

Celebrating
STAY WITH GOD

A Three-day Immersion Seminar
on Francis Brabazon's Epic Masterpiece

Friday through Sunday, May 8th through 10th, 2015
Baba's House at Avatar's Abode

Composed at Meher Baba's directive, read out to Him several times, and incorporating Baba's own additions and corrections, *Stay with God* stands alone in the "Meher Baba library" as a presentation without parallel of who the God-Man is and the significance of His Avataric Advent. As the Master Himself said, ***Stay with God is food for the brain and a feast for the heart, second in importance only to God Speaks.*** Sweeping in what it undertakes and supremely beautiful in its poetry, Francis's masterpiece lays a major foundation for the culture of New Humanity in the age to come.

This three-day program will devote itself both to the close study of the poem in its various aspects and to the sheer enjoyment of its poetic and spiritual riches. On the first day we will read aloud (without discussion or commentary) the five "books" of Francis's poetic text, leaving out the front matter and notes. Saturday and Sunday will feature a series of talks, which introduce and explore the poem in various aspects, interspersed with musical renderings and recitations and art display.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be made available at the original Meeting Hall. We respectfully request that all beverages and snacks be consumed outside of Baba's House. You will need to make your own arrangements for lunch.

Program

Friday, May 8

Morning Session

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| 9:00 – 9:15 | Tea and coffee |
| 9:15 – 9:30 | Arti |
| 9:30 – 12:15 | Live reading of <i>Stay with God</i>, Books I–II |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | Recording of a dramatic reading of Book III with piano accompaniment |

Afternoon Session

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| 2 – 5:00 | Live reading of <i>Stay with God</i>, Books IV–V |
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Saturday, May 9

Morning Session

- 9:00 – 9:15** **Tea and coffee**
- 9:15 – 9:30** **Arti**
- 9:30 – 10:15** **Ward Parks.** “**General Introduction:** *Stay with God* as a Tool in Meher Baba’s Work for Humanity.” *SWG* provides guidance in the creation of a new world culture based on the foundation of the God-Man’s message of love and truth. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 10:15 – 11:00** **Ross Keating.** “**Situating *Stay With God*.**” A review of the biographical and historical background to *SWG*, with some comments on the poetic-artistic-cultural environment out of which Francis arose. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 11:00 – 11:15** **Tea and coffee**
- 11:15 – 11:45** **Geoff Gunther.** “**Epic Structure and Themes.**” An introduction to the central theme of *SWG* and the structure of Francis’s “argument,” with the division into five “books.” A talk with ten minutes of Q&A.
- 11:45 – 12:45** **Lorraine Brown, Suzie Imura, Steve Hein, and Amir Naderi.** “**Singing in His Silence.**” A piece of performance poetry incorporating selections from *SWG* with musical interludes tuned (and some written) by Sam Saunders, Chris Gray, and Lorraine Brown.

Afternoon Session

- 2:00 – 2:20** **Ward Parks.** On “**Book I. Meher Baba.**” An introduction to the opening biographic movement with which Francis launches his epic undertaking. Five minutes of Q&A.
- 2:20 – 2:40** **Ross Keating.** On “**Book II. The Love Song of John Kerry.**” An introduction to Francis’s very personal love expression which serves as the poem’s second movement. Five minutes of Q&A.
- 2:40 – 3:00** **Ward Parks.** On “**Book III. “God’s Speaking.”**” An introduction to Francis’s poetic retelling of the Divine Theme narrative from *God Speaks*. Five minutes of Q&A.
- 3:00 – 3:20** **Geoff Gunther.** On “**Book IV. “The Steps to His Feet.”**” An introduction to the poem’s fourth movement on the seeker’s search and approach to the Perfect Master. Five minutes of Q&A.
- 3:20–3:30** **Tea and coffee**
- 3:30 – 4:00** **Lorraine Brown, Peter Davies, Kris Heins, Wilma Pearson, Jeannette Isaacs-Young, and Ward Parks** render musically five stanzas from “**The Steps to His Feet,**” as put to tune by Sam Saunders.
- 4:00 – 4:45** **Peter Rowan.** “**The Archetypal Feminine in *Stay with God*.**” An exposition of Francis’s use of the Greek in conjunction with the Hindu-Vedic cosmology of the feminine.

Sunday, May 10

Morning Session

- 9:00 – 9:15** **Tea and coffee**
- 9:15 – 9:30** **Arti**
- 9:30 – 10:15** **Tian Gunther. “Chinese Cultural References and Backgrounds in *Stay with God*.”** An unpacking of several of Francis’s Chinese references, with their roots in Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian spiritual cosmology. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 10:15– 11:00** **John Parry. “*Stay with God* rendered through the Visual Arts.”** A talk and slide show with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 11:00 – 11:10** **Tea and coffee**
- 11:10 – 11:40** **John Isaacs-Young and Jacob Horsey.** Dramatic recitations from “**God’s Speaking**” and “**The Steps to His Feet**” with accompaniment on guitar.
- 11:40 – 12:00** **Geoff Gunther. “The Perennial Philosophy in *Stay with God*.”** Perennial philosophy provides a vision of traditional culture (grounded in sacred art) and modernity that is much in evidence in *SWG*. A talk with five minutes of Q&A.
- 12:00 – 12:45** **Michael Le Page. “The Three Heralds: Vivekananda, Inayat Khan, and Ananda Coomaraswamy.”** As the decline of modern civilization approached its nadir in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these three heralds (as *SWG* relates) helped prepare for the new Avataric Advent. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.

Afternoon Session

- 2:00 – 2:45** **Geoff Gunther. “*Stay with God* as Poetry.”** Close readings and appreciation of passages from the poem, with attention to the figurative language, rhythm and sound, and other poetic means by which Francis conveys his deeper spiritual sense. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 2:45 – 3:30** **Ross Keating. “*Stay with God* as a Guide to the Revitalization of Poetry and Art.”** An exploration of Francis’s critique of modern art in Book V with suggestions as to what a revitalization might mean. A talk with fifteen minutes of Q&A.
- 3:30 – 3:45** **Tea and coffee**
- 3:45 – 4:15** **Ward Parks. “On Overview.”** Some general comments on *SWG* and the aspects of it explored over this weekend.
- 4:15 – 5:00** **General discussion**