

Meherana MESSENGER

The Word of His Singing

Study Course 2016 reflections on Francis Brabazon's *Stay With God*

by Jim Wilson, Portland, Oregon

Tired of the ebb and flow of the world, longing for more meaning, more peace and calmness of body, mind, and heart, I eagerly surrendered to the call of my master to come to His feet. Along with seventeen others, we arrived at Meherana's heavenly encampment for nine sun-filled days and moonlit nights of His Singing. The topic was Francis Brabazon's poem *Stay With God*; the time was Meher Baba, His life and works; the goal was penetration into the Art of God-to-man and man-to-God.

Francis' poem, *Stay With God*, falls in the category or genre of a "modern epic." Few examples of this genre exist, perhaps none with the reach and passionate intensity of what we held in our hands. Meher Baba said this work was a companion to His *God Speaks*. He

gave it a major role in the establishment of mankind's true orientation to God, mankind's "re-turning" to God to face the Light of His Sun by which all nature will return to wholeness.

Since its publication in 1959, followers of Meher Baba have perhaps read it with interest as I did decades ago. Recently reading it several times in

preparing for the seminar, I realized its beauty and importance but was not familiar with most of the classical references and I did not recognize their intended place in the unfolding of Francis' insights and spiritual narrative. In order to plunge into the ocean of these references as well as see the governing metaphors, themes, and

narrative organization, I required a guide, someone schooled and accomplished in the literature of the ancient past, someone to reveal the historical context needed for time-and-place, the spirit, and the underlying nature of the references. Professor Ward Parks studied and taught medieval literature as a career. He is well known in the Baba community for his dedicated work on the





re-editing of *Discourses*, editing *Infinite Intelligence*, and the soon-to-be-available *Tiffin Lectures*.

His presentation of *Stay With God* was the match that lit up the shadowy cave of my limitations. The two-dimensional pages of the poem expanded into cathedrals of stained-glass light. The stanzas flowed in musical rapture with themes splendidly rich in meaning and

inspiration. My mind soared blissfully. I awoke to the Word of His Singing through Francis' pen. I searched for the keys of understanding. We all questioned and expounded on the beauty of what we were experiencing, not just reading. We feasted on the art of his word-craft. We were challenged by his insights, criticisms, and exhortations.

Francis skillfully wove themes of many colors into the epic tapestry: themes of hero and child; man and woman; outward and inward turning; lion and lamb; good and evil; knowledge and ignorance; piercing of veils; agricultural themes of rain, plowing, and sowing; day and night, sun and moon; stone; war; evolution; love-song themes of praise and complaint; Avataric themes of His descent in times past and present; themes of involution and Perfect Masters; of masts; themes from Baba's 1955 Sahavas programs at Meherabad; and a no-holding-back theme of taking one's uncompromising stand for God in the dark waves of pleasure and pain.

In the first three books of *Stay With God*, Francis identifies who Baba is. Book I presents God in His personal aspect as the God-man. Francis tells Baba's story, His-story, of His life and work up to 1955 when the assignment was given. Book II is Francis' portrayal of himself in relation to Baba who plays the dual role of Lover and Beloved, a singing in illusion. Book III defines the Impersonal God by passing four times through the Divine Theme as expounded in *God Speaks*, Baba's cosmological and metaphysical depiction of Reality. Book IV addresses the question: How? How do we find our way to the feet of the Perfect Master? All four books are the lead-up to Book V. Here he gets to his assignment exhorting all mankind to "Stay With God." All else is nothing from Nothing.

In the final part, Book V, Francis unleashes in fiery poetry the authenticity of traditional culture, in contrast to the

renaissance, colonialism, and modernity. Here he sculpts in majestic and lyrical form God's response to darkness by the advent of Meher Baba. Like the hard-working farmer he once was, Francis waters and cultivates the expectation of the coming Word, which will align humanity in its proper relationship to God.

Book V, which comprises more than half of the poem, presents the God-Man as *World Axis* and the *Living Perfection of Art*. He relegates and at the same time elevates art to two fundamental acts: Act I is God descending to earth as True Art, for indeed, it is really the ONLY creative act; and Act II is illusion ascending to God from stone form through evolution to human form, then into the spiritual planes and onto God realization, the only goal of creation. This Art form is God's answer to His question of "Who am I?" as the one Reality of "I am God."

Profound insights open to us through Book V, undoubtedly inspired by Baba, which illuminate the darkness preceding Baba's birth. His focus on art is unique and requires "unlearning" on our part. He proposes that true Art contains and defines the expression of the Sacred in each person's response to God's Word in their individual lives.... ultimately the creation of total devotion.

A.K. Coomaraswamy wrote: "An artist is not a special man, but every man is a special artist." (see Endnote) This is the True Art, the highest and most noble response in each one's life to God's Presence, the ultimate fulfillment of mankind's purpose and adorative nature.

"It is not the tongue but our very life that sings the new song."

St. Augustine

At times Francis mocks the progress of the Western world in the last 400 years, but it is not criticism of individuals as artists, but rather the *condition* of society as having

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moved away from God and having become focused on a new god of “human reason and sense perceptions” that removed The Absolute from His hierarchical throne. The focus changed from finding the Divine Truth *within* to turning *outward* to human self-sufficiency in the empirical world of illusion. “Replacing Jesus with Ares,” a recurring symbol and theme, exposes the false gods elevated to the altar as society moves toward rationalism and humanism, scientism and materialism. His insights do not represent just a personal view, although Baba’s followers are free to make their own judgement. Actually, Baba went over every word of *Stay With God*. Francis read it to Him many times in the process of writing it, and Baba praised and guided Francis in ways not seen elsewhere in His connection with writers. Baba called it “food for the mind and a feast for the heart.” He placed it high on the short list of written works He would leave for posterity.

We spent the final two full days on Book V, coming to the glorious mountaintop of this expression of the Divine Sun of Reality shining through

the mists of illusion. Like a great symphony rising to a crescendo, Francis exhorts us, pleads with us to *Stay With God*, the title Baba gave to Francis for this assigned work. No matter how dark, no matter how alluring and strong the forces of the false self, no matter the weapons of ignorance against us, take our stand. Turn to the Light. Fight “the greater war in the service of Self – Existence, Knowledge, Bliss;” (p. 145, line 1) “...stay with God since none, except in dream, exists but God” (p. 154, line 28). Again he urges us to *Stay With God* until “...we wake from dreaming and behold His lovely Face, and sleep within His breast and know His thought – and all the world is lost, well lost.” (p. 155, lines 9 -12)

One cannot remain unmoved by his ardent devotion and one-pointed surrender to his Beloved. His plea to “serve or be nothing” bears the honor of a warrior in the internal battle against his lower self to become dust at His feet. *Stay With God* is a glorious work of sacred art worthy of the Divine Beloved for all ages to come. Baba played His Song on Francis’ heart strings. In this Singing we are washed in the grace of the Avatar as a river of tears flows down His cheeks in love and compassion for all His creation. ♥

“The real art of men is modelling their flesh upon the pattern of His Perfect Manhood, dreaming His loveliness and truth, and delineating in work and works the dreamed Image of His Reality”

p. 154 lines 11-14

“Stay With God in whatever shape He shapes you and work your works within the boundaries of that shape. Art is His shape of you singing light through your hands, through your speech, imaging His Image. STAY WITH GOD. Let the Dream dream out the staying and the going of your form or million forms – they are not you who ever stays with God.”

p.154-55 lines 37-42

Endnote: Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, Dover Publications, Inc. 1956, p.112



To the Members and Friends of Meherana, Jai Meher Baba!

It has been another exciting and busy year at Meherana, and with buckets of rain now falling on the property, Meherana really is Baba’s paradise!

We had two well-attended Sahavas from people as close as San Francisco and Los Angeles and from as far away as the East Coast and Australia.

Special guests Merwan Dubash and Jim Meyer at our Spring Sahavas provided us with rich stories and music. (See pages 4 and 9 in this issue of the Messenger.) A variety of workshops included Cartooning with Brian Narelle; Spiritual Poetry with Ben Leet; Food and Nutrition—vegetable pickle making—taught by Meibao Nee; Silk Scarf Dyeing with Georgene Tarbox; Chanting the Bhagavad Gita with Eric Ashelman; and The Challenges of Marriage as an Expression of True Love with Michael Childs and Dana Lee. And if that wasn’t enough, there was a Women’s Tea at the Meadow Cottage while the men enjoyed a Joke Telling session.

The New Life Sahavas featured programs on the life of and work of Francis Brabazon, one of Meher Baba’s mandali from Australia—*fair dinkum mate* (Australian slang meaning “It is true my friend”). A play, *The Mighty Beloved*, drew a lot of interest about Baba’s time in Australia as did Raine Eastman-Gannett and Sue Jamison’s sharing of priceless stories of their youth spent with Francis interwoven with poetry and songs (pages 10 and 14). Concerts of new musical settings to Francis’ poetry were led by Ward Parks and the Dunns. In addition there were workshop talks by Michael LePage on Baron von Frankenberg; Dina Snow Gibson with more Brabazon reminiscences; and Brabazon-style ghazal writing with Greg Dunn. And I haven’t even mentioned the beloved arts and dhunis that are an integral part of each Sahavas.

Always noticeable are the many young people who come streaming in—many of them with their own young ones who are attracted to an inviting Children’s Program which

includes many arts and crafts projects as well as games, including ping pong and water fights.

Volleyball is a favorite Sahavas activity, along with hiking, relaxing in our laid-back mountain environment, playing music (including open mic) and games. And last but not least, I must mention the delicious catered food that we all enjoy. With all of these activities, we experience Baba’s fragrance liberally sprinkled on us.

Another highlight of the year was Ward Park’s nine-day study course in September focused on Brabazon’s *Stay With God*. There are two articles here (pages 1 and 15) for you to enjoy from attendees.

Looking at the year ahead, we are building a wooden cabin; upgrading the solar battery storage at the Meadow Cottage; adding gutters to Baba’s Cabin and the Meadow Cottage; and painting the caretakers’ home.

We have a strong and dedicated board who are committed to the mission of Meherana: Carole Cunningham, Ellen Van Allen, Gay Dunn, Georgene Tarbox, Jim Wilson, and myself, Therese Williams.

With the support of our members, the wider community, and our Master Meher Baba who is in charge, Meherana continues to thrive. To offer our service to Meher Baba is a true blessing! I pray that this year has brought all of us closer to the presence of God within.

We encourage His lovers from all over the world to come and visit Meherana. It is your home and a place for you to celebrate Meher Baba’s love.

*"Nothing is real but God.
Nothing matters but love for God."
—Meher Baba*

I look forward to another thriving year ahead at Meherana.

In His warmest love,
Therese Williams
President, Meherana Board of Directors



ABOVE: Children at play, more “children” at play, one of the Brabazon concerts, the Women’s Tea



Merwan regaled us with many captivating stories during the 2016 Spring Sahavas. "The Bicycle Incident" is one of them.



The Bicycle Incident

by Merwan Dubash



In May and June 1960, my parents Adi and Rhoda Dubash and I spent between six to seven weeks with Baba at Guruprasad. During this stay I experienced one of my major incidents with Baba. My parents and I had started using rented bicycles for transportation to Guruprasad every day. Each day we would cycle there in the morning, cycle back home for lunch and then in the afternoon Adi and I would bicycle back to Guruprasad.

One morning as we entered Guruprasad I was told by someone that the Mandali ladies had noticed that I cycled very fast and I should slow down as Baba would not like it. I was warned but soon forgot about it!

One day in the afternoon on the way to Guruprasad after lunch, as my father and I were bicycling through one of the crowded side streets of Poona, a car appeared from nowhere at some speed with horn blaring. In a hurry to move over to one side, I lost my presence of mind and instead of pulling over to the left (which is the side to drive in India) I pulled over to the right, across the path of the oncoming car. Apparently, the car missed me by a whisker. I got a few choice words from my dad and heard one of the onlookers say "Now go. God has saved you".

After composing myself we cycled over to Guruprasad, parked our bikes

and noticed that Baba was already in the side Mandali Hall. As soon as we put our foot into the room, Baba looked over at my father and asked "How well does Merwan ride his bicycle?" Of course, that was just the excuse Adi needed and he quickly blurted out what had happened that afternoon. Baba became quite serious (not angry) and after my father finished complaining, Baba looked at me and said "Don't I have anything better to do than to keep my nazar on you? From now on your bicycle riding stops." Being only thirteen, I asked if this meant no cycling when I went back to Karachi and Baba said "No cycling when you are in India. You can cycle in Karachi." That was the end of this incident with Baba.

Later, after Baba retired, we found out that for about a week before the incident Baba had been asking everyone in Mandali Hall daily, "How does Merwan ride his bicycle? Is he rash, does he drive too fast?" and so on. No one could respond to these questions except Aloba. He was the one on gate duty so he used to see me riding into Guruprasad and told Baba that like most kids my age I rode a little fast, jammed the brakes on and came to a screeching halt and showed off a bit.

There is a sequel to this story: In 1962 I finished school and went to university. The only convenient transportation to get me there and back was a



Baba's nazar on Merwan

bicycle. When I asked my parents to buy me one, they hesitated. Even though Baba had said I could bicycle in Karachi, they were reluctant to buy one for me without Baba's permission.

So in 1963 when we were with Baba again in Guruprasad, at an opportune time Baba was asked whether I could use a bicycle in Karachi to go back and forth to university. Baba, inquired why it was necessary for me to have a bicycle and what alternate transport was available, but eventually said it was okay for me to have a bicycle of my own in Karachi, but I was still not to ride a bike in India. So even today, although I can ride a bicycle anywhere in the world, I do not ride one in India. ♥

If you are convinced of God's existence, then it rests with you to seek Him, to see Him, and to realize Him. Do not search for God outside of you; God can only be found within you, for His only abode is the heart. But, you have filled His abode with millions of strangers, and He cannot enter – for He is shy of strangers. Unless you empty His abode of these strangers, you will never find God. These strangers are your age-old desires – your millions of wants.

Honesty in your dealings with others will clear the strangers from your heart. – MEHER BABA

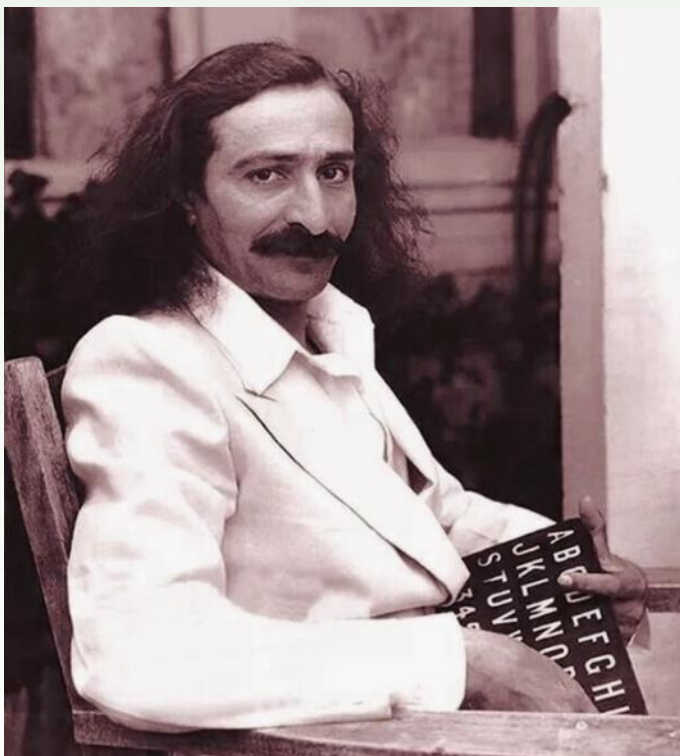
Meher Baba Calling, p.61



An interview with playwright/composer Greg Dunn by Anne Haug

AH: Greg, although I was not blessed to see the play in Los Angeles, you did send it to me to read as well as some of the music you were working on. I was thrilled by your creative endeavor, as this aspect of Baba's work in Hollywood—meeting with the stars and promoting his film vision—is critically important. I would love to hear about the play's conception and your process in bringing it to life. How did the idea come to you to write a musical play about Baba in Hollywood? Did the idea arise full blown or did it develop over time?

GD: Members of the Los Angeles group requested a play on this topic. They had recently performed a shortened version of *This New Life*, the play that Ralph Brown, Michalene Seiler, and I wrote in 2015, and were keen to put on another play. I imagine the topic of Baba's work in Hollywood was a natural



for them, since they live there, and since so many people in the group work in, or are connected in some way with, the entertainment industry. Baba's connection to the place is quite immediate, with so many people who have been part of the group, from Filis Frederick on down, having met and worked for Baba while He was in the body, including three or four who are still alive and still live there. Many of the places Baba visited, or where He gave out messages, are still there, intact.

In the beginning, I wasn't planning to do a musical. I had certainly thought about it, having just watched the process by which Ward Parks composed the music for the *New Life* play; having worked with Ward to integrate the music into the play; and having experienced at very close range how much that music had contributed to the experience of the play. But originally the L.A. group wanted to put the Hollywood play on in January or February (2016), which was only a couple of months from the time we first talked about it, so there wasn't time even to think about writing a play and writing music for it as well.

However, after I'd essentially finished writing the play in mid – to late January, the intended production date got moved back due to a variety of logistical issues, so the delicious challenge of writing music for it resurfaced as a possibility. I decided to give it a shot.

AH: During the 9-day study course on *Stay With God* you and Gay performed some of the music from the play one evening for the attendees and community and we loved it. Carol Cunningham was there that night in Mariposa and she was also in Los Angeles for the earlier performance and was profuse in her compliments. Please tell us about these musical compositions—whatever you feel inspired to share.

GD: To get ideas for songs I simply re-read the play with that in mind. Certain scenarios jumped out at me: Boris Karloff feeling his burden of being type-cast as a monster lifted from him by Baba; Marie Dressler inviting Baba, at a private lunch, to dance

with her in the woods; Quentin Tod encouraging some of Baba's well-heeled female followers to buy God-Realization gowns for the supposed silence-breaking in the Hollywood Bowl. Those became "Everyone Thinks I'm a Monster (Karloff's Song)", "Dance Me to the Stars (Marie's Song)", and "Dress to Impress" (Quentin's Song).

Then there was a need for a piece to be performed at the end of the play that would tie some kind of bow on it. That one came out of Baba's final 1956 visit to Hollywood, which was much lower-profile than the two visits in the 1930s had been, Baba having little contact with the press or with Hollywood stars, and instead spending almost all of His time with His dedicated lovers. "Till You Let Me Know (The Disciple's Song)" is the song of the true lover, who's still with Baba after the glitz and fanfare have died out and it's become clear that following Baba isn't about having one's desires fulfilled.

The last thing that I realized was needed – having completed the other four songs – was a piece for the beginning of the play, to kick it off with the right mood. I wrote lyrics for that one (which is called "He's Coming!") sometime in February; but then the production kept getting delayed and delayed, to the point where I began to doubt whether it would ever happen at all. So after that I set the project aside and involved myself with other things.

Elaine Munson, bless her heart, who was the play's champion and producer in L.A., never gave up on the project and pushed through many obstacles to finally make it happen this past September. I wrote the music for "He's Coming!" about ten days before the actual production. Then my wife Gay, who's a professional cellist and an experienced arranger, wove all five songs together into a wonderful instrumental overture that we used to call the audience together at the play's beginning.

AH: It was in Hollywood that the famous incident of Baba promising to break His silence and then failing to do so occurred. In your research for the play, did you learn anything interesting about that?

I more or less had the idea that the Hollywood Bowl silence-breaking business was something Baba's followers had come up with, and that Baba had simply allowed them to believe was going to happen, without ever Himself actually confirming that it would. But it seems that Baba really did say, point blank, that He was going to do it; and not just once, but several times, to different people, including in a public message read out for Him in New York by Meredith Starr. He also told it to Marie Dressler, in person and in a follow-up letter.

For me, Tallulah Bankhead sort of personifies the reason Baba (I imagine) did this. She was drawn to Baba, but apparently not for reasons that were really spiritual, but



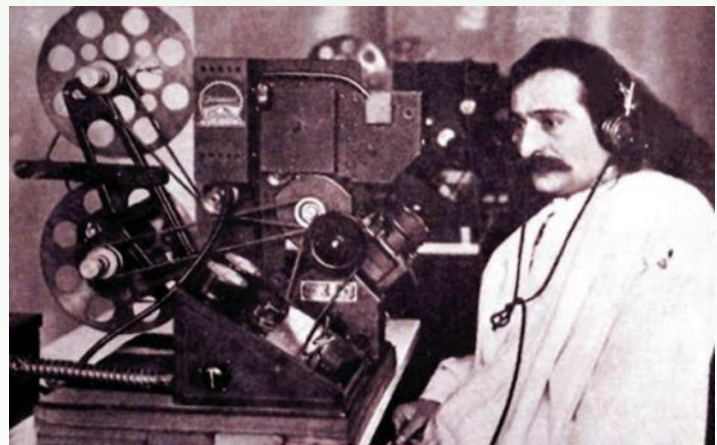
because she thought He could give her worldly benefits. She even asked Him, through Adi Jr., to help her entrap a man she was interested in who wasn't much interested in her! Baba, I imagine, needed to shake such people loose, who probably abounded, especially in the West.

At the same time, the planned silence-breaking generated quite a bit of publicity, and brought Baba's name and existence to the attention of many people. It certainly wasn't the sort of stunt an ordinary person could have pulled off without having pretty much everyone abandon Him. Quite a few people did turn away from Baba because of it.

I don't mean to cast aspersions on Tallulah, by the way. Who but Baba knows what the real state of development of anyone really is? Everyone has their role to play, and she spent many hours in Baba's physical presence, which is a lot more than I can say!

AH: Did anything else particularly strike you about Baba's visits to Hollywood?

Two things. The first was the magnificence of the messages He gave out during the first three days after his arrival for His first visit



in late May, 1932. Here was a man from India who had only been in the West for about eight months total before arriving in Los Angeles; and He was giving out messages that cut absolutely to the heart of the material problems in which America was so deeply immersed at the time. This one, for example:

The root of all our difficulties, individual and social, is self-interest. It is this, 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 to break, for their own profit, 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 great masses of humanity by individuals or groups of individuals seeking personal gain; which impedes the progress of civilization 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 market prices; which causes the hoarding of large sums of gold when the welfare of the world demands its circulation.

His statements were equally bold as to Who He was, and what His mission was:

I eternally enjoy the Christ State of Consciousness. 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. Co-operation will replace competition; certainty will replace fear; generosity will replace greed. Exploitation will disappear.

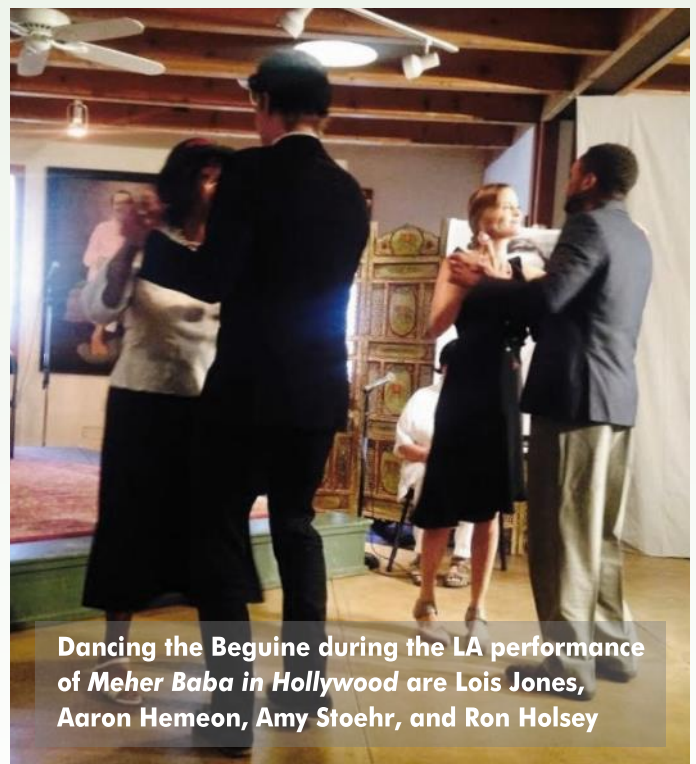
He also seemed to understand the film industry's importance perhaps better than most of those working in the industry did:

I do not need to tell you, who are engaged in the production and distribution of moving pictures, what a power you hold in your hands; nor do I doubt that you are fully alive to the responsibility which the wielding of that power involves.

He who stimulates the imagination of the masses can move them in any direction he chooses, and there is no more powerful instrument for stimulating their imagination than the moving pictures. People go to the theatre to be entertained. If the play is strong, they come away transformed. They surrender their hearts and minds to the author, producer, director, and stars, and they follow the example which they see portrayed before their eyes more than they themselves realize. Both the press and the radio influence thought, but both lack the power of visible example, which is the greatest stimulant to action and which the moving pictures offer better now than any other medium.

The second thing that stood out to me about Baba's Hollywood visits was the intensity of His work on the *How It All Happened* film project. He had so many people working on it, and gave it so much personal attention! Dramatic productions are little models of life, allowing rich experimentation, from which much can be learned; and motion pictures, besides their tremendous power to influence people's values (pointed out by Baba), represent the greatest metaphor ever for the Creation itself! When the last few bits on the DVD have played out on the screen – Mahapralaya!

AH: Thanks so much Greg for sharing how your play came about and for the fresh new look at Baba's work in Hollywood! ♥



Dancing the Beguine during the LA performance of Meher Baba in Hollywood are Lois Jones, Aaron Hemeon, Amy Stoehr, and Ron Holsey

Caretakers Corner

Jai Baba everyone! In the months that my husband Eric and I have been caretakers here at Meherana, we have been a part of two Sahavasas, multiple guests coming for Individual Retreat, and are becoming a part of the heartbeat of the Mariposa Baba community. There are so many ways that we find opportunities to express our love for the Beloved in this, what I call “His home in the western West.” For me, the activities of daily living are expanded to include the entire property and everything in it. Since His seat is in Baba’s Cabin, the atmosphere is imbued with Baba’s magnificent love, from the tiniest spring flower to the spacious and beautiful Meadow Cottage. It is a source of ever-expanding joy to find myself fortunate enough to be a guardian of this precious jewel we call Meherana.

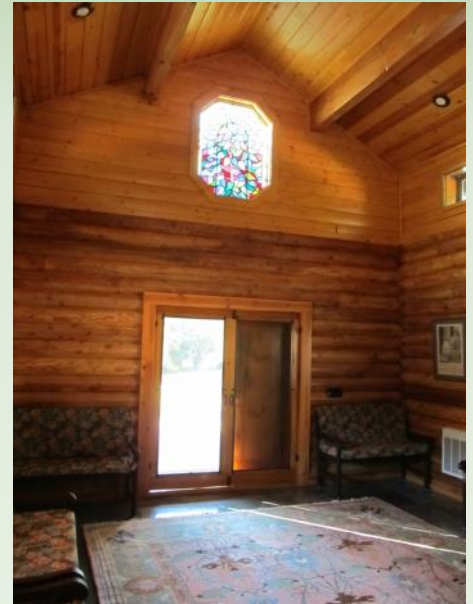
Baba’s Cabin is more special than ever with a recently donated Lyn Ott portrait of Baba, a loving gift from Adele Wolkin, now hanging in the Cabin. I wish all of you to know that the Cabin retains the afterglow of your prayers and songs from your visits here. Several of our dear community residents maintain the nearby roses and gardens, supplying flowers and keeping the interior and grounds clean and ever-ready for guests, and most especially for Baba.

Having been a guest in the Meadow Cottage, I took it under my wing to update the linens and towels and re-arrange the bedroom furniture and artwork as one of my first projects. My viewpoint is that if the next guest should be Baba Himself, then He would be comfortable and rest well. A recent guest showed me how to make a

superb natural cleaning solution made with water, vinegar and essential oils so that the Cottage is now fresher and cleaner without the use of common toxic cleaning agents. There is also now a dryer for use in rainy weather. Even though there are only two bedrooms, the number of people coming on Individual Retreat has increased.

When you come to visit, you will see the two newly chip-sealed roads (a process of grading, oiling, and graveling) on the property: the entrance road up to the Caretakers Residence and the drive up to the Meadow Cottage. Both areas had been badly eroded from use, so now they are a pleasure to use and the level of dust has decreased greatly. The drive down to Baba’s Cabin was re-graded and a new layer of gravel was spread. As a newly-elected Active Member and Site Committee member, it is my pleasure to be on the spot as caretaker to be a part of what needs doing.

In addition to registering and giving orientation to guests coming on individual retreat, our job is to frequently walk the property and see to the security of the water systems, buildings, and other property. I’ve never had a more wonder-



ful job in my life—to roam the property and breathe the lovely dry air filled with the scent of pines and the sound of wind and birds. You might think it isolated and lonely, but I think it just the opposite; I’ve never been happier in my life. It’s so beautiful and peaceful here and Baba’s presence is palpable.

We have settled into the Caretakers Residence and this summer installed a swamp cooler to handle the one hundred-degree days. Even though the house is aging, it’s well laid out and roomy, and includes the Meherana office which serves as the registration area. There are good views to the main pandal area, approach roads and of course the lovely hills, oak trees, and meadows. The garden this year was paltry due to the scampering critters and the fact that we haven’t had the right dog show up yet to join our security team. We now have large aqua-colored terra cotta planters filled with flowers and landscaping in the area in front of the office. Eric has been busy mowing and weed-whacking here and elsewhere on the property so everything is looking pretty spiffy. He has also taken an interest in the nearby orchard which has suffered due to lack of successful irrigation.

We both have a great interest, as



does the Baba community here, in bringing the principles of permaculture and sustainability to Meherana, and the possibilities are endless. We hope to soon be implementing these principles for the improvement of the natural beauty as well as the ongoing need to increase food production and to capture and spread available water and rainfall. This arid region can become a flowering Garden of Eden and we are eager to play a major part in this development.

This summer we stopped by Meher Mount for the first time and we were so delighted to meet the caretakers there, Buzz and Ginger Glasky. What a fun and energetic pair! Ginger took us out to Baba's Tree and explained all about the property, the view, and the neighbors. They included us in a homey lunch at the big kitchen table and regaled us with stories past and present. We also talked about the future and decided it would be fun to stay in touch as fellow caretakers to share experiences. This is interesting, because we have also developed a great relationship with caretakers Ginna Bourisseau and James Spivey at the Heartland Center in Prague, Oklahoma, from several visits there when we lived in Iowa. And having spent so many years as a guest at the Myrtle Beach Center, I have many contacts there who can help answer questions, share information, and give advice. It seems the Beloved is weaving a web of connectedness amongst center caretakers, and we can learn and support each other in service to Him.

As you can see, a lot is happening here at Meherana and we are so fortunate to be an intimate part of this process. I hope you will come soon and see for yourself and have a rest from the world. Until then, know that we are here on the job, making sure all is well and beautiful for Baba.

With warm regards and love in our Beloved,
Marianne Ashelman ♥

Life is not meant to be rich in spiritual significance at some distant date, but is so at every moment, if only the mind is disburdened of illusions. It is only through a clear and tranquil mind that the true nature of spiritual infinity is grasped as something which is not yet to be, but which already has been, is, and ever will be an eternal self-fulfillment.

— MEHER BABA

DUST AND WINE

Jim Meyer on Francis Brabazon

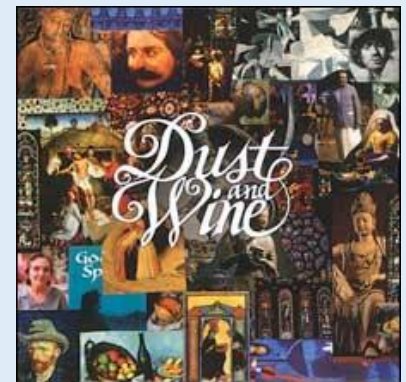


singer, to put them to music.

But the really interesting thing has been how Baba inwardly helps me to find these poems and how He "nudges" me to find a proper setting for them. I cannot put into words this process—but it is very creative and does not begin with any input from me—that's for sure!

Since Baba's guidance is based upon our remembrance of Him in all things, this has been a very sweet path for me. Singing the Beloved's Name is a very pure and honest path back to the Self. ♥

“ I have been singing Francis Brabazon's songs since 1968, and have enjoyed their many versions by a variety of singers. But in the last five years I have been "called" to re-examine Francis' later poems in a different way—a more mature way. My personal relationship with Meher Baba, ever evolving and involving, has "caught-up" with some of the deeper heart exclamations of Francis Brabazon's post-Amartithi works and it was only natural for me, as a Baba



Jim enchanted us with his music at Meherana's 2016 Spring Sahavas. Much of the CD "Dust and Wine", written by Jim Meyer and Tom Dimock, features these new musical settings to the words of Francis Brabazon.

THE MIGHTY BELOVED

by Ralph Brown and Michalene Seiler



Our decision to create a play around Francis Brabazon's life was prompted by Ward Parks' study course on Francis' epic work, *Stay With God*. We really knew very little about Francis at the start, but as we delved deeper and deeper into his life, a biographical play began to take shape. We asked ourselves: what can we find in the known facts about Francis' life that might explain his future as the Hafiz in the court of Meher Baba?

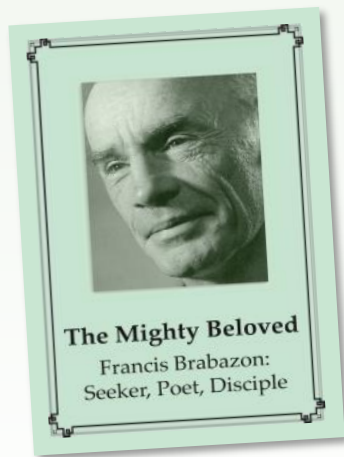
Utilizing the biographies written by Ross Keating and Robert Rouse, as well as interviews with many people who had known Francis, a picture of his life began to develop. Francis was transplanted from London to a desolate farm in Australia as a young boy and despite his innate artistic yearnings, he embraced the hard labor demanded of him. No doubt this served him well later in life when he nearly single-handedly built a house for Meher Baba's visit to Australia. In fact, every move in Francis' life seemed to have been designed to bring him closer to his finding and serving his true Beloved and it was our hope to bring that story to life. No spoilers here; if you want to know in detail how the story develops, you'll have to

travel to Australia where we understand the play will be resurrected in 2017. We will say this much: Doug Ross did such a great job as Francis that he has been invited to reprise his role for the Australian production.

Many details of the story development called out for both music and sound effects. Bob Een and Mader provided beautifully haunting music, and Greg Ennis did an amazing job with the sound effects. We also felt that at many points in the play, Francis' poetry, read by Brian Narelle, could add more to the mood than anything we might have written. The beautiful sets painted by Melinda Abeles were also a high point.

The acting was uniformly excellent, which was slightly miraculous given the very limited rehearsal time. Everyone played their role magnificently.

We were grateful for the opportunity to get a glimpse of the life of Francis Brabazon and others in his Baba story, to work with all the cast and crew, and for the chance to do our bit to try to please the audience and Meher Baba, who are of course one and the same. ♥



ABOVE: Francis (Doug Ross) posing for an artist friend (Glenn Russ); Francis on his way to meet Baba in Myrtle Beach, in a car with Ivy Duce (Meibao Nee), Charmian Duce (Peni Choi) and Sparkie Lukes (Becky Caraco); Francis working on *Stay With God* with Robert Rouse (Brian Narelle) hovering. LEFT: Program designed by Joseph Choi



Introducing Meher Baba

I had the privilege of giving an introduction for those new to Baba at the Meadow Cottage at Meherana last May. Most in attendance were old-time Baba lovers, but that didn't dampen our enthusiasm to enjoy communing together with our Beloved! The following are notes from the talk. —Anne Haug

I'm so happy to be here with you today to share something about Meher Baba that you might not find in a book or DVD. In fact, after this short intro, we will watch a 27-minute movie, *Meher Baba Highlights* by Meherabad Films, that showcases His life and work with lovely images and makes the facts of his life much more interesting and memorable than hearing me tell them.

As I contemplated what I would like to share with you today about Meher Baba, what came to me was the singular word that describes Him for me—and that is Love. Meher Baba is the incarnation of Love. He said God is Love and Love must love. In fact, He affirmed that it is for love that the whole universe sprang into existence, and it is for the sake of love that it is kept going. And when you watch the movie, you will probably notice the effect that He has on those around Him. He is like the sun shining in all directions, and when we come closer to Him we can feel completely loved, known, understood and accepted—just as we are. And even though He is no longer with us physically, I experience Him to be very alive when I remember Him. By His unflinching example, He continuously guides me as to what real love is—and that is the journey I am on.

I feel that the most important thing I can share with you about Meher Baba is that the personal relationship we develop with Him is unique and ours to discover. And like any good relationship, it

develops slowly and organically through growing trust. As you get acquainted with Baba, you might notice that this trust heals the hurts of our past—for a relationship with Baba is unlike any other relationship. It is an adventure and ongoing transformation into a deeper awareness of pure love and truth. I have realized that I am the only block to my awakening—and Baba helps me transcend my old, wounded self.

We grow in our relationship with Him through remembering Him—for me that means reading about Him, watching movies of Him, attending study groups, communing with Him privately, talking about Him with others and now

associating with the Meherana community. One of my favorite ways of connecting with Baba is by gazing on his Ancient One portrait. That is when I feel Him speak to me in my heart.

Which brings up another subject: Meher Baba's silence. He gave up speaking relatively early in his advent. And He said that the reason for this was to help us spiritually. Baba did use an alphabet board to communicate and later on used unique hand gestures, but what is really significant to me is that He really isn't silent. He is speaking to us all the time if we will just listen to Him. He is the voice of our conscience and the voice of love. And I am learning slowly over the years to stop and listen more and more and ask Baba to direct me. He said "that which is real is given and received in silence."

Baba represents for me what is real and constant in this world of phenomena. I invite you to test this for yourself because it is beyond reason or logic. I have been a student of psychology for many years and I love how Baba addresses that subject in His *Discourses*. He defines the ego as an affirmation of separateness and says that the only experience that makes for the slimming down of the ego is the experience of love. Then Baba invites us to construct a provisional and working ego that is subservient to the master. This is indispensable as we dive deeper into our journey of love.

An Introduction to Meher Baba

2pm Saturday May 14th
Meherana's Meadow Cottage
3946 Hwy 140
(just past the Rock Shop going south on Hwy 140 from Mariposa)

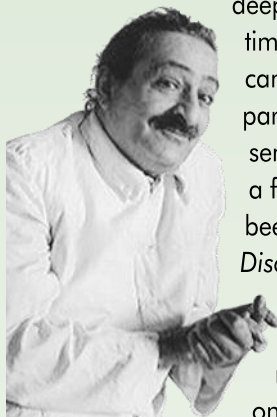
- Short talk – presented by Anne Haug
- Questions & Answers
- Film. "Meher Baba Highlights" (27 minutes)
- Tea / coffee / snacks

Invite your friends who you feel may be interested

For more information contact:
Kebi at (209) 742-5053 or kebi@meherana.org



I'm a lover of books, and if you enjoy reading, I recommend delving into the vast library of Baba literature. If you want the core material, you might start with Baba's *Discourses*. I've read them quite a few times and they are always new. It's amazing to take in the concepts at a



deeper level each time I read. You can read just a paragraph—even a sentence—and find a feast. In fact, I've been involved in a *Discourses* study over the phone and we've never gotten past one page in a

session due to the richness of the material. Baba's words are like little atoms or capsules packed with rich nutrients, and unpacking each concept is worthy of our attention, worthy of our contemplation.

The last thought I would like to share with you is the value of coming together with other Baba lovers—folks who accept Him as their beloved master. There is a synergy when experiencing His love so intimately and multifariously with His lovers. All Baba centers provide this opportunity and I'm here visiting Meherana from my home in Montana. The thirst for union with the Beloved who actually represents my own Real Self has grown over the years to where I need to find ways to be with Baba more and more

and that includes being with His lovers.

Meher Baba said "To each one I appear to be what he thinks I am." I have tested this proposition and found it to be true. As my thoughts and feelings purify, I am able to experience Him at a deeper level.

We can't have an introduction to Meher Baba without a short biography, although this is easily found in books by and about Him. He declared Himself to be the Avatar of this age, God incarnated in human form for the purpose of releasing Love for humanity. And it is through love that we can appreciate who He is. Thank you for coming and giving me the opportunity to share with you about my absolute favorite subject, my beloved master Meher Baba. ♥

Meherana Bookstore offers books



by
Bhau
Kalchuri

Mastery in Servitude – Some wonder if these words inscribed on Beloved Baba's tomb-shrine might not be a paradox meant to transcend or break the reasoning mind. To help the Baba world understand the importance of these words, Bhau Kalchuri has written an inspired book which also helps set the foundation for dedicated service to Avatar Meher Baba.

Meher Roshani is a compilation of 117 ghazals that contain numerous lines from Meher Baba and, per Bhau, reflect the force of the sound of Meher Baba's breaking of His Silence. The force of this sound, out of the vacuum of Silence, then establishes the forces of His manifestation. Bhau shares, "The source of *Meher Roshani* is Avatar Meher Baba, the Beloved of all. And to acknowledge the Source is to remain bowed down at His feet. He is all great—all mighty—and He is above all praise."

Meher Sarod features 170 ghazals and Bhau shares in the book's acknowledgements: "It was Meher Baba Himself who taught me how to write ghazals and gave me the inspiration to write what is contained in *Meher Sarod*. Meher Baba Himself titled this book and arranged for its publication in Hindi just a few months before He dropped His mortal body to leave behind His immortal words. Meher Baba must be acknowledged foremost for He is the very Source of everything contained in this book of poems. The ghazals have been translated into English by me over a period of years and in certain instances, I have given commentaries on the meaning of some couplets."

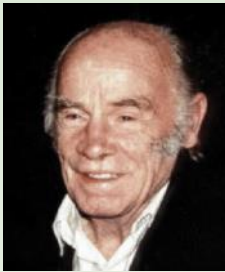
\$9.00 each or any 3 for \$25.00 including postage.

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Meherana, PO Box 1997, Mariposa CA 95338
or pay via PayPal and enter: donations@meherana.org



Reminiscences of Francis Brabazon

by Susan Jamison



Our coming to Baba coincided with Francis' return from India after Baba dropped His body in 1969. We were extremely

fortunate to be in his company at Avatars Abode in our formative Baba days. For this Sahavas, we presented a mix of our personal stories of being with Francis, and sang renditions of his ghazals along with oral presentations of Francis' poems and stories of the Mandali.

We shared how Francis introduced the "young ones" to new ideas and ways of thinking through music including folk, classical, and opera, as well as through books—Indian, Greek, and Norse myths,

books of the saints—both European and Eastern, and Noh and Kabuki theatre. It was from this exposure, inspiration, and encouragement from Francis that led to original plays and music being performed by all living around Avatars Abode.

Francis encouraged the anniversary of Meher Baba's visit to Avatars Abode in 1958 to be honored and celebrated every year. He wrote plays and music to be performed at these anniversaries and this creativity in the forms of plays, skits, and songs still continues to this day at the three-day Sahavas every June.

In poetry, music, and spoken word, we were privileged to share a chronological journey of Francis' rich and sublime writing, including *Stay With God*, *Singing Threshold*, *In Dust I Sing*, and *Word at World's End*, as well as some unpublished



Raine Eastman-Gannett and Susan Jamison presented a program of stories and music from their days with Francis Brabazon. A DVD will be available at the Meherana Bookstore.

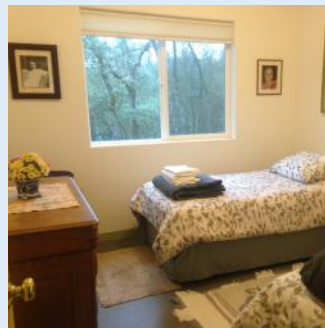
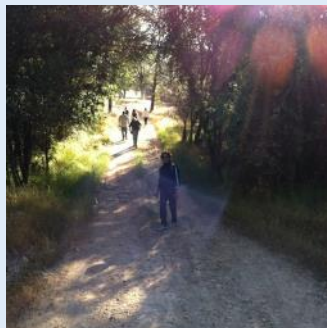
songs, all of which complemented the play, *The Mighty Beloved*, which focused on Francis' life until Baba dropped His body in 1969. ♥

Visiting Meherana

Yes, Meherana is open for visitors! The Meadow Cottage with its two bedrooms, two and a half baths, great room, very ample kitchen, and decks looking out on nature, is a perfect spot for those coming for the day or wishing for overnight accommodation. It is located in what Sahavas and event attendees refer to as the "camping meadow" where those putting up tents sleep and which is in the center of Meherana's 289 acres. Baba's Cabin is only a short distance away and walking

there is a delight through fields of wildflowers in the spring, graceful grasses in the summer, and greenness of new life emerging in the fall and winter.

So if you're thinking of a get-away for a day, a weekend, or longer and the idea of a retreat in nature with Beloved Baba is what you're hankering for, send an email to visits@meherana.org with your thoughts and plans and we'll do our best to accommodate you. We look forward to sharing with you the specialness of Meherana. ♥



The Magnificent Treasure Box

Study Course 2016 reflections on Francis Brabazon's *Stay With God*

by Graham Stonebridge, Kelowna, British Columbia

What could I possibly say that Meher Baba hasn't already said more clearly and more concisely in His inimitable and poignant way? For me that thought is a stopper to any further creativity of the written word. But then arises the thought, "He is me and I am He!"

How could it be any other way if ALL OF THIS IS HIS DREAM? I might as well participate and enjoy the ride! So fumbling and befuddled and generally getting in my own limited-self way, I attended the treat Baba arranged in September 2016 at Meherana with dear Ward Parks and seventeen other hungry souls to ingest great gulps of Francis Brabazon's *Stay With God*, of which Ward was inspiringly willing to share his gargantuan repository of knowledge.

The subject matter *Stay With God* caught my eye, imagination and heart—after all *where else* is there to STAY? I have been imbibing Francis' poetic turns of phrase in *Stay With God* for two years, and have been awed, excited, puzzled, bewildered, overwhelmed, and generally happily uplifted as I took small early morning bites.

In 1955 at the Men's Sahavas Program in Meherabad, Baba charged Francis with the Herculean task of writing this poetic masterpiece. Knowing that Baba had this epic read to Him three times and made suggestions, corrections and additions gives it even more import! And it finally saw the published light of day in 1959.

My intention in writing a personal view or experience of *Stay With God* is to hopefully evoke interest from other Baba lovers for this magnificent treasure box. Francis' consummate knowledge of mankind's recorded history that has come down to us through the ages helps to flesh out the Souls' Journey back 'Om to God. What else is there??

The ONLY Way to travel back to the Om Point has been clearly delineated in the "writings" of the ONE: The ONE who keeps popping back to check out His Creation, give it a nudge or a gigantic kick, while inspiring with wisdom, knowledge, music, compassion, and always by being a living exemplar of LOVE.

We have also been blessed by souls who are

within a VERY wide hair's breadth of realizing themselves, but who have yet to span that cosmic gap between sainthood and the Divine Goal, the great abyss that only a Perfect One can lift the saintly seeker across.

The considerable history that Francis alludes to covers stories of our favorite saints and authors from the hoary depths of ancient Greek, Roman, Icelandic, Indo, Judaic, Tibetan, American Indian, and Arabic cultures! How can I do justice to dear Francis' inspired love for the One in this magnificent epic poem?

Knowing that Baba is "behind" this brilliant poem should be enough for us who have "seen" the deft hand of the Christ/Avatar/Rasool/Messiah/Buddha at work in our own meager daily lives, to want to imbibe and eat the whole of this epic.

Let's go back to the Treasure Box image for a minute....

1. The Treasure Box has been kindly placed before me. God knows what amazingly good karma has befallen me to be in this position.

2. Spying it right there before my face will surely generate or evoke some curiosity.

3. Will I have the strength to open this Treasure Box?

4. How do I know it's not Pandora's Box?

5. What if I don't have the clarity of vision to see what Francis is about?

Amazing, isn't it, how the monkey mind wanders all over the landscape doing everything EXCEPT the obvious.

ALL THE EVENTS IN MY LIFE ARE A REFLECTION OF WHERE I AM IN MY JOURNEY BACK HOME TO STAY WITH GOD.

A fascinating part of this "Treasure Book" that I had not grasped before Francis started to poetically rub my nose in it

is the following: The Dark Ages are a misnomer! According to my reading of Francis, they were the times when the common folk were inspired to labor and toil on gigantic mathematically inspired stone cathedrals that could only be realized by divine perspiration. We are led to believe that



Ward Parks guides the class through Brabazon's epic poem *Stay With God*.



those laboring on these spires reaching for the heavens were NOT slave labor reminiscent of the Egyptian pyramids or the temples of the Greek and Roman empires. They were the times when tradesmen produced art to glorify God's magnificence.

This time period was followed by the Renaissance, the so-called Age of Enlightenment, which Francis handily says is the glorification of the individual ego. And this is how we arrived at today where the individual ego has gone to great lengths to magnify itself and glorify its separation from the rest of the masses.

To use one of Meher Baba's metaphors to describe the soul's moving further into the wilderness of the individual ego

and its implications: We are like the arrow in God's bow, as He pulls us further and further away from the Goal till the bow string is at the breaking point. It is at this almost-breaking point that He has a whim to release us to fly Home with all the speed and potential energy logarithmically proportional to the amount He has pulled us away from the goal!

So with hair straight back and leading with the heart, we are now cruising at light speed, hands outstretched in superman/woman pose towards our Beloved. We have been delighted to witness and experience firsthand in our innumerable incarnations the full panoply of His dance, having done it all! Time to go HOME! Happy reading for all those who "Stay With God." ♥

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Meherana



Upcoming Events 2017

- ◆ Baba's Birthday – 2:30 pm, Saturday, February 25, at Baba's Cabin, Meherana.
- ◆ Spring Sahavas with Tom and Cathy Riley and Billy Goodrum – Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-29.
- ◆ 9-Day Study Course on "Meher Baba's Darshana" led by Ward Parks – September 16-24.
- ◆ New Life Sahavas – October 6-8. All are welcome to come entertain Baba.

For more information regarding Meherana, visit our website at

www.meherana.org

or email: info@meherana.org

Avatar Meher Baba Trust

Meherana participates each year in sending grants to the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust for the development and ongoing expenses of Meherabad. Donations made to Meherana are tax-deductible. For more information on how you can help the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, please contact:

Kebi Brown

Phone: (209) 742-5053

Email: kebi@meherana.org

Meherana Mission Statement

Meherana is a universal center for spiritual renewal dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba and His principles of active love and service to both the Meher Baba community and all humanity. It is intended for the enhancement and strengthening of spiritual life, without supplanting professed religious convictions or beliefs.

The center is to be made available for Sahavas, meetings, and retreats, both group and individual; and for the development and support of service projects. It is to be organized and implemented according to democratic principles.