

DELIA DE LEON WITH MEHERA IRANI

M.P.C.
Mabad



DELIA DE LEON

*Born February 10th 1901, Colon, Panama
Died January 21st 1993, Kew, England*

ALL MANDALI SALUTE DEAREST DELIA BELOVED BABA'S EVER FAITHFUL LEYLA
AND HIS BIGGEST BLESSING TO ENGLAND NOW MERGED IN HIS OCEAN OF LOVE
DELIA SUPREMEY HAPPY IN THE MANSION OF HER LORD AVATAR MEHER BABA

MANI AND MEHERAZAD FAMILY

January 22nd, 1993

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Delia de Leon

Head of the Q

DELIA DE LEON, who has died at the age of 91, founded and ran the legendary Q Theatre, the first fringe try-out theatre, in 1924. The list of actors who appeared at the Q, near the Thames at Kew Bridge, included Vivien Leigh, Dirk Bogarde, Peggy Ashcroft, Denholm Elliot, Margaret Lockwood, Donald Sinden, Sean Connery and Roger Moore.

With her brother and sister-in-law, Delia contributed much of the original capital and worked at the theatre, as an actress (under the stage name Delia Delvina). It finally closed in 1956 after a disastrous transfer of *The Czarina* to the West End consumed most of her money and a great deal of nervous energy.

Looking for respite, Delia read a magazine article by Charles Purdom, who later became a great friend, about a man named Meher Baba. It changed her life and career.

"All my life", she wrote in her recent autobiography, *The Ocean of Love*, "I had two intense desires. The first . . . was to know and understand about God. The second was to be a great actress. Both desires ran parallel and were the pivot of my life. But the first one haunted me — I could not escape it."

This desire to know God first hand led her in 1931 to meet the Indian guru Meher Baba on his first visit to the West. Baba was far from stuffy and Delia's connection with the theatre met with his approval.

To her surprise, they met first not at a spiritual retreat but in a box at London's Coliseum Theatre at a performance of the operetta, *White Horse Inn*. She later wrote: "I was stunned. I had seen his face in my dreams: the eyes were startling in their beauty; the face seemed luminous, honey-coloured, framed by a halo of long, dark hair." Among her fellow disciples and friends were Margaret Craske, famous as a



teacher of ballet, and Kitty Davy, a staunch, spirited and intensely practical woman who ran the Meher Spiritual Centre in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for many years. Meher Baba christened them "The Frivolous Three", but though they were light-hearted, all three remained strong and steadfast in their devotion to his message of love for humanity, well into their nineties, and in Kitty's case, beyond her century.

Delia spent some time with Meher Baba in India and accompanied him on visits to Europe and the United States in the 1950s. But for most of her life she remained in Britain. During the second world war she worked helping people whose homes had been blitzed.

Later on, in the 1960s, Delia welcomed a new and eager generation of seekers into Meher Baba's orbit. Despite the period, they remained unfashionably opposed to the use of hallucinatory drugs. This new flock

included Pete Townshend of The Who, Ronnie Laine of The Faces and the songwriter Billy Nichols. Pete Townshend wrote the introduction to Delia's book.

Her "quietly undemonstrative love" and her down-to-earth nature, combining a sharp sense of humour with a comically boundless capacity to worry, endeared Delia de Leon to her many friends and her close-knit family. She remained actively interested in the world — and in music, films and the theatre — and age was never a barrier to her friendship, up to and including the day she died.

Paul Birchard

Delia de Leon, born February 10, 1901; died January 21, 1993.

TRIBUTES IN LOVING MEMORY OF DELIA DE LEON

For those who loved Delia and were fortunate enough to have her in the forefront of their lives, it is hard to imagine life without her. She was so much a part of their lives - sharing news as it happened, phoning constantly to keep in touch, showing her love, gratitude and concern for others, even in the face of her own hardship.

It would be all too easy to look back on Delia's long life and to have the reflection distorted by her well known idiosyncrasies. She had her own unique way about her, and life as a close friend was never dull. But the abiding impression of Delia, if we were honest and patient enough to see beyond the superficial distractions, was of her deep and true love for others, her courage and loyalty, her steadfastness and intuitive wisdom, and above all her unwavering love - after a lifetime of selfless service - for her Beloved Meher Baba.

Delia gave up many aspects of the world into which she had been born, in order to follow Baba. Of course, Delia herself felt she sacrificed nothing. On the contrary, she gained immeasurably, and her life changed completely after that first meeting with Baba at the performance of 'The White Horse Inn' 60 years ago. Her faith in Him was absolute, and despite the difficulties Baba sometimes placed in front of her, she was true in her resolve to follow His wish to lead the English group, as the last chairman appointed by Him.

It might be easy to forget that Delia had already been with Baba for nearly 40 years when there came, in the late 60s, a 'sudden influx of young people', as she wrote in her book. This heralded a new period of service in Delia's life and those who met her then, and whose lives she influenced, know the vitality and enthusiasm she brought to those early meetings. Her concern for the English Baba community was profound, and her guidance to the Association was a gift from Baba which has now sadly passed.

As the years went by and she became physically more frail, having to endure hardships with her living situation, she still continued to hold the torch for the English group. As Mani says in her cable, Delia was indeed Baba's 'biggest blessing to England.' With Delia's passing comes the end of an era.

Delia was famous for her worrying - it was legendary. Most often though, her worries were for others, and however distracted she may have seemed by her own problems, her care and concern for those she loved never diminished.

Delia was a light in our lives, a glorious wonderful example to us all. To those who loved her, she gave us comfort just by being there. Now she has gone, and we should take comfort knowing that, just as she wished to be cremated wrapped in Beloved Baba's sadra, she is in fact wrapped in His Loving Embrace for all time.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

24 January 1993 Shireen Bonner

Delia in her last weeks did not feel happy, she felt anxious and had a bad chest which made her cough a lot. By Baba's Grace Mathew Price arrived from America to be with her and this made her very happy.

I visited her late Tuesday morning, Pat her niece was there, I went out to buy Delia some soup and when I returned Pat had left but Joan, a lovely lady who had been coming in for the last year to give the room an extra clean and to massage Delia, had arrived. Delia seemed very restless and was coughing, but totally aware and came out with very clear instructions. I felt very much that I wanted to massage her feet but so many people kept coming in and out with various things, she was trying to sit up more on her pillows and hurt her lower ankle and asked me to stroke it, so I took off her slipper and rubbed her ankle, she said it felt much better.

She suddenly said you must get your husband to sing Ocean of Love for me. Mathew arrived and I took my leave of Delia, as always she said, "Thank you for coming." I went back to touch her arm, driving home I felt sad that she was ill and restless. On Wednesday morning I telephoned and she sounded brighter. Then I went to change my airline tickets for a second time, we had planned as a family to visit India for Christmas, seeing Biddu's mother, and then I was to stay on and visit Meherabad, but with all the trouble at that time we had to cancel. I had re-booked for January 26th so as to be there for Amartithi, unfortunately the trouble flared up again in Bombay and Biddu was not keen for me to go, especially as the 26th is Republican Day, so again I re-booked for the 31st.

On Thursday Marion Saunders telephoned to say Delia had passed away, I rushed out of the house and despite it being rush hour got to Abbeyfield in twenty minutes, Marion and Alfred were there with Stella, Ralph and Libby Hernandez who were on their way to India. We all went up to Delia's room, the windows were wide open and the wind was blowing the curtains, as I entered the room my first thought was how light it was, that they must have painted the room, then I realised that was impossible. There was for me the most incredible calm and peace almost a dream-like quality, I felt Delia had just flown out the window. We stood beside her and said her favourite prayer 'Beloved God' and the Parvardigar prayer, after a while the others left to go to the Centre where Ralph was to tell of his meetings with Baba. I opened Delia's box of Baba quotes and took one, it said, "I do not want anything else from you but the gift of your obedience, give me that and you will free yourself from the bondage of ignorance". It fitted so well to Delia's last meeting with me, she had me running up and down with the soup, it wasn't hot enough it was in a bowl and should be in a mug, when it was changed to a mug, it was the wrong mug, then go and get the original mug from the kitchen, all this while having fits of coughing and trying to get herself comfortable. I just couldn't fathom why it was so important. But of course it was, it was just all perfect, she brought out in each of us just what was needed, frustration, humour, doubt, anger, tenacity, patience, tolerance, compassion, peace, understanding, obedience, but mostly love, she brought it all to the surface and we just went back for more, she stirred all our emotions, kept in touch with us constantly, always cared about our families and lives.

That last day she must have spoken to so many people, Richard Casey had called from the airport on his way to America, Paul Birchard came to London that day from Scotland and spent lunchtime with her and sang 'Begine the Beguine' to her. Pat her niece had been there in the morning, Joan had given her a massage in the afternoon, her sister-in-law had spoken to her around 5pm, and before 6pm Hildi Halpen had phoned. Dr Kirkbridge who was holding Delia's hand at 6.30pm said it was very peaceful.

During the following days I saw Baba's hand moving. Delia's family were very gracious, they felt that Delia would not like a conventional funeral and allowed the Baba Group to help arrange the details. So many people were going through their own emotions with Delia and Baba, could we have done more, visited more, could we have helped her to live longer. But that would be taking Meher Baba out of Delia's whole situation, her life and her death, all went according to Baba's perfect timing.

Her funeral was wonderful, her nephew, Michael de Leon, said it was the best he had ever been to. So many people turned up, all her favourites got together, they performed, they cried, they spoke, they mourned but most of all they paid tribute to Delia's faith and love for Meher Baba. The sun even came out for a few minutes whilst we sang Begine the Beguine, the floral tributes and messages added to a very special occasion.

Afterwards Delia's family and Barbara Frieji, following Delia's wishes, gave a party for Delia's friends, both well attended. At Barbara's Michael da Costa sang the song that he had finished on the very day that Delia passed on. For me Baba's timing was perfect, my ticket having been changed and re-booked for the 31st, the message to take Delia's ashes to Meherabad instead of scattering them in Kew Gardens as originally planned, and then the thought 'Oh yes Delia, you travelled when no other Western woman did, to Baba's Samadhi exactly twenty four years earlier to your Beloved, the one you never strayed from, the one you always remained faithful to until the very end. How lucky we were to have you here, how much I shall miss you. JAI BABA

Suzie Biddu

I saw Delia the Monday before she died, and I was shocked. When I went into her room she was curled up on her side sleeping lightly. I had never seen her this ill. She woke immediately, but was clearly distressed. She kept saying 'What shall I do?' It was as if she didn't know how to get better. And there was nothing I could do. She hadn't eaten anything for several days, and had to be constantly encouraged to sit up and drink. She asked me to say Baba's Prayer - 'Beloved God, help us all...', and we said it together several times that evening, also the Master's Prayer and Prayer of Repentance. The night nurse came and took her temperature again - 102 degrees F. - but it kept fluctuating. She had some soluble aspirin and her temperature dropped to below normal. She told me that she was near the end. Even though I rationalised this - it could be a matter of months - I was very frightened she was going to die.

When I called again the next morning, she seemed a little stronger, but was still having a lot of difficulty breathing and constantly coughing up mucous, which seemed to be accompanied by blood. It was difficult for her to get comfortable. I saw her again that evening, her temperature was back up to 104, the staff in the home were clearly worried about her. They asked me to let them know when I left so someone could come and be with her.

Delia's health had been declining steadily for several years, but this seemed of a different order. In the past few years, almost all her faculties had been taken from her. Her hearing relied upon intuition to an almost laughable degree. Her sight was nearly gone in one eye and little better in the other. Even her teeth were crumbling, much to her disgust. She had two huge hernias which made it difficult for her to eat, or even to go out. Her memory wasn't as good as it had been, but throughout her mind remained clear and her judgement as sound as ever.

Only her body was letting her down.

Not that Delia suffered in silence. She contrasted her plight longingly with that of Kitty and Margaret, spending their last years 'in the lap of luxury'. But she would never contemplate leaving England. This was where Baba had put her and this was where she would stay. And though she would complain bitterly about the imperfections of people in the home, she never allowed her friends to do anything about it, or remonstrate in any way. The result was, we could do very little in concrete ways. She loved flowers, fruit, the telephone, but she wasn't really interested in changing her situation. So I was left with a constant feeling of frustration and inadequacy, not knowing what to do to make her happier. I realise now that her gift to us was to let us share in her frustrations and worries. Actually, of course, all she ever wanted from us anyway was love.



Baba travelling incognito through Lugano in 1932 with (l to r) Minta, Delia de Leon and Margaret Craske. His mandali, Chanji and Abdul Ghani are standing behind Baba.

During that week I kept in touch by phone and she seemed to be getting a little stronger. So much so that on the Thursday that she died, I didn't phone her till the evening - and found she had died five minutes earlier. There were no Baba friends with her when she died. Her doctor, who was fond of her, was there, as were two people from the home, who said she slipped away quickly and easily, and had a young, happy smile on her face.

I was very lucky. I shouldn't have been in England at all that week, but at home in Texas. Instead, I'd caught as bad a dose of flu as I've had in twenty years, so had postponed my trip a week. It was a real gift to me. Arrangements for the funeral were made by Michael de Leon, Delia's nephew, and he did a wonderful job. He had only one criterion: what would Delia have wanted? She had given him various instructions and talked to friends during the last few years, so we built on that. The result was something I think Delia would have loved.

It was informal. There was a good blend of words and music: Pete Townshend playing the Parvardigar prayer would have absolutely delighted her. There was no flummery, it was all heart felt. Baba lovers came from all over England, Noe came from Dallas. Frankly, it was a better send off than I would ever have believed possible. There were two gatherings afterwards: one at Delia's niece's house in Kew, one at Barbara Freije's house. Some Baba lovers went to the de Leons, Michael and his wife Ann came later to Barbara's. For me, the funeral was an ordeal to be overcome, and the gathering at Barbara's was a great comfort. It was great to have all Delia's friends around, from the newest, to the original four who had burst into a Poetry Society meeting in the late 60s and demanded 'Is this the Baba set-up?' Mike da Costa sang a beautiful song he'd composed for Delia's birthday in February, and there was a showing of Pete's film Delia, with Delia looking wonderful. It's strange to think, but actually it was a wonderful day. So many of Delia's friends, both Baba lovers and family, there was a tremendous sense of love and support. As the preparations took shape, there was a growing feeling that Baba was saying, 'This is my darling, faithful Leyla: Let it be done perfectly.' And so it was. And now there is a strange vacuum. I can't really believe, despite the evidence, that she's gone. I just wish she'd hurry up and come back.

Mathew Price

My sweet friend is no more. She left ever so swiftly. Oh, of course she had warned me many times lately that she was tired - and wanted to go - and yes, I know I should rejoice for her, she is now with the only One she ever wanted. But I already miss her terribly, I already count all the sweet moments I miss so much.

The phone will not ring any more at any odd hours, nor just at that very moment when, returning from a trip abroad, and putting down my suitcase, I would hear her saying in her imperative voice: 'Let's say the little prayer.'

I will not be sitting any more in her overheated little room every Saturday afternoon, holding hands, writing letters, peeling mangoes, complaining together about the ruthless world, reciting Meher Baba's prayers, looking at her eating the soup I had prepared, making me feel it was her only decent food in a long time, making me feel my visit was the only one in a long time, even if I knew she had other caring visitors. It was her special talent to make one feel quite unique, needed, loved.

This last year especially I knew she was exhausted by her various physical pains, knew she had enough of a world where she could find no satisfaction ever, because she had been burned long ago by the Beauty of Love. But she stayed because of her loving concern for us, the 'English Baba group', constantly calling each and every one, always in touch with what was happening at the Centre, keeping the thread of Baba's Love from heart to heart. Now, we will have to do it without her. Jai Baba.

Anne-Marie Collette 21 January 1993

Our Lord chose this century to manifest in human attire... selecting old familiar friends, the closest of close ones, to be blessed in such a unique fashion with His Divine companionship... For almost 92 years of this century, Delia de Leon was one of the chosen few, along with other western and eastern close ones...

'Once, a charming, sweet girl fell madly in love with the Lord of the Universe and thought she meant nothing to Him. But one day she found out how much He cared for her, and then became happy for ever.'...

At last Delia is out of the Q at Kew, it certainly seemed to me that at Mortlake crematorium, the seeds of the new humanity had sprouted in the light of that bright, fresh new morning, filling hearts present with joy and remembrance, melting any ego idealistic ambition along with the frost. One certainly felt an uplifting presence amongst the backdrop of beautiful wreaths of spring flowers, pews full of heartily singing lovers, and Delia's coffin draped by her Beloved's flag. ...

Now, as always, is surely the time to follow the shining example of Beloved Baba's Leyla, the ever faithful one, and hold on tight to His Damaan, until the very end. AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!

John Barker



HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN ME

If you have rock-like faith in God and flame-like love for Him, nothing in this world will affect you. Misery will not trouble you, flattery will not touch you, happiness will not humour you. Such faith and love will cause you to rise above the imaginary phenomenon and make you understand that God alone is real.

Trust God completely and He will solve all your difficulties. Faithfully leave everything to Him and

He will see to everything. Love God sincerely and He will reveal Himself to you. This love needs no ceremonies and show. Your heart must love so that even your mind is not aware of it.

Let nothing shake your faith in Me, and all your bindings will be shaken off. Once you open your wings to fly, you must fly straight like the swan. Do not flit from tree to tree like the sparrow, or many things will distract you on the way.

On the several days since Delia's death I have thought of her many times, most often of course remembering the many occasions on which we had been together working on projects. These go back to 1954 when Will and Mary Backett, Charles Purdom and Mollie and Douglas Eve were the constant members of the group who, with Delia nurtured the spreading of Baba's word in this part of the world, the Hopkinson's being absent in Africa at that time. I remember them as the most extraordinarily endowed as well as highly explosive groups I have ever known.

It was also at that time that four or five young people began to test the water at the monthly Baba meetings in London. They seemed especially drawn to Delia, and soon I found myself participating in meetings with an increasing number of them either in Delia's flat or that of the MacInnerys. The conversation centered on Baba and was always lively, and afterwards there was always cold meats and salad. Delia could always be depended on for expertly hard-boiled eggs!

Everyone pretty well knows the history from there: Pete Townshend's offering the use of his apartment on Wardour Street, the start of weekly Discourse groups, the eventual transfer to Karen Townshend's flat in Ecclestone Square and the firm establishment of a new generation of seekers in Baba's love.

Through the years my own participation was complicated somewhat by two changes of residence for my profession, but contact with London and the group continued in a very regular manner. It had been sad to lose Mary and then Will, followed by Douglas Eve and then Charles Purdom. But the return of Tom and Dorothy Hopkinson gave the additional vital support that was clearly included in Baba's plans.

London has been a wonderful example of how the Avatar provides the bridges necessary to pass from one generation to the next. He could not be more indulgent than He has been in London, even to giving Delia a life span of at least twenty years beyond what I had ever imagined her rather fragile body would support.

A final personal note. I think I have had some of the toughest personal situations of my life with Delia. She was not easy. But always one thing carried the day for me: Delia's total love and devotion to Baba. I found myself always, finally, loving and respecting Delia for this great grace she manifested.

With warmest memories in His Love,

Don Stevens

Delia, as aptly described by Mani and the Meherzad family, was indeed Baba's biggest blessing to our nation.

She gave herself and all she possessed in the service of her Beloved Master. In return she became a living symbol of His Presence among us and we shall all miss her.

Our loss is her gain however, for she is at last happy and fulfilled in her Beloved Meher Baba. Let us thank Him for giving her to us, sending at the same time all our love - to her in Him - Meher Baba.

Joyce Bird.

Delia was a jewel in Baba's necklace of Western disciples, a touchstone to Baba for all who met her.

In my wallet I still have a 'Don't Worry Be Happy' card from Delia's Box, with a quotation pasted on the back. It always lightens my heart to recall that joyful 'game' we used to play at her lovely meetings and recall the many other Baba occasions inspired by her.

David Hastilow

On His last visit to London in July 1956, Baba reorganised the British group and has always been the Association's President, and remained so even when, at the time of the New Life, he renounced all other positions and titles.

Delia was our Chairman and then Vice President and the Association's motivating spirit for many years. She was my inspiration during my term of office as Chairman and, I am sure, will continue to guide our Chairman Susie Biddu as well.

I treasure two things from Delia in particular. One is an extract from Hafiz (Delia's favourite poet) which Delia was fond of quoting:

"He who would tread my path
The thorn of grief will find:
What pilgrim has in fear of this
His quest resigned?
Thou knowest well he who attains
True perfect bliss
Is he who upon whose soul
Grief, like a lamp, has shined."

The other is the quotation from Baba typed on the back of a "Don't Worry, Be Happy" card which Delia gave me:

"God exists. If you are convinced of God's existence then
it rests with you to seek Him to see Him to realize Him."

Delia - your joy, your eternal worrying and, above all, your love will always be with us.

Laurie Kaye

Tribute to Beloved Baba's Leyla:

Our deepest recollection of Delia will always be her one-pointedness - the 100% focus on her Beloved every day of those 62 years. Truly she lived Baba's life of Love and Truth and truly many knew His love through her.

And what a beautiful quality, to be able to laugh at oneself! As you well know Delia enjoyed a good joke at her own expense more than anyone else. And that quiet sweet smile!

A memory: One day in 1958 she literally pulled me across Baba's bridge towards the Guest House, saying: "Come and see us!" (Anita, Margaret and Delia were staying there during the Sahavas.) As we reached the top of the steps, just before entering the compound, we saw the Beloved seated there. Absolutely still. Only Elizabeth and Kitty were with Him. He remained silent and motionless for what seemed a long time. He then clapped His hands and Adi and Eruch came swiftly. Off he went with Elizabeth driving the car.

I will always cherish those precious unforgettable moments when Baba appeared to be engaged in His Universal Work. The expression on dearest Delia's face is with me today as though it happened this morning. She was radiant - frozen in motion like a lovely startled deer; dazed at His Beauty and His Divine Love. My heart said, this is the same awe, wonderment and timeless recognition that the Ancient One gave to His faithful one that evening at "The White Horse Inn" play in London, 1931.

How we all miss the Frivolous Three. How blessed we all are to have known their sweet love, ever present humour, steadfast discipleship.

Thank you, Baba, thank you.
With love in Baba,

Jane Barry Haynes

Also love from each worker at Baba's Center, Myrtle Beach, including the Directors.



THE FRIVOLOUS THREE

For Delia

The line of yogis, walis, saints
and a million would-be mystics
stretches towards eternity
mere po-faced, dour statistics.
Such as them endure forever
but I doubt that we will ever
see another bunch so gay and clever
as Baba's Frivolous Three!

Kitty, Margaret and Delia
had spontaneity to laugh aloud
a cumulative cloud of joy
by Meher Baba powered:
they introduced the ashram
to the songs of Noel Coward.

As meditation hour limped by
in silent denial of self,
Their opened eyes saw Baba
lift a volume from the shelf.
All Quiet on the Western Front!
The urge to laugh they had to blunt
As Baba twinkled all the while
preferring love and joy and smiles
to meditation time severe.

Movies for the three there were,
and ice cream too, my dear!
Kitty's flavour a mystery
but Delia's and Margaret's are history:
'Mango was for Margaret,
and coconut for me!'

Baba named them The Frivolous Three
but then went on to say:
Watch out about the frivolous,
but it's alright to be gay.'

And gay and happy they remained
and steadfast too,
while others strained
were serious
and sometimes pained
by life, and Baba's orders
to the point where many had to leave.

But Delia, Kitty, Margaret
lived out the meaning of a skit
they wrote for Him and acted out,
as ancient females who had to shout
in order to be heard;
listening out for Baba's word
searching for the 'perfect boy.'
(Norina, Mabel, Anita too
performed for Baba at the Q
in distant 1932!)
When faithful Leyla, longest to grieve
stoutly declared:
'I still believe!'

My darling, though it's hard to leave you,
my heart of hearts can now conceive you
everywhere - both here and there -
enraptured
with your captured
Lord Meher!

Paul Birchard

What more fitting way of sending our love and rejoicing at her happy re-union with Beloved Baba than the service arranged by her family and her Baba friends. Michael de Leon, Delia's nephew, welcomed us all and explained with great understanding how the the service had been agreed, including Delia's wishes.

A hundred and twenty family and friends filled the chapel at Mortlake Crematorium, everyone being given a rose, an order of service and a prayer sheet, containing Baba's prayers, on arrival. Suzie Biddu read the telegram from the Mandali and an extract from Delia's book. Paul Birchard with guitar, Billy Nicholls and Malcolm Harrison began by singing and encouraging everyone to join in 'He's got the whole world in His Hands' ending with 'He's got Delia de Leon in His Hands', which beautifully set the happy tone.

Mathew Price read 'How To Love God', Laurie Kaye lead us all in reading the 23rd Psalm. Pete Townsend sang his setting of the Parvardigar Prayer, which Delia loved so well. Paul, Malcolm and Billy sang 'Begine the Beguine, followed by Barbara Frieji reading a tribute sent by Shireen Bonner, now in New Mexico. Annie Nicholls read those hauntingly true words 'I said to the Man who stood at the gate'.

Michael de Leon read the lovely and telling verses from I Corinthians Chapter 13, followed by time for meditation and silent prayer. The whole gathering singing 'Amazing Grace' as they filed past Delia's flower bedecked coffin to place their rose.

This was quite the most moving and loving farewell I have ever seen. Delia who so enjoyed such programmes would have been delighted at the atmosphere of peaceful happy acceptance.

Dear Delia, our loving remembrances are with you always. Jai Baba.

Ann Eve

Dear Delia

My tears and sorrow are so selfish because I know that you are now with Him.... Avatar Meher Baba, our Beloved. I know that you are now released from your frail and tired body and have finally reached your Ultimate Goal, you have concluded your incredible journey.

Delia, my tears are selfish because I feel so alone. You were the one who brought Baba so close to me. You were the one whom I sought out in order to feel the burn of Baba's love which shone through you so pure, so powerfully clear and bright. It was you to whom I would go when I was feeling lost and in need of strength. In my darkest moments I went to you in order to be near to Baba.

Delia, my tears are selfish because I will miss you so terribly. Your gossip, your fretfulness, your sense of fun, your sense of occasion, your bossiness - your style - your INDOMITABLE SPIRIT.

And Delia, I thank you for the encouragement you gave me, as you did to so many of us struggling to make sense of our lives in a world of uncertainty and shifting values. Your practical wisdom, and intensely critical eye, your concern for world affairs, your appreciation of the arts - and your very 'down-to-earth' and real love for Baba - all this and so much more, I will remember.

In Baba's Love.

Cari Hamlett

I visited Delia just a few days before she left us, she was feeling very low, she was in great discomfort from her physical problems and also felt that all her dear friends had gone from her, especially Kitty, Margaret, Tom Hopkinson and Mollie Eve. I read to her from 'Meher Baba Calling' and we said the prayers which comforted her.

Later that evening she expressed her concern about the future of the Association and UK Baba lovers, she said, "They mustn't let the heart go out of it, they must keep together, meet together and hold fast to Baba's daaman." She also said, "Remind them when they meet together Baba is with them."

Delia's life's work for Baba had been keeping the Association, in its many forms, going through whatever difficulties arose. Delia loved the big Sahavas gatherings but she also enjoyed smaller more intimate gatherings like the 'Tuesday Evenings' held in her home for many years. As long as I can remember she kept in touch with everyone by letter or telephone, hundreds of 'very hard to read' letters. In return she received hundreds of letters keeping her in touch with everyone's lives.

Perhaps the greatest tribute we can offer Delia is to do our individual best to continue her work, to meet together, not just at the Centre or Sahavas but in our homes, to write the letter we keep putting off and most of all keep a tight hold on Baba's daaman.

Jai Baba.

Maxine Summers

After leaving the Sahavas I had a long drive to Scotland, and found myself thinking a lot about Delia. I remembered once asking her at the first Norwich Sahavas if, like other Mandali have said, she did not miss Baba because He is so much more present all the time now. "No" she replied immediately, and her eyes misted over, "it has never been the same. I miss Him terribly." It was then that it struck me - the enormity of Delia's love for Baba. Here was someone, who, as a young woman, fell desperately in love with the God-Man and has remained in that state of Grace all her life, loving Him with a deep longing that does not fall far short of Mehera's itself. So much love!

As I drove through the night it came to me that Delia's name will literally become immortal! In reincarnations to come we shall hear her name, Delia de Leon, her love and devotion to Meher Baba and what she did to keep the flame of His Love burning in England for all these years will be a legend. And then I thought how easy it is to forget, when faced with her shyness and humility, her fussing and worrying, the wonder of her love for our Beloved; easy to take for granted the treasure we have in our midst.

The more I thought about Delia the more I wished I could rewind the tape and say all of this in her presence at the Sahavas. Having since read her book (Ocean of Love) with those amazingly intimate love letters from Baba I am even more confirmed in what I was feeling and thinking, and I knew that if I could not speak it, at least I had to try and write it. So here I am, and now let me say directly to you, Delia;

We salute you and your profound love for Beloved Meher Baba. And Delia, let me presume and say wholeheartedly for all of us in Britain - We love you!

May we never forget.

Jai Baba.

Michael Da Costa

(Reprinted from the July 1991 Newsletter at Michael's request.)