

The Meher Beacon

Circular for the Meher Baba Sydney Community

Issue 1 – August 2017

Meher Beacon: Inaugural Welcome!

Bill Le Page



Painting: Diana Le Page

BEACON INDEED! As Beloved Baba expressed in a cable sent to me in 1966:

"LET MEHER HOUSE BE A BEACON TO ALL STRIVING TO REACH ME... BABA"

And, just as in those early days when Australia began to awaken to His Call, this newsletter is reminiscent of our first newsletter in 1968. It was called *Meher Baba News*, and Francis's cable sent to me on receiving it in India read:

"MEHER BABA NEWS MAGAZINE BEST THING YET DONE ANYWHERE. IMPATIENT TO SHOW BABA... CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CONCERNED. FRANCIS"

After having all four pages read to Him, Baba too expressed His appreciation and the names of those involved in its publication were read out to Baba as well. Now, our present love for Him that inspired this Meher Beacon will, I am sure, bring His Love and Joy to the hearts of those who offer this in service to Him as well as its readers.

Editorial

Emily Chantiri

Welcome to the first Meher Beacon Newsletter.

The idea behind the Sydney newsletter is the next logical step in bringing the Sydney and wider community even more closer together. The aim will be to share the stories and events from Meher Baba followers. In this first edition, Bill Le Page begins with a welcoming piece. Kelly Malone details her experiences while on a pilgrimage to Avila Spain. Ross Keating shares a poem, which many Sydneysiders will appreciate and much more.

We hope you will also like the name, Meher Beacon, thanks to Kevin Mossberger who came up with the name so easily.

The next newsletter will be published at the end of the year. The aim will be to publish the newsletter twice a year; however, this may change if the content from the community increases.

It is so easy to get caught up in our lives and hopefully when you receive this newsletter in your inbox, it will also serve as a small reminder to remember Baba.

The Seven Realities of Meher Baba's Teaching

EXISTENCE, LOVE, SACRIFICE, RENUNCIATION, KNOWLEDGE,
CONTROL AND SURRENDER

Meher Baba's teaching gives no importance to creed, dogma, caste or the performance of religious ceremonies and rites, but does to the UNDERSTANDING of the following seven Realities:

1. The only Real Existence is that of the One and only God Who is the Self in every (finite) self.
2. The only Real Love is the Love for this Infinity (God), which arouses an intense longing to see, know and become one with its Truth (God).
3. The only Real Sacrifice is that in which, in pursuance of this Love, all things—body, mind, position, welfare and even life itself—are sacrificed.
4. The only Real Renunciation is that which abandons, even in the midst of worldly duties, all selfish thoughts and desires.
5. The only Real Knowledge is the Knowledge that God is the inner dweller in good people and in so-called bad, in saint and in so-called sinner. This Knowledge requires you to help all equally as circumstances demand without expectation of reward, and when compelled to take part in a dispute, to act without the slightest trace of enmity or hatred; to try to make others happy with brotherly or sisterly feeling for each one; and to harm no one in thought, word or deed, not even those who harm you.
6. The only Real Control is the discipline of the senses to abstain from indulgence in low desires, which alone ensures absolute purity of character.
7. The only Real Surrender is that in which poise is undisturbed by any adverse circumstance, and the individual, amidst every kind of hardship, is resigned with perfect calm to the will of God.

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Ferry Across the Harbour

Ross Keating

There's the deep droning
of the turbo-charged
diesel engines as
the ferry ploughs across
the sun-lit waves.

There's the faint
surging sound
of classical music
swirling around the ears
of the passengers.

There's a voice of
an aspiring opera singer
over the loud speaker
declaring the café on
the lower deck is now open.

There's the smiling face
of the café attendant
echoing the orders
of his customers
in a singsongy voice.

There's a meat pie in
the stainless steel warmer
sliding like a slow
trombone as the ferry
sways from side to side.

There's the impulsive
and creative spirit
making its own playful
and passing world
out of nothing.



Warning: Do not stare at this image for more than 60 seconds prior to driving or operating heavy machinery.

Pilgrimage to Ávila

Kelly Malone

This year, during Baba's 59th Anniversary to Australia, I found myself in the Northern Hemisphere and able to get to Ávila, Spain. I stayed for a week in Hostal el Rastro, a rustic 16th century building within the walls of the old town. My room was on the third floor with a balcony that faced into the square looking directly over the statue of St John of the Cross toward St Teresa's Convent and birthplace 100 steps away.

A reflection often close to my mind during my travels to Italy and more recently, Spain, is the wealth and infrastructure built around Christ, his saints, and ultimately the Catholic Church. Being amongst the hordes of tourists at the Vatican, St Mark's Basilica in Venice, to the pilgrims in Assisi, and Ávila, I keep thinking of how fortunate I am to have come so close to Baba and his dear ones in this lifetime, aside from the unencumbered access we still have to the Samadhi and other Baba retreats in the world.



The significance of visiting these holy places has the added dimension of my own Catholic background. Baba has seen to it my timing has been such that I've caught special mass at: St Mark's Basilica Venice for an ordination; the Milan Cathedral with archbishop Angelo Scola; Santa Croce Florence on Remembrance Day with a procession of hundreds of priests including archbishop Angelo Scola; St Peter's Basilica in Rome and seeing Pope Francis on Sunday, 12 noon, for the Angelus Praying and Papal Blessing; and Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi. Most sweet was a small English speaking service in St Francis' Tomb, which is downstairs underneath the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi. Of course I caught mass in Ávila at St Teresa's Church, in German, and on my final day in English!

I went to Alba de Tormes where Saint Teresa's remains are. (Her right ring finger is in Ávila, along with some bones from St John of the Cross). I wanted to pay my respects and even though the atmosphere in Ávila is palpable, I thought her resting place would be *the place*. Need I add, Alba de Tormes meant a two hour train ride to Salamanca, followed by a local bus to get to the bus station and catch the Moga bus that would take me a further half an hour drive to Alba de Tormes. All this travel was worked out through pointing and gesturing, for Google Maps said there was no way there via public transport. 30 Euro later, and before sundown, I was relieved to be back in Ávila. Oddly, there was little atmosphere in Alba de Tormes, although I had a great feeling of peace when I sat in St Teresa's tomb which holds her pierced heart (I can confirm is pierced) and an arm separately encased above her marble coffin. Baba said, 'it is the spiritual atmosphere that you feel which gives value to the shrines of saints.'¹ Certainly this atmosphere is in Ávila, and not, as I had anticipated, where most of St Teresa's remains are.

I've had significant experiences visiting these 'nerves' of Baba's body,² and retracing some of Baba's footsteps. The hotel where Baba stayed, 'Ingles'³ is opposite the Gothic Cathedral in Ávila. Hotel Ingles became Hotel Continental, but it is presently closed for renovation.⁴ The possible place where Baba might have stood in the picture of him at the Ávila wall,⁵ was covered with scaffolding and the protective mesh had the company name, 'Barba.' (photo below)



¹ Revised Lord Meher, p 1567, © AMBPPCT <http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=1567>

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ I've gathered information on Hotel Ingles from flickr, translated from Spanish. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/avilas/4976912147/>
(continued from Pilgrimage to Ávila)

On Love, Death and Baba's Teachings

Martin Wolterding

Over the four decades that I've been a follower of Meher Baba, His teachings have firmly and subtly shaped the way I perceive the world and live my life. Baba emphasis on service to others as a way of grinding down the ego has become a sort-of habit over the years.

When I first arrived in Australia in 1988, A.I.D.S was a scourge among certain segments of the population. Intense fear of A.I.D.S was widespread among the population. People didn't know how it spread and feared they could catch the deadly disease through casual contact with those infected, their families or friends. Being informed of the risks and, through Baba teachings, not particularly afraid of death I decided to support people who were HIV+ or had AIDS.

There was, at the time, a volunteer organisation called Ankali which provided emotional support to HIV+ people and their families. Between 1990 and 1995 I worked as a member of the Blue Mountains chapter of Ankali. Simultaneously, I was an at-home dad, caring full time for my one year old son David. Through Ankali I met Tony and we quickly became friends. Tony was a kindergarten teacher who'd lost his job when he was diagnosed as HIV+. I visited Tony once a week and usually took David with me. For the two years that they knew each other Tony and David developed a deep, loving friendship, a source of fun for David and profound joy for Tony.

Over the last three months of 1994, when David was three, Tony sickened, was admitted to the hospital and finally died of an AIDS related illness. David and I followed Tony through this process. Towards the end, during our visits to St. Vincent's hospital, David watched his friend slowly change from a warm, personable, friend to a comatose, skeletal shadow. We last saw Tony three days before he died. I took David to the funeral but, despite my explanations, I was unsure whether he understood that Tony was inside the closed coffin, that he had died and that we would not see him again.

I feel it is important to demystify death with children. On several occasions over the following six months, David brought up the issue of death. At first he asked about Tony, his sickness, his death and where he is now. "Tony is with Baba who is taking care of him" I said. Later he asked whether Rosemary his mother and I were going to die. Then one warm, sunny, afternoon, he asked me whether he himself would ever die. As I looked into my son's beautiful face, his eyes beginning to swim with tears, Through Baba's love I entered an altered state. The bright afternoon took on a spectral intensity. The air seemed to hum with the wings of unseen beings. I sensed God watching and guiding my response. "This is a keystone moment" I told myself. Be absolutely honest while clearly addressing David's fears.

In answer, I gently reaffirmed that he, David, would indeed die. I then went on to repeat Baba's teachings on reincarnation. While I strove to be reassuring, that he would probably not die for "many, many years" I also tried to explain that death was not an end. Moments like that are the mile stones of parenthood, one of the crucial moments of my life and what being a parent and a Baba follower is all about.

"To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing, in the world of forms – truth, love, purity and beauty – this is the sole game which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents and attainments can, in themselves, have no lasting importance."

Avatar Meher Baba

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⁵ I tried to work out where Baba stood when circumnavigating part of the wall at Ávila. I took photos at different vantage points and compared the angle, slope of the ground, and details of the turrets to the angle, gradient, and turrets of the wall in the photograph 'Meher Baba in Ávila' on the cover of *Meher Baba Australia*, April 1986, by Anthony Zois.

Sydney News

Ward Parks Visits Sydney

Emily Chantiri



The Sydney community welcomed international writer and speaker, Ward Parks to our shores in May 2017.

Ward first heard of Avatar Meher Baba at a lecture when he was a freshman at Harvard University in 1970. In 1993, he left the academic world to become a spiritual trainee at the Avatar Meher Baba Trust in Ahmednagar, India. There he has engaged in research in Meher Baba's life and teachings and several books.

During his visit to Sydney, Ward discussed his latest book, *The Tiffin Lectures* (to be published by Sheriar Foundation).

The book provides a wonderful insight into the early years of Meher Baba and his mandali.

Ward spent more than 15 years working on the book and trawling through hundreds of original discourses to bring the book to life. *The Tiffin Lectures* take the reader back to the early 1920s – almost like a 'fly on the wall' listening to the intimate account of Baba's work while he was training his young men towards becoming mandali.

Ward recounted some of the main chapters to the Sydney group and took us back to this amazing time with Baba.

Avatar's Abode Anniversary 2017



A few piccies from the Anniversary held at Avatar's Abode...



Amrit and Dara Irani visit Sydney

Kris Wyld

Amrit and Dara are woven into my heart and into my life story with Baba. Many years ago as a wide eyed girl, I made my first pilgrimage to India. I landed at Bombay, with no idea how to reach Ahmednagar. Or even where it was. But like a moth, drawn to the flame, I thought I was making a visit to a tomb, and in my mind's eye, an old lady sweeping it. You see I knew nothing much about Meher Baba, the places where he had lived, or his Mandali, and family.

When Baba dropped his body, I was still at school, but soon after as a young teenager, I heard of Meher Baba through a boyfriend, and read Baba's books. Somehow deep within I knew I was Baba's and always had been. And some years later – only a few really – but in my young mind – an eternity – there I was in India, lost.

How I got to Ahmednagar is another story. But when I finally arrived, I was greeted by Adi K Irani, who first sent me to Meherazad to meet Mani and Eruch, who embraced me with hugs like I had never had before, warm and full, and told me 'Welcome Home'. There followed a Paradise of love time with the Mandali. Adi also sent me to stay with Viloo, and for six long glorious weeks I did. There I met Dara and Amrit. Amrit was beautiful young mother, looking after two very young boys. She was as dazzling as a diamond, she never walked if she could dance or run, and her firmness about obedience, and her willingness to obey Baba totally, was a source of inspiration.

Dara would sit on the porch, and he could still see a little, and he would play guitar and talk of Baba and Mani Auntie. He used to sing songs like 'Morning has Broken' and whenever I see him now, the song comes to my mind, and his sweet voice. Sometimes I wonder if Baba's voice was like Dara's. Dara had a big soft heart, and we used to chat as the sun was going down drinking a glass of limpani...

So the days were spent in the company of the Mandali, and around that I got to witness how a young couple, who had married at Baba's request, lived a life of love and obedience. Amrit and Dara came to visit us in Sydney in June, and once again spending time with them was a taste of heaven. Amrit and Dara told us their stories, and I got to know things I never knew, but in



Kris, Dara and Amrit at the 3 Sisters in the Blue Mountains

all the stories I see how remarkable these two souls are, and how loved they were by Baba.

That's not to say their lives have been easy; they haven't. Amrit is the daughter of Kumar, once an imprisoned Indian Freedom fighter, who prayed to 'Mr God' to release him and he was released the very next day. Some time later when he met Meher Baba, Baba told him 'I am Mr God'. Kumar loved Meher Baba very much as did the whole family so Amrit grew up in Baba's arms. She told us how she was cradled in Baba's embrace when she was born. And Dara told us that Baba told him he had selected a wife, from when she was born. Dara was the son of Adi K Irani, Junior, and Meher Baba's brother. I met Adi in London, he was a remarkable man, fiery in his love for Baba. Dara lived in Ahmednagar, before moving to London. So he is East and West in one soul.

Amrit grew up in the mountains, near Dehra Dun. Amrit spoke of how her lovely grandmother had gone blind, how she had visited Baba, and he asked her, 'Now you have seen me, what else is there to see?' and she smiled and said 'Nothing Baba.' In caring for her grandmother, Amrit had learned how to care for someone without sight. And when Dara finally went blind, she was prepared and trained in a way to help unobtrusively.

So many stories we got to hear, as both Dara and Amrit are natural storytellers. And Amrit also gave us a cooking lesson. Which was much fun. Between them they have so many lovely stories of growing up with Baba and I hope they write a book, because their stories are unique and inspirational.

The last significant act Baba did before he dropped His body was arrange their wedding. An act of Love. We felt fortunate that we got to share in that love on their visit to Sydney.

On Working for Meher Baba

excerpts from a talk given by Mani S. Irani (Meher Baba's sister) to the Meher Pilgrim Staff on June 12, 1980

Never lose sight of the purpose of your being here. You are here because of Baba. While you are working here for Baba, never forget the real work that Baba does through whatever work you do. Each of you is Baba's special work. While He gives you an opportunity to work for Him, He is working on you. He uses the work you do to do His work within you—He is quite tricky, you see!

Don't lose perspective—even though He wants you to wholeheartedly do the work entrusted to you, don't be so attached to the work itself that you find yourself failing to give what He really wants from you. Keep an eye on yourself. It's the little things that you trip over, things too small to make a show of, with no reward of glory attached, only service and the effort to please Him.

Like the jeweller who tests the metal to see if it is gold, test your acts and words with the touchstone of His pleasure, to see whether they are pleasing to Him. Remember while you are serving His lovers, you are not obliging them. You are obliged to serve Baba. Baba does not need us. Baba only loves us, with that incredible Love that He alone has to give. It is we who need Him. Your hearts are His, that is certain, but it is the mind—the mind goes on its own sweet way.

Remember that the work you do and the problems and conflicts you face are all His way of working on the mind—it is to deal with the mind that He creates these situations. That is His business.

What we have to do is to remember Him. As I said, Baba is tricky; He plays you along and when you are too pleased with yourself He pulls the rug out from under all the things you are so proud of in yourself. He will pull the rug right out from under you, but He will sustain you in His hands.

In your work for Him, there should be harmony and communication among you as a team. There should be no islands; islands are what separate the Ocean. Strive to keep the flow natural and to be of good cheer. One of my favourite Baba quotes is: "When love is present, the path to the Truth is joyous." You are all spokes in one wheel, which revolves around the hub: BABA. And all the spokes have to move rhythmically together for the wheel to keep rolling. Of course there will be moments when your relations in work and the pressures involved will snap your determination not to lose your temper, but you must become aware of it and do all you can to clear up the atmosphere again.

"Even in intoxication, keep your head on the Wine-giver's feet." So remember, in the intoxication of work, achievement, service, love, always keep your head at His Feet.

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Calendar of Events – August to December 2017

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



Meher House Anniversary 12-13 August

This year promises to give us all some special treats!

Saturday August 12 - Meher House will be open from 10am; program starts at 11am

MC: Josh Wolterding – Welcome and Intro to Anniversary

11:15-11:30am – Anniversary quote/focus – Kristine Wyld

11:30-12noon – Music and poetry - Ross & Jenny Keating

12noon - 1pm – Lunch provided by Sydney group

1pm – 1:30pm – Music and poetry - Max Reif (from USA)

1:30pm – 2:30pm – Artwork video presentation – John Parry

2:30 – 2:45pm – Prayers and Arti; 3pm – Afternoon Tea

6:30pm for a 7pm - Potluck dinner Lebanese theme at Wendy &

John Borthwick's home in Annandale; Singing Circle – Sage

Sunday August 13 - Meher House open from 10.30am; program starts at 11.30am

MC: Josh Wolterding – Welcome and Intro to Anniversary

11:30 – 12noon – Singing circle with Sage Andreasen

12:00pm - 12:30pm – Spiritual talk – Yvan Duerinckx

12:30pm - 1:30pm – Lunch provided by Sydney group

1:30pm – 2:00pm – Music - Sage Andreasen & Meher Kanigiri

2:00pm – 2:30pm - Play – The Blue Mountaineers & Sydneyite

'Volunteers'

2:30 – 2:45pm – Prayers and Arti;

3:00pm – Afternoon Tea - Toddy shop



Jeff Wolverton and Nan Wicker 3-6 October

* Tuesday 3 October (changed for Jeff and Nan) at Kris Wyld's

Growing up in a non-religious, although fun-loving, family, Jeff Wolverton was unexpectedly smitten with Baba during a meeting of the famous Monday Night Group in New York City in January, 1968. This happened during a three-minute silence at the end of the meeting when Baba appeared to him and quickly rearranged the itinerary of his life. In 1972, Kitty Davy arranged for him to move to Myrtle Beach, and in the mid-70s he became a caretaker at the Meher Center where he has worked for the last 40 years. During these years, he has had the good fortune to observe up close Baba's divine love in action with the guests who come to the Center, often witnessing how transformative His work is in the hearts of each one. Being a caretaker, one winds up doing many things, and over the years, Jeff has arranged Center programs, given music concerts with Nan Wicker, etc. His constant prayer to Baba is quite simple—help!



Monthly Meetings at Meher House in Beacon Hill are held on the last Sunday of every month. Prayers and Arti, open discussions about Baba, occasional guests, vegetarian potluck meal. Contact: Kevin Mossberger; M: 0412559402 or kevdude7@yahoo.com

August: Meher Baba and Dreams – come share your story where Baba appeared in your dreams. Host: Josh Wolterding

September: TBA

October: TBA

November: TBA

December: Holiday break



Monday Night Discourse Meetings are held on most Mondays at the home of Kris Wyld. Occasional special guests. Please contact truestories@ozemail.com.au or call 0407 481 323 for more information.



Kirtan Singings are usually held once in the middle of every month (on a Saturday) at Meher House in Beacon Hill, starting at 3pm and ending at 5pm. Occasional special guests. Please contact Sage Andreasen at sagerepeti@hotmail.com or call 0401 456 839 for more information.



AUGUST

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Drawing of Baba: Josh Wolterding

Contact Details for the Sydney Community

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Help Us Help Baba

Please see the Working Committee contact details in this newsletter if you would like to join in to help our amazing community in Sydney!
Jai Baba

Other Sources

Be sure to "Like" us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/MeherBabaSydney

See our website:
www.meherbabasydney.com

Meher Baba Melbourne:
<https://mehermelb.jimdo.com>

Avatar's Abode: www.avatarsabode.com.au

You can also subscribe to the **Meher Baba Australia** newsletter, issued quarterly (and not to be missed!), by emailing your enquiries to meherbabaaustralia@gmail.com

The Meher Beacon is a publication for the Meher Baba Sydney community or for anyone who would like to know what is happening in the Sydney group

Subscription is via email – please send an email to jkeating@tpg.com.au – note that you will also receive other updates from the Sydney group

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Content Contributions can be made by contacting emily.chantiri@bigpond.com or kevinmossberger@bigpond.com

Contribution Requests: Length of articles preferably 500 - 600 words; photos colour or black and white (in electronic format)

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