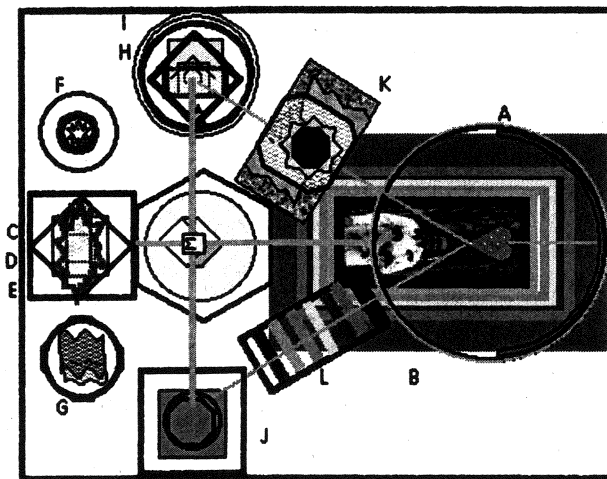


The Place of Pilgrimage

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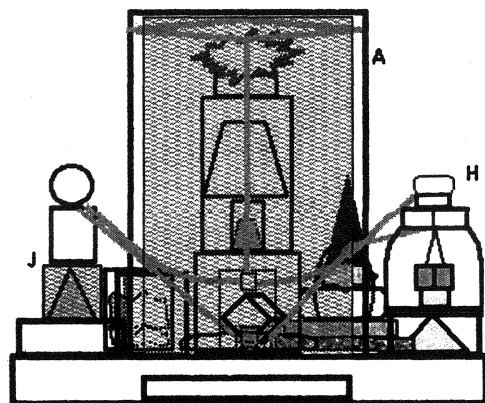
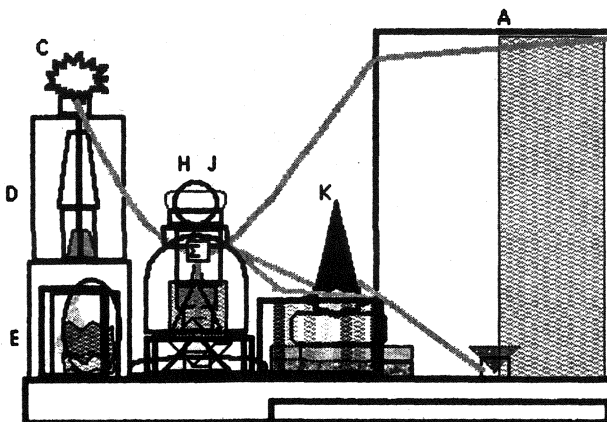
1. The Place of Pilgrimage—Under Construction.

This assembly, or conceptual artwork, or performance, is an abstract and personal representation of Upper Meherabad (near Ahmednagar, India) in the area of Meher Baba's Samadhi. This project was created and presented for the spring 2004 *Poetics of Place Arts Festival* at the University of San Francisco, organized by Tracy Seeley, Professor of English and USF NEH Chair. The piece incorporates multiple geometric arrangements and references to many religious traditions, typically via numbers significant to them. Numbers featured include 1–10, 12, 17, and 19. (What, no 11?) Geometric elements include polygons, polyhedra, circles, helices, catenaries, cylinders, and progressions, projections, reflections, revolutions.



The Place of Pilgrimage —Under Construction

- A. Central structure: Avatar Meher Baba's samadhi/tomb
- B. Photo of Meher Baba at a cave on Mt. Abu
- C. Crystal from Upper Meherabad
- D. Gifts of Ganesha, the remover of obstacles
- E. The white horse, the mount of the Kalki Avatar
- F. Twin-coiled 10-fold creative symmetry of DNA in an egg
- G. Ribbons from tombs of two Khulabad Sufi perfect masters
- H. Ivory carving of plow aligning the universe, as seen at Tomb
- I. The eternal flame of Zoroaster above rose-quartz pyramid
- J. Granite-clad Bahubali, but also Earth-bound me, with snail vehicle
- K. Granite, fiber & frit mountain = major sanskaric residue
- L. 7-colored flag deck of sanskaras, offered at His feet with K.
- M. "I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string." —Meher Baba



2. Poetics of the Place of Pilgrimage.

This word art represents a play on pi and π (or Π) that is appropriate for both the *Place of Pilgrimage* and the *Poetics of Place*. Poetics derives from the Greek *poiesis* (making) written at the bottom. The shape also suggests Σ . These two mathematical symbols have a complementary orthogonality: Σ usually means sum or addition, and Π product or multiplication. But they have other similar uses. If Π connotes intersection, the Σ means union. If Π connotes universal truth, then Σ means existential truth. More importantly, they are often used in combination. In addition, the figure stresses image and images, using the red, green, blue of computer displays, with the remaining colors of Meher Baba's seven-striped flag forming the border. The picture theme is also echoed by the emphasized PI..IMAGE P.ICS. The prose poem unites the works.

The Place of Pilgrimage

Let us set some geometry.
 There is the One. That's all.
 Should I have said theology?
 Think of it as a goal. Call it Perfection.
 Can we achieve it? Can it be reached?
 Metrics differ.
 Some claim it can be finitely approximated;
 others think of approach without convergence.
 Mystics use a discrete metric
 and know that everyone makes that journey.

Pilgrimage is both a step and a trial run,
 a journey forward in space and back in time,
 a chance to stand in place and bow in heart.
 To what? For what? No expectation.
 Believe it ... no expectation.

The place of pilgrimage is a puzzle.
 Why go somewhere seeking an inner goal?
 Because the One was there.
 Fragrance remains, intoxicating fragrance.
 Is there.

The way to the end is carved through one's own past.
 Vast dark passionate granite foots the bill.
 Birds sharpen beaks on a mountain of fiber and frit.
 A plow aligns the looker as far as the whole universe.
 The lamp enclosed in glass shines as a star in crystal.
 Pilgrimage attunes the higher senses
 so that the feet keep moving on, moving on,
 despite the weight.

It is the light, his light, her light,
 that makes it worth it.

