

**GLIMPSES OF THE GOD-MAN  
MEHER BABA  
Volume IV  
(February - December 1953)**

By

Bal Natu

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***GLIMPSES* of the **GOD-MAN**  
**MEHER BABA****



*Meher Baba at Dehra Dun.*

***GLIMPSES***  
*of the*  
***GOD-MAN***  
***MEHER BABA***

VOLUME IV  
(FEBRUARY-DECEMBER 1953)

**BAL NATU**

Sheriar Press

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*To the Loving  
and Abiding Presence  
of the God-Man,  
Meher Baba*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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When this work was completed, I requested the chairman of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust to accept *Glimpses of the GodMan, Meher Baba*, Vol. IV (February to December 1953) as an unconditional offering in Meher Baba's love for the Trust. My sincere thanks to the chairman for accepting this book and to Sheriar Press, Inc., U.S.A. for publishing it.

I end, once again, with an overwhelming sense of deep gratitude and all praise for Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, who is the source of inspiration for any work connected with His name and message of truth, including *Glimpses*, Vol. IV.

Bal Natu

31st January, 1983  
Meherazad

## PREFACE

When God, out of His unconditional love and unbounded compassion, assumes a human form, He is known as the Avatar — the God-Man. He lives amongst men to gracefully unveil the timeless divinity in all hearts — His own innumerable selves.

The Formless God gets Himself "bound in form" as the Avatar to make humanity aware of its divine heritage — the eternal divinity latent within each heart. The Avatar's life is divine perfection expressed in human terms, beckoning one and all to life everlasting. On his own, man often falters and gets lost on the path, so the God-Man, in whom the personal and impersonal aspects of God are perfectly blended, has to come and show the way.

In July 1939, Meher Baba dictated a discourse on Perfection,<sup>1</sup> a part of which is given below:

Perfection does not belong to God as God, nor does it belong to man as man. We get perfection when man becomes God or God becomes<sup>2</sup> man. The finite being who is conscious of his being finite is obviously short of perfection, but when he is conscious of being one with the Infinite, he is perfect. . . God's perfection is revealed only when He manifests Himself as man. The conscious descent<sup>3</sup> of God into the limited form of man is known as Avatar .

Thus we have perfection when the finite transcends its limits and realizes its Infinity or when the Infinite gives up its supposed aloofness and becomes Man. In both cases the finite and the Infinite do not stand outside each other. When there is a happy and conscious blending of the finite and the Infinite, we have perfection.

In the 1960's, one day while sitting with His *mandali*, Baba casually conveyed a sentence in Hindi: "*Jisko pata laga usaka pata kisiko na laga.*" This means: "The One who has found

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<sup>1</sup> Meher Baba, *Discourses*, Vol. I, pp. 119-129.

<sup>2</sup> For details see: Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, (1973) pp. 267-269.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162

## PREFACE

Himself cannot be fathomed or understood by the rest of men.” If this was said about the life of a God-realized person (man-become-God), how much more profound and fathomless must be the life of the Avatar, (God-become-man), which continuously reveals supreme perfection! The following lines of an enlightened Sufi, translated into English, give some inkling of the perfect blending of humanity and divinity which is found in the life of the Avatar:

The clearness of the Wine and the transparency of the  
goblet  
Have perfectly merged in each other.  
Now, as it were, it is all goblet and no Wine!  
Or all Wine and no goblet!

The men of the world see only the goblet; the *masts* (the God-intoxicated souls of the fifth and sixth planes of consciousness) are intoxicated by the Wine. The recipients of the Avatar's grace are privileged to savor the Wine as well as delight in the perfectly transparent goblet; in fact, for them the goblet and the Wine are one. But, the recurring divine irony is that for many, the goblet — the human form of the Avatar — distracts them from receiving the Wine, the divine love and beauty of His Avatarhood, that He pours through His presence on earth.

For the benefit of those who are not receptive to the Avatar's inner call, He — in this Age Meher Baba — unequivocally states:

I am the Ancient One. Come all unto Me.  
Don't worry; I am with you.  
Love Me; I am the Way and the Goal.

These simple, yet direct statements bear the unmistakable stamp of His most unassuming authority, and the profundity with which He invests these words speaks directly to the hearts of some and, for them, no other proof of His divinity is needed.

For a good number of people, however, the Avatar's life and activities, being unconventional, perplex, even seem irrational. This is because their minds function in the domain of time, while the Avatar is beyond it. Being established in eternity,

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the Avatar lovingly reaches out to those who are drowning in the waves of time, but mankind misunderstands and misses Him while He is in their midst. The Avatar's life will ever remain a mystery to humanity for it manifests that perfection which is humanly divine and divinely human.

Francis Brabazon, Meher Baba's disciple and a great poet, concluded one of his books with the following lines<sup>3</sup> in praise of Avatar Meher Baba:

How glorious you are as Man; how helpless as God.  
So helpless that you could not hide your Godhood  
Even behind the walls of pain.  
How very Man you are.  
How absolutely God.

Some aspects and activities of Meher Baba's life were so human that people wondered how to relate these to His divinity. He played games, enjoyed picnics, went to the movies, appreciated the arts (painting, dancing, music, etc.) and joked with His people. Of course, He also observed silence, helped the poor, served the lepers and fasted for long periods. For months, He would be in seclusion, and on certain days He would hold public *darshan* for thousands and at other times He would give *sahavas* to His close ones.

But all of Meher Baba's activities, both external and internal, were the channels through which He passed on His love to all and silently shared the sufferings of mankind.

In one of His messages, dictated in 1937, Meher Baba stated:<sup>4</sup>

Divinity is not devoid of humanity. The Infinite embraces all expressions of life. Spirituality does not mean renunciation of worldly activities. It means the internal renunciation of mundane desires . . . A Perfect Being functions with complete detachment in the midst of the most intense activity and in contact with all forms of life.

Divinity includes all that is beautiful and gracious. How, therefore, could you expect a Perfect Being not to have a sense of humor!

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Baba's life. With a

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<sup>3</sup> Francis Brabazon, *The Word at World's End*, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Kitty Davy, *Love Alone Prevails*, p. 156.

## PREFACE

smile, He faced ridicule and antagonism from people, yet His love remained unconditionally available to all.

Twice He was in automobile accidents, sustaining severe fractures of His legs and the partial destruction of His hip-joint which made it very difficult and painful for Him to walk. Yet in such a helpless condition He journeyed around the globe and His followers experienced divine bliss and compassion radiating from Him. Isn't this indicative of His matchless sense of humor? In fact, the Avatar's retaining His infinity while suffering the limitations of a finite form is perhaps His greatest joke — a game He plays at His own expense.

It is the Avatar's divine love which touches our hearts, but it is the humanity with which it is expressed that enables us to love Him in return. It is His grace that sustains us on our journey to Him (our real Self), but it is His human example which convinces us that the final destination is possible. And it is His unique combination of the divine and the human which inspires us to find Him in our hearts by offering all of our thoughts, feelings, and actions to Him — the Avatar.

Whenever the Avatar is physically present on earth, every day of His life holds deep significance for the entire creation. The spiritual results of His inner work are not immediately apparent and are also far beyond one's finite comprehension. I have in this volume ventured to record some of Meher Baba's external activities and the messages He gave during a period of over ten months — February to December, 1953.

There are countless ways of getting closer to the Avatar — the Omnipresent One — and everyone has to find one's own opening, a way which leads to Him. Some try to serve humanity selflessly; some meditate deeply; some lead a family life in His silent and loving remembrance; some sing His praise; some dance for Him. My business is to "be His-ness" and my way is to share the stories of His life through *Glimpses*.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly offer this volume — some glimpses of the Avatar clothed in words — to the Timeless One, Meher Baba. If it pleases Him, in His own time, He may use this account of His *Lila* and His words of truth to awaken the hearts of His dear ones to His sweet and sacred love.

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Thus far and no further, except a loving request that my being be consumed in His love and glory. My salutations to Avatar Meher Baba, the One worthy of Love.

Jai Baba!

Jai Meher!

Jai Avatar!

Bal Natu

1st January, 1983  
Meherazad

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NINE-MONTH STAY AT DEHRA DUN BEGINS  
1953—PART III<sup>6</sup>

*The Incredible Divine Sport*

Each advent of the Avatar on earth is a matchless mystery which, owing to the unbounded compassion of God, occurs time and again. Age after age, infinite God, in His omniscience, chooses to become man to quicken the life pulsating in everyone and everything. About this game of God — the Creator evolving and involving Himself through creation — Meher Baba states:

The whole of evolution, in fact, is an evolution from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, in which God Himself, essentially eternal and unchangeable, assumes an infinite variety of forms, enjoys an infinite variety of experiences, and transcends an infinite variety of self-imposed limitations. Evolution from the standpoint of the Creator is a divine sport, in which the unconditioned tests the infinitude of His absolute knowledge, power, and bliss in the midst of all conditions.

But evolution from the standpoint of the creature, with its limited knowledge, limited power, limited capacity for enjoying bliss, is an epic of alternating rest and struggle, joy and sorrow, love and hate, until, in the perfect man, God balances the pairs of opposites and transcends duality.

Then creature and Creator recognize themselves as one; changelessness is established in the midst of change, eternity is experienced in the midst of time. God knows Himself as God, unchangeable in essence, infinite in manifestation, ever experiencing the supreme bliss of Self-realization in continually fresh awareness of Himself by Himself.<sup>7</sup>

Whenever the Avatar appears there is a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness. When the sun rises,

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<sup>6</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. III concludes with 1953 - Part II.

<sup>7</sup> Meher Baba, *Discourses*, Vol. III, pp. 11-12.

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the world responds in infinite ways to its light and warmth. For each of us, however, the field of observation — what we feel, perceive, and interpret — is very limited. Simultaneously, with our personal experience, manifold forms of life in this vast creation respond to the sun in their own specific ways. The Avatar's physical presence may be likened to the sun dissolving the darkness, bringing a new day.

The activities of the Avatar, while He graces this planet, can be divided into two main categories, internal and external. Most of His spiritual work belongs to the former and is hidden from our gross eyes, for it is done in subtle and unknown ways on different planes of consciousness. The external activities that are known to His close ones, or to some people on certain occasions, are the ones that principally become the subject of the Avatar's personal biography. So, from the meager sources that I have been able to gather, I resume my narration of *Glimpses of the God-Man*, Meher Baba, through this present volume.

### *Two Houses on Rajpur Road*

Dehra Dun is one of Meher Baba's favorite places in India. It is a large town to the north of Delhi, close to the Himalayan ranges, not too near nor too far from the twin pilgrimage centers of Hardwar and Rishikesh. It is an area which is intimately associated with Baba's activities during His Old and New Life.<sup>8</sup>

Baba had stayed there with a large group of His Eastern and Western disciples for several months during the years 1941 and 1942. That stay was particularly devoted to His spiritual work carried on in seclusion and also His contacts with His beloved children, the *masts*<sup>9</sup> — the God-intoxicated and God-centric souls.

During the New Life, from January through June 1950, Baba had stayed at Majri Mafi (now known as Meher Mafi), a locality situated a short distance from Dehra Dun.

Now again Dehra Dun was to be sanctified with Baba's physical presence during the phase which He called "Life":

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<sup>8</sup> For Old Life see: *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. I (1943- 1948). For New Life see: *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. II, (February 1948-February 1952).

<sup>9</sup> See: William Donkin, *The Wayfarers*.

## NINE-MONTH STAY AT DEHRA DUN BEGINS

"Life that is eternally Old and New."<sup>10</sup> Apart from Meherazad, Baba's home in India, there are only two specific areas (Mahabaleshwar to Satara, and Dehra Dun to Rishikesh) which have been blessed with Baba's physical presence for a considerable length of time during all three phases mentioned above.

While in Eluru, in Andhra Pradesh, during His *darshan* tour, Baba had instructed Kishan Singh to send Him a telegram on February 5th, detailing the latest developments in his efforts to rent a suitable house for Baba in Dehra Dun.

After completing His public *darshan* programs in Hamirpur and Andhra Pradesh, Baba stayed for two weeks at Meherazad beginning at the end of January 1953. In the first week of February 1953, the rent controller's office at Dehra Dun finally agreed to the request of Kumar (Shatrughna Kumar), Kishan Singh and Elcha (Eruch Mistry), to grant them a house. This house was to be Baba's residence during His forthcoming stay. It was located on Rajpur Road, close to Kishan Singh's residence, a spacious government house which Kishan offered for Baba's men *mandali's* use. Baba agreed and graciously permitted Kishan to stay there with them.

On February 5th, Kishan Singh sent the following telegram: "House arranged near mine. Letter follows. Kishan Singh." However, owing to some disorder in the mail service, it did not reach Baba in time. So, at Meherazad, it was presumed that Kishan Singh had failed to obey Baba's specific instruction, and, under Baba's orders, Eruch wrote:

Baba wants you to definitely understand that if you have left Dehra Dun for Delhi under one pretext or another, other than fixing a bungalow for Baba at Dehra Dun, then this absence of yours amounts to gross negligence and disobedience and it would be best for you not to show your face again to Baba.

In fact, in spite of a high fever, Kishan Singh had been frantically working with Kumar and Elcha for the final settlement of the house, while simultaneously the All-Knowing One was sending him such a harsh reply. Luckily, Kishan

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<sup>10</sup> See: *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. III (February 1952-February 1953).

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Singh's telegram reached Meherazad the next day, February 6th evening, and Baba had Eruch write again:

This shows that you have not disobeyed Baba and therefore you have now no need to worry at all. But now you and Kumar should pay all your attention, looking after all the necessary details required for the bungalow. Baba sends His love.

What Kishan Singh felt when he received the two successive letters I don't know, but such instances were not too unusual. The above excerpts from Eruch's letters indicate how Baba's omniscience was linked with human unknowingness; for in Him God has become man, a perfect human being. Owing to this unrivaled blending of the human with the divine, confusion would sometimes occur, but it had its own significance. As this case illustrates, the result turned out to be as Baba wished — two houses quite close to one another on Rajpur Road.

Vishnu had earlier written that accompanying Baba there would be six women disciples and about twelve men *mandali*, including Donkin, one of Meher Baba's close English disciples, also known as Don, who was to be allotted one room, whether large or small. Baba's bungalow, where Mehera, Mani, and others were to reside, had to have electricity and be furnished with the bare necessities such as cots, mattresses, tables, chairs, etc. As the men were to reside in Kishan Singh's house for a long time, Baba wanted to know everything about the house, such as the number of rooms, lavatories, and so forth — all details, big and small, were treated alike by Baba.

Baba wanted to work undisturbed at Dehra Dun, so He sent a message to His people that there would be no public *darshan* nor would personal interviews be granted. Baba families were not to entertain any expectations that they would see Baba, but were to wait patiently for the call if at all it came from Him. In Baba's words, "See that I am NOT disturbed there and I am free to do my work as I want." With full faith in Baba's divinity, the Baba families staying at Dehra Dun willingly agreed to abide by Baba's directions. Baba, however, graciously promised to give *darshan* to one and all before

## NINE-MONTH STAY AT DEHRA DUN BEGINS

leaving Dehra Dun.

On February 15, 1953, Baba with His men and women disciples left Meherazad. The next day they boarded the train at Bombay and reached Dehra Dun on the 18th. Kumar, Kishan Singh, Elcha and Keki (Nalavala) were at the railway station to receive Him. They found Baba radiant and beautiful as ever, and they gazed upon Him with loving eyes. Baba was apprised of the arrangements made in the two bungalows and He looked pleased, as all the instructions were carried out to His satisfaction.

With the women *mandali*, Baba left for the newly acquired house while the men disciples — Pendu, Gustadji, Baidul, Vishnu, Eruch and a few others — left in cars for Kishan Singh's bungalow, 107-A Rajpur Road. Four months later, when Kishan Singh retired, the Government insisted that two officials share this house and he wondered why in his case it had been granted for his use alone. Perhaps to house Baba's *mandali*! To him it was a Baba "coincidence." With Baba's arrival at Dehra Dun on February 18th, the momentous period of His long stay there commenced.

### *Symbolic Service Through the Poor*

After a tiresome journey of two days by rail, from Bombay to Dehra Dun, Baba did not want to rest but immediately wished to plunge into one of the aspects of His spiritual work. It has been noticed that Baba's spiritual operation would begin with His service to the poor, which would later be followed by His contacts with the *masts*. It seemed that Baba was using simple to complex or visible to invisible methods to accomplish certain results on the different planes of consciousness.

In an earlier letter to Kishan Singh, Vishnu, one of Baba's *mandali*, had mentioned that Baba's work with the poor was to begin February 19th. Accordingly, that morning Kishan Singh gathered seven poor people at 107-A Rajpur Road. Baba, with Aloba, walked over to the *mandali's* bungalow by 7 o'clock to wash the feet of the poor. The necessary things — a

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bucket of warm water, a mug, and a few towels — were kept ready.

Together with the *mandali*, Baba came outside the house, and with a deep, stirring look of compassion, He washed and dried the feet of seven poor people. He also gave each fifty rupees as *prasad*. He once remarked that whenever He offered services of this kind, persons with similar impressions elsewhere were also benefitted spiritually. The seven people visible to others were the media for His invisible work.

Baba's arrival had aroused great interest and curiosity in that particular locality. So, on the 19th, quite a number of people stood at a distance and watched Baba lovingly offering His services to the poor. They were immensely impressed by Baba's divine personality. And so, on each successive day, there were small groups of men and women on both sides of the road waiting to have a glimpse of Baba as He passed by.

At the beginning of Baba's stay in Dehra Dun, Aloba's duty was to accompany Baba to His residence from the *mandali's* quarters and also to hold an umbrella over Him for shade when necessary. The distance between the two houses was not great and to see Baba in all His majestic splendor as He walked back and forth was a magnificent sight for the people nearby. Some even tried to reach Him for *darshan*.

This daily gathering of a small crowd disturbed Baba's work which displeased Him, so He had the following notice in Hindi displayed outside the *mandali's* bungalow. Freely translated it read as follows:

Baba offers His *namaskars* (salutations) to all and conveys that of His own He will give *darshan* to all on March 23rd, 1953. Come on that day. If you try to have Baba's *darshan* earlier, against His will, you will not derive the benefit of *darshan*.

(signed) Baba

This reminds me of a line from Kabir: "Whatever you wrench from the Master against his will is like extracting his blood." For the most, people took the hint and stayed away. At times, however, a few continued to linger by the road, watching Baba as He passed by.

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Before Baba started visiting different places to contact the God-intoxicated souls, a local *mastani* who often wandered in the vicinity of the civil court was brought to Him. Baba looked pleased with this inaugural contact and later disclosed that she was the chageman of the town, a successor to Nannu Mian.<sup>11</sup>

### *A Groundless Rumor*

In addition to Baba's work with the *masts*, He also wished to bow down to sadhus and mahatmas residing at Hardwar and Rishikesh. Most of these mendicants were people who were not on the spiritual path but were seekers with spiritual leanings. The spiritually advanced souls who were on the path and were conscious of the divine experiences of their particular plane — *saliks* — were not generally contacted by Baba. He once remarked that *saliks* recognize the divinity in Him and try to offer their respect to Him. Such a response, He added, impeded His spiritual work, as He wanted to serve them without Himself being honored.

The different places and ashrams, where sadhus, *sanyasis* and mahatmas stayed were reported to Baba. During this talk someone casually mentioned the name of a renowned saint. Hearing this, Kishan Singh related the incident which he recalled about my visit to Rishikesh and my subsequent meeting with the saint.<sup>12</sup>

Nine months before, in April 1952, when Baba left for the States, He had instructed Eruch and Pendu to visit different parts of India, to share His love with His devotees and to give His message of truth to the people. In this all-India tour, Eruch visited Solapur which is close to the town where I then stayed. I took this opportunity to go and see him. During our conversation, I casually mentioned my meeting with the saint at Rishikesh.

As far as I remember, I told Eruch that one night in October, 1949, when I was with that saint, he pointed across the Ganges to Swarg Ashram and told me that in the early 1940's Meher Baba had to leave Rishikesh overnight in order

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<sup>11</sup> *The Wayfarers*, (1948) p. 230.

<sup>12</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. II, pp. 130-134, and Vol. III, p. 105.



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to save Himself from the situation, as people had learned about parcels of liquor bottles sent by rail addressed to some of the disciples living with Him. Whatever may have been the saint's intention, the story did not confuse me; it did not create an adverse impression upon me. Unaffected, I told him that such things had nothing to do with Baba's divinity and His unconditional love for all. In the end I even requested him to bless me to love Baba more and more.

When Kishan Singh was finished, Eruch narrated similar rumors he had heard way back in the early 1940's. The *mandali* were surprised to learn that a decade later there was still such gossip being spread. Baba, however, remarked that all this helped Him in his spiritual work. The next day, February 22nd, Baba gave the following discourse:

A certain rumor concerning Myself and My disciples has reached My ears. It is to the effect that during My stay in Rishikesh with My disciples in 1942, some parcels being damaged during transit were found to contain liquor, and that I and My disciples had to leave Rishikesh immediately to save ourselves the embarrassment of an awkward situation.

I deeply appreciate this action on the part of those responsible for spreading such false rumors, as I feel that it has the effect of rendering great service to My work. In spiritual work, opposition, rumors and criticism help as nothing else can. The spiritually perfect ones who are one with the truth know and bless such channels that try to conceal and distort the truth.

A principal part of My work for these many years has been to bow down to saints, sadhus, the so-called sinners and to the poor. Now, when I go to Rishikesh and Hardwar, I will also bow down to the persons concerned in the spreading of the rumor and to all those who believed it; and I want it clearly understood that this bowing down to them is not an ironical gesture ... or egotistic attitude on My part, nor is it caused by any displeasure towards them, but that it is an indication of love from the bottom of My

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heart for the help rendered by them in My great spiritual work.

From the beginningless beginning to the present day I am what I am, irrespective of praise or universal opposition, and will remain so to the endless end.

After dictating the above discourse, Baba ordered Eruch and Pendu to go to Rishikesh and to find the number and location of the various small and big ashrams located there. They were also to obtain the approximate number of sadhus, *sanyasis*, and the like residing at each place.

Baba also instructed them to visit the aforementioned saint and to relate the following to him: "Since eternity, Meher Baba has been bowing down to *masts*, sadhus and the poor because He is in everyone." Eruch was also asked to read out to the saint the text given by Baba in the morning and an additional message, "Honesty,"<sup>13</sup> which was dictated by Him in Andhra.

According to the Master's order, Eruch and Pendu met with the saint and during their conversation Eruch read aloud the discourse and the message. The saint looked perturbed by Eruch's reading. At the end, in an agitated mood, he asked Eruch to convey his request to Baba to please forget all about the rumor of the liquor bottles.

Eruch quietly listened to him, but, in compliance with Baba's order, he did not fail to fix the date and time (March 2nd at 10 A.M.) for Baba's visit to the ashram. The saint and all the residents of the ashram were asked to be present in the main hall where Baba wished to bow down to them — to one and all who believed in the false story of the liquor bottles. Eruch and Pendu, with their mission accomplished, returned to Dehra Dun and related the details to Baba, who looked pleased.

### *A Summons from Baba*

On February 26th, Baba instructed one of the *mandali* to send me the following telegram at my Kurduwadi address: "Only if

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<sup>13</sup> *Life Circular* No. 9: January 27, 1953.

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you can, arrive Rishikesh bus station on second March morning, eight o'clock. Come for two days; otherwise wire inability care Kishan Singh 107 Rajpur Road Dehra Dun — Baba."

The invitation that the telegram brought me was an unexpected sweet surprise — an opportunity to be in the sweetest company of Beloved Baba. The contents of the telegram puzzled me a little, however, as there was no reason mentioned for my visit. Owing to my weak constitution, I had to plan in advance even for a trip of twenty or thirty miles. And now I had a journey of over a thousand miles, which necessitated traveling night and day in an overcrowded 3rd class train compartment, facing me. But the prospect of seeing Baba was enough to make all inconveniences fade into insignificance.

In fact, whenever Baba sends you a call, He clears from your way all apparent obstacles, although at the outset the odds may seem insurmountable, but the very attempt, prompted by His love, to answer His call, invariably results in circumstances arranging themselves favorably beyond one's expectations. Many, many a Baba lover, even to this day, is witness to this Avataric sport. With great delight I read and reread the telegram and my immediate reaction was, "I must start soon!"

### *A Sadguru Acts, the Avatar Becomes*

Whenever Baba was away from Ahmednagar for a long period, His mail was sent to Him by Adi, Meher Baba's disciple and secretary, who generally resided at Khushroo Quarters, King's Road, Ahmednagar, attending to the office work. (Meher Baba's youngest brother was also named Adi. To avoid confusion, Adi K. Irani was known in the *mandali* as Adi Sr. and Baba's brother was called Adi Jr. Hereafter, in this volume, Adi refers to Adi K. Irani.)

It has been noticed that Baba was very particular about all letters and cables addressed to Him and virtually all letters from His dear ones would either be read out to Baba or the contents made known to Him, depending on His mood and

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work. Baba's response, whether written or oral, would be conveyed via short replies through the *mandali*. In a few cases it was deemed enough that the matter had been brought to Baba's notice.

Following Baba's arrival in Dehra Dun, Adi, as usual, forwarded mail which had been addressed to Him or the *mandali* staying with Him. One such letter concerned a difference of opinion which had arisen between Ramjoo, one of Baba's close disciples, and Irene Conybeare. Ramjoo was helping Irene edit material for her book, *Civilization or Chaos?* Before Baba had left for Dehra Dun, He had met with both of them briefly at Meherazad in connection with the book.

Now it seemed a disagreement over some of the points to be included had developed. Although Baba was very busy with other matters, on February 27th He dictated a letter to her clarifying the matters under discussion. A small portion from Baba's letter is given below:

There is no difference in consciousness of the Avatar and a *Sadguru* or in their perfection . . .

Both are one with God. Both experience infinite power, knowledge and bliss; and both use these aspects of *Sat-Chit-Anand* for the universe.

The difference is in the scope of their working. *Sadguru* works for the selected few in a chosen way and for the universe in a general way. Avatar works for the selected few in a special way and for the universe in a chosen way.

So although both work for the universe and the field of their working is not limited, the scope of the ways of their working is (thus) different . . .

A year later, Baba further clarified the distinction between the working of the Avatar and a *Sadguru* in a short yet profound discourse wherein He stated, "Whatever be the understanding of man, the fact remains that the Avatar becomes and the *Sadguru* acts."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *God Speaks*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (1973), p. 269.

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### *Caught up in a Colorful Holi*

I had received Baba's telegram on the evening of February 26th and there were only three days left to reach Rishikesh — a journey of nearly a thousand miles — so I had no time to lose. Immediately I met with the principal of the high school where I taught; he readily sanctioned the casual leave due to me and I hastened to board the first express train for Bombay. This was my second visit to the foothills of the Himalayas, the first being in October 1949. I knew this would be a tiresome journey of two days and yet I intended to keep myself fit, so I could be lively in Baba's presence.

While traveling I was very careful about my food. To avoid any chance of drinking contaminated water, I drank only hot tea which also helped keep me alert on the train. Nevertheless, at one station, the sight of big, sparkling, fleshy Varanasi berries tempted me. I purchased a good quantity of them. As there was nothing else to do on the long ride, one by one, I easily devoured the whole lot.

In my case, this impulsive eating was unusual and its result soon became obvious. After a short while, there was occasional gurgling in my stomach. I had loose motions which scared me a lot and I became doubtful about my ability to remain lively in Baba's company. I felt weak, yet at the same time relaxed. Perchance the berries turned out to be a light, refreshing laxative, because by morning I felt my strength and spirits totally restored. It is as if Baba, in His compassion, had condoned my temptation of the palate during my journey to Him.

Baba has warned us in His sermon: "Let us not live the life of the senses." He expects us to live a life of love for Him. But how often we are carried away by the moments of transient pleasure, whether sensual or sensuous. Yet, in His compassion, over and over, He lifts us from our lapses without condemning us for our failures. He smiles a smile of forgiveness which becomes our strength in our journey to our Beloved Baba. However, since that night, I have avoided eating Varanasi berries except in moderation.

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The telegram had asked me to be present at the Rishikesh bus station on the morning of the 2nd. On the train, realizing I would arrive at Rishikesh on the morning of March 1st, I spent most of my time asking myself questions such as, "Where will I find Baba or any of the *mandali*? How will I know where Baba is staying?" Last time I had been to Rishikesh I had had to search for my dear friend Mauni, to give him a special message from Baba. This time, it seemed as if I would have to look for Baba Himself.

But by the time I reached Rishikesh I had decided what to do. Kishan Singh's address had been given in the telegram Baba had sent me. I knew if I contacted him, he would know where Baba was. Since Dehra Dun was less than 30 miles away, I decided to take the bus. I had already changed at the station from my night clothes into fresh ones so I would be presentable should I happen to meet Baba or the *mandali*. I now bought an English newspaper to read on the journey and boarded the bus.

At the first stop, which was only after a few minutes, a group of young children circled the bus and began shouting. Being engrossed in the news, I was not attentive to what was happening outside. However, as the bus honked and stopped and started, I felt some water sprinkle on me. As I looked out the window, I saw some children with color stained clothes on and I realized it was *Holi*, a Hindu festival when people make merry by throwing glassfuls of water mixed with different colors at one another. Especially in North India, *Holi* is a favorite festive occasion to celebrate the beginning of spring after the weary winter.

The next stop of the bus was a village, where a larger crowd was waiting to have fun with the passengers. No sooner did the vehicle stop than the youngsters began tossing colored water through the windows. The English daily with its Sunday magazine section became my protective shield, but even so, soon my clothes began to get wet and stained. At the succeeding stops, the same thing happened and my shield soaked with water began to fall apart. By the time I reached Dehra Dun, all my clothes were spoiled.

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"How can I present myself before Baba with such dirty clothes?" I thought. Thinking the town people would be more sane than the villagers, I again changed my clothes. I approached a *tongawalla* and expressed my readiness to pay him extra if he could take me to 107 Rajpur Road and avoid the streets where the urchins would be playing *Holi*.

One *tongawalla* agreed to this proposal. However, after a long ride (though I later learned that the house was nearby), we entered a street where elderly people in a gay mood were sitting on the steps of shops which were closed for *Holi*. There were small groups of children gleefully moving about. I suspected that I was directly in the danger zone and my suspicions were soon proved right. By the time I reached Kishan Singh's house my kit and clothes were more stained with overlapping patches of colors than they had been at the bus station.

I was happy to again be with the *mandali*, but before we could even enter into any informal conversation someone brought a message for me, "Baba wants you." It had never occurred to me that Baba Himself would be in that house. This was more than a surprise to me. In my "colorful" clothes, I stood before Him and offered my respects. He straightaway asked me about the details of my meeting with the saint at Rishikesh. I related the entire episode that I had earlier shared with Kishan Singh and Eruch, including the sly remark the saint had made about the liquor bottles.

When I had finished my narration, Baba asked me whether I had been totally honest in what I said, and that I need not exaggerate anything. "Will you say this even in the presence of that saint?" He asked. My simple reply was, "Baba, I have said what has happened. I will tell this before anyone you want me to." In fact, I wondered why Baba wanted this information. At the close of this brief meeting, He instructed me, "Take your bath and lunch. Be ready by 2:00 P.M. for a visit to Rishikesh." As I left the room there was, I think, a smile on Baba's face, or was it my own imagining? I don't know. Whatever it may be, to me it indicated that Baba had enjoyed the results of the

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urchins having played *Holi* with me, and that my colorful garb had amused Him.

I hurried to have a bath with my undergarments on, as is customary in India, but soon realized that I had left all my currency notes in my pockets, and that they too were inadvertently getting a bath. As it was not too late, I took them out and spread them out on a broad window sill. While they were being dried I was scrubbing my body with soap and water — a funny occurrence! After lunch, I was told about the programme at Rishikesh — Baba's bowing down to the sadhus and *sanyasis*, including the aforementioned saint. Accordingly, at 2 P.M., Baba, with Pendu, Eruch, Meherjee, Elcha, Baidul, Aloba, Kumar, Kishan Singh, and myself, left for Rishikesh.

### *Baba's Incredible Life of Perfection*

During our journey by car, Baba told Eruch that instead of visiting the saint the next morning (March 2nd) as previously planned, He would like to-visit him that very evening. He added that this was convenient for Him, as it would keep the next day entirely at His disposal for paying respects to the sadhus and *sanyasis* residing at different ashrams in Rishikesh.

At 3:30 P.M. we reached our residence at Rishikesh (Shanti Kutti, Koyal Ghat), a nice, small estate away from the town, with a pleasant garden. Eruch and Pendu immediately left for the saint's ashram. There they contacted the secretary, who told them that the ashramites were busy arranging a reception in honor of Baba. Eruch made it clear that this particular visit of Baba's was not for giving *darshan* but was for special spiritual work. The secretary also informed them that the saint, being ill with lumbago, would not be able to walk to the main hall and had requested that Baba visit him in his room. Eventually it was agreed that Baba would visit the ashram that evening at 5:30 P.M.

By the time Baba reached the ashram with His *mandali*, the ashramites had gathered in the big hall and were singing



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devotional songs. Baba was very warmly received, and the secretary very humbly bowed to Baba. As Baba had not gone there to give *darshan*, He returned this homage by bowing back to him. The secretary led Baba to a chair reserved for Him in a well decorated hall. Baba reluctantly agreed to this, but after a few minutes He got up and sat on the ground. In response to the rumor concerning the liquor bottles, He then motioned Eruch to read aloud the discourse which He had given at Dehra Dun on December 22, 1953.<sup>15</sup>

Then, addressing all those present in the hall, Baba conveyed, "Whether you have personally and directly or indirectly spread the false rumor, or whether others have done so in your name, I bow down to you with love, for your having been an instrument of help in My universal spiritual work." At the close of this statement, Baba bowed to all and He again gestured to Eruch to read out a special message dictated by Him for this occasion, which is given below:

We should once and for all understand that no amount of learning, reading, teaching, reasoning, and preaching can give us liberation. Vedantic expressions, Sufi talks, mystical words, and philosophical statements take us nowhere spiritually. Religious conferences, spiritual societies, and the so-called universal brotherhood are apt to bind the soul, rather than free it.

Only when we transcend intellect and enter the domain of love can we aspire for liberation. When love for God reaches its zenith, we lose ourselves in the Beloved God and attain eternal liberation. Liberated ones are ever free from all illusory attachments. Good and bad, virtue and vice, cannot pollute the Ocean of Divine Truth.

Perfection does not merely mean escaping from the *Mayavic* Law. Man having become God is Perfection: but when man after consciously becoming God returns to gross consciousness as man, he has achieved the supreme Perfection. Such a Perfect One is not only God, but lives the life of God as man.

He is in *Maya*, and simultaneously beyond it. He is

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<sup>15</sup> See: pp. 13- 14.

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amidst the Law of Karma, but not bound by it. Whatever His actions, they are non-actions; for the actions which bind ordinary man are not only non-binding when performed by a Perfect One, but are channels for His universal spiritual work of liberating mankind from the ignorance of *Maya*. The Perfect Ones are free from freedom itself, and so are free even from the non-actions that They perform for Their universal work.

To those who love Me and naturally wish to know more about My activities I can only say, as far as My inner life and internal activities are concerned, only God and those who are one with God can know and understand. As far as My external activities are concerned regarding My work with the God-intoxicated, saints, sadhus, and the poor, of contacting them, working with them, serving them and bowing down to them in whole-hearted devotion, they have all been recorded by a disciple of Mine in *The Wayfarers*.<sup>16</sup>

I enjoy games, chiefly cricket, playing marbles, flying kites, and also listening to music, which I have rare occasions to enjoy. From time immemorial to this day I have been playing with the *Mayavic* universe and this enjoyment of playing still persists.

Although the rumor concerning Me and My devotees regarding consumption of liquor at Swarg Ashram is absolutely false, yet it is a fact that once in a great while I give wine to My lovers and make them understand that it is not the wine of grapes but the true wine of love, giving them divine intoxication, that helps towards union with God.

I allow vegetarians to follow their diet and non-vegetarians to eat meat, fish, etc. I do not interfere with any religion and permit all to follow their own creeds, unhindered. When faced with love for God these external ceremonials have no value. Love for God automatically and naturally results in self-denial, mental control, and ego annihilation, irrespective of the lover following or renouncing these external adoptions.

I sometimes see motion pictures (mostly humorous

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<sup>16</sup> William Donkin, *The Wayfarers*.

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ones), and enjoy My real state of being the Eternal Producer of the vast ever-changing, never-ending film called the universe. I also find relaxation in listening to humorous stories, all the time being aware of the humor that lies in the aspect of the soul which is the source of infinite power and glory being made to feel so helpless in its human bondage of ignorance, in its various forms of duality.

Once in a while I give *darshan* and *prasad* of love to the people, each person benefitting according to his or her receptivity. I give *upadesh* (advice) in the form of instructions to those who have surrendered to the Perfect Masters; and I give help in the form of general advice to a few who long for the truth. All this, of course, is effective in accordance with the worthiness of the recipient.

Perfect Ones can impart divine knowledge, bestow divine love, and shower the grace of God-union by a mere glance, touch, or a single divine thought.

I feel very happy, and give My love and blessings to all. If My gesture of love is understood even by one among you all, My coming here today will have served its purpose.<sup>17</sup>

### *Divine Authority Blended with Utmost Humility*

The secretary asked Baba's permission to say a few words, to which Baba made a gesture of consent. The secretary stated that their ashram was the last place from which such a rumor would have been spread. About his personal contact with Baba, he related that he had the great good fortune to have had Baba's *darshan* at Madras. He went on to say that in his first meeting with Baba, he felt that Baba was his guru and he considered it a privilege to call himself Baba's disciple. He ended his speech requesting Baba to accept the united homage from the saint and the ashramities, and asked Him to bless them all.

As a reply, Baba conveyed, "If we want to know God as He is, we have to be as honest as He is. The least hypocrisy creeping

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<sup>17</sup> *Life Circular*, No. 8.

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in takes Him away. Let us be honest. My blessings to all." Baba also emphasized that, irrespective of what had happened, the ashramites, having taken the saint as their master, should adhere to him wholeheartedly and follow his instructions. After this Baba indicated that He wanted to see the saint.

There were about seven of us accompanying Baba. The secretary suggested that as the saint's room was very small, only one or two persons should go with Baba. Baba asked Eruch and me to be with Him. As we left the hall, addressing the secretary Baba knowingly gestured, "I have not yet found a single disciple in the whole world; all are my gurus!" I am sure the person understood what Baba meant. On our way to the room, which was on the bank of the Ganges, a few close ones of the ashram joined us.

When Baba reached the room. He noticed that the saint was lying flat on his bed. When he saw Baba, as a mark of respect, he tried to get up but could not. Baba signaled him to lie down and conveyed through gestures that this visit of His was for His work and that the saint should not feel worried about anything. Baba stood by the side of the bed and asked Eruch to apprise the saint of the proceedings in the main hall, including the reading of the discourse and the special message, typed copies of which were given to the secretary. Eruch did this and Baba remarked that the saint should carefully read the typed matter when he recovered from his illness.

By this time Baba had started pressing the saint's feet. About the rumor the saint said, "When I came to Rishikesh, people including the sadhus of this place began to spread nasty stories about me too. Let us be unmindful of such groundless rumors." At this point, Baba clapped as a signal for me to enter the room. Pointing at me, Baba asked the saint whether he recognized me and if he remembered the talk he'd had with me on a moonlit night in his ashram in 1949. The saint told Baba that he didn't.

Then Baba asked me to narrate the details of the conversation I'd had with him on the parapet of his ashram. After listening to the relevant facts, the saint recollected the entire

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episode. With folded hands he said, "Baba, I don't speak ill about anything — from an ant to an elephant — but I regret that my tongue slipped in making that remark."

Baba, with a very compassionate look, gestured, "This had to happen, as the Ancient One had to visit you in person. You are blessed." The saint expressed his gratitude for Baba's visit and said, "I will read the typed matter; I have already noted your message on honesty sent to me with your disciples." Baba looked most powerful and also very tender. His eyes flashed with the light of divinity, and His compassion too. He clasped the hands of the saint and then gestured, "Love is the link."

Baba's brief visit to the saint in his room was a unique Avataric incident wherein His divine authority of being the Ancient One and His humility as man amongst men were perfectly blended. When Baba was about to leave the room, the saint started prayers in Sanskrit in His honor, and his disciples joined him in chorus. At the end of the prayers, Baba, pointing to Himself, spelled on the board, "I am the Ancient One." The saint's immediate reply was, "My salutations to the Ancient One."

Baba again pressed his feet and gestured, "I love you; don't worry. You will be well." The secretary presented Baba with the written works of the saint and Baba repeated that the ashramites should adhere to the saint wholeheartedly.

As Baba came out on the veranda adjoining the room, refreshments were placed on trays for Baba and the *mandali*. Baba, however, did not wish to remain there any longer. He touched the contents of the plates and offered as *prasad* some dry fruits to the ashramites who were there. The momentous meeting was over; the work was accomplished. Baba looked pleased. We returned to our residence at Shanti Kutī.

### *Sparks of Omniscience*

On March 2nd, Baba wanted to visit the various ashrams scattered around Rishikesh to pay His respects to the sadhus

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residing there. After breakfast, He left Shanti Kuti in Kishan Singh's six-seater car, which was kept for Baba's use. Elcha Mistry had also offered a conveyance, an old rocking jeep which had no flaps on any side and as such, during the journey, provided a free passage for wind and dust. Kumar had brought his motor bike with him.

As Baba's car passed the large rectangular fields stretched before our residence, we started to follow in the jeep. It might have gone about three hundred meters before it had a flat tire. Coincidentally, at the same time, Baba's car stopped on the main road across the fields, practically in line with our jeep.

Baba asked one of the *mandali* to inquire why the jeep had stopped. As we could not hear each other properly at that distance, we communicated through hand signals. Finally, under Baba's order, those in the jeep had to leave it then and there. After locking it, we walked directly across the field to Baba's car. Pendu got on Kumar's bike and the others were asked to squeeze into Kishan Singh's car. Being slim, I sat on someone's lap. In a way this was a blessing in disguise, for such inconvenience brought me closer to Baba who was in the front seat.

The car moved on towards Veerabhadra, a small town. It was funny that although I was in close proximity to Baba, the All-Knowing One, my mind was often clouded with thoughts about the jeep that had been left on the road without our having entrusted it to anyone. I thought, "What will happen to the jeep? Will someone steal some of its parts?" Before getting into the car, Baba simply instructed Elcha to change the tire on our return. He did not want to wait there any longer.

Baidul and Eruch knew the sites of different ashrams and we sped on, with a Baba lover named Jagannath Helen driving. The car would stop at certain places on the road, and Baba would walk to the buildings or houses where the sadhus and *sanyasis* resided. There He would bow down to them, and before they knew what had happened, He would be far away.

At one of the ashrams, a *mahant* (the Chief) inquired from some of us, "Who is this radiant One?" As there was no specific

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instruction to conceal His identity, someone replied, "Meher Baba." Hearing this the *mahant* hurried to touch Baba's feet. But by this time, Baba had already taken His seat in the car and gestured to Helen to drive some distance ahead. During these contacts in this semi-forested area, Baba at one point sat on a big rock and delightedly threw some small stones in different directions, but not much above the ground. We stood about silently watching the incomprehensible play of the Avatar.

The crowded journey in the car and the contacting of sadhus continued for an hour or more and we then returned to the place where those in the jeep had gotten into the car. All of us got down and as I looked across the field I was amazed to see that there was no jeep there! Baba, after getting out of the car, began to stroll back and forth by the side of the road. He looked preoccupied in His inner work and no one dared to disturb Him. I did not venture to broach the subject of the missing jeep with anyone, but this made me all the more aware of its absence. The only other person who was struck with anxiety was Elcha, but owing to Baba's serious mood he too kept quiet.

After about five minutes of silence and suspense, we saw a vehicle coming from the opposite direction, honking its horn. To our utter surprise it was Elcha's jeep. It was hard for me to believe my own eyes. To Baba, who was still in the same mood, this was not worthy of any notice. He signaled that we should get in, and we left for the other side of Rishikesh, going towards Laxman Jhula, a suspension bridge over the Ganges.

Our jeep followed Baba's car and again my mind began to spin, trying to figure out what had just happened. It seemed almost miraculous to me, but the actual explanation was quite simple. One of Elcha's close friends had come to visit him at Shanti Kuti, only to find that Elcha had left, but his jeep was still there. Noticing that it had a flat tire, and thinking that this must be inconvenient for him, as a true friend he managed to unlock the jeep and took it to a workshop.

He got the tire changed and even attended to other minor

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repairs. When this was finished, he wished to hand over the jeep to Elcha himself. From a distance he must have seen Baba strolling by the road and so, instead of going to Shanti Kuti, he came honking to where we were standing. What perfect timing! To me this was a clear example of Baba's omniscience.

In fact, this was the second striking illustration in the last twenty hours that obviously revealed Baba's all-knowingness. The previous afternoon, while we were on our way to visit the aforementioned saint, our vehicle passed a big temple. At that time, Baba poked Kumar in the ribs, and pointing at a tamarind tree, He gestured, "You were born under that tree, weren't you?" Kumar, with an expression of utter surprise, replied, "Yes, Baba. But how do You know this?" Baba just smiled, and that was a perfect answer.

The fact is that in 1911 Kumar's parents during their pilgrimage to Rishikesh, had camped in this particular temple. It was here that Kumar's mother began to experience labor pains. According to Hindu tradition she was not allowed to deliver inside the temple, so an improvised tent was erected under the tamarind tree where she gave birth to a baby boy. Since the temple was of Shatrughna — Rama's youngest brother — the baby was named Shatrughna Kumar.

It is literally true that the entire life of every Baba lover is an open book for the Eternal Beloved, Meher Baba. Sometimes Baba discloses His omniscience; sometimes He stands by as a silent witness. Whatever His response, it is to awaken confidence and courage in our hearts during our journey with and to Him.

Here, in addition to these two incidents, I intend to narrate one more event from the life of one of Baba's five masters, Upasni Maharaj, that I recently heard in Mandali Hall at Meherazad. One day, Maharaj was sitting in a room with his devotees. While conversing with them on spiritual subjects, Maharaj suddenly looked at a gekko (small lizard) high up on the wall wagging its tail. In the midst of his discourse he said to the gekko, "Dear! Don't be unhappy. You will soon find your partner." And he again continued with his discourse.

Those in the room could not make out what the seemingly



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extraneous remark of Maharaj could mean. But they did not have to wait too long to learn. After a while, a visitor came in who had journeyed from a village by bullock cart. Placing his belongings in a corner, he proceeded to pay his respects to Maharaj. As he did so, a gekko swiftly crawled out of his bags, surprising everyone seated nearby. The gekko was frightened and frantically climbed the wall and it was astonishing to see it go directly to the gekko addressed earlier by Maharaj. Both came close to each other, then vanished into a crack in the ceiling.

This simple occurrence illustrates the different dimension of knowledge that a Perfect Master has, even of the most trivial activities of the world in its relation to the past, present, and future. To those who are in the love orbit of Beloved Baba, He reveals through many incredible ways that He knows each of His dear ones through and through, and that He loves them more than they can ever love themselves. His is love unconditional.

### *In a Rowboat under the Limitless Blue*

After a ride of two to three miles, we entered the outskirts of Rishikesh. Here Baba visited a *mast* who was residing on the second story of a house. He was seated on a big bed and was in a delightful mood. He was practically naked, except for a loose towel wrapped around his waist. The complexion of his body and the gleam in his eye were exceptional. Intense longing for God the Beloved displaces all other desires from the hearts of the *masts*, and so inner ecstasy and beauty become manifest in their demeanor and are visible in their eyes.

With the end of the Old Life phase, Baba did not mind having His *mandali* or others nearby Him while offering help to the poor or when contacting *masts*. At the end of this particular contact (in contrast with the earlier seriousness that we noticed about Him), we found Baba to be in a happy, jovial mood.

On the way to Laxman Jhula, Baba's car stopped. With

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Baidul leading the way, Baba began slowly descending a narrow foot path going through the forest towards the river bank. At the end we reached a small ashram. On inquiry it was learned that the advanced soul staying there whom Baba wished to contact had closeted himself in a room for a certain period, as he wished to remain secluded from others. The *mandali* requested the people serving the sage to convey a message to their master that a party from Bombay had especially come for his *darshan*, but it was of no avail. Baba's identity was not disclosed.

Then it was suggested that one of the persons — Baba — should be allowed to offer His homage at the threshold of the room within which the sage, I think named Ramakrishna, was living. But even this proposal was not acceptable to the sage. What a funny situation: the Ancient One in person waiting outside to see the sage, and the sage closeted inside seeking the Lord through meditation! What a tragedy for the seeker, but what a comedy for the sought — the Ancient One!

In the end, Baba decided to go back to the car. It was not easy for Baba to walk up the steep path. Once He sat on a big stone, and as we gathered around Him, we saw a look of displeasure on His face He gestured, "Hindus respect, Moslems love their master." I gathered that Baba's remark was in relation to the attitude of the devotees of the sage. After bowing down to some other mendicants, Baba returned to Shanti Kuti.

After lunch we had a short rest and then Baba again wished to continue His work, this time on the other bank of the Ganges. Baba's car and our jeep were parked on the shoulder of the road. He instructed one or two of us to stay near the vehicles; the rest, with Baba, started walking towards the Ganges to a place where there was a free *hodi* (rowboat) service for pilgrims going back and forth from one bank to the other. When we reached there, we found a small *hodi* with a few passengers which almost seemed to be waiting for Baba's arrival. The rowboat had five or six planks for people to sit on.

I stepped into it and reached the end part of the *hodi*, which could hardly accommodate two people. Others started getting in and Baba, stepping high over the planks, came and sat right

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next to me. I felt delightfully embarrassed. I thought of moving to some other place but that was not possible. However, I did contract my body to keep as much room between us as possible. It was the first time in my life that I sat so close to Baba, and that feeling is indescribable.

As the boatman began to row, I looked in different directions at the sky so that my being there would not in any way interfere with Baba's work. When we were in midstream, though the water was very cold, I tried with my fingers to reach the Ganges flowing by. About that time Baba patted me on my right shoulder, a very exciting moment indeed. I looked at Baba and He pointed His index finger in the direction of a house far away on the other shore.

Someone interpreted that gesture as meaning Baba had been staying there, in Swarg Ashram in Rani Singhai's bungalow, for some months in 1942 with a big group of Easterners and Westerners. It was during this period that the rumor about the liquor for the use of Baba's *mandali* was fabricated with ulterior motives.

In fact, this precious patting from Baba reverberated through my entire being. To me, that delicate touch of Baba's fingers on my shoulder, under the limitless blue, while sailing with Him on the holy Ganges, was a profound gesture revealing His intimacy with me.

I do not recall what Baba did when we reached the other bank except that we visited Gita Bhawan, a place which had all the lines of the *Bhagavad Gita* written in bold letters in different parts of the building.

### *Exacting yet Compassionate Companion*

On our way back from Swarg Ashram, we passed the ashram Baba had visited the day before for His meeting with the saint. As the car stopped, the secretary happened to be in his office. That morning, Baba had instructed Eruch to convey a special message to the saint, but he could not meet with him. Even now the secretary was hesitant to arrange a meeting of anyone

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with his master, as it was against the doctor's orders.

With a twinkle in His eye, Baba reminded the secretary that on the previous day he had stated that he regarded Baba as his guru, and Baba added, "Now here is the opportunity for you to obey your guru's order." Baba had Eruch stay at the ashram and the rest of us, including Baba, left for Shanti Kuti.

Eruch waited in the ashram for over an hour, but the secretary failed to arrange a meeting with the saint for him. Shortly before six o'clock, as an alternative given by Baba, Eruch asked the secretary whether it would be possible for him, on Eruch's behalf, to give the saint Baba's message. The secretary agreed and Eruch gave him the message, the gist of which was Baba's work with the saint and the ashramites was done to His satisfaction. Owing to Baba's love for them all and inasmuch as Baba did not wish to hurt the feelings of anyone, He had decided to omit the names of the saint and the ashram from the discourse and the message that He had read out in the main hall of the ashram on March 1st. According to Baba's instructions these were to be printed and mailed to His followers in India and abroad.

The secretary went to his master and on his return told Eruch that the saint very happily received Baba's message. He also conveyed his loving *pranams* (salutations) to Baba and a request for Baba's blessings. Eruch happily returned to our residence.

The response from the saint pleased Baba. However, the next morning, He again sent Eruch to the same ashram. He met with the secretary and repeated Baba's message given the previous evening, with the following addition: if the ashram tried to misrepresent Baba's visit to the saint, "it would be tantamount to piling dishonesty upon dishonesty" and this would be severely dealt with. The secretary told Eruch that his master had already informed the ashramites that no more discussions on the subject should continue in the ashram. I have given these details concerning Baba's meeting with the saint to show how exacting He was in His work with His people and with others.

On March 3rd, Baba wanted to visit Hardwar. On the way,

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the car stopped and Baba contacted an elderly, long-haired *mast*. He was wearing dirty clothes but had exceptional eyes. While visiting different places at Hardwar, Baba expressed a wish to stop for a while at a particular secluded spot. At this point, Baba casually noticed that Kishan Singh was all smiles. He asked him what made him so happy.

Kishan Singh replied, "Baba, once, in the early 1940's, I became very desperate to have Your *darshan* but I could not succeed. So in a mood of desperation I wanted to commit suicide, and it was at this very place. Your grace helped me to get over that feeling and now I am with You here. Isn't it incredible?" To me, this is a convincing example of Baba's being with each of us in our moments of crisis, although He may take His own time to reveal this secret.

Here I would like to illustrate this method of Baba's working by quoting Nadine Tolstoy, one of Baba's close disciples. Four decades ago, in an article entitled "Who Is That Man?," she beautifully described Baba's responses to the needs of humanity. She wrote:

Only an objectively impersonal, completely selfless being like this man (Meher Baba) can have the unparalleled freedom to use all means and circumstances of life for the inward speeding of the spiritual destiny of Man ... Sorrow or laughter, beauty or ugliness, outward action or stillness, this or that in the dual play of life for Him contains no question, no surprise; everything has its place to fit the universal plan and will of life. His life is a masterpiece in being and acting all the roles of creation.

In life and death, that unique being Meher Baba helps life in all its forms of transition and growth. How many times, unknown and invisible, He has stopped the hands of desperate sufferers ready to commit suicide and has turned their whole outlook of life by giving them the light of true understanding ... He is evidently one with all life."<sup>18</sup>

When Kishan Singh completed his narration, Baba looked pleased. He told him to pay one rupee to a sadhu sitting

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<sup>18</sup> *Meher Baba Journal*, Nov. 1939, pp. 32-34.

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nearby, and Baba Himself bowed down to the sadhu. The *mandali* then recollected that this had also been one of their halting places during the New Life.

That same afternoon, during Baba's hunt, He walked across a farm with Baidul towards a cottage where another *mast* was staying. When Baba returned to the road, He asked us to go and pay our respects to this God-intoxicated soul, but to keep our distance. We saw him standing wearing only a loincloth, and he was in a delightful mood. The complexion of his body was glowing like heated copper. Baba continued visiting and bowing down to sadhus for a considerable time. It was a busy day, although I don't remember other details.

The next day, March 4th, Baba had planned to return to Dehra Dun after visiting Najibabad and Muzaffarnagar. I did not accompany Baba in His visit to these two towns, for I had to return to Kurduwadi. I wondered how the last three days could have passed so swiftly. I approached Baba to report my departure. It was an unspoken silent farewell. As I stood with folded hands before Baba, I expressed gratitude in my eyes for this unforeseen opportunity that He had blessed me with to be in His divine company.

I lowered my head; He flashed a simple glance at me and signaled. "Go." But in that one gesture was His tacit yet complete assurance that wherever I go, Baba will be there too. Still, every time during my moments of parting from Baba, the one thought that prevailed within me was, "When shall I be in His company again?" I presume most of us felt the same way at the end of our stays with Baba.

From Hardwar, I reached Delhi by bus and then continued to Ahmednagar by train, where I stayed for a day with Adi. I apprised him of Baba's meeting with the saint and other details of my stay at Rishikesh. On March 7th, I reached Kurduwadi, a thousand miles physically away from Baba, but the memories of my moments with Him would often revive the feeling of His presence.

With the passing of years, the Baba incidents of this visit instead of fading are becoming more vivid and alive. Even today, the memory of going to the other shore of the Ganges

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with Baba, in a rowboat under the boundless blue, gives me a passionate thrill. And, sometimes, this feeling sets my heart to dancing within me, with the Compassionate Companion, Baba, Master of infinite steps and rhythms.

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1953—PART IV

*Bhau Comes for a Permanent Stay*

On March 5th, after His short tour of four days, Baba returned to Dehra Dun. Ever since He arrived there in February, Baba had been making plans for His visit to Kashmir. He wanted to be there in April, the concluding month of the Fiery Free Life. Luckily, I was included in the tentative list of those who could accompany Baba on this visit. I was allowed to join Him if I could do so without jeopardizing my job and without neglecting my family responsibilities. Soon after my return to Kurduwadi, I learned that Baba had indefinitely postponed His Kashmir visit for reasons known only to Him.

On hearing this news I felt somewhat disappointed. To be frank, apart from the rare privilege of being with Baba, there was also lurking in me a desire to visit Kashmir — one of the most beautiful places in the world. Earlier, I had felt how compassionate Baba was that He would be with me, while also fulfilling my wish to see Kashmir. One of Baba's ways is to help us build our dreams and another is to shatter them with the sole purpose of awakening in us one-pointed longing to see Him and Him alone. As the years have rolled by, there is practically no desire left to visit any place or any country for sightseeing. My present attitude is to take things as they come and to try to remain happy wherever He places me. What should really matter to each of us is to be in tune with Baba's loving and compassionate will. He knows best.

Some months earlier, Bhau Kalchuri had had Baba's *darshan* for the first time at Saoner, and later had an audience with Him at Nagpur.<sup>19</sup> At that time Baba had asked Bhau to complete his studies for his master's degree and then come to see Him wherever He might then be. Accordingly, on March 9th, Bhau arrived at Dehra Dun.

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<sup>19</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. III, pp. 253-255.



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Two days later, Bhau had an important interview with Baba — one which was to deeply affect the remainder of his life. Given below are excerpts from a diary of Kishan Singh's. Kishan was then staying with the *mandali* at Dehra Dun.

Baba: Are you prepared, on your own responsibility, to do as I order you?

Bhau: Yes, Baba.

Baba: I might ask you to go to Bombay or to certain places and work with the lepers on My behalf, or go preaching, or go to Badrinath (in the Himalayas) and sit there, or go begging, or go to work as a *tongawalla* (horse-carriage driver), earn and bring Me the money. In short, will you do whatever I ask you to do? I might, after a few months, tell you to go and stay with your family for some months; I might ask you to do business or attend to worldly affairs. This means you will have to do anything I say whether you like it or not, but do it because I ask you to do it. If done willingly, then whatever you do will be for Me; whether good or bad, you will be doing it for Me.

Baba also gave Bhau a discourse in Hindi about the nature of desires — how they are stored in the mind and how they revolt against the mind. At the end of this interview Baba conveyed to him, "Now you will live for Me. Stay here (with the *mandali*) till the 18th. Join in the meeting which is to be held on March 21st. After the 21st I will be going on a *mast-tour* for seven days. Possibly, I will take you with those going with Me. At the end of this month, I intend giving you special instructions."

Bhau Kalchuri has been staying with Baba ever since that time as one of the resident *mandali*, leading a dedicated life, lovingly and implicitly following Baba's orders.

### *Ordained Hour of the Age*

As Baba had mentioned to Bhau, on March 21st He held a

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special meeting with His *mandali* residing at 107-A Rajpur Road. His visit to Kashmir was definitely cancelled. However, during the meetings at Meherabad in November 1952, and the subsequent *darshan* tours to Hamirpur and Andhra Pradesh, Baba had hinted that certain happenings would occur by the end of April — the concluding part of His Fiery Free Life. For the benefit of His followers, Baba wished to briefly elucidate some changes made since His earlier statements.

In this meeting, Baba told His people that irrespective of whatever might or might not happen, they should be brave and face any situation they encountered. He exhorted them not to feel disheartened in the face of humiliation and apparent utter defeat. The concluding part of Baba's discourse given on this day is quoted below:

For a disciple it suffices to obey. Your duty as a disciple is to obey as if you were not your own self, which is indeed literally true when you have completely dedicated your self to the Master. Never try to match your limited intellect or your reasoning against your Master's will. Spontaneous acceptance by you of anything the Master says or does and your unquestioning obedience to Him will safely steer you through any so-called crises that you may have to face.

Be brave, therefore, and be honest to yourselves. Obey the Master, giving willingly whatever He demands of you. Play your parts well as I too shall play Mine, fulfilling all that is ordained for Me by God. Whether I bring about this fulfillment by the end of April or by the end of any other year, it all rests with the will of God. And although it is not for you to concern yourselves with what is to come I will tell you this much, that if it is not at the end of April then it will be between July 11th and October 10th of any coming year.

At the outset of My Fiery Free Life I had said that I desired to bring about the climax by the end of April 1953. But to be honest with you all I must say that as matters stand today I find that there is a 50% setback in My preordained task. I will however with the remaining 50%

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try to precipitate the great moment by working intensively for 21 days, commencing from March 24th.

During this period I will exert Myself with concentrated intensity to force the climax as I had planned and repeatedly declared to all My people these past few months. If My work, *Inshallah* (God willing), is accomplished to My complete satisfaction then you will see the end of April bring either an end to all chaos, or the beginning of a betterment for the good of all.

But if on the other hand the desired results are not obtained by the end of April then take it from Me that the opportune moment has not yet arrived, and that you and humanity at large will have to tax your endurance to the utmost and your forbearance a little longer to this Ordained Hour of the Age, which will come suddenly and when least expected.

I ask you therefore not to be disheartened by My frequent procrastinations and not to despair; and I warn you all to be alert and vigilant, ready to meet humiliations and difficulties with faith and confidence in the eternal victory of the divine Truth.<sup>20</sup>

With the beginning of His Fiery Free Life, Baba began giving *darshan* to thousands of people, and hundreds of them began to love Him and adore Him as their Master. Beginning with March 1953, Baba would on occasion give a message or discourse similar to the one mentioned above. Changes of plans and postponements of events (concerning breaking His silence, manifestation, etc.) can be regarded as an Avataric technique — or His enigmatic sense of humor.

This was, and still is, one of Baba's methods to arouse various feelings about the nature of spiritual life latent in our hearts. And as a master psychologist, He in turn helps us to transcend them with a laugh at ourselves. This process leads us to a wondrous path, simple and direct, which is love for love's sake alone. It's sort of winnowing, which gradually convinces us to love Baba not for any anticipated events or rewards but only for what He ever is — the Eternal Beloved.

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<sup>20</sup> *Life Circular*, No. 9.

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### *The Nalavala Family is Drawn Closer to Baba*

Baba had decided to give *darshan* to the people of Dehra Dun on March 23rd, 1953. Two days before this, the women *mandali* celebrated New Year's Day according to the Parsi calendar. The Nalavala family — Keki, his wife Freiny, and their two children, Naosherwan and Mahroakh — was invited to spend the day with Baba and the *mandali*. This family had been very closely connected with Baba's visits to Dehra Dun from the '40s onwards, and had helped the *mandali* provide facilities to Baba for His work.

During the New Life, the family was blessed with intimate contact with Meher Baba and His companions. This was a rare privilege and they responded by wholeheartedly dedicating themselves to Baba. Now, three years later, in a most natural way, Baba continued to draw them even closer to Him in His love. The son, Naosherwan Anzar, author of several books on Baba and consulting editor of the "Glow International," a magazine devoted to Baba, was seven at the time and reminisces:

I remember Meher Baba as a playmate — a perfect playmate with whom I played little games so that I would get an additional piece of candy, or another embrace. I sat at His dining table and beat my hands on it as if it were a *tabla* and, as a reward, received a morsel of *dal* and rice from His hands. I played find-the-hidden-finger with Him and received a gift of a toy lamb that the women *mandali* had deftly crafted.

Baba visited 36 Lytton Road, the home of the Nalavala family on several occasions. Once He went to the circus and Naosherwan and his sister, Mahroakh, went with Him to a 3-D movie, sharing the fun with them but, at the same time, working intensely through the focused attention of the audience.

One day, when the family was walking with Baba and the *mandali* in the Botanical Gardens, naming different flowers, a devotee of Baba innocently pointed to the border of corn-flowers and exclaimed, "Baba, look at these cornflakes!" Mani, with her ready wit said, "Well then, let's have breakfast here,"

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and all laughed.

The time the Nalavalas spent in Beloved Baba's love and remembrance was golden. Each day unfolded a different facet of His love and compassion. For Keki and Freiny, Meher Baba was the Eternal Beloved, while for their children, Mahroakh and Naosherwan, Baba was their playmate — simple, loving and kind. The entire family's united love for Baba and their conviction in His Divinity is a blessing to them from the Avatar Himself.

### *Beloved's Wish and Lover's Desire*

In the annals of Dehra Dun, March 23rd, 1953 will be remembered by Baba families as one of the eventful days when they had an opportunity to have the *darshan* of the Enlightened One, Meher Baba. This program was held in Kishan Singh's house, located in a quiet residential district north of the main town. Adi, from his office in Ahmednagar, communicated to Baba Centers in India that this *darshan* was exclusively for the people residing in Dehra Dun, and that others should not go there.

On March 23rd, Baba saw people for seven hours, from eight to eleven in the morning and two to six in the afternoon. People were informed earlier that no personal or family interviews were permitted. In addition, no one was to touch Baba's feet or ask Him any questions — worldly or spiritual. In spite of this instruction, some questions were put to Baba on the spur of the moment by the *darshanites*, and He good-humoredly answered them.

Baba did not wish to see people under an open awning in front of the house, but preferred to take His seat in a room which was both intimate and quiet, so that people would pass before Him and not get rooted in one spot for too long. By seven o'clock in the morning, quite a large crowd had gathered near the house. In response, Baba began giving *darshan* fifteen minutes early, and people with folded hands slowly moved towards Baba's room to pay their respects and to receive His

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blessings — thus the exchange of love between the Beloved and His lovers began.

One young Baba lover, in spite of the *mandali's* instructions, tried to touch Baba's feet. He had been anxiously waiting for some years to see Baba in person, so Baba, the Compassionate One, allowed the man to touch His feet. That touch stirred the young man's emotions and he began to sob and weep profusely. Baba patted and comforted him. Though he then went to wait outside, the sound of his sobbing could be heard from time to time.

Baba once more called him into the room and gestured, "Today I wanted no one to touch My feet. However, out of your deep devotion you did so. Now let this act of placing your head on My feet be treasured by you by keeping Me always in your heart. Love Me more and more until you find Me in you."

At the end of this divine counsel, Baba Himself touched the feet of this young man and in addition He bowed to seven *mandali* members who were close by. This was perhaps done to counteract the incident of someone having touched His feet against His wish. In one of Baba's short messages, He has stated, "Love burns the lover; devotion burns the Beloved," and the happening mentioned above illustrates the difference between love and devotion, between the Beloved's wish and the lover's desire. By mentioning this incident I in no way intend to belittle anyone's devotion to the God-Man, but I mean to glorify the profundity of love and obedience.

A group of well educated and religious-minded Sikhs were in the *darshan* room. Baba looked pleased to see them and motioned to them to sit down. Baba asked one of them to repeat His favorite lines of Guru Nanak, beginning with "*Tumpe thakar...* " Nanak was a Perfect Master who lived from 1469 to 1538 A.D. and was the founder of Sikhism. On different occasions, in general conversation, Baba would refer to him as "*Pyare* (beloved) Nanak." On this day, He exhorted the group of Sikhs to live up to the teachings of Nanak. Then Baba's beautiful fingers began to move gracefully on His alphabet board. He dictated:

If when we grow up we become like children — childlike

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not childish — then we can love God, because to love God we have to be desireless except for the one desire, the one longing, to be united with God.

So when we grow up and become childlike not childish, we can then honestly love God — then we find God everywhere. Nothing can shake, alter, or stop that perpetual happiness, but we must first be honest seekers of truth.

Great masters have taught us to think and act in all humility. Nanak Saheb who was God Personified acted as "Nanak *Das*."<sup>21</sup> (*Das* literally means slave.)

As the group rose to take leave, one of them invited Baba to visit his house. Baba lovingly declined the offer, explaining that if He were to visit one house there would be no end to visits.

A young cadet from the National Defence Academy, a resident of Amravati, especially came to see Baba because he had missed Baba's *darshan* in December, 1952 when Baba had visited his town. In his youthful enthusiasm, he said, "Baba, when are You going to break Your silence?"

With a smile Baba conveyed, "Breaking of My silence will coincide with breaking the long-awaited silence of God." Sometimes, to those who were unnecessarily concerned about His silence, He stated, "If My silence cannot speak, of what avail words?" Baba's silence transmitted wordless spiritual truths to those who were receptive to them. If words point at spiritual truth, silence etches them into the heart.

### *Householders, a Seeker and an Atheist*

People from various walks of life had gathered for Baba's *darshan*. Their faces lit with expectancy, they rapidly formed an orderly queue. When they arrived at Baba's room they felt that His presence was radiating divine energy — to some this feeling was overpowering, to some even overwhelming, and tears would flow profusely down their cheeks.

Kishan Singh was working in the Controller of Defence Accounts Office of the Air Force. Quite a good number of his colleagues came to offer their respects to Baba. Kishan Singh

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<sup>21</sup> Short discourses of Meher Baba quoted in this chapter are from Kishan Singh's notes of March 23rd, 1953, pub. in *The Awakener*, Vol. I, no. 2, pp. 9-12.

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introduced them to his beloved Master, and Baba on His own called them to Him and gave a short message:

We have to be honest in our thoughts and deeds ... Only when we become honest can we find God, even whilst attending to our duty ... I give you My love.

It seems that in one's job or profession one is apt to be carried away by a hundred and one things in life, but Baba's guideline to all is to be totally honest in our dealings with others and with ourselves in loving remembrance of God. This is indeed a helpful way of keeping company with the Omnipresent One, Meher Baba.

Then followed a group of college students. They entreated Baba to permit them to sit in His presence for some time, to which Baba consented. As the youngsters were silently sitting, one of them very casually said, "Baba, I am a seeker of God." Baba looked happy and in response to this remark dictated the following stanza:

Some seek money, some seek name;  
Some seek power, some seek fame;  
Some want children, few want God;  
Life is a joke and all is a game.

Baba concluded, "Whatever you seek wholeheartedly, you get. . . . It is said that when you carry your life in the palm of your hand, you can enter the Path of Divine Love."

Although "life is a joke," one has to pass through the challenges that are on the path. Here, Baba has differentiated worldly and intellectual seeking, carried on through the mind, from the agonies of the heart to find God. Love is the heart of spirituality — and if a life of love is a joke, it is a fiery joke. It entails agonizing madness wherein the lover consumes himself to see the One who resides in his heart.

Before coming to Baba, Kumar was a revolutionary, a terrorist in fact. He and his friends, in their noble intention to free India from the British rule, believed more in the efficaciousness of pistols in one's hands, than in love in one's heart for God. On this *darshan* day Kumar introduced one of his comrades to Baba as a friend who happened to be an



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atheist. Addressing this person, Baba dictated:

Everyone is an atheist till he finds God by actual experience. It is better to be an atheist and be honest in words and deeds than to pose as a lover of God and lead a dishonest life. God is independent; He needs no worship; He only needs that we be honest.

In fact, to call someone an atheist, an agnostic, or a lover of God is a superficial labeling. Baba's emphasis is on honest living in response to the deepest prompting of one's heart.

When the quest for truth that is within everyone becomes one's first concern and only refuge, life cannot help but be an honest expression of what one really feels, and with this process begins real unfoldment — unwinding of oneself from oneself.

### *Love for God*

As people continued to take *darshan*, one person, in spite of verbal instructions from volunteers, could not restrain a question which was, in fact, far beyond his own understanding, "Why did God create the universe?" In soft voices, Baba's men expressed their displeasure with this impudent questioning. Baba, however, responded succinctly to this enormous query as follows:

Who says God has created this universe? ... God is supreme, independent. When we say He has created this universe we lower His infinity. He is beyond all this.

One of Baba's ways of answering people's questions was to put counter questions to them. This was to awaken in them a quality of open inquiry so they could find the right answers for themselves, depending on the seriousness with which they sought solutions.

To some who requested Baba to enlighten them on love for God, Baba stated:

How to love God. How do you love anyone? If a man really falls in love with a beautiful girl, what happens

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then? No system of principle exists for him. He won't mind being ridiculed; even if people call him mad, he does not mind.

Likewise, one should become lost in longing for "possessing" God, the Beloved. When you are determined in your heart of hearts to gain union with God at the cost of life and the ridicule of the whole world, then perhaps you may be said to have entered the Lane of the Divine Beloved.

Addressing another group on the same subject, Baba continued:

We have to love God silently and honestly even in our everyday life. Whilst eating, drinking, talking, and doing all our duties, we can still love God continuously without letting anyone know.

When God is found, you have no idea what infinite bliss and peace is experienced. I give you My love so that some day you can love God as He ought to be loved.

With reference to those who are intoxicated with their love for God (the *masts*), Baba explained:

Lovers of God are called *Mard-e-Khuda* (*mast* of the 5th plane). When one loves God, the only longing is for union with Him. "I want to see You, my Beloved," is the constant cry of this mad lover. Circumstances do not affect him; people call him mad and may make him suffer untold hardships, but his life's only desire is to see God.

Baba concluded that if householders, while discharging their responsibilities are wholeheartedly remembering God, they are then as great as *Mard-e-Khuda*. Although such householders do everything (worldly duties), they do nothing. Those who are bound to God are not bound by anything else.

Some people in Dehra Dun had recently read some of Baba's enlightening discourses and inspiring messages. They were keenly looking forward to seeing Baba in person. Naturally after arriving at Baba's room, they wanted to linger there as long as possible. Baba told them that for want of time and owing to the long queue outside, He could not comply with their request. He, however, graciously conveyed to them, "I give My love to you all and that is what really counts. Love is

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the only thing worth living for and dying for. My blessings." One family in particular had come in Baba's close contact since His arrival in Dehra Dun. The head of this family was a simple-hearted person who was often deceived and unnecessarily jeered at by others. Baba granted a short interview to this family, in which He comforted the person with the following message:

If people act dishonestly with us, if people create difficulties for us, if people deceive us, and yet we remain honest, we are very fortunate; because these deceivers or our so-called enemies are our friends. They wash away our sins and weaknesses and make our path clear towards God. They do not deceive us; they help us and deceive themselves.

In one's journey to God, the lover tries only to please the Beloved and none else. This attitude is misunderstood by some, and they criticize and jeer at the lover. Baba expects His lovers to take such reactions with grace and a spirit of sportsmanship. How nice it would be to roll up the world and its ways which are overestimated by mind and to unroll the heart's carpet for the imminent arrival of the Beloved!

### *Interplay of the Seeker and the Sought*

Near Dehra Dun there lived a sadhu who used to stay in a temple. One morning he came for Baba's *darshan* and quietly sat gazing at Baba's radiant face. He did not speak to anyone the whole time he was in the room. Later it was learned that this sadhu slept only five hours each night, and that too in a sitting position. He took only one meal a day and was serious about his search for God. He was revered in his locality and people used to pay their respects to him by placing their heads on his feet. During his meditations, however, he would at times get severe headaches.

In the afternoon, he came again and Baba allowed him to sit near His chair. This loving response from Baba emboldened

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him to ask about his *sadhana* (system of meditation). After a while Baba communicated with the sadhu through gestures. Pointing to Eruch, He conveyed, "Two to three times, he (Eruch) drew My attention that you seek spiritual help from Me. So, I am giving you two instructions and if you sincerely follow them, God will help you on the path to Him:

- 1) Don't allow anyone to bow down to you; instead you can place your head on anyone's feet if you feel like doing so.
- 2) Beginning from today, exactly at midnight — 12 o'clock — say only once '*Parabrahma Paramatma* very loudly as if God were totally deaf. Then, after five minutes, say 'Baba' likewise very loudly as though Baba too is completely deaf.

"This is the best *sadhana* for you, but remember, it is not easy. If you faithfully observe these two instructions, every other *sadhana* will be contained in them. Start from today and let God feel that you are really earnest about finding Him. As for your sleep or diet, do whatever you like; that has nothing to do with My instructions. However, remember well that even if one person were to place his or her head on your feet, all gains are lost. You only have to follow these instructions for a period of eleven months and then see what God does for you."

The sadhu assured Baba that he would do as Baba had directed beginning that very midnight, and he reverently folded his hands to express his gratitude. As he left the room, he looked very blissful and obviously felt blessed as well.

At the close of this *darshan* day, as one of the visitors offered his respects to Baba, he softly said, "Baba, what is life?" Baba did not appear displeased with this question. He lovingly looked at the person and smiled, then took His alphabet board in His hands and dictated the following response:

Life is a mighty joke. He who knows this can hardly be understood by others.

He who does not know it finds himself in a state of delusion. He may ponder over this problem day and night but will find himself incapable of knowing it. Why?

People take life seriously and God lightly, whereas we

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must take God seriously and life lightly. Then (finally) we know that we always were the same and will ever remain the same — the originator of this joke. This knowledge is not achieved by reasoning, but it is the knowledge of experience.

This reminds me of a couplet of Shams-e-Tabriz wherein he writes:

O seeker of God, you are God, you are God;  
He is not out of you; you are Him, you are Him.<sup>22</sup>

Life is a joke, a perfect joke in the sense that the seeker and the Sought are continually trying to find each other. In response to one of the letters addressed to Him, Meher Baba replied, "Do you know why it is impossible to find God? It is because you are trying to find 'something' which is never lost! What is needed is that you lose yourself and God is imminent."

If Baba's words really dawned on anyone, his seeking would take on an altogether different dimension. Then, instead of seeking God, the Omnipresent One, such an individual would try to witness how God, through His incredible and infinite ways, is searching for His self in the seeker. To be an earnest seeker is to experience how, through each of our activities, the Sought (Baba, the Ancient One) impatiently beckons everyone to come to Him. The certainty that His foremost concern is to reveal Himself in us and through us then becomes our greatest strength; it is grounded in our utter helplessness and the conviction that God alone is the Doer.

Although one may not have transcended one's limitations, still with the above conviction, the seeker begins to nest in the presence of the Sought in a relaxed state. Now the game really gets going in an astounding fashion — it becomes a reciprocal interplay of love and longing between the Sought and the seeker. It culminates when the seeker gets himself totally lost in the Sought and then, for him, all seeking is forever over.

*Darshan* period was coming to a close. Baba had been seeing people continually for a period of seven hours. As each visitor — man, woman, or child — passed by Him, with one hand Baba gave all the *prasad* of His love. Simultaneously, He

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<sup>22</sup> *Aanan ke talabgare Khudaid, Khudaid; Biroon ze shumaneest, shumaid, shumaid.*

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would raise His other hand to His forehead in salutation, a graceful way of returning the homage given to Him.

Perhaps He was saluting the divinity in each one, irrespective of age, caste, creed, or occupation. On another occasion, He had conveyed, "Baba blesses; Baba salutes." Exactly at 6 o'clock in the evening, He left the room, and *darshan*, a gracious and evident dispensation of Baba's compassion, was over for that day.

### *Sitting Naked on a Snow-Bound Peak*

Baba's *darshan* offered peace and solace to many, and many a heart was delighted. For some, Baba's loving touch subsequently inflamed their hearts with the longing to love Him more and more, so much so that before leaving Dehra Dun Baba agreed to give another *darshan* in November 1953. The March *darshan* happened to coincide with *Ramanavmi* which, according to the Hindu almanac, was the birthday of the Ancient One as Rama. Some families who met Baba on this day accepted Him as Rama come again.

A few days after the *darshan* program, a young, erudite *sanyasi* came requesting an interview with Baba. He had been a professor of English at one of the colleges in Uttar Pradesh, but had left his profession in quest of truth. As he was a sincere seeker, Baba made an exception in his case and he was ushered into Baba's presence. He bowed down to pay his respects, which Baba did not object to. In answer to a question, he related that he had heard of Meher Baba during his stay at Uttar Kashi in the Himalayan region, and that he felt drawn to visit Dehra Dun to meet the Perfect Master. He also added that he had resolved to leave the world for good and to lead a life under Baba's spiritual guidance.

Baba mentioned that there were many gurus and teachers in and around the Dehra Dun and Rishikesh area and asked him what had made him come to Him. His simple reply was, "Because I feel that You are the One who can lead me to the

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Goal." Baba gestured that many came to Him seeking gains of various sorts: relief from physical ailments and financial difficulties, a good job, or a suitable partner in life, a wife or husband, and so on, but He was happy that the professor had come solely for spiritual guidance.

Baba continued, "You want to stay with Me, but that is not easy — this needs great daring. And above all, those who stay with Me have to obey Me implicitly." The *sanyasi* promptly replied, "I am ready to obey You." Baba, however, asked him to sit outside the room for about fifteen minutes to reconsider his decision and then inform Him about it. The man went out and Baba continued His conversation with the *mandali* about His day-to-day work. After a short time the person came back and announced, "Baba, my decision to obey You remains unchanged."

Baba looked serious and stated, "Remember one thing carefully. It is easier to sit naked on a snow-bound peak of the Himalayas than to live with Me and obey Me implicitly." The *sanyasi* responded, "Baba, I do understand and honor the implications of Your statement."

Baba continued, "Then listen attentively. There are three orders that I want you to follow: For the present go back and stay wherever you want to, but without fail come to see Me exactly after one month. During this month, read books and messages dictated by Me and, in addition, those that are about Me. This reading will give you an idea about some of My ways and the nature of life lived near Me. For this period don't touch any woman. Will you be able to observe faithfully these three instructions?"

The *sanyasi* said, "Yes, Baba." Baba looked happy to hear this reply and gestured, "One more thing: when you come after a month, come alone; don't bring anyone else with you." The *sanyasi* gladly agreed and left the room. (Owing to its pertinence, I intend to narrate the entire episode now, although it actually occurred over a three month period.)

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### *The Irony of Search*

In the second week of April, Baba left for Mussoorie. One day He told Eruch that He wanted the *sanyasi* to visit Him after two months rather than one. So Eruch went to Dehra Dun and on inquiry learned that this person had gone to Delhi. Eruch obtained his phone number and called him long distance to inform him of the change in the date of his meeting with Baba. The *sanyasi* was delighted with the change and his immediate response was, "How compassionate is Baba! He is really the All-Knowing One!"

Eruch asked what he meant by this. The *sanyasi* explained. "During my recent visit to Delhi, unexpectedly I suffered a severe heart attack. I was rushed to the hospital and the doctors advised me to stay in bed for a few weeks. These past days I had been very much worried about my impending visit to Baba on the date fixed by Him. After hearing Baba's recent message, I heaved a sigh of relief and now there is no more mental tension with regard to the Master's order."

On the appointed day, as revised by Baba, the *sanyasi* arrived at the *mandali's* residence in Mussoorie and met Baba. Baba's first question to the visitor was, "Have you come alone?" "Well, Baba, when I was sick, a young woman looked after my needs and nursed me very well. I thought that the best way to repay her services would be to bring her for Your holy *darshan*," he replied. "You mean, you did not come alone as instructed by Me?" Baba gestured. Baba, however, asked the *sanyasi* to call in the woman. As she paid her respects to Baba, He conveyed His appreciation of her services to the *sanyasi*. He also blessed her by giving her a rose petal as His *prasad*. She was then asked to wait outside Baba's room.

Baba continued His conversation with the *sanyasi*, "Did you read the books dictated by Me and those that are written about Me?" "Sorry, Baba. I could not complete reading a single book by or about You because I was sick and ailing," was the rueful reply. "What about not touching any woman? Did you follow My injunction?" Baba inquired. "Well, I was resting in bed



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and was not allowed to exert myself, so the woman now sitting outside nursed me and I could not help touching her."

Baba summarized, as He folded three fingers, one after another, "You did not come alone. You did not read the books I asked you to, and you could not keep yourself from touching a woman for just two months. That is why I told you in the beginning: it is easier to sit naked on a snow-bound peak of the Himalayas than to stay near Me and obey Me."

However, with a look of compassion, Baba continued, "I forgive you for your failures in obeying my orders. Forget what has happened in the past. I give you one more chance. This time, no more reading of any special book or books; no restriction about touching any woman. Just one thing: come and see Me exactly after one month but come alone." The *sanyasi* replied, "Yes, Baba." With Baba's signal he left the room, although he looked crestfallen.

Another month passed by and, exactly on time, the *sanyasi* appeared at the *mandali's* residence. Coincidentally, Baba was there and motioned him to sit down. Baba gestured, "In obedience to My instruction you came on the appointed date. That's good. But have you come alone?" The man hesitated. Finally he said, "Baba, I have come here with the same woman who nursed me during my stay in the hospital. She has become my spiritual mate." Baba looked amused by the phrase spiritual mate. The man continued, "Please allow her to live with Your women disciples and I will stay with the men. Thus, both of us will lead a dedicated life at Your holy feet."

This request did not seem to please Baba. He signaled to Eruch to repeat His earlier statement about obedience being more difficult than sitting naked on a Himalayan peak. At the close of this brief interview Baba concluded, "I gave you two chances and twice you failed. With Me there is room only for one. It is better that you go your own way and please yourself."

The visitor, as he left the room, had no idea of the magnitude of the precious and sacred chance he had lost, an opportunity that comes only after many lifetimes. And what an irony it is that in his quest for truth, the *sanyasi* preferred to stay with

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his "spiritual mate" than with the Truth-Personified Master, Meher Baba.

### *Religious Conferences Make Spirituality Dry*

In the first week of April a Parliament of Religions was organized at Rishikesh. Yogi Shuddhanad Bharati was invited to be the chairman and to preside over the conference. With Baba's permission, Kishan Singh visited the site of the conference with the intention of distributing leaflets of Meher Baba's messages to the delegates coming from different parts of India.

He reached Rishikesh when the programs were already over and the delegates were busy packing to leave. It was a busy time for all and Kishan Singh could not meet the chief guest, Yogi Bharati, so he asked some people to pass on the leaflets to him.

On Kishan Singh's return to Dehra Dun, he reported to Baba what had occurred and Baba asked him to revisit Rishikesh the following day with a special message for the chairman, Yogi Bharati. When Kishan Singh arrived at his residence the next day, he saw him surrounded by many people asking him questions. Kishan Singh pushed his way through the crowd and said in a loud voice, "Yogiji, I have a message for you from Meher Baba."

With the mention of Baba's name, Yogi stopped his conversation and with a look of surprise said, "Where is Meher Baba residing at present? What is His special message?" Kishan Singh replied, "He is at Dehra Dun. But Yogiji, do you want to hear His message when alone or in this crowd?" At this, Yogi Bharati asked those present to leave. The gist of the message was, "Religious parliaments and conferences make spirituality dry and lower its status; only the presence of the God-Man enhances spirituality."

Yogi Bharati accepted Baba's words with great respect and in addition expressed his desire to see Baba in person if Kishan

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Singh would give him a lift to Dehra Dun. Kishan Singh didn't know what to say. After the March *darshan*, Baba had given a strict warning to the *mandali* that none of them should request Baba to see anyone, even for a few minutes. However, he felt that as a special case Baba might make an exception and he agreed to take Yogi Bharati to see Baba.

As an introduction, I might add here that Yogi Bharati was initiated in *Raja Yoga* during his early years. In 1915 he had the good fortune to have the blessing of both Sai Baba and Upasni Maharaj. As Sai Baba gave him candy as *prasad* he said, "Sweet (blessed) is the heart which is linked with the Sweetest (God)." Also, a very high saint of Hubli (in South India) had casually remarked to him, "You will meet a Silent Master."

Some time later while he was weeping he composed these lines: "O Beloved of my heart, I wait for You and have no other longing in life." The very next morning, he received a copy of *Meher Message* (a Baba journal) in the mail. In it was a beautiful photograph of Meher Baba, a figure he had often seen in his meditations. About this incident he wrote, "The Beloved is here; I have found Him. Mine is to love Him and His is to lead me."

In January 1953, when Baba was at Tadepalligudem, Yogi had his first opportunity to be in the embrace of his Silent Beloved, Meher Baba. About this brief meeting he wrote a poem, the first and last two lines of which are:

A God I see in human form,  
A shining God on earth;  
.....  
His presence I can never miss,  
I am a child of His grace.

Baba expressed His love for Yogi by embracing him for a second time and gestured, "You are sincere.... My love and guidance are with you."

It was some months after this meeting that Yogi went to Rishikesh to preside over the Parliament of Religions. He had no idea that Baba was staying so nearby, at Dehra Dun, and he

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jumped at the opportunity to meet Him again.

J. Helen drove Kishan Singh and Yogi in a car to Dehra Dun. A mile or two before reaching their destination, the car had a flat tire. Kishan Singh thought to contact one of the *mandali* by telephone to inform him of his being delayed and perhaps also to give the news that he was bringing Yogi Bharati with him. As the office from which he intended to phone was not on the main road, he had to cross a few bylanes and this took longer than he expected.

He had not informed Helen of this, as Helen was busy changing the tire. Thinking that Kishan Singh had decided to walk all the way back, when he was finished Helen drove straight to 107-A Rajpur Road. By the time Kishan Singh returned, Yogi's meeting with Baba was already over. As he left for His residence, Baba gave a message that as soon as Kishan Singh returned, he should be sent to Him. Baba's perfect timing includes perfect mistiming as well; this too is part of His game, as He adjusts situations to fit His work.

Yogi Bharati's arrival was a surprise for the *mandali*. Baba, however, gave an audience to Yogi in which he explained, "Conferences cannot unite mankind; the awakening of heart alone can achieve it. I belong to no religion; all religions belong to Me. Words have failed, I am the Silent Awakener."

Yogi told Baba that he had expressed the same views in his presidential speech and, in this context, he even read some lines to Baba. Baba simply gestured, "I know everything. I am the Ancient One." Baba then instructed the *mandali* to give Yogi Bharati some fruit and milk, which was his regular diet. Yogi felt blessed and the spell of Baba's inner and outer giving overwhelmed him.

A little later Baba left for His residence and just then Kishan Singh arrived. He received the message to see Baba immediately, and understood what it meant — a failure to obey Baba implicitly with regard to His earlier order concerning visitors. Baba reprimanded him for his loose interpretation of Baba's warning. Kishan Singh, with tears in his eyes, apologized to Baba, and Baba, in His compassion, forgave him. He also told him that he should not repeat such a mistake,

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as it created disturbances in His spiritual work.

Baba instructed Kishan Singh to help insure that Yogi Bharati left for Rishikesh by 3:00 P.M. He also told him to make arrangements for his safe and comfortable journey. A little while later, Baba sent word that Yogi should leave half an hour earlier, and again, after five minutes, a further message was received that he should now leave by 2:15 P.M., which he did. Baba's ways of changing dates and times for persons connected with Him were unpredictable, but in each case they had their own significance.

### *Disobeying and Obeying Baba*

There have been a few instances where one of the *mandali* either deserted Baba or was asked to leave. Baba's love for each of them, however, remained the same, unchanged and unconditional. During Baba's stay at Dehra Dun, He had to completely sever His outer connections with Babadas, who in the 1940's had traveled extensively spreading Baba's name and message in different parts of north India. Before Eruch and Pendu visited the district of Hamirpur in 1952, the spade work for people to receive Baba's message of love had been performed by Babadas.

However, it is sometimes noticed that the good results brought about by Baba's grace and inner help are mistakenly appropriated as the product of one's own efforts. Unfortunately, this happened with poor Babadas and his ego got the upper hand, which brought about his downfall. In addition to this, without Baba's permission, he raised loans in Baba's name, which Baba totally disapproved of. Being infinitely kind, Baba took upon Himself the responsibility of repaying the money to all concerned.

In spite of Baba's repeated warnings, Babadas did not mend his ways and Baba was, in a way, compelled to ask him to leave. On April 9th, a letter to this effect was handed to him at Dehra Dun. It read: "Go to Nagpur or anywhere you want to

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go; don't stay with the *mandali* at Dehra Dun." Accordingly, Babadas left the *mandali's* residence on April 10th and did not see Baba again for the rest of his life.

For Baba's followers in India, a special circular was mailed which stated:

Of late Babadas's talk and actions have been getting increasingly stupid and irresponsible. For the matter of that, Baba draws attention of everyone that whatever dealings one does with Babadas will be at the sole responsibility of the one who does it.

This matter was, however, prefaced by the following two sentences:

Baba has forgiven Babadas many a time for his mistakes and weaknesses. Even now He forgives him because Baba loves him as He loves everyone.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to Baba's two general injunctions given in the 1960's — no sex outside of marriage and no use of psychedelic and other harmful non-prescription drugs — one of the things that he disapproved of most was misappropriation of money in His name. And the above episode connected with Babadas is a glaring example of the result it brings.

In contrast to Babadas's disobedience and its dire consequences, I intend to narrate now an instance in which obedience to Baba's orders brought in its wake wonderful results. It is connected with another of Baba's *mandali*, Kaikobad Dastur. Before coming to stay with Baba, Kaikobad was working as a head cashier in an insurance company. He developed cataracts in both eyes and had to retire from his position two years prior to the normal time of retirement. And yet it was this which gave him the opportunity to begin counting repetitions of Baba's name instead of money.

About this time Baba not only conveyed to him that he would soon be called to stay with Him but, as a prerequisite, He also told Kaikobad to sell all except for a minimum amount of clothing. Kaikobad cheerfully carried out Baba's order and awaited the call to come, which did not arrive for several months. Only when he reached the point of total desperation

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<sup>23</sup> *Life Circular*, No. 11.

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did Baba send him a message to come to Meherabad for a permanent stay with Him. Thus in 1944 Kaikobad became one of Baba's close resident *mandali*.

In February 1953, when Baba went to Dehra Dun for a long stay, Kaikobad was among the *mandali* accompanying Him. Baba gave Kaikobad the special duty of offering prayers at certain specific times, so he was given a separate room. Knowing that Kaikobad's eyesight was very weak, Kishan Singh fixed a high-powered electric light in his room so that he would be able to read when he wished to. It was here in Dehra Dun that Baba asked him to repeat His name a hundred thousand times a day.

Kaikobad spent most of his time in his room. Baba would visit him in the morning before coming to the room where He sat with the *mandali*. One morning when Baba visited Kaikobad, he told Baba of three incredible experiences that he'd had. Later the same day, Baba called Kaikobad into the sitting room and instructed him to share with the *mandali* what he had previously related to Him.

Kaikobad said that during the past few days a dazzling light had begun emanating from his eyes, so much so that he could now read the newspaper without having to use the electric light. The second thing was that sometimes, even when he closed his eyes, the light persisted. It was as though the light was abiding in his body and, in that light, he saw Baba's beautiful face. Thirdly, on certain occasions, within this resplendent effulgence he saw a hand coming towards him — and the moment he felt the hand actually touching his head to bless him, it disappeared.

At the end of Kaikobad's narration, Baba explained that all the experiences related were in the domain of illusion. Such experiences continue to occur for a while and then they automatically stop. Baba told Kaikobad that he should not in any way regard himself as more advanced spiritually than others of the *mandali* just because of these incredible experiences. Nor should he feel disappointed or "demoted" when they no longer occurred.

In the end, Baba concluded, "I am least concerned with such

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experiences and from the point of view of ultimate reality there is not an iota of truth in them." As years passed by, with Baba's grace, Kaikobad had a variety of experiences and visions, but because of Baba's profound and crystal clear explanation given above, he did not attach extra importance to them. He viewed them as Baba's gifts and, as such, these experiences helped him to love Baba more and more and to continually repeat Baba's divine name from the depths of his heart.

Disobeying Baba implies loving Him for oneself, for one's own pleasure; obeying Him means loving Baba for Himself, for His pleasure. To love the God-Man, the Avatar, not for what He gives but for what He is, Love Unconditional, is all that really matters.

### *Baba's Quiet Stay at Mussoorie*

In the first week of April, Baba asked Adi in Ahmednagar to mail a printed leaflet to the Baba families in India. The gist of this leaflet was that Baba wanted His lovers to audibly and wholeheartedly repeat the name of the God according to their respective religions. The time given by Baba for this continuous repetition was for one hour from four to five o'clock in the morning of July 10, 1953.

The divine names recited by the Baba people, according to their beloved Master's instructions were:

Hindus: *Parabramha Paramatma*

Muslims: *Allahu Akbar*

Christians: God Almighty

Zoroastrians: *Ahuramazda*

(Parsis)

Zoroastrians: *Yezdan*

(Iranis)

Here I may mention that Baba would, for short periods, occasionally give opportunities to His lovers to participate in His inner spiritual work through certain instructions such as:



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to keep awake at night, to fast, to observe silence, to repeat the divine names. I presume that Meher Baba, even after having dropped His body — the cloak that Infinite Consciousness had put on — has left for us an unwritten instruction to observe silence each year on July 10th for the whole day, and also on January 31st for fifteen minutes from 12:00 midday to 12:15 P.M.

These two occasions can be regarded as special periods for the dispensation of the Avatar's grace, the purpose for which He assumed the man-form. The first date mentioned above is the anniversary of the day on which Meher Baba began observing silence. The second date is when He, the Word become flesh, dropped His physical form to resume His Infinite Formlessness — residing all the more in the hearts of His lovers as the Eternal Beloved.

On April 10th, Baba left Dehra Dun for a short stay of seven weeks at Mussoorie, the queen of hill stations in India. Located 22 miles north of Dehra Dun, it is situated at an altitude of 7,000 feet. On one side, it commands a majestic view of the Himalayas and on the other a vast panorama of the Doon valley, spreading out into the plains of India.

Baba stayed in Happy Valley, about three miles from the main bazaar, in a house owned by the *Rajah* of Tehri-Garhwal. The men *mandali* were accommodated in nearby quarters. The weather throughout April and May was pleasant, cool, and refreshing. Baba spent His time apparently relaxing, but was mainly working in seclusion towards the culmination of His Fiery Life and the beginning of Life, as explained by Him at the close of His New Life phase.<sup>24</sup> In fact, from the beginning of Baba's stay at Mussoorie, His spiritual work seemed to intensify profoundly.

The change of rhythm in Baba's inner spiritual work was often marked by offering His services to the poor and/or contacting the *masts*. This time, however, the variation in work was represented through the service of a teenage boy. In fact, before His arrival at Dehra Dun, Baba had instructed Kishan Singh and others to find an "ideal boy," as from February 19th, He wanted to wash the feet of this youth and to

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<sup>24</sup> *Life Circular*, No. 1, Feb. 6, 1952.

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offer him seven rupees as *prasad* every day for two weeks.

As it turned out, Baba's men at Dehra Dun were not successful in finding a boy fulfilling the qualifications enumerated by Baba. On the *darshan* day, however, a visitor coming to offer his respects to Baba was accompanied by his son, a teenager. Baba liked the young man and he was later invited to stay with Him at Mussoorie from May 2nd onwards. Accordingly, Kishan Singh made the arrangements to bring the boy to Mussoorie for Baba's contact. In connection with His special work, Baba kept this boy with Him for about two weeks and then sent him home.

It has been noticed that Baba was more concerned with His inner invisible work than with the outer, visible things and/or people connected with it. During each specific period of His work He would focus His entire attention on all those involved or connected with the work, so much so that other concerns did not exist for Him. Perhaps due to the very impersonal nature of His work, in which the individuals concerned were chosen primarily because of the roles they were to play, neither the boy nor his parents again visited Baba nor did He send for them. Baba's method represented a perfect blending of attachment and detachment.

At the beginning of His stay in Mussoorie, Baba allotted some of His time to attend to daily correspondence. But He soon felt He should be wholly undisturbed for His work, so in the first week of May, He instructed Adi to issue yet another circular to His followers in India informing them not to correspond with Baba for any reason whatsoever from May 15th through the end of September 1953. Along with this communication the following short message was also given:

When we love God in His own infinite Self  
And in all other selves except our own self,  
In the end we find that all the time  
We have been loving our own self.<sup>25</sup>

By the end of May 1953, Baba with His group of men and women disciples returned to Dehra Dun for the glorious work ahead of Him.

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<sup>25</sup> *Life Circular*, No. 12, May 10, 1953.

A MAST-TOUR OF FIVE DAYS  
1953—PART V

*A Van with Immense Spiritual Import*

During Meher Baba's stay at Mussoorie, in the first week of May He called Elcha Mistry, Kumar, Kishan Singh, and Jagannath Helen from Dehra Dun for a special meeting, along with His resident *mandali*. During this meeting, He entrusted Elcha with the task of hiring a sizeable van for a period of two weeks, beginning June 5th.

He also disclosed to those present that for the purpose of bringing about some momentous results in His ensuing spiritual work, He was planning to travel day and night with some of His people who would have "no rest, no sleep" for fifteen days. No outsiders were to be accommodated in the van and, as such, it would have to be driven by one of Baba's own people.

Elcha Mistry assured Baba that he would easily be able to procure such a van from one of his acquaintances. This pleased Baba and He added that Elcha should not treat this matter lightly and that He would not mind paying an abnormally high rent to the owner if necessary, as traveling together with the whole group in one vehicle was of paramount importance. "With a month's time in hand, Elcha should definitely fix one good van," Baba remarked. The rest of the invitees from Dehra Dun also agreed to help Elcha in this work.

As often as every other day, Baba would ask someone to telephone His people in Dehra Dun about their progress in hiring the vehicle. Baba instructed them not to spare any honest effort, not to leave any stone unturned in obtaining the van.

It was not an easy job to persuade an owner to part with his vehicle without his own man to drive it. Yet, Elcha at last succeeded. On hearing this piece of good news Baba was very pleased, and as He had said He would do earlier, He distributed

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sweets to the *mandali* to celebrate this communication affirming the group-tour of fifteen days.

Prior to this non-stop wandering, Baba sent Baidul in advance to search out fifty-six advanced souls — some *masts*, some saints. For Baba they were to represent the fifty-six God-realized souls who exist on earth at all times.

In connection with Baba's work with the poor, He sometimes allowed certain people, His ardent disciples or devotees, to contribute whatever they could conveniently and happily spare for such a cause. This time Baba families in Bombay were given the opportunity to contribute a significant sum to helping the poor at Dehra Dun.

For Baba, the poor chosen each time represented a different category for His work. On this occasion He asked Kumar to find widows who had daughters of marriageable ages who were unable to have them married owing to financial difficulties. In India most marriages are arranged marriages in which a bride's parents are required to offer a large amount of money to a groom as a dowry. Kumar carried out a strenuous search and succeeded in finding the kind of women Baba wanted.

On May 31st, Baba returned to Dehra Dun from Mussoorie and Kumar told Him about his success. Baba fixed the date of June 3rd for the gathering of the widows, and on their arrival, after bowing down to them, He presented each one with a new sewing machine. He also gave them some money to purchase cloth and other necessities. This was one of Baba's ways of helping them to learn and earn simultaneously.

With the passage of time these gifts of love must have helped the widows to financially arrange good matches for their daughters. After one such program, Baba conveyed that in helping the type of poor selected by Him, His help reached everyone in a similar predicament. On this particular day Baba also washed and dried the feet of twenty-four men and gave three hundred rupees to each person. This served as a prelude to Baba's tour of two weeks.

Baidul, who had been sent by Baba to gather information about *masts* and saints, now returned to Dehra Dun after a

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very strenuous journey. He had traveled within a radius of 150 miles and had prepared a list of advanced souls with their special and peculiar characteristics and the names of the villages and towns where they resided at the time. After listening to this inventory, Baba selected fifty-six *masts* and saintly souls. He also decided to visit most of these places to contact these God-possessed and God-loving souls during His "wandering tour," which the *mandali* estimated would cover a distance of about 2,000 miles in two weeks.

Baba often inquired about the availability of the van and stressed the importance of this "no rest, no sleep" journey and the magnitude of spiritual work which would be done if this tour of two weeks was completed to His satisfaction. He also added that if for any reason whatsoever, this tour were to be cancelled or modified, most of His plans would be adversely affected and upset.

Some of His people wondered why Baba should make His spiritual work dependent on such an apparently insignificant thing as a van. Some reassured Baba that the conveyance hired by Elcha was one of the best vehicles in Uttar Pradesh and that the owner had willingly agreed to part with it on a rental basis for two weeks. Baba instructed that the van should be at the *mandali's* residence on the evening of June 4th to begin the journey in the early hours of June 5th. Thus everything seemed to be going smoothly.

But soon difficulties began to crop up. Elcha Mistry, who was to accompany Baba, had to attend an important meeting on June 5th in connection with his work, and Baba reluctantly agreed to start a day later. "But what's the news about the van?" Baba gestured. Elcha, in contrast to his usual jovial way, reported despondently that the hired van which was supposed to have returned from the Punjab a week earlier had still not come back. He had sent telegrams to the owner but had received no reply. It was clear now that the van would not be made available for Baba. Elcha realized that it had been a mistake to rely completely on the van owner's word, but now it was too late to try any other van owner. He was very dejected because the whole affair displeased Baba.

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The *mandali* also became very unhappy and concerned, for they had heard Baba often warn that grave spiritual consequences would result if no van was procured. On this day Baba also conveyed to them that the delay of a day in His tour had resulted in an additional setback to the work originally planned by Him. In the hands of the Avatar, a simple thing or casual incident can hold enormous gravity for His work. Later, Baba gave an explanation (included at the end of this chapter) to the *mandali* about how such apparently small incidents have changed the course of events — the internal and external activities of the past Avatars.

### *Baba Begins His Tour in Two Cars*

Thus began a search to hire another van. Traveling together in one vehicle was of such paramount importance to Baba that in Mussoorie He had even suggested that His people in Dehra Dun purchase a new van and then sell it when the tour was over. But it was too late now even to buy one. After all efforts had failed miserably, the matter was reported to Baba with great distress. He then called His Dehra Dun group together and expressed His displeasure. On such occasions Baba looked so fiery that none would dare to offer any excuses or explanations as to why His instructions had not been properly carried out. Baba reprimanded them and told them that they had no idea of the setback that had been caused to His spiritual work. He added that under the present circumstances, to undertake a wandering tour of fifteen days was impractical, even unthinkable. Traveling by train or journeying in two cars would not bring the desired results, He concluded.

A summary of the points Baba discussed and decided in His meeting with the *mandali* and some devotees at Dehra Dun is given below:

- 1) Baba's plan of work during 1953 will have to be radically changed.
- 2) July 12th, the tentative date for a public *darshan* at Dehra Dun, is cancelled.

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- 3) Baba's visit to Kashmir which was earlier postponed is also cancelled.
- 4) Baba's future plans of 1953 will be decided by Him on July 10, 1953.
- 5) Instead of the original fifteen days tour of "no rest, no sleep" covering about 2,000 miles, Baba will now leave Dehra Dun on June 6th for one of His short *mast-tours* of five days.

It was to be a journey of about 500 miles, in two cars. Baba, however, made it clear that this tour would in no way compensate for the loss caused by the failure of the earlier plan.

On June 5th, Baba began the tour in two cars — Kishan Singh's, driven by Jagannath Helen, and a jeep borrowed by Elcha Mistry and driven by him. The others who accompanied Baba were Eruch, Baidul, Kumar, Kishan Singh, and Dr. C.D. Deshmukh who happened to be in Dehra Dun during his college vacation. Deshmukh also filmed a part of this tour, concentrating mainly on Baba in the process of contacting *masts*.

At about six o'clock in the morning on June 6th, Baba and His people left Dehra Dun for Rishikesh where the first contact was Nikanthawala, a high *mast*. Baba, with a big tray containing flowers, fruits, and sweets, approached and bowed down to the *mast*. He did not, however, touch his feet. The *mast* was lying majestically on his bed, on the second story of Bhajan Ashram. He seemed to be one of Baba's favorite *masts*; during this tour he was the first and also the last one to be contacted by Baba.

The cars proceeded towards Roorkee, but on the way Baba stopped at Kalyar Shariff, a place of pilgrimage for hundreds of people who pay their respects at the *dargah* of Sabir (Makdoom Ali Ashmed Sabir).

### *Sabir, in and out of Muqam-e-Hairat*

Sabir's life presents an incredible illustration of the powers of the planes. While Sabir was staying in Kalyar, he once had a

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whim to visit a local mosque for the morning prayers. As it was considerably earlier than the time for prayers He found the mosque totally vacant. He took his seat behind that of the *Pesh Imam* (one who leads the prayers) in the first row. After a while, people began coming into the mosque.

Each person, upon finding Sabir, a man of dirty appearance and tattered clothes, sitting up front, asked him to move back one row, until by the time the prayers were to start, Sabir had been thrown out of the mosque and had to sit on the step of the outer door. He was greatly annoyed at this, especially since inside a mosque all are supposed to be treated equally, irrespective of their social status.

At the appointed time the *nimaz* began. When the congregation had bowed down in supplication to Allah, Sabir cried aloud, "O Mosque, how can you bear such an insolence on this part of the people and stand erect? Why don't you come down?" And it is said that the huge structure immediately toppled down and that the congregation was buried alive. It was also noticed that the flourishing city of Kalyar, from that day on, began to decline and eventually fell into ruins. Perhaps this is an example of God's wrath made manifest through the utterance of one of His children, a powerful *jalali mast*.

Some time later, Sabir, who was consciously traversing the spiritual path, was unfortunately caught up in *muqam-e-hairat*,<sup>26</sup> a station between the third and fourth planes of consciousness. If an aspirant happens to get involved or absorbed at this station, he finds himself lost in an enchantment and his spiritual progress is definitely delayed. This particular *hairat* (enchantment) has another unique quality: one's physical posture, whatever it may be at the moment one is overpowered, remains unchanged. In Sabir's case, he was holding an overhanging twig of a fig tree at the moment of entering this deep absorption, and so he remained standing in that posture for days and weeks without food and water, dazed to the world. Only natural death, divine intervention, or help from a Perfect Master can pull one out of this profound infatuation.

Eventually the news of Sabir's *hairat* reached the ears of Baba Fariduddin, Sabir's Master. He summoned his disciples

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<sup>26</sup> Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, Supplement No. 6, p. 21.



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to him and said to them, "If any of you can help Sabir come down from his *hairat*, he will be richly rewarded by me." All kept quiet. At last, Shamshuddin Toork of Panipat, as wished by his Master, offered his services. He was a handsome person, a singer with a melodious voice. The Master blessed Shamshuddin and the only instruction he gave him was, "For any reason whatsoever, do not stand in front of Sabir, so that his direct gaze may not at any time fall on you."

Shamshuddin arrived at Kalyar and saw Sabir "with blank and unwinking eyes, staring at the skies, utterly lost to his surroundings." <sup>27</sup>He took his stand to Sabir's left and began singing in his sweet warbling voice some mystical songs of love and praise of God. Through the inner help of Baba Fariduddin, this simple, natural device worked well. Sabir began to show signs of animation, regained his gross senses and was finally pulled out of the profound enchantment.

When he became fully aware of his surroundings, he recognized Shamshuddin standing on his left and said in a feeble voice, "Why are you standing? Why don't you sit?" Shamshuddin, his heart filled with joy at the fulfillment of the duty given by his Master, said, "It does not behoove me to sit when a venerable person of your stature is standing."

Thereupon Sabir asked Shamshuddin to help him be seated on the ground. As his limbs had become extremely stiff, it was not possible for him to assume a sitting position, so Shamshuddin helped him to lie flat on the ground. He soon closed his eyes which had been open for many, many weeks and in no time he was fast asleep. On waking, Sabir felt totally relaxed and he bade Shamshuddin return to Baba Fariduddin.

### *Sabir Predicts His Own Death*

Shamshuddin returned and reported the entire episode to his Master who was highly pleased. Later, one day Shamshuddin very respectfully reminded his Master, Baba Fariduddin, about the promised reward, and in reply the Master said, "Yes, I know you have done your work very well. I give Ali Ahmed Sabir to you by way of reward. Go and serve him."

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<sup>27</sup> *Meher Baba Journal*, "You Must Believe It," January 1942, pp. 164-169.

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Shamshuddin once again made his way to Kalyar and wholeheartedly dedicated himself to the service of Sabir, whom he began to regard as his Master. As time passed, Sabir initiated him in the Path. After a while, he instructed him to seek a position in the king's cavalry. He of course ordered him to continue with his personal spiritual disciplines and prayers. Sabir incidentally remarked. "Remember one more thing: the day you happen to perform a miracle will be the day of my departure from earthly life."

In compliance with the Master's order, Shamshuddin sought a position in the cavalry of Sultan Alauddin's army. A few years later, Alauddin besieged a very strong fort in Rajasthan, but despite his best efforts, failed to conquer it. As a last resort he approached a saintly person to intercede in the matter and to pray for his success.

The person replied, "Sultan, there is a great soul in your cavalry; if he prays for you, your wish will be fulfilled." "But how am I to know him?" the Sultan inquired. The saint answered, "Tonight there will be a great storm. It will extinguish all the lights — big and small — in your camp. But you will notice a little lamp burning and a man praying by its side. He will be the one I am now referring to."

As foretold by the saint, a hurricane raged over the camp that night. The tents were knocked down and the lamps were blown out. Everywhere there was chaos. This convinced Alauddin that the rest of the saint's prediction must be equally true, and he began to visit the campgrounds of his cavalry in search of a lone burning lamp. After a little while, he noticed a small lantern flickering, and by its side a man was engrossed in deep meditation. The Sultan reverentially waited till the person concluded his prayers.

This person was Shamshuddin Toork. He stood up to receive the Sultan. In a very polite way the Sultan entreated Shamshuddin to pray for the fall of the fortress that he had besieged. Shamshuddin tried to put him off with different reasons but the Sultan remained adamant. At last, Shamshuddin felt that it was God's will that he should pray and said to the Sultan, "Relieve me from my position; pay me my dues. I will immediately leave this camp and go some miles

away to pray. Attack the fort in the morning. God willing, victory will be yours." After a little pause he added, "But unfortunately this miraculous happening will coincide with the passing away of my beloved Master from this earthly abode."

The Sultan, who had no connection with Shamshuddin's Master, willingly agreed to the conditions laid down by him, and eventually captured the fort. Meanwhile, Shamshuddin, after his promised prayers, left for Kalyar immediately. And there, true to his Master's words, he found that Sabir "had expired, and for want of attendants his body was being guarded by tigers and wild animals of the forests."<sup>28</sup> On Shamshuddin's arrival the animals returned to the jungle, and he attended to the burial of his Master's physical body. It is at this place that the present *dargah* of Sabir was later constructed.

Coincidentally, there are two similarities between the lives of Sabir and his Master, Baba Fariduddin, also known as Ganj-i-Shakkar. Both were caught up in *muqam-e-hairat*, and both used their powers. Baba Fariduddin killed sparrows and thieves;<sup>29</sup> Sabir toppled a big mosque burying many alive in the debris. However, with the grace of the Perfect Masters, both became God-realized. Incredible are the ways of God, the Incomprehensible, revealed through the lives of *Sadgurus* (Qutubs), the Perfect Masters.

I have narrated the account of Sabir in detail for the readers as an illustration of the stories connected with the lives of saints and Masters whose *dargahs* and *samadhis* Meher Baba visited during this and also subsequent mast-tours.

After paying His respects at the *dargah* of Sabir at Kalyar, Baba proceeded to Muzaffarnagar.

*A Naked Mast, a Saint and a Mastani*

While traveling in the car toward Muzaffarnagar, Baba sighted a mast who was completely naked. It seemed that he was *majzoob-like* because he was walking delightedly, without the least perturbation, in the scorching heat of the midday sun.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Meher Baba, *Discourses*, Vol. II, pp. 107-108.

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This mast had not had the good fortune to have come in contact with the God-Man during His earlier tours, so Baba appeared anxious to meet him. Baidul was told to persuade the mast to sit by the roadside, which he managed to do by coaxing the mast to rest under the shade of a tree. Baba walked a little distance to give him sweet biscuits, and the contact was accomplished to Baba's satisfaction. This majzoob-like person appeared old and gentle, and had an impressive countenance.

Baba liked this *naga* mast and especially remembered him at Dehra Dun after the tour. He even sent one of His disciples to bring him to Dehra Dun. In spite of an enthusiastic search between Roorkee and Muzaffarnagar over a period of two weeks, neither the mast nor a trace of his whereabouts could be found. Disappointed, the diligent disciple returned to Baba to report his failure.

To the surprise of all, one evening shortly thereafter the same mast was seen leisurely walking on Rajpur Road in Dehra Dun towards Baba's residence. Baba was pleased with this news and made arrangements for his stay. For about a month. Baba often visited him and served him lovingly, after which he was sent back to Saharanpur with an escort. As usual, Baba made some arrangements with a local person to look after the needs of the mast. Baba's love for masts, His God-centered children, was inimitable.

On June 6th, late in the afternoon, Baba and His people continued their journey to Bijnore. It turned out they could not reach the city by the route they had taken, as a bridge had been torn down. One of the cars, while going back to the road, got stuck in the sand of the riverbed. By using jacks and clearing the burning sand by hand, the *mandali* succeeded in making the wheels spin. But instead of freeing the car, this only made it sink deeper in the sand. The hot breezes and the shadeless expanse of the river worsened the situation.

Human aid at such an hour seemed impossible. Luckily, however, after an hour of fruitless struggle, some people happened to pass by on their way to Bijnore. They readily offered to help pull the car out of the sand and get it on the right track. Perhaps these hardships of the mast-tours were metaphors for the adventures and frustrations of the masts

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while treading their inner path to God.

It was evening when all reached Muzaffarnagar, and Baba abandoned the plan of visiting Bijnore. After meals and a short rest, Baba wished to visit Charthawal, an out-of-the-way place where a very respected saint named Abhaya Dev was staying. Baba wanted to pay His respects to the saint, but as an "ordinary" man. Baba warned His people that none of them should disclose His identity to anyone at Charthawal. The journey began. The distance was only fourteen miles, but the road was so rough and bumpy that the drivers had a very difficult time.

Baba visited the saint and bowed down to him. The saint's devotees very lovingly invited Baba's people to stay there for the night or at least to spend some time and have refreshments. These requests, however, were not complied with. It has been noticed that once a contact was made with any *mast* or saint, Baba would immediately leave that place. So the same night the two cars slowly made their way back to Muzaffarnagar.

On arriving, and before having food or retiring for the night, Baba visited a *mastani* named Allahdia. She was staying in a very small room filled with all sorts of rubbish. Baidul requested Allahdia to come out of her room, and a little later she yielded and came out, holding a candle in her hand. She was heavily clad with dirty clothes and had put a number of iron rings and bangles on her wrists. God alone knows how one can feel comfortable with such a load of unclean clothing!

Baba gave her a rupee (coin) which she gratefully accepted and said in Urdu, "May you live long; I invoke God's blessings." She went inside her room and Baba in a happy mood left for the *dak* bungalow. The first day of the mast-tour was over.

### *Bambi of Khanna and Totapuri of Kup*

On June 7th, at 5 o'clock in the morning, the two cars left the *dak* bungalow of Muzaffarnagar for a long journey. However, after a short drive, Baba stopped at Saharanpur to renew His contact with an old, white-bearded man with a pleasing

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personality named Kalu Mian. This *mast* had sparkling eyes and a ready smile on his face. Baba gave him a rupee and bowed down to him.

Although earlier Baba had wanted to go to Ludhiana (Punjab) by the highway, He now suggested a side trip to Kurukshetra. There He paid a visit to Kathia Baba, a saintly person who had recently arrived from Kathiawar, a province in the state of Gujarat. At night Baba and His people rested at the *dak* bungalow in Ambala.

On the morning of the 8th, the first stop was at Khanna where Baba contacted an ascetic clad in orange robes, and then a naked *mast* named Bambi who looked very robust. As Baba placed His head on Bambi's feet, he cried aloud, "*Saqi*," and ran away into the fields. Baba, being the Perfect *Saqi*, the Cupbearer, pours the wine of His love to the measure of one's cup (heart's longing). But His giving has a unique quality that helps the cup to increase its capacity to hold even more wine in case the Cupbearer wishes to dole it out again. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons for Baba's *mast* contacts.

Baidul led Baba to a Jain sadhu who had returned from his daily round of begging for food. When Baba wished to pay respects to him, the sadhu said, "I am not worthy to receive such homage from others." However, after a little persuasion he allowed Baba to touch his feet.

At Kup, near Ludhiana (Punjab), Baba visited a ninety-year-old *majzoob-like mast* named Totapuri. Baba had first met him in April 1942; at that time he was a very *jalali-type* and roamed about naked accompanied by dogs. At the initial contact, Baba gave him some bananas and cigarettes. In the summer of 1946, during Baba's visit to Kup, Totapuri was in a very fiery mood and he could not be contacted to Baba's satisfaction.

This time, however, he appeared very quiet and docile. He still was not wearing any clothes and always sat on the bare ground, with no shelter over him. Baba looked pleased to meet this sixth plane *mast* and several times He placed His forehead on Totapuri's feet. While paying such homage, Baba casually heard one of His men making reference to Baba's divinity.

Baba did not like this, so He chided the person and gestured,

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"One has to reduce oneself to dust and then, in utter humility, take *darshan*. That's the way." And He pressed His head again on Totapuri's feet. With the passage of time, Baba's remark has gathered profound significance for His lovers, directing them to the method in which they should take Baba's *darshan* at Meherabad, or anywhere, any time.

In the afternoon, Baba reached Ludhiana. In 1946 in this city He had contacted a few *masts* and swamis. During this visit, He met only Dandi Swami who for most of the day used to sit alone in his room and saw visitors only at *arti*. Because he was orthodox in his habits, those who were allowed to see him had to remove sandals, belts, wallets, etc., so that no leather articles were brought into Dandi Swami's presence. Baba, to accomplish His work, did not mind abiding by this rule. The Swami was said to be 108 years old and yet gave regular discourses on the *Bhagavad Gita*. He did not allow anyone to touch his feet, so Baba bowed down to him from a distance and returned.

After a long and tiresome journey in the scorching heat throughout the day, Baba and His men rested for the night in the *dak* bungalow at Ludhiana, and resumed traveling the next morning.

### *Mastani Ma, Chinta Bhagat and Nooria Baba*

June 9th was a busy day for Baba and His men. They were constantly on the move from one place to another in search of God-intoxicated people, from early morning till late at night. First they drove straight to Phillaur to contact a reputed *mastani*. On arriving they found her resting, covered with a bed sheet. The *mandali* gently called out, "*Ma, ma,*" (mother), but she did not stir. As Baba never contacted any *mast* or *mastani* against his or her wish, Baba decided to pay another visit to her later the same day.

Now, under Baidul's direction, the two cars proceeded through long stretches of fields towards a village named Mohwalla. On the way, Baba's car, in an attempt to cross a pool of water, got stuck in the muddy soil. Local villagers, without

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knowing how blessed they were to have an opportunity to help the Avatar, assisted Baba's men in pulling the car out. It was about 8 o'clock in the morning when the cars reached the village of Mohwalla, which is about two miles from Pratap Para railway station.

Here Baba contacted a *mast* who had besmeared his whole body with dust and was comfortably lying naked in one of the lanes of the village. He was asked if he would like something to eat, to which he replied, "Apply *ghee* (clarified butter) to the *chapatis* and offer them to dogs and to some good people." It was noticed by the local people that whatever condition the *mast* found himself in, he appeared happy and contented. *Masts*, being drowned in the ocean of God's grace, want practically nothing and are not bothered by anything — whether it be the sweltering heat of summer or the biting cold of winter. Baba paid His respects to him and gestured, "A good *mast*." Incidents like this have been captured by Dr. Deshmukh in his film.

On His return to Phillaur, Baba met Mastani Ma. She was found sweeping the floor of a nearby hotel and singing to herself softly in a low voice, "*Baja baj raha hai*," meaning "sweet music is being played." Baba was so pleased with this contact that He met her again the same night and offered her a rupee coin. She played with it as a child plays with a fascinating pebble. Then she asked for cigarettes. One of Baba's men gave her two packets. She gave two cigarettes to each including Baba, placing them in their pockets. In addition, she very playfully tied a knot in Baba's *sadra*. Baba looked happy and remarked that she was of a high spiritual status.

The narration of this contact reminds me of another exceptional *mastani* with the same name — Mastani Ma of Lahore. She was supposed to have been sitting at one place, opposite the railway station, for over twenty years. Baba contacted her in 1941 when He was on His way from Jaipur to Quetta. This *mastani*, like a woman observing *purdha*, used to keep her face covered with a shawl. "One evening, Baba took Norina to see her, and He (Baba) lifted the shawl away from her face. She had a very dark countenance with strange, light-bluish



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eyes, and she looked up adoringly at Baba, put her hands together, and said, 'Allah,'"<sup>30</sup>

It was still late morning and after another detour Baba reached a village named Shikhola Tala to see a *mast* called Munni Lal. He had to be gently persuaded to allow Baba to touch his feet. By midday the cars arrived at Bura Rurka, another big village. Here there lived a very high type of *mast* who, in spite of being very old, was exceptionally lively in spirit. He remained absolutely naked throughout the year. His name was Chinta Bhagat.

Chinta Bhagat, in his childlike innocence, was oblivious of his bodily needs. He had to be humored to make him drink a cup of milk or to eat some sweets. Some of his devotees would sing songs as they placed morsels of food in his mouth. He had a very dignified look and his eyes indicated the depth of his intoxication, of his unadulterated love for God. In such *masts*, the splendor of the Beloved they contemplate with love is reflected on their faces and is expressed through their gait and gestures; and a far-off gaze, lost as they are in their journey to the Infinite One, is also clearly visible.

When Baba reached Chinta Bhagat's place, Chinta was found to be lying on the bare floor of a room. Baba very lovingly pressed Chinta's feet and also at times placed His forehead at the feet of the *mast*. Even after His return to Dehra Dun, Baba would occasionally remember Chinta Bhagat for his innocent and unpretentious behavior and because of the blissful air about him.

In the afternoon, at Sangatpura, another gem of a *mast* named Nooria Baba was contacted. During Baba's previous visit, he was found sitting in front of a small room, near a *dhuni* pit in which some wood was smoldering. The *mast* had a blanket over his head and a *chillam* (a small, clay pipe) in his hand. Perhaps the *chillam* and *dhuni* reflected the fire of love inside the heart of the *mast*.

People had been seeing him sitting there in the same fashion for more than twenty years, unmindful of those visiting him and oblivious to the changes of the seasons. At that time, he kept by his side seven sacks of baked earth piled one on top of the other, with all sorts of rubbish on them. On the occasion of

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<sup>30</sup> William Donkin, *The Wayfarers*, p. 286.

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this visit, it was learned that the *mast* had more or less regained his normal consciousness and had begun to stay inside his room, behind closed doors. Instead of seven sacks, he had dug seven shallow pits leading to his room.

When Baba reached Sangatpura, the *mast* had retired into his room and was not in a mood to see visitors. When requested to come out he replied, "Not until evening." But after repeated entreaties by his devotees and Baba's men, Nooria Baba finally opened the door and stood in the doorway in silence.

Baba very affectionately went to him and touched his feet, a sign of Baba's inner and outer contact. Then the *mast* asked Baba to cross one of the seven pits, which He lovingly did to please the *mast*. After the doors were closed again, Baba wished to meet him for a second time, but when the message was conveyed to the *mast*, he promptly replied from inside his room, "The work is done. You are free to go." And so the two cars moved on.

Baba continued His journey in the direction of Kapurthala, but en route He visited Hadiabad to see a well known centenarian, a saintly person named Kali Prabhat. After Baba's very short visit with the advanced pilgrim, Kali Prabhat distributed almonds to all, a nice and nutritious ending to celebrate the occasion of the Avatar's incognito meeting with him.

### *Sweet Memories of the Discomforts*

Baba reached Kapurthala (Punjab) by 6:00 P.M. In this city He first contacted an old *mastani* who had a very dignified face and a self-composed expression. In contrast to the earlier *mastanis*, she was decently dressed, which was exceptional. She used to spend most of her time roaming about in the vicinity of the courthouse. Some revered her to the extent that they believed she directed the justice dispensed through that court. Because of this, she was fondly called "Budia Judge" by the local people. Baba reverentially paid His respects to her.

One of the people watching Baba's group taking *darshan* of the *mastani* voluntarily offered to guide them to another

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*mastani* if they so wished. Of course, this suggestion was accepted. After going through lanes and bylanes on the outskirts of the city, they found a *mastani* sitting all alone in a field. Although her name was Bodha Rani (Queen), she was scantily dressed in the most ordinary clothes.

When Baidul tried to approach her, she flung a piece of brick at him. However, Baidul, being used to the ways of the God-intoxicated ones, went ahead. In soft words he explained that his elder Brother and friends had nothing to ask of her, but that they simply wished to pay their respects, Dr. Deshmukh, seeing the fiery mood of Bodha Rani, kept a considerable distance from her as he did not wish to risk possible damage to his movie camera. Baba, however, quietly went to her and touched her feet.

After this contact, she asked for cold water and food. One of the *mandali* managed to get a glass of cool water from a nearby well. As for food, Baba gave her a rupee and the *mastani* instructed a nearby villager to buy something for her to eat. During Baba's visits to the God-intoxicated, owing to His deep love for them, He would fulfill any wishes they expressed.

On His return to the city, Baba contacted a *mast* named Ramesh. He was sitting on the parapet of a temple. After quickly paying His respects. Baba gave Ramesh a rupee and left; no comments were made. The next contact was of Kashiram, a much respected figure in the main bazaar of Kapurthala. He seemed like a simple, innocent man with an air of genuine naturalness about him.

Kashiram became all the more humble in Baba's presence, perhaps a sign of indirect recognition, and innocence shone through his God-intoxicated eyes. Kashiram very lovingly wanted to return Baba's homage by touching His feet, but was not permitted to do so. Instead, he just folded his palms in *namaskar* while his eyes seemed to touch Baba's sacred feet. It was about eight at night and Baba conveyed that His work in the city was completed. In all, six *masts* and three *mastanis* of high order had been contacted that day.

Now, Baba decided to return to Dehra Dun and He wished to finish as much of the journey as possible during that one night.

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In addition, He instructed those with Him not to sleep, not even to doze in the cars but to keep wide awake. This was a real ordeal for Baba's men, especially after their continuous traveling of four days, but, in their love for the Master, no one thought of disagreeing with Baba in any way.

Baba and His party left for Jullandur. They stopped en route at Phagwara for dinner, and reached Phillaur at about 10:30 P.M. As mentioned earlier, Baba made a special visit to Mastani Ma for a second contact. From here, the journey to Hardwar was to be made without a break, but on the way Elcha Mistry's car had a flat. In the dead of night, after strenuous effort, a number of punctures were patched. The spare tires that they had with them had already been used. By the time the car was ready, the desire for sleep had totally left Baba's men.

In the early morning of June 10th, they arrived at Kankhal, a suburb of Hardwar. There was a *mast* staying here in a lovely garden; he had remarkable, radiant skin which shone like heated copper. During Baba's last visit, He had offered enough money to the devotees to have dentures made for this God-intoxicated soul. At this present visit, the *mast*, like a child, innocently showed his artificial teeth to all, which amused Baba.

The cars then sped off via Hardwar to Rishikesh, to Bhajan Ashram. Here Nilkanthwalla, the naked *mast*, was staying. On June 6th, when Baba had met him, the *mast* did not speak but wrote on a slate, "Kankhal, Hardwar, Rishikesh, Ram Ram." Baba responded to this writing by concluding His short tour with His visits to Kankhal, Hardwar and Rishikesh, and bidding *Ram Ram* (goodbye) to Nilkanthwalla. On June 10th, the party returned to Dehra Dun, utterly exhausted. Baba, in spite of His delicate health, looked cheerful and expressed His happiness about meeting His beloved children, the *masts* and *mastanis*, whom He had contacted during the entire tour.

To give readers an idea of the unbearable weather and the multitude of discomforts of the journey which Baba and those with Him had to face, I give below some excerpts from the diary of one who made the trip:

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This mast-tour, as is always the case on such occasions, was a very trying ordeal for everyone. Especially the two (J. Helen and Elcha Mistry) who drove the two cars, had to suffer great strain, without any rest. They were all the time at the wheel, barring when there was a break in the journey, either for food or mast contacts. Both the cars gave a lot of trouble by frequent punctures and bursts; spare tires and tubes had to be fitted under the scorching heat of the sun.

In most of the places, the temperature was above 117 degrees Fahrenheit. Water was sometimes scarce and the hot wind and dust-storms added to the heat of the day. The heat and the hot breeze instantaneously evaporated the sweat as soon as it oozed out of the pores of the body. All the members of the party had to put up with discomforts and inconveniences of all types, and Baba shared these with the group.

These experiences of difficulties and trials, though very trying, become sweet in memory when one recollects them. There is invariably a lingering feeling that the mast contacts were surely worth all these troubles and much more.

After returning to Dehra Dun, Baba remarked, in the presence of most of His devotees of Dehra Dun, that although He was completely satisfied with the work done in this tour, no number of such mast-trips nor any amount of satisfaction derived thus could ever compensate for what has been undone by a thing so trifling as failure to procure a station-wagon (van) and the consequent repercussions on the "picture of work" He had formulated and pre-planned in all its details.

### *The Avatar's Incomprehensible Game*

One may wonder how an insignificant material object like a van could assume such importance in Baba's work, but there is no doubt it did. While in Mussoorie, Baba frequently stressed the need for His people in Dehra Dun to definitely have a good

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van hired for His work by the first week of June. He even suggested that they buy a van and sell it after the two-week tour if they could not rent one. Baba's work seemed to depend on His being able to travel with His men in one vehicle for fifteen days "without rest or sleep," and in contacting fifty-six advanced souls — *masts*, *majzoobs* and saints. When a van could not be procured, not only was Baba extremely displeased, but He remarked later that this had forced Him to revise and rearrange many things pertaining to His future spiritual work.

That the Avatar's spiritual work can hinge upon whether or not a van is rented was and will be incomprehensible to many. Baba Himself once remarked that even to some who have accepted Him as their Master, such a state of affairs might seem ridiculous. The gist of Baba's explanation (not noted verbatim) is given below:

A Perfect Master, owing to his conscious union with God, the Infinite, is beyond time and space, and as such there is nothing for him to accomplish for himself. However, according to the divine will, he takes an active interest in creation and experiences himself as the center of everyone and everything. So he consciously and continuously works in order to help all who are in bondage in their Godward march.

But his ways of work and of help are not always comprehensible. To the human intellect (mind) sometimes his utterances and actions appear very confusing, but to a simple and innocent heart embedded in complete faith in one's Master, such words and deeds will shine out ... as the *Lila* of his Master.

It is impossible to convince the limited mind through rational explanations about the workings of the universal mind, which are beyond the grasp and reach of human intellect and even of human imagination. So, however much I explain about the setbacks caused by the failure of obtaining a van, one will never comprehend the import of what I really mean. Yet, one thing is certain: that all these setbacks do not and will never affect Me although they affect My work.

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Baba then mentioned some apparently ordinary incidents from the lives of the past Avatars to illustrate how those events have changed the course of spiritual history. Rama, for instance, at Sita's request, went out to hunt a "golden" deer. While He was away, Sita quite casually crossed a line drawn before the hut, which enabled Ravana to take her to Lanka. The search for Sita and her consequent release from Ravana's palace, is the main subject for the great epic the *Ramayana*.

Krishna, as an arbitrator, visited the royal court of Duryodhana, the King of the Kauravas, to bring about an amicable settlement between the two mighty warring parties. In spite of His most skillful pleadings, He did not achieve the desired results, and He returned home seemingly disappointed. This setback brought in its wake one of the greatest wars in the history of the world (which forms the setting for The *Mahabharata*, wherein Krishna has given His universal message to the world through the *Bhagavad Gita*).

Baba also referred to events in the lives of Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed, and added that if they were Truth-Personified, All-Knowing and All-Powerful, then why could they not foresee the dangers and avoid the setbacks to their work? Baba concluded:

If anyone's mind happily and voluntarily accepts the explanations given by Me, it is well and good; if it does not, then let it continue to doubt till it gets tired of all the endless doubts and arguments about things which are beyond the conception and comprehension of any human mind.

In a later period, during one of His meetings with His lovers, Baba conveyed, "In Illusion, how I play My game, no one knows. Don't try to understand Me. My depth is unfathomable. Love Me." And this, I feel, is the most appropriate explanation given by Baba for any of His lovers trying to understand His incomprehensible game.

JULY MEETING AND THE MASTER'S PRAYER  
1953—PART VI

*The Two Circulars*

All the *mandali* residing at Dehra Dun gathered in Baba's presence on June 19th, at 8 o'clock in the morning, nine days after the *mast-tour*. Baba looked radiant, but serious as well. He gracefully rose from His chair, so the *mandali* also stood in silence. Baba first bowed down to Gustadji and then stood in a very reverential mood, with His hands folded in *namaskar*. On behalf of Baba the following prayer was read aloud:

My salutations to all the past, present, and future Perfect Ones — *Qutubs, majzoobs, masts*, lovers and seekers of God.

Today I remember with my love, in accordance to their love and faith, my physically departed lovers.

Then, while all remained standing, Elcha Mistry read a list of 137 departed ones who were close in Baba's love. At the end, Baba for the second time placed His head on Gustadji's feet, and with quick and light steps walked to His seat. To conclude this program, mango jam was distributed to those present. Perhaps this *prasad* of jam was to commemorate the sweet memories of those who lived for Him.

In the latter part of June, although Baba did not leave Dehra Dun, the *mandali* did have to move from 107-A Rajpur Road, to 101 Rajpur Road. This was because Kishan Singh, in order to dedicate the rest of his life to Baba, retired from his government job. He thus had to leave the house the government had put at his disposal. So he and the *mandali* moved to a house nearby.

At around this time, Baba issued a circular which asked His people to observe a fast on July 10th, 1953 from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. During the period of fast, no food or liquid, except water, was to be permitted. Between 5



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and 7 A.M. on the 10th, however, all were allowed to consume anything they liked so they could keep focused on Baba during the day.

According to an earlier circular, Baba's disciples and devotees had already been asked to repeat the name of God, specific to their religion, for one hour in the early morning of July 10, 1953. When giving orders to His people, Baba was specific and strict, yet also considerate.

### *A Visitor Drenched in Rain, Denied Darshan*

Most mornings while in Dehra Dun, Baba, accompanied by Dr. Goher, walked from His residence to the *mandali's* quarters by an unfrequented footpath that ran behind the large bungalows in that area. During His regular sittings with those who stayed near Him, He often warned all, especially Kishan Singh, not to ask Him to see any visitors. Every day, by 11:00 A.M., Baba would return for lunch, often accompanied by Aloha who would hold an umbrella over His head.

Baba's *darshan* in March for the local people was still the talk of the city. Those who had missed the opportunity of meeting Baba earlier began requesting Kishan Singh through letters and phone calls to arrange brief meetings for them with his Beloved Master. When the entreaties were genuine and from deserving people, it was very difficult for him to explain that he was not allowed to even ask Baba to see anyone. Obeying Baba's order was a real test for Kishan Singh, but he seemed to be up to it. Unconsciously, however, he began to take pride in his obedience. Baba, being the Compassionate Master, soon helped extricate him from the snares of self-esteem through an interview given to an unexpected visitor.

It was July 5th. As usual, Baba arrived in the morning at the *mandali's* quarters. It began to rain heavily and a little later a man, soaked to the skin, entered the gate and stopped in front of the house with an inquiring look on his face. Kishan Singh came out and learned that the person was Dr. Hakumat Rai Kapil, and that he was working at the Air Headquarters in

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New Delhi. He had read Baba's books and was ardently seeking Baba's *darshan*. But as he was not on Adi K. Irani's mailing list, he did not know of Baba's partial seclusion.

Kishan Singh was very much touched by Kapil's sincerity and devotion. However, only a day earlier Baba had severely warned him that if he even put in a word for any one to have His *darshan*, He would immediately leave Dehra Dun. So Kishan Singh was helpless, and with a heavy heart he told Kapil that it would not be possible for him to see Baba for several months.

It was a shock for Kapil to hear this news. The Compassionate Master was so close and yet he was being denied His *darshan* — how unbelievable! However, in obedience to the Master's wish, he retraced his steps towards the gate, his tears joining the rain showering from the heavens, a sign of heavenly sympathy and solace.

When Dr. Hakumat Rai Kapil was only eight years old, he had heard a discourse in a temple about the Expected One — the Avatar of the *Kali Yuga*. He was so fascinated with the idea of God assuming a human form that the desire to meet Him in person became deeply ingrained in him. While still a young man, he obtained a nice job and was married to a good girl, yet his longing to meet the Avatar did not diminish.

Soon this quest took a serious turn and he began with great interest to read books on spirituality — different paths leading to God. He was especially interested in yoga because he thought that the awakening of the *kundalini* would be very beneficial to his search. Yet he felt that a great part of his heart remained dry and that there was no real music ringing in it.

Even after his marriage, he would at times besmear his body with ashes, wear a loin cloth, and spend long hours in seclusion or performing *havan*<sup>31</sup>. This naturally annoyed his wife, who once remarked, "If you are so determined to be an ascetic, it would have been better if you had resided in the mountains observing austerities rather than getting married to me!"

It was about this time, in the early 1950's that Kapil learned of and became interested in studying the *Discourses* and life of Meher Baba. Although greatly drawn to Baba's words of

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<sup>31</sup> A ritual in which an oblation, in the form of offerings of *ghee* or some particular food, such as grains placed in the fire, is made.

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wisdom, he found His statements about being the Avatar much harder to accept. Still, in spite of certain doubts and confusion, Kapil continued to ponder over Baba's *Discourses* and messages. At the beginning of one's contact with Baba, it is not unusual that one's thoughts and feelings are deeply stirred, and Kapil was no exception to this Avataric technique.

After a while he was blessed with a deep feeling that Meher Baba was a real *Sadguru* and that he should therefore try to see Him. But how and where?

In 1953, in the earnest attempt to find God, he decided to send his wife and children to her parents at Mussoorie, while he visited the saints and yogis residing in the Himalayan region. The search for God became his adventure. Just when everything was settled and he was ready to leave Delhi, he happened to receive a letter from Adi, from which he gathered that Meher Baba was staying at Rajpur Road in Dehra Dun, a town on his way to Mussoorie.

This "coincidence" made Kapil exceedingly happy and he decided to have Baba's *darshan*. Kapil had not received the earlier circular about not disturbing Baba by calling on Him. On his arrival at Dehra Dun, Kapil sent his family on to Mussoorie. He removed his western clothes and put on a loincloth over which he wrapped a *dhoti*. He also wore rubber *chappals* (sandals) instead of shoes. Perhaps he regarded this change of dress as a prerequisite for the spiritual life.

Though it had begun raining that morning, he could not wait until the sky was clear for Baba's *darshan*. However, on reaching 101 Rajpur Road, he was asked to leave immediately, without having had a glimpse of his Beloved Master. What a shattering disappointment!

### *Kapil's Audience with Baba*

When Kapil left, Kishan Singh went inside and reported to Baba that he had sent away a visitor who had come for His *darshan*; this he did with a feeling of pride at having so strictly adhered to Baba's instructions. Hearing this, Baba, instead of giving him a pat on the back, looked displeased and conveyed,

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"What right have you to send away someone who had especially come to My door for *darshan*? Go! Run! Bring him to Me at once."

Although this was totally unexpected, Kishan Singh nevertheless rushed out of the room and through the gate shouting loudly, "Kapil, Kapil!" In the meantime, Kapil had walked half a furlong away, but hearing that Baba wanted to see him, his joy knew no bounds. "Meher Baba is indeed the all-knowing and compassionate Master," he thought with surprised delight.

Kapil was led into Baba's presence. Finding him standing in wet clothes, Baba expressed His concern that His visitor might catch a chill and asked Kishan Singh to find him some dry clothes. After Kapil put on the new garments, Baba beckoned him to sit down before Him, which he reverentially did. Baba lovingly inquired, "Have you taken your morning tea?" Kapil replied, "I had taken a vow not to eat or drink anything until I had your *darshan*." Baba smiled softly and instructed one of the *mandali* to bring tea for him, and the audience began:

Baba: What do you want to know?

Kapil: I want to learn yoga.

Baba: Then, as I am not a yogi, you had better go to someone else. But tell me, why do you want to learn yoga?

Kapil: For God-realization.

Baba looked pleased and asked if Kapil was willing to give up both his yoga<sup>32</sup> and his ascetic practices and let Baba guide him to his goal of God-realization. Baba continued, "But of course if you decide to follow Me, you will have to obey Me implicitly." Kapil lowered his head as a gesture of voluntary acceptance and said, "Most willingly, Baba." Baba added, "Then tell Me, will you roam about naked, eat meat and drink liquor if I order you to?" Kapil answered, "I will do whatever You say."

Baba gestured, "Will you kill your dear son if so ordered by Me?" Kapil's eyes flickered with surprise. There were moments of intense silence, but eventually he responded, "Yes, Baba."

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<sup>32</sup> Baba did not object to yoga *asanas* if these practices were intended entirely for physical health.

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Hearing his reply, Baba explained, "Remember well, it is not 'roaming, eating, drinking or killing' that I am interested in. I only wanted to know whether you were ready to obey Me, so totally forget about those things. Now, I know you are married; tell Me do you love your wife? Be honest."

Kapil: Not really. I fear she might be an impediment on my journey to God.

Baba: Does your wife love you ?

Kapil: I am sure she does.

Baba: It is wonderful that your wife loves you; but you don't love her because of your selfishness. Now that you have agreed to give up ascetic practices and follow Me, carefully listen to the instructions I give you.

At this time, one of the *mandali* brought in tea for Kapil, and Baba also gave him a mango to eat, which to him had heavenly sweetness. Baba in a delighted mood also gestured for him to finish his tea. During this short period, Kapil felt that the sacred sound "Om" was reverberating in his whole being.

At the end of this divine breakfast, Baba asked Kapil if he had read the *Discourses, The Perfect Master, Avatar* and other works by and about Him. Kapil replied that he had carefully read all these books. Hearing this, Baba began, "Here are some orders for you to follow. Listen carefully. Wear clothes that are normal for a person leading a family life; don't put on sadhu's clothes. People sometimes associate spirituality with the clothes that others wear and pay their homage to such people. This is harmful. Don't be a hypocrite.

"You should not come here a second time for my *darshan*, even if you happen to be passing through this town. When I call you, leave everything and come. Within a short period I want you to bow down to two saintly personalities in Rajpur, one naked *mast* in Bhajan Ashram and also a reputed swami at Rishikesh (Baba named all four). I want you to pay your respects, all told, to 101 *sadhus, sanyasis* and the like, residing at Hardwar. Don't stay with anyone; bow down and leave immediately. Do not tell any of them that I have ordered you to do so. Write Me a letter when you finish bowing down or touching the feet of 101 *sadhus, mahatmas*, etc."

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Baba gestured to Kapil to sit by His side. Then He lovingly asked, "What will you do now?" Kapil replied, "I will go to Mussoorie and stay with my wife at my father-in-law's place for two or three days; then leave on my tour of bowing down to people as directed by you." Baba looked delighted and conveyed, "Good. Go and have a nice time with your wife and other family members. Love your wife; make her happy." And with a smile He added, "I won't mind even if you forget God for these two or three days!"

It was time for Kapil to leave and as he stood before Baba, Baba gave him *prasad* of some raisins (*manuka*). While receiving this, Kapil felt the touch of Baba's long, sensitive fingers and a sudden sense of incredible ecstasy enveloped him. This touch was to Kapil a special gift from the Master. With a heart full of gratitude and eyelids wet with love, Kapil left the room where Baba was seated.

Having lived in a city, he was not used to taking long walks, but in a state of intoxication, suffused with Baba's love, he decided to walk the fifteen miles to Mussoorie, eight miles of which is very steep and hilly track. He covered this distance without feeling the least bit tired. Most of the time it was raining, and when he reached his father-in-law's residence, his relatives were amazed to find him in such an unusual condition: totally drenched outside and inside!

He immediately changed his clothes and put on his regular woolen clothes, and later told his family about his meeting with Meher Baba, his beloved Master. All felt happy. After visiting some picnic spots and spending a nice time with his wife and other family members, he left Mussoorie to bow down or touch the feet of 101 people (saints, *sadhus*, *sanyasis*) as instructed by Baba. After completing this work, Kapil sent a detailed report of his tour, with the names of as many people as he knew, to Baba. When the list was read aloud Baba remarked, "I want such men for my work," and the following reply was sent to Kapil, "I am happy with your love. Remember me more and more. Baba."

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### *Baba's Plans until December*

Baba began His silence on July 10th, 1925. On that date this year, in response to the two circulars issued earlier, Baba's followers repeated one specific name of God for one hour in the early morning and observed a partial fast for twelve hours.

On July 11, Baba also informed the *mandali* who were staying in Dehra Dun that in order to partially make up for the failure of His earlier plan of fifteen days' continuous traveling, He wanted to journey either in a van or by rail for seven days. During this period, He wished to contact seven *naga* (naked) advanced souls, visit seven *dargahs* and seven *samadhis*.

The seven members to accompany Baba were Gustadji, Baidul, Pendu, Eruch, Kumar, Kishan Singh and Elcha Mistry. J. Helen was to drive the van. Those going with Baba were not to sleep for seven days. Baba, looking at Elcha, gestured, "You may come or may not come with me. But in case you decide to come with me, be ready to keep awake for the entire period." Elcha was a blessed jester in Baba's *darbar* (court) and Baba would sometimes make jokes with him.

There was a special three-day meeting in Dehra Dun for which Baba had summoned Adi from Ahmednagar, Adi Jr. (Baba's youngest brother) from Poona, Meherjee, and Nariman from Bombay, and some close ones from the state of Uttar Pradesh. On July 15th, at 8 o'clock in the morning, Baba was seated in His chair in the *mandali's* residence at 101 Rajpur Road. Twenty-five people, including his close men disciples, were seated before Him. Baba, with His divine dignity, looked magnificent. This gathering was the beginning of the three-day meeting Baba had called to discuss some important matters with His intimate ones. While conducting the meeting, Baba often used His alphabet board, yet many a time the communication continued through His facial expressions and hand gestures, which conveyed more than words. He glanced at those assembled in the sitting room and His look was full of love and concern. After some preliminary inquiries, He began:

Today I have called some selected ones for this important

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meeting. Even if seven of you were present that would have been a sufficient number. In fact, there was no need for twenty-five to be here, because whatever I will discuss and decide, with 100% honesty and in the presence of God, will concern only Me. I wanted seven of you to be witnesses. I felt, however, that a greater number would do no harm.

During this meeting, although you will find Me laughing, smiling and joking with you, whatever I discuss will be in all seriousness — do not take it lightly. It is true that had I not My sense of humor,<sup>33</sup> My body would not have withstood the pressure of work.

For the benefit of those who had come to Dehra Dun from different parts of India, Baba briefly told them what had happened to His plan of traveling in a van for two weeks. He told them that He had wanted the journey to begin the first week of June, and had, since the first week of May, frequently reminded Elcha Mistry to either hire or purchase a van for His travels. In spite of every possible effort, the van had not been made available to Baba and this had caused a setback in His work. Baba went on to explain:

So before I discuss and decide about other matters let Me first explain a little about the setbacks. If I am Baba then I must know everything of the past, present, and future. Therefore, there should be no setbacks for Me in My work. Again if Baba is Baba, the setbacks cannot alter His plan. Hence, although I refer to such incidents as 'setbacks,' they are God-ordained.

This will give you a clue that in fact it was no one's fault in not getting the van. The plan was there; the setback was there. And I simultaneously felt that the plan would work out and that it would not work out. That is why I often reminded Elcha about the van. This cannot be understood by you, just as you cannot understand what Christ really meant when He said, "Father! Why has Thou forsaken me?"

With the above explanation, Baba concluded His discussion about the setbacks and switched to another topic. With reference to His statements in *Life Circular* No. 9, concerning

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<sup>33</sup> "Before I met my Beloved in Union, I lost everything ... ego, mind, and lower consciousness; but thank God I did not lose my sense of humor." Meher Baba, *The Awakener*, Vol. II, no. 3, p. 13.



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His humiliation, manifestation, etc., Baba reaffirmed them. He added, however, that these occurrences might or might not take place in 1953 as the time factor was uncertain. He continued that things for Him and for those living with Him would be completely changed after November first. Some months earlier, He had asked two of His lovers from Delhi to make certain arrangements with regard to His Kashmir visit; during this meeting He told them that His impending visit to Kashmir was cancelled.

Baba was very open in His dealings with the *mandali*. During these three days, He made specific provisions, up to the end of December 1953, for His intimate ones who had dedicated their lives to Him and were totally dependent upon Him. Baba's plans for the ensuing five months were also discussed in the meetings. Some of the decisions were that from August 1st, no one should correspond with Baba; in case of an emergency, Baba would permit Adi to send Him a telegram. Until the end of September, Baba would continue to stay at Dehra Dun. Baba would decide later where He would stay next. Some of His disciples were told to inquire about leasing houses in Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, Mysore and Hyderabad. The final selection of the place would depend on Baba's work. He might even continue to stay in Dehra Dun.

Baba then heard a detailed report of the work done by Keshav Nigam and his associates in the Hamirpur District. Baba appreciated Keshav's love and sacrifice in Baba's cause. He gave Keshav some instructions to observe in spreading Baba's message of love and truth, and told him to be steadfast, poised and vigorous under all circumstances, whether they brought praise or humiliation, success or failure.

KDRM<sup>34</sup> — the four pillars among Baba workers in Andhra — were doing their best to let people know that the Avatar of the Age had again assumed human form, this time as Meher Baba. A Telugu weekly, *Velugu*, was regularly publishing Baba's messages in the vernacular for the benefit of the general public in Andhra. Since Baba's first visit to Hamirpur (November 1952) and Andhra (January 1953), many letters had been pouring in requesting Baba to revisit these areas. In response to these requests Baba gestured, "In December, I will

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<sup>34</sup> KDRM: the first initials of four Baba lovers in Andhra: Kutumba Sastri, Dhanapathy Rao, Ranga Rao and Mallikarjuna Rao.

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be on the move." The following schedule was tentatively fixed.

Baba would reach Kanpur on December 4th. After visiting different places for public *darshan* in the district of Hamirpur, Baba would leave Kanpur on the 10th to reach Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh on the 12th. Then, until December 23rd, He would visit different towns and villages in Andhra. After these public *darshans*, Baba planned to stay for two days in Bombay and two days in Poona, and wished to reach Ahmednagar on December 29th, 1953. During this *darshan* tour, approximately forty of Baba's people were to accompany Him. No one was to ask Baba about going with Him, as Baba would decide who would accompany Him. At all public programs and house visits, Baba wanted the resident *mandali* to remain very close to Him, ready at His beck and call.

The meeting was over on July 17th and those who had come from the out-stations prepared to leave Dehra Dun with heavy hearts. They bade Baba a loving farewell, their eyes filled with tears of separation and of delight. Meetings conducted by Baba were really matchless. For me, the opportunity to be in Baba's presence on such occasions was more precious than any intellectual understanding I might gain in His company. I knew that whatever Baba, the Compassionate Father, decided was in the best interests of all concerned. The changes that followed did not matter, for the Avatar's omniscience was and is beyond the comprehension of our minds.

### *States of God*

In spite of the multifarious activities which had to be discussed in the three-day meeting and the pressure of work, Baba in a rare mood gave a discourse on the "States of God," similar to the one He had given in the first week of November 1952.<sup>35</sup> The present discourse can also be treated as a synopsis of certain parts that Baba later elucidated in *God Speaks*.<sup>36</sup> The exposition below is my version, based on the main points noted by. Adi at Dehra Dun, which he edited to form a report for private circulation. Baba began:

God in the Beyond Beyond State is absolutely independent

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<sup>35</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. III, pp. 140-145.

<sup>36</sup> Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, 1955.

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of the world, is the source of Infinite power, knowledge, bliss, beauty, and wisdom, but is neither conscious of these attributes nor of Himself.

God in the Beyond State (Allah, *Paramatma*) is independent of the world and yet is conscious of His power, beauty and eternity, but in this state does not express these attributes. He is eternal in the sense that He ever was, is and will be.

We imagine God was; before that He was and still before that He ever was. Imagination cannot grasp and cannot reach the One who has no beginning and no end. So, we logically conclude that this state (of God) is beyond imagination and understanding.

It is incorrect (in a way) to say God is one; the idea of His being one limits Him; He is infinite. To speak of Him correctly is to say, "God is." We can say this only with reference to His Beyond State, where there is no beginning, no end, and nothing exists but God. If God alone is, God is Everything, and in this infinite Everything, Nothing is latent, thus Nothing also exists. Let us see how this Nothing represents this universe.

The most-first imagining of God which Vedanta refers to as *Lahar* and Sufism calls *Guman* is the First Urge in the Beginningless Everything to know Itself. As soon as this Urge appeared a beginning began — not of God but of the Urge that produced Nothing, which was latent in God.

What was the Urge? It was to know "Who am I?" As soon as the Urge appeared, Nothing was produced and God, instead of knowing Himself as God, began to experience the nothingness of Nothing.

This process may be likened to a man tickled out of his sleep into a gradual opening of his eyes, a progressively full awakening. When he wakes up he sees the objects — the nothingness of the Nothing (God's shadow) — and not himself. Passing gradually through seven stages of the rise of consciousness, man, figuratively speaking, attains a full opening of the eyes and simultaneously the consciousness of a fully manifested universe, the Shadow of God.

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Shadow (Nothing) was latent in God. With the emergence of the Urge, God did not know Himself as God, but experienced Himself as a shadow. Impressions (nothingness — germs of imagination and illusion) piled up in profusion, owing to the transition of the shadows through alternations of pain and pleasure, beauty and ugliness, births and deaths, etc. After attaining the human form, for God to know Himself as Himself, He has to traverse a journey of seven inner stages and yet retain full, open-eyed consciousness. For God to know Himself as Himself (through the medium of a human form), creation of forms and the consequent experiences were necessary.

Baba illustrated this with the example of someone standing near a lighted lamp and seeing his own shadow. Baba continued:

Sometimes you suffer, sometimes you are happy. You don't remember having gone through all the dual states of experience — of being man/woman, strong/weak, rich/ poor, healthy/sick, etc. It was all a dream. It will continue to be so till you become free. With God's Urge to know Himself a beginning was made, so it has to have an end. Beginning and end, and all the paraphernalia of things and beings — the becomings — that go along with them are what constitutes the Law of opposites.

God has no beginning, no end. The Nothing, which is latent in God, has a beginning and an end. God is not limited; Nothing is limited. Nothing has three states — mental, subtle and gross. When Nothing manifests, the Law of opposites (bindings) manifests; this law is established in all three spheres.

Law equally binds all, except those who become free. One principal binding appears in varied aspects — like the uniformity of two hands, one head and two eyes running through the differences of human features and figures.

According to Law, the number of lives and deaths, with their measure of suffering and happiness, is fixed. Until the total number of incarnations are gone through and the amount of experience is learned and unlearned, no freedom

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can be attained. (The only exception Baba referred to is through the contact and Grace of a Perfect Master or the God-Man.) But all this experiencing is nothing. There is no suffering; when I say this, you will grouse. Since you do not know the Law of nothingness, you may even think that there is nothing like justice in the world. But that is not so.

Baba concluded this discourse by explaining the subtle differences in the gnosis of the God-realized ones — a perfect *Majzoob*, a *Jeevanmukta* and a *Sadguru* — each of them experiences a unique State of God.

When one escapes Law and merges in God, who is beyond law, one becomes God. Then there is no binding; he is *Majzoob-e-Kamil*. He is merged in God, has no normal consciousness, and is completely disconnected from the world. If he comes down, he brings God on earth. Law exists on earth; however, he brings law-exceeded God down as law-abiding God.

As *Jeevanmukta*, God in the Beyond State is conscious of His infinite attributes. Law cannot touch him because law-exceeded God is infinite, mighty and powerful. *Jeevanmukta* is God-realized and has normal consciousness, but has no concern with the world and is unaffected by the world. His state is unique: he does everything and yet does nothing. He is *Majzoob-e-Kamil*, and also has normal consciousness.

*Sadguru (Qutub)* is law-exceeded God. He is all powerful. He comes down from the Beyond State to normal consciousness. He is concerned with the world and its people, and yet is completely detached from them. He has to work with the sins and merits of the world, and is concerned with everyone and everything. He extends his hand of love and grace under a glove that keeps him unaffected by the world. Law cannot touch him, but he touches law. He acts like an ordinary human being but uses his infinite power, knowledge, and bliss to make others free from the law of opposites.

In this discourse, Baba did not explain the state and status of God as the Avatar — the incredible phenomenon of God becoming

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man, who through His life silently expresses God's unbounded love and unlimited compassion for awakening the Creation to its divine heritage. However, Meher Baba in His discourse "The Highest of the High," dictated in September 1953, at Dehra Dun, and another profound message, "Meher Baba's Call," delivered in September 1954, gives us glimpses of the Avatar's function and His divine dispensation.

### *The Universal Prayer*

Baba wanted to begin His seven-day tour on the 21st of July. But owing to a minor setback (a meeting that Elcha had to attend), he left Dehra Dun on the 22nd. The route of travel was practically the same as for the five-day tour in June, except some detours were made to visit new places to contact *masts*. Baba returned to Dehra Dun on July 29th. I can only sum up by stating that this tour was exacting physically and mentally for the *mandali* in ways similar to the one described in the previous chapter. Baba, in spite of the enormous strain, looked cheerful. He expressed His happiness and satisfaction with the *mast* contacts and with the *dargah* and *samadhi* visits as well.

Some may ask, "What did Baba accomplish through such visits?" The mind that looks for visible signs and seeks immediate objective results will find itself totally at a loss to fathom Baba's ways of working. For example, Meher Baba has now laid aside His body and yet hundreds of Baba lovers from different parts of the world continue to visit Meherabad every year with love and devotion. I personally feel that this is a result of the inner work that Baba did in silence and seclusion. Inscrutable is the Avatar's work!

On His return from the seven-day tour, Baba told the *mandali* that He would soon keep Himself busy for three weeks with special spiritual work. Before beginning that, however, He gave to the world one of His most profound gifts, the "Universal Prayer," which later came to be known as the "*O Parvardigar* Prayer" or "The Master's Prayer." In Hinduism, every incarnation of the Avatar is regarded as a manifestation

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of Vishnu, who is known in Sufi terminology as *Parvardigar*. Thus, the "Universal Prayer" is unique in that it was given by the God-Man and is, in a way, addressed to the Avatar.

Baba dictated this prayer at Dehra Dun, and during His intense spiritual work of twenty-one days (August 13th through September 2nd), it was recited every day in His presence by one of the *mandali* in English, followed by its Gujarati version, which was read aloud by another of Baba's disciples.

### *The Universal Prayer*

*O PARVARDIGAR* — the Preserver and Protector of all!  
You are without Beginning and without End;  
Non-dual, beyond comparison; and none can measure You.  
You are without color, without expression, without form,  
and without attributes.  
You are Unlimited and Unfathomable, beyond imagination  
and conception; Eternal and Imperishable.  
You are Indivisible; and none can see You, but with eyes Divine.  
You always were, You always are, and You always will be;  
You are everywhere, You are in everything; and You are also  
beyond everywhere; and beyond everything.  
You are in the firmament and in the depths, You are manifest and  
unmanifest; on all planes, and beyond all planes.  
You are in the three worlds, and also beyond the three worlds;  
You are Imperceptible and Independent.  
You are the Creator, the Lord of lords, the Knower of all minds  
and hearts;  
You are Omnipotent and Omnipresent.  
You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite, and Bliss. Infinite.  
You are the Ocean of Knowledge, All-Knowing, Infinitely-  
Knowing,  
the Knower of the past, the present and the future, and You are  
Knowledge itself.

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You are All-Merciful and eternally Benevolent;  
You are the Soul of souls, the One with infinite attributes.  
You are the trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss;  
You are the Source of Truth, the Ocean of Love;  
You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High;  
You are *Prabhu* and *Parameshwar*;  
You are the Beyond-God, and the Beyond-Beyond God also;  
You are *Parabrahma*; *Allah*; *Elahi*; *Yezdan*; *Ahuramazda*; and  
God the Beloved.  
You are named *Ezad* — the only One worthy of worship.

If anyone carefully studies the above prayer, he will be impressed with the beauty and melody of the words dictated by Baba. In the God-Man, the impersonal and personal aspects of God are beautifully and perfectly blended. This prayer has immense spiritual importance. Some find that it has two distinct parts or sections: the sentence or the part ending with "You are Imperceptible and Independent" refers to the Impersonal God, while most of the remaining section glorifies the attributes of the Personal God. Some may not agree with what is perhaps an arbitrary division, but at least we can say that this is an ideal prayer to invoke the grace of the Impersonal and Personal God in One — The Avatar.

### *The Avatar's Participation in Prayer*

From 1949 onwards, the offering of prayers became one of the vital aspects of Meher Baba's spiritual work. Deshmukh, one of Baba's dear and learned disciples, has shed considerable light upon this subject in his article,<sup>37</sup> "Participation in Prayers by Avatar Meher Baba." Given below are some excerpts from Dr. Deshmukh's commentary. He writes:

It is not merely a prayer which Avatar Meher Baba recommends to the aspirants; He Himself participates in it with folded hands as one of them. Significance of this participation is clear. Though He is Himself perfect, and has nothing to repent for or ask forgiveness for, He intercedes with God for the sake of those who love Him or

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<sup>37</sup> *Divya Vani*, July 10, 1962, pp. 44-48.



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have faith in Him.

He prays for them and on their behalf and while doing so, He identifies with them so completely that He explicitly includes Himself among them as one of them.... It is, on the part of Meher Baba, a deliberate descending to the level of ordinary aspirants and devotees without in any way being Himself limited thereby ....

Lord Shri Krishna used to offer prayers and homage to God, worship and serve saints, and even serve his own lovers and devotees, in all sorts of lowly capacities. He veiled his infinite power and being as the unlimited and all-comprehensive Truth from those whom he loved, so that they may not be dazed by the premature revelation of the full light and power, which they were incapable of receiving at that stage. He revealed his divinity only in such degrees as were entailed by the limited and varying degrees of receptivity, characteristic of ascending humanity.

Christ was one with God; yet He prayed to Him, assuming a provisional separateness from Him, in order to show the way to the attainment of Unity through final realization. Having descended into the world as its Saviour, He Himself lived its life, in its different phases, thus feeling and affirming His unity with it, even as He felt and affirmed His unity with the Godhead ...

In the "Old Life" Avatar Meher Baba affirmed His Unity with God. In the "New Life" He solely emphasized His purely human aspect, in all its limitations, living the life of an ardent and fearless seeker of truth. And in the "Life Phase" He has comprehended both aspects in His conscious and explicit role ... The dual role of the Perfect One and of human limitations has been simultaneously assumed and affirmed in the "Life Phase." It is a fuller manifestation of Meher Baba's comprehensive and infinite divinity.

Avatar Meher Baba is and always has been as great as it is possible for others to grasp and much more ... He does not expect that He should be understood by everyone, in His essence. No work is possible in an incomplete world, without

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taking on its incompleteness which, in fact, turns out to be an inalienable aspect of infinity or completeness ...

The God-Man does not insist that He should be accepted as necessarily *this* or *that* by each and everyone. He leaves everyone free to respond according to the inescapable promptings of their specific positions in the wilderness of the world or their specific position on the Path ...

Avatar Meher Baba in His "Life Phase" manifests both the Goal and the Way. And while manifesting the way, He uses the language of the ordinary human state, which agonizingly tries to transcend its own limitations ...

All prophets and Avatars have therefore worshipped the impersonal God asserting and experiencing their unity with Him at the same time. Unity in duality and duality in unity are the inescapable moments in the manifestation of the divine perfection, characteristic of Avatar Meher Baba's "Life Phase" which is triumphantly affirmative in His Avataric role.

Each time before offering the prayer, Baba, looking radiant, would rise from His chair, straighten His coat or *sadra*, and comb His hair with His fingers if necessary. All the participants, generally the *mandali*, would rise to their feet in complete silence. Baba would then wash His hands and face, and stand for the prayer with His feet some distance apart. He would fold His hands, look at the one whom He had asked to read the prayer aloud, and then close His eyes. The Perfect Man had now become a perfect devotee.

### *The God-Man's Incredible Gift*

Baba's profound spiritual work has had many phases. Yet one characteristic feature of the 1960's was the Avatar's personal participation in The Master's Prayer and The Prayer of Repentance.<sup>38</sup> These prayers were recited many times in Baba's presence, particularly after Meher Baba's last public *darshan* at Guruprasad, Poona, in May 1965. From then, until He dropped His body on January 31st, 1969 as ordained by Him, although He remained in seclusion, primarily at

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<sup>38</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. III, pp. 180-181.

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Meherazad, the two prayers were recited frequently, often daily for weeks at a time, in Mandali Hall at Meherazad.

During these years, the pressure of Baba's universal work continued to increase. Towards the end of His physical presence on earth, His body grew weaker and weaker until He was apparently totally helpless, so much so that He had to be helped by two of the *mandali* to stand when the prayers were being offered.

At Meherazad, on one such occasion, He gestured to Eruch to read the prayers rapidly. After Eruch had read a few sentences, Baba snapped His fingers for Eruch to read faster. A little later Baba again signaled for Eruch to speed up. Eruch was now rattling the words off as fast as he could. When Baba signaled him to read even faster, he burst out laughing. He controlled himself the next moment, however, and resumed the rapid reading. Baba did not comment on this, but quietly continued with the prayers.

When they were concluded, Baba slowly took His seat. After some time, when all the *mandali* were seated, He casually inquired of Eruch, "What made you laugh during the prayers?" Eruch replied frankly, "It happened uncontrollably, because I could hear my own voice rushing through the whole prayer. It appeared to me that I was like a railroad train rattling through all the stations without stopping, without caring for the passengers! And something happened in my mind that vividly evoked in me the image of a speedily moving express train and I laughed. I am sorry."

Hearing this explanation Baba conveyed to Eruch, "You are mad! You have no idea what was happening to Me when I signaled to you to read faster. To you, rapid reading (of the prayers) seemed ludicrous. But for Me to participate in these prayers in this state of health is no joke. I have given these prayers to humanity, to posterity, to recite them. And whenever anyone offers these prayers, even after I pass away, owing to My present participation it will help everyone and anyone spiritually who recites them. That's why I want the prayers said; it has nothing to do with your speed or how you read it out, or anything of the sort. All that matters is My having participated in the prayers. So every time anybody repeats

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these prayers, I am there with him; My Presence is there."

Eruch sometimes shares the above incident in Mandali Hall at Meherzad with Baba lovers to bring home to Baba families the immense importance of offering the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance, recited hundreds of times in Baba's physical presence, He Himself having taken part. These particular prayers have the unique quality of penetrating dry minds and awakening the wellsprings of love in the heart.

The Master's Prayer is Meher Baba's loving present, a sort of spiritual talisman which, in time, will reveal to its reciter the treasure latent in one's heart. Its daily recitation, followed by the Prayer of Repentance, is like tapping the innermost source of blessedness, which will, in time, purify one's everyday life. Indeed these prayers are a gift of the God-Man to humanity and all are free to experiment and ascertain for themselves the awakening of God's love in their hearts.

### *Prayer, an Avenue to the Avatar*

The Master's Prayer opens with the words, "O *Parvardigar*," and ends with "*Ezad*." These are the two gates pointing to the gateless gate of the Ancient One. With the grace of the God-Man, when *Parvardigar* Meher Baba becomes one's real *Ezad* — the only One worthy of worship, the rest of the divine attributes mentioned in the prayer begin to reveal their various facets of meaning. The mercy of the All-Merciful One and the guidance of the Omnipresent One are experienced beyond doubt in the big and small happenings of our lives.

The beginning of the Master's Prayer with "O *Parvardigar*" (God-Almighty-Sustainer) reminds me of the occasion when Sai Baba of Shirdi looked straight at Baba (December 1915) and exclaimed, "*Parvardigar*." Perhaps this was the divinely ordained moment that declared Meher Baba's status as *Parvardigar*. I leave all to fathom as best they can, in their own ways, the divine connection between Sai Baba's spontaneous utterance, "*Parvardigar*," and the Avatar's beginning the Master's Prayer with "O *Parvardigar*."

But it is not just the beginning of the prayer that is

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significant; every word in both the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance is imbued with a timeless significance. This is because these words have been charged with the Avataric consciousness, through the physical participation of the God-Man, Meher Baba. As such, these words can render spiritual help to anyone, on any level of human consciousness. Therefore, offering these prayers should not be treated as a ritual; they are channels of direct communion with the Beloved that will help each one in their journey to Him. Offering prayers is an occasion to open one's heart to the Eternal Ancient One; it is not just uttering words or muttering phrases, just spoken and forgotten. It is basically a heartache, imploring communion with the Omnipresent One. The depth of one's prayer can be gauged by the "fragrance" — the loving remembrance of the God-Man — that lingers in the heart and permeates the moments of one's days. One of the Sufi poets wrote:

The formal prayer is — sitting up and down;  
The real — one's egoism to drown (in God's presence).

Here, I also wish to mention my personal approach and feelings with regard to the Prayer of Repentance. From the time it was first offered in November 1952, whenever I happened to be in Baba's physical presence during the recitation of this particular prayer I would silently join the others and say, "We repent O God ... We ... We ... " But when alone in my room or elsewhere, I would change every "We" into "I." My mind would vehemently challenge my right to repent and confess on behalf of others.

Years later, I learned from one of Baba's resident *mandali* what Baba had intended by this "we" business. I was told that whenever anyone recites the Prayer of Repentance, Meher Baba in His omnipresence and unconditional compassion, and in His own matchless way, participates in the prayer. Ever since I heard of this act of compassion on the part of the God-Man, I regard saying "We repent O God ... We ... We ..." as my privilege in growing closer to humanity and of course to Meher Baba. Besides, I consider that "Amen" is not the end of the prayer but a new beginning, or rather a fresh attempt to

## JULY MEETING AND THE MASTER'S PRAYER

feel Baba's silent presence and participation in the activities of our everyday life, including the most common and casual movements of body and mind.

Prayer is a personal, intimate pleading to God or the God-Man for the purification and final effacement of one's self. Prayer helps in tuning one's heart to sing a ceaseless song in praise of Him. The God-Man, the Avatar, is not deaf; He not only hears, but listens carefully. He is not blind; He not only sees, but perceives wholly. He is not indifferent; He not only answers one's call, but responds most lovingly.

In a message for the public which Baba had some of His disciples read out at a press conference in Bombay, He stated:

I am the same Ancient One who has always been saying and will continue to say: I am the slave of those who love Me.

And on an earlier occasion, while sitting with His intimate group, He stated:

I am with you always and I am ever watchful over My flock.

Hence, offering of the two principal prayers given by Meher Baba forms an avenue that will make anyone eligible for and receptive to the Avatar's care and love.

## THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH 1953—Part VII

### *Anniversary of Zoroaster's Birth*

During Baba's stay at Dehra Dun, often there was news, especially in the local Hindi dailies, about the various mahatmas, yogis or sadhus residing in or visiting the town. The articles in the newspapers invariably focused on the miracles performed by such people and the bizarre behavior indulged in by them. Not only that, but the papers gave the impression that these incidents or practices could be justified in the name of spirituality. Such news columns not only made a mockery of true spirituality, but showed a complete lack of understanding of what spirituality really is — a natural way to God.

For the popular press, the only criteria of spiritual progress were the miracles one was able to perform. Thus the dignity of a pure heart and simple unadulterated love for God was belittled in comparison with the spectacular phenomena of either physical or mental healing. Baba indicated that this attitude nauseated Him, and about a month later, He gave a special message entitled, "Playing with Illusions." It put things back in their proper perspective for Baba lovers in particular and the public in general.

Around this time, several new families from Dehra Dun came into Baba's contact. Two such families had retarded children, and in the third the wife was mentally imbalanced. In the beginning of September, the husband of the third family remarked to one of the *mandali* that although he had faith in and love for Meher Baba, his wife's condition was not improving. During a casual conversation, Eruch mentioned this to Baba.

Baba remarked that His lovers should not pester Him with their personal difficulties — whether material or spiritual — unless asked to do so. He pointed out that Rustom (Adi's elder

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brother) and Ramjoo did not complain to Him about their wives' health, even though neither had been well for many years. Baba went on to explain that He gives a spiritual push to everyone who follows Him, but for this to be effective, one must completely accept whatever situation one is placed in. Of course, all are free to do their best to improve their lot, but to receive Baba's real help they have to surrender these efforts to His will. Baba, the All-Knowing One, knows what is best for each, even though He may at times appear callous or indifferent. Baba concluded by remarking, "If anyone wants to follow Me, he should first ascertain whether he is prepared to accept life cheerfully, no matter what."

After this brief discourse, Baba sent Eruch, Nilu and Kishan Singh to the man who hoped that Baba would cure his wife of her neuroses. They were told to give him a message from Baba, the gist of which was: if you expect Baba to cure your wife, it would be better if you leave Him and seek such help from someone else. Baba often made it clear to His disciples that healing through supernatural powers has no spiritual value, while suffering borne with courage and faith in God, or in the God-Man, brings a profound understanding of the futility of becoming attached to that which is transitory, as well as a deeper appreciation of the intrinsic worth of the Eternal.

Of course, this does not mean that one should totally neglect one's own or another's suffering, or not avail oneself of medical or psychiatric aid to help alleviate pain or distress. One should try one's best, but to seek any sort of supernatural help, rather than resigning oneself completely to God's will, is to profane one's love for Him.

Baba's special work, which began August 13th, continued undisturbed until September 2nd. From remarks that Baba made during this period, it was gathered that He was working intensely for the spiritual awakening of humanity. In this year, according to the Parsi calendar, September 7th was Zoroaster's birthday.<sup>39</sup> On this day, the *mandali* joined Baba in prayer. Before the prayers Baba conveyed, "Zoroaster gave to the world the essence of true living in the form of three

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<sup>39</sup> *Khordad Saal*: When comparing the Parsi (*Shahenshahi*) with the current Roman (Julian) calendar, it is observed that every four years the birthday of Lord Zoroaster is celebrated one day earlier.



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fundamental precepts: Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. These precepts were and are revealed to humanity in one form or another, directly or indirectly, by the Avatar each time He comes. To put these precepts into practice is not as easily done as it might appear, although it is not impossible." Later on the same day, September 7th, Baba gave an illuminating discourse that has made this particular date most memorable.

I would like to add here that in addition to February 25th, Baba's birthday; July 10th, Silence Day; and January 31st, *Amartithi*, there are a few other dates which are regarded as significant by some of Baba's followers. These are: October 16th — Baba set out from Meherabad on the New Life; November 8th — Baba first introduced and participated in the Prayer of Repentance; August 13th — Baba gave the Universal Prayer (The Master's Prayer); and also September 7th — the day He gave the discourse, *The Highest of the High*. The statements made by Baba in this discourse are so fundamental that anyone who wishes to follow Meher Baba should first carefully read, contemplate and assimilate them. In a way, it is as if Baba, through the medium of words in this discourse, is descending into our midst from His Beyond State as the Highest of the High.

Everyone is free to decide whether Baba is an ordinary man or is, in fact, the Highest of the High, though in this discourse Baba authoritatively declared to the world His true status. He categorically ruled out for all time any possibility of His being a sadhu, saint, yogi, *wali*, or anyone else stationed on any of the planes of consciousness. The discourse, apparently prompted by the eager anticipation on the part of so many people for miraculous healing, either physical or mental, emphasizes that Baba will not perform miracles just to satisfy the wishes of His followers.

For Baba lovers, this discourse has its own significance. Rereading it often will help one and all to reflect on the degree of their faith in Meher Baba as the Avatar. Eventually it will inspire the reader to implore Baba for a still deeper conviction of His divinity. This is a never-ending process, for each stage of

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conviction is but a deeper, yet finite dive into the infinite depths of His being.

About two months later, in November 1953, the entire discourse — The Highest of the High — was published by Meher Publications, Ahmednagar, in the form of a booklet and was mailed to Baba lovers in India and abroad. It was also translated into Marathi, Hindi and Telugu. For the convenience of the readers, the text of the discourse, given below, is divided into three sections, each headed by its own sub-title.

*"The Avatar is Always One and the Same"*

Meher Baba stated:

Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, each and every creature, each and every human being — in one form or the other — strives to assert individuality. But when eventually, man consciously experiences that he is Infinite, Eternal and Indivisible, then he is fully conscious of his individuality as God, and as such experiences Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. Thus man becomes God, and is recognized as a Perfect Master, *Sadguru* or *Qutub*. To worship this Man is to worship God.

When God manifests on earth in the form of Man and reveals His Divinity to mankind, He is recognized as the Avatar — the Messiah, the Prophet. Thus God becomes Man.

And so Infinite God, age after age, throughout all cycles, wills through His Infinite Mercy, to effect His presence amidst mankind by stooping down to human level in the human form, but His physical presence amidst mankind not being apprehended, He is looked upon as an ordinary man of the world. When He asserts, however, His Divinity on earth by proclaiming Himself the Avatar of the Age, He is worshipped by some who accept Him as God; and glorified by a few who know Him as God on Earth. But it invariably falls to the lot of the rest of humanity to

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condemn Him, while He is physically in their midst.

Thus it is that God and Man, proclaiming Himself as the Avatar, suffers Himself to be persecuted and tortured, to be humiliated and condemned by humanity for whose sake His Infinite Love has made Him stoop so low, in order that humanity, by its very act of condemning God's manifestation in the form of Avatar should, however indirectly, assert the existence of God in His Infinite Eternal state.

The Avatar is always One and the Same, because God is always One and the Same, the Eternal, Indivisible Infinite One who manifests Himself in the form of Man as the Avatar, as the Messiah, as the Prophet, as the Ancient One — the Highest of the High. This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats His manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and help free it from the bondage of delusions.

In the world, there are countless *sadhus*, *mahatmas*, *mahapurushas*, saints, yogis and *walis*, though the number of genuine ones is very, very limited. The few genuine ones are, according to their spiritual status, in a category of their own, which is neither on a level with the ordinary human being nor on a level with the state of the Highest of the High.

I am neither a *mahatma* nor a *mahapurush*, neither *sadhu* nor saint, neither a *yogi* nor a *wali*. Those who approach me with the desire to gain wealth or to retain their possessions, those who seek through me relief from distress and suffering, those who ask my help to fulfill and satisfy mundane desires, to them I once again declare that as I am not a *sadhu*, a saint or a *mahatma*, *mahapurush* or *yogi*, to seek these things through me is but to court utter disappointment, though only apparently; for eventually this disappointment is itself invariably instrumental in bringing about the complete transformation of mundane wants and desires.

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The *sadhus*, saints, yogis, *walis* and such others who are on the *via media*, can perform miracles and satisfy the transient material needs of individuals who approach them for help and relief.

The question therefore arises that if I am not a sadhu, not a saint, not a yogi, not a *mahapurush* nor a *wali*, then what am I? The natural assumption would be that I am either just an ordinary human being, or I am the Highest of the High. But one thing I say definitely, and that is that I can never be included amongst those having the intermediary status of the real *sadhus*, saints, yogis and such others.

Now, if I am just an ordinary man, my capabilities and powers are limited — I am no better or different from an ordinary human being. If people take me as such then they should not expect any supernatural help from me in the form of miracles or spiritual guidance; and to approach me to fulfill their desires would also be absolutely futile.

On the other hand, if I am beyond the level of an ordinary human being, and much beyond the level of saints and yogis, then I must be the Highest of the High. In which case, to judge me with your human intellect and limited mind and to approach me with mundane desires would not only be the height of folly but sheer ignorance as well; because no amount of intellectual gymnastics could ever understand my ways or judge my infinite state.

*"If I am the Highest of the High "*

Meher Baba continued:

If I am the Highest of the High My Will is Law, My Wish governs the Law, and My Love sustains the Universe. Whatever your apparent calamities and transient sufferings, they are but the outcome of My Love for the ultimate good. Therefore, to approach Me for deliverance from your predicaments, to expect Me to satisfy your worldly desires would be asking Me to do the impossible — to undo what I have already ordained.

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If you truly and in all faith accept your Baba as the Highest of the High, it behooves you to lay down your life at His feet, rather than to crave the fulfillment of your desires. Not your one life but your millions of lives would be but a small sacrifice to place at the feet of One such as Baba, who is the Highest of the High; for Baba's unbounded love is the only sure and unfailing guide to lead you safely through the innumerable blind alleys of your transient life.

They cannot obligate Me who, surrendering their all — body, mind, possessions — which perforce they must discard one day, surrender with a motive; surrender because they understand that to gain the everlasting treasure of bliss they must relinquish ephemeral possessions. This desire for greater gain is still clinging behind their surrender, and as such the surrender cannot be complete.

Know you all that if I am the Highest of the High, My role demands that I strip you of all your possessions and wants, consume all your desires and make you desireless rather than satisfy your desires. *Sadhus*, saints, yogis and *walis* can give you what you want; but I take away your want and free you from attachments and liberate you from the bondage of ignorance. I am the One to take, not the One to give what you want or as you want.

Mere intellectuals can never understand Me through their intellect. If I am the Highest of the High, it becomes impossible for the intellect to gauge Me, nor is it possible for My ways to be fathomed by the limited human mind.

I am not to be attained by those who, loving me, stand reverentially by, in rapt admiration. I am not for those who ridicule Me and point at Me with contempt. To have a crowd of tens of millions flocking around me is not what I am for. I am for the selected few, who scattered amongst the crowd, silently and unostentatiously surrender their all — body, mind, and possessions — to me.

I am still more for those who, after surrendering their all, never give another thought to their surrender. They are all mine who are prepared to renounce even the very

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thought of their renunciation and who, keeping constant vigil in the midst of intense activity, await their turn to lay down their lives for the cause of Truth at a glance or sign from Me. Those who have indomitable courage to face willingly and cheerfully the worst calamities, who have unshakeable faith in Me, eager to fulfill My slightest wish at the cost of their happiness and comfort, they indeed, truly love Me.

From My point of view, far more blest is the atheist who confidently discharges his worldly responsibilities, accepting them as his honorable duty, than the man who presumes he is a devout believer in God, yet shirks the responsibilities apportioned to him through Divine Law and runs after *sadhus*, saints and yogis, seeking relief from suffering which ultimately would have pronounced his eternal liberation.

To have one eye glued on the enchanting pleasures of the flesh and with the other expect to see a spark of eternal bliss is not only impossible but the height of hypocrisy.

*"Awake now"*

Meher Baba concluded:

I cannot expect you to understand all at once what I want you to know. It is for Me to awaken you from time to time throughout the ages, sowing the seed in your limited minds which must, in due course and with proper heed and care on your part, germinate, flourish, and bear the fruit of that true knowledge which is inherently yours to gain.

If on the other hand, led by your ignorance you persist in going your own way, none can stop you in your choice of progress; for that too is progress which, however slow and painful, eventually and after innumerable incarnations, is bound to make you realize that which I want you to know now. To save yourself from further entanglement in the maze of delusion and self-created suffering which owes its

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magnitude to the extent of your ignorance of the true Goal, awake now. Pay heed and strive for freedom by experiencing ignorance in its true perspective. Be honest with yourself and God. One may fool the world and one's neighbors but one can never escape from the knowledge of the Omniscient — such is the Divine Law.

I declare to all of you who approach Me, and to those of you who desire to approach Me, accepting Me as the Highest of the High, that you must never come with the desire in your heart which craves for wealth and worldly gain, but only with the fervent longing to give your all — body, mind, and possessions — with all their attachments. Seek Me not to extricate you from your predicaments, but find me in order to surrender yourself wholeheartedly to My will. Cling to Me not for worldly happiness and short-lived comforts, but adhere to Me, through thick and thin, sacrificing your own happiness and comforts at My feet.

Let My happiness be your cheer and My comforts your rest. Do not ask Me to bless you with a good job, but desire to serve Me more diligently and honestly without expectation of reward. Never beg of Me to save your life or the lives of your dear ones, but beg of Me to accept you and permit you to lay down your life for Me. Never expect Me to cure you of your bodily afflictions but beseech Me to cure you of your ignorance. Never stretch out your hands to receive anything from Me, but hold them high in praise of Me whom you have approached as the Highest of the High.

If I am the Highest of the High, nothing is then impossible to Me; and though I do not perform miracles to satisfy individual needs — the satisfaction of which would result in entangling the individual more and more in the net of ephemeral existence — yet time and again at certain periods I manifest the infinite powers in the form of miracles, but only for the spiritual upliftment and benefit of humanity and all creatures.

However, miraculous experiences have often been experienced by individuals who love Me and have unswerving

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faith in Me, and these have been attributed to My *nazar* or Grace on them. But I want all to know that it does not befit My lovers to attribute such individual miraculous experiences to My state of the Highest of the High. If I am the Highest of the High, I am above this illusory play of *Maya* in the course of the Divine Law.

Therefore, whatever miraculous experiences are experienced by My lovers who recognize Me as such, or by those who love Me unknowingly through other channels, they are but the outcome of their own firm faith in Me. Their unshakable faith, often superseding the course of the play of *Maya*, gives them those experiences which they call miracles. Such experiences derived through firm faith eventually do good and do not entangle the individuals who experience them into further and greater binding of illusion.

If I am the Highest of the High then a wish of My universal will is sufficient to give, in an instant, realization to one and all, and thus free every creature in creation from the shackles of ignorance. But blessed is knowledge that is gained through the experience of ignorance in accordance with the Divine Law. This knowledge is made possible for you to attain in the midst of ignorance by the guidance of Perfect Masters and surrenderance (in surrendering) to the Highest of the High.

After reading this discourse thoroughly, people will arrive at various conclusions about the statements made by Baba, depending on their perspective and understanding of spirituality. It might be interesting and also relevant to quote a part of Meher Baba's message given a year later in which He mentioned some reactions to His claim of being the Highest of the High. He dictated, "When I say I am the Avatar, there are a few who feel happy, some who feel shocked and many who hearing Me claim this would take Me for a hypocrite, a fraud, a supreme egoist, or just mad . . . I know I am the Avatar in every sense of the word . . ."

No one can deny that if Baba is the Highest of the High, He



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has stated whatever can be said with the highest divine authority. And to those who honestly feel that what Meher Baba has "said" is the Truth, Meher Baba's form will be the form of perfect beauty, and the sound of His name a perfect melody. To them Baba will reveal His humanity and divinity in all the happenings of their daily lives.

### *The Third Mast Tour of Five Days*

In May, Baba had planned for a fifteen-day continuous journey. As this plan did not work out, He made two trips, the first for five days in June and the second for seven days in July. In September, He again wished to visit *samadhis* and *dargahs* of some saintly personalities, and also to contact *masts*. This third tour of five days was to begin on September 11th. Thus, in a way, Baba had carried out His earlier intention of traveling for about two weeks to carry out His spiritual work.

Accordingly, on the morning of September 11th, Baba left Dehra Dun for Devband and paid His homage at some *samadhis*. He reached Meerut military headquarters at about 11:00 A.M. Minoo Desai, one of Baba's dear ones, was a Lieutenant-Colonel, temporarily posted there, so Baba's car sped on towards the Military Mess. The *mandali* learned that Minoo had gone out. An orderly was sent to inform him about the arrival of guests. Minoo hurriedly came back and was immensely surprised and delighted to see Baba, his beloved Master. He requested Baba to visit his room.

On reaching there, Baba asked for a salty snack. Minoo remembered that his wife had recently given him a small tinful of *sev-gathia*<sup>40</sup> and Baba was happy to taste a little of it. This was one of Baba's unique ways of silently revealing His love for Minoo and Bapai, his wife, indicating that though she was not there, He was nevertheless responding to her love for Him. The *mandali* had cold drinks, after which Baba left the military premises.

He and the *mandali* traveled on to Suraj Kund. Nearby were the *samadhis* of Anand Nath and Manohar Nath. A local priest was called to offer prayers on Baba's behalf at these

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<sup>40</sup> *Sev-gathia*: A salty Gujarati preparation of chickpea flour.

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*samadhis*. He chanted some verses in Sanskrit, then Baba, Baidul and Gustadji bowed down to the *samadhis*. On the entrance door of another *samadhi* where Baba paid His homage, an Urdu couplet was written which, when freely translated, means:

I have attained the Goal for which I was born.  
Now I am on my way to the Beyond;  
Try your luck. Bye Bye!

On His return to Meerut, Baba had intended to contact a *mast* named Meherban. Earlier in the morning, Baidul had made various inquiries with the local people about his whereabouts, but he had failed to obtain any reliable information. However, when Baba visited the last *samadhi* at Suraj Kund, one of the people there approached, and addressing him as Seth,<sup>41</sup> said, "Sethji, during your last visit you met Meherban. Do you want to also meet him this time?"

Baidul asked the man if he knew of Meherban's present whereabouts and the man replied, "Yes." Hearing this, Baba meaningfully smiled and gestured that the person should be accommodated in the car and that he should guide them to Meherban's dwelling. The man happily agreed. What had brought him to Suraj Kund at this time we can only guess, but Baba alone knew.

So this man led Baba to Meherban's abode, a small hut under a tree. At that time, the *mast* was feeding a cat and was reluctant to come out. Though Baba wanted to bow down to him, he would not agree to even stretch his two feet outside the entrance of his hut. However, he accepted some money that Baba gave him and then Baba bowed down to him from a distance. Just then, the *mast* muttered in Persian, "*Gultam Deedham*" (I said; I saw), a cryptic remark befitting a *mast*. Then he softly repeated three times a sentence in Hindi which, when freely translated, means, "Only the fortunate ones shall know what a fortune it is to see Him!"

Near Meherban's hut, there was a *dargah* of a Moslem saint named Shah Pir. This place was included in the category of "Protected Monuments;" therefore the Archeological Department of India looked after its maintenance. Yet, it was quite

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<sup>41</sup> When Baba would go out incognito to contact *masts* or for work with the poor, His identity as Meher Baba would not be disclosed. Those accompanying Baba would refer to Him, if asked, as a *seth* (business man) from Bombay, or sometimes as *bada bhai* (elder brother).

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strange that the top of the dome of this *dargah* was open to the sky. People told Baba's *mandali* that in spite of this lack of protection, not a drop of water ever falls inside the *dargah*.<sup>42</sup> Baba, with Baidul and Gustadji, went to offer His homage and He later instructed the rest of the *mandali* to pay their respects.

Then followed a visit to the *dargah* of Makhdum Ali Shah. His grave has iron railings enclosing it and is surrounded by a small garden. It is reported that more than seven hundred years earlier, Ali Shah left Medina for India on his camel. When the camel reached Meerut it refused to move any further. The saint took this as a sign from God that he was to stop there. When he died, this *dargah* was built where the saint and his dear companion, the camel, stayed till the end. Incredible!

It was late afternoon and Baba wished to proceed to Delhi, which He reached by five o'clock. Here, He stayed at the residence of one of His followers who felt immensely honored to entertain Baba and His followers with tea and dinner. Before going to sleep, Baba told the *mandali* that He wished to start at midnight to visit *dargahs* and *samadhis* in Delhi. Later, He changed the time to four o'clock in the morning.

After paying His respects at the three principal *dargahs* of Delhi — Nizemuddin Awalia, Amir Kushroo and Khwaja Bahtiar Kaki — Baba visited the *samadhi* of Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs. It is located near the Central Secretariat building. The *granthi* (priest) was called. He was given some money as *dakshana*<sup>43</sup> and was requested to offer a prayer for the successful completion of Baba's four-month work.

Not knowing who Baba was, the priest in his enthusiasm also invoked God to bless Baba with a nice bonny baby. This made the listeners smile, although they had to restrain themselves from expressing their amusement. While leaving the *samadhi*, Baba jokingly gestured that He already had an infinite number of children and it was hard for Him to look after them. After lunch Baidul again led Baba and His party to some more *samadhis* and *dargahs* in Delhi and Baba most

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<sup>42</sup> The Taj Mahal at Agra, a magnificent mausoleum built by Emperor Shah Jehan in memory of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal, is regarded as one of the wonders of the world. However, in contrast to no rain falling in the *dargah* with an open dome, it is said that in the rainy season, very often a few rain drops fall right on the grave of the queen, and even today expert engineers are unable to stop this leakage.

<sup>43</sup> A Marathi word meaning any amount of money respectfully given to a person, usually a priest, who offers prayers on someone's behalf.

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respectfully offered His respects at each place. It appeared as though He was symbolically contacting the hundreds of devotees who visit these holy places, thereby rendering their contacts more fruitful.

### *A Mast Walks Arm in Arm with Baba*

On September 13th, Baba left Delhi in the morning for Panipat to visit the *dargah* of Bu Ali Shah Qalandar, a Perfect Master of the 15th century. The road leading to his grave was circuitous and very narrow, so the car had to be parked on the main road and Baba, with the *mandali*, walked the distance on foot. This *dargah* had a nice dome with flowers painted on it, and on its gate a couplet of Hafiz was written in praise of the *Qutub*. Freely translated, it read: "Your footprints, O Master! On this ground that you have trod will be the places for real lovers of God to offer their prayers to Him." If this can be said about the spiritual magnitude of a *Qutub's* footprints, how much more can be said about the land that the Avatar so often trod — Meherabad and Meherazad.

While returning from the *dargah*, Baba walked through the bazaar and reached the other end of town. Helen, who was driving the car, had not properly followed Baba's directions as to where he had to wait for Him, so Kumar had to run hither and thither to find Him. At last, Kumar hired a rickshaw so he could look in more places more quickly. While this chase was going on, Baba, in a delighted mood, was distributing sweets (*jalebis*) to the *mandali* and to others standing nearby. It seemed that confusion and exhilaration were simultaneously in play, one of the characteristics of Baba's game.

On Helen's arrival, Baba sped on to Sirhind via Kurukshetra. At Sirhind He visited Gurudwara Fateh Garh, where the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh were entombed alive by fanatic Moslems. The Sikh priest at the temple was requested to offer *ardasa* (prayer) in accordance with their Holy Book, the *Guru Granth Saheb*, and then without visiting any other *samadhi* in the town, Baba proceeded to Khanna.

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Earlier in June at Khanna, Baba had contacted a robust, roaming *mast* named Bambi. He not only had a pleasing personality, but also an ecstatic heart. When Baba had bowed down to him in the earlier tour, he cried aloud, "*Saqi*." This time Baba wished to meet him again. This contact, however, created a little love-scene on the road. When Baidul spotted the *mast*, Baba got out of the car and, with Baidul ahead of Him, He began to walk towards the *mast*.

Baidul gestured for Bambi to come closer, which he did. When he reached Baidul, he tightly took hold of his hand and began to walk on. His grip was so tight that Baidul, in spite of being a strong man, could not release himself from Bambi's hand. Baba walked faster and did a trick: He offered Bambi two apples. At this, the *mast* let go of Baidul, but then arm in arm with Baba he began to walk towards a shop.

These few steps with the divine *Saqi* brought the *mast* to the point of bursting into tears. At the shop, Baba offered him a cup of tea and some sweets as well. Nibbling this *prasad* calmed the *mast* down. Finding him in a good mood, Baba touched Bambi's feet and felt totally satisfied with the contact. Baba did not wait longer at Khanna, but continued His journey via Phillaur to a village in the Punjab named Mohwalla.

This was a long and tiring journey. After reaching Pratapgarh railway station, the car had to continue on a rough dirt road. At Mohwalla, it was learned that the particular *mast* they were seeking had left for another village. After extensive inquiries, Baidul obtained information that the *mast* was staying at a place named Mewwal. So, again, through the narrow roads amid the fields, the car sped on to that village.

After arriving at Mewwal, a village boy led Baba and His people to the naked *mast* they had come so far to see. His body was besmeared with dust and he was nonchalantly lying on a dirt road. Baba got out of the car and joined three villagers who were pressing his legs. At Baba's touch, there was some inner recognition and the *mast*, looking at Baba, shouted, "Leave. Leave." Baba's fiery presence was hard for some to bear.

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Baba, however, was so happy with this contact that He remained seated by the side of the *mast* for half an hour. When the *mast* left his lying position on his own and sat erect on the road, Baba fed him with apples and grapes. While feeding him, Baba several times placed His forehead on the feet of this God-intoxicated soul. It was an incredible sight to see — the God-Man and the man of God, along with ordinary men — seated together on a dirt road.

Baba then instructed His people to proceed to Sangatpura. It was already dark, and to reach this village in the interior of the district (Ludhiana) was not an easy venture. The highway soon gave way to a dirt road which was in terrible condition. It was not long, however, before even this road ended, and they had to travel either through ploughed fields or through crops standing on both sides. Baidul missed the correct turn for Sangatpura and because of this they didn't get to the village until ten at night.

Luckily, the *mast* for whom Baba had come was in the village. Although he had not gone out, he had bolted the door to his room from the inside and refused to open it. Repeated requests and patient waiting on the part of Baba finally induced the *mast* to open up. Baba bowed down most respectfully to the *mast*, and Baidul asked him to bless Baba so that His work would be crowned with success. In a happy mood, the *mast* said, "You will be triumphant in your work."

### *An Old Childlike Mast, Bhagat*

Although it was already quite late, Baba wished to go directly to Bararurka to meet an old, naked, childlike, and innocent *mast* named Chinta Bhagat. It was around eleven when they arrived there. Baidul knew where a Sikh who acted as Bhagat's attendant lived and he went and woke him and asked him to accompany them to Chinta Bhagat's residence.

Baba and some of His people stood in Bhagat's room where he was lying asleep on his *charpai*. The attendant began chanting some devotional verses, and in a short while Bhagat

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got up from his bed and like an innocent child sat on the lap of his devotee, who continued singing. In ecstasy, the *mast* would clap his hands and laugh merrily. His expression had an unmistakable stamp of profound spiritual beauty. Being deeply engrossed and immersed in the joy of God-intoxication, he seemed almost oblivious of his surroundings.

Repeating the refrain of a song, in an overpowered mood, Bhagat got up, caught hold of Baba's hand, and began to walk to and fro in the room and sometimes on the road outside. Physically, this was not good for Baba as His leg was still weak from the auto accident. The *mandali*, through the attendant, pleaded with Bhagat to end his stroll, but the *mast* pushed them aside.

After a little while, however, on his own he released Baba's hand and stopped walking. During this walk with Baba, the *mast* had been weeping and sobbing. At the close of this contact, which lasted over forty minutes, Bhagat was asked through the attendant to bless Baba for the happy ending of His four month's work, which he lovingly did.

A little after midnight on September 14th, Baba and party reached the Phillaur railway station. In June Baba had met Mastani Mai there. Baba used to joke, "Baidul 'smells' *masts/mastanis*," and sure enough, Baidul found Mastani Mai in no time. During Baba's previous visit with her, she had asked Him for a rupee. In view of this, Baba offered her a rupee this time, which she refused, saying, "I will take it, but at dawn." After gentle persuasion, she accepted the money and said, "God will help you." It is beyond mind to understand the cryptic meaning of such conversation.

Baba looked pleased, but by the time He got in the car, Mastani Mai approached Him again and lovingly demanded ten rupees. Baba immediately offered her a ten rupee note, but Mai insisted on ten coins of one rupee each. Some luggage in the trunk of the car had to be untied, and Mai's wish was fulfilled.

Now she had the whim to ask for a pencil, which was also given to her. Delightedly holding it in her hand, she drew some lines and wrote some figures on Baba's back. After catering to

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such childlike whims, Baba left for the long journey to Hardwar via Roorkee. On the way, He visited *samadhis* and *dargahs* of saintly personalities and paid His respects to them.

The last four God-intoxicated persons mentioned above had been contacted by Baba early in June and they all belonged to the *naga* (naked) type of *mast*. Baba had asked Baidul to especially seek out this type for these tours. A saintly personality, Sarmad (16th century), beautifully expressed his views on the nakedness of *masts*:

God told the sinful ones to hide their shame  
In many folds of clothing;  
But to those who have not sinned,  
He gave the beauteous dress of babies —  
Innocence in nakedness.

There are many interesting incidents in Baba's life which illustrate His intimacy with various types of *masts*. I have related some here to display a few facets of Baba's relationship with His beloved children — the childlike vagaries of the *masts* and the Compassionate Father's ever-patient, and loving responses.

### *A Gift Given in Disguise*

On September 14th in the afternoon, Baba reached Hardwar intending to contact a *mast* who was residing in a garden a few miles from Kankhal. It had rained in the morning and the dirt road leading to the garden was covered with many large puddles of muddy water. On two or three occasions, Baba had to get out of the car and wade through the water while the old six-seater Chevy detoured through the fields.

During Baba's previous visit, this *mast* had allowed Baba to be accompanied by only two people when contact was made. So Baba took just Baidul and Elcha with Him when He went inside the *mast's* room. The *mast*, however, was in a different mood on this occasion and wanted to see the entire group. The moods of the *masts* change like the vagaries of children and Baba always wanted to contact them when they were in good



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moods, so the *mandali*, waiting outside, were called in.

With this successful visit, Baba returned to Hardwar and spent some time with one of His favorite *masts*, Nilkanthwalla. He then drove to Rishikesh and after a few contacts with *sadhus*, etc., all had dinner. When they returned to Hardwar, it was past ten at night, a time normally associated with sleep, but at the beginning of this tour, Baba had made it clear to His people that this was to be a "no rest, no sleep" journey. So, late as it was, Baba announced to those accompanying Him that He wanted to offer prayers at a *samadhi* at midnight. Some of the *mandali* went out to find a *samadhi* in Hardwar that Baba would approve of. However, this search did not prove fruitful, and Baba finally decided to visit Kalyar near Roorkee to offer midnight prayers at the *dargah* of Sabir Saheb (Makhdoom Ali Ahmed Sabir).

It was after eleven and the road to Kalyar lay through forest. Baba's car was driven by J. Helen whose eyesight was so weak that he had to wear thick glasses. Baba, who wanted to reach Sabir's *dargah* before midnight, urged Helen to drive faster, and after a while, still faster. Helen, in fact, was frightened to drive at such a high speed, for in the darkness, even with full headlights on, he was unable to see the road clearly.

Just then, Baba pointed His finger at a car's red taillight ahead of them on the road. He told Helen to catch up with that vehicle. Helen increased his speed but the car in front seemed to maintain the same distance, perhaps a bit more, but not less. Kumar, who was in the rear seat, was asked by Baba, "Why should that car go so fast?" Kumar replied, "Baba, this particular area is a Government forest reserve. I presume there could be a poacher in that car and he has gotten the impression that he is being chased by Government forest officers. And to avert arrest, he is driving at such high speed." Baba looked back at Kumar and smiled.

As Baba's car neared Roorkee, the red taillight ahead suddenly vanished. Baba directed Kumar's attention to this abrupt disappearance, which seemed extraordinary. Kumar commented, "Baba, I too wonder at this sudden disappearance of the light. Perhaps the poacher has turned on to a side road."

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Again, Baba simply smiled. As Baba's car continued on its journey, Kumar was particularly watchful to see if there was any turnoff ahead, but there didn't seem to be one.

The taillight's sudden disappearance puzzled him greatly. The only solution he could think of was that the appearance of the red light was Baba's device to summon courage in Helen to drive faster and in the right direction because He had to reach Kalyar sufficiently before midnight to offer prayers.

Baba's car and the *mandali's* jeep stopped near Sabir's shrine. Baidul went in to meet the caretaker of the shrine, who flatly refused to open the door of the *dargah* at such an odd hour. Baidul pleaded politely but to no avail. Finally, Baba decided to offer prayers by standing near a stone trellis through which Sabir's grave was visible.

That night Baba gave an unusual instruction to His people. He asked all who had accompanied Him to circumambulate Sabir's *dargah* 101 times. The employee of the shrine, for some unknown reason, did not like Baba's people walking around the shrine. To express his displeasure, he often repeated, "Go slow, go slow."

In contrast to this, a young boy who happened to be there then was deeply touched by Baba's presence. While Baba's people were circumambulating the *dargah*, this boy took his seat near another stone trellis and began to read either the Holy Koran or some other religious work. Soon, he was overwhelmed with ecstasy and began to shed tears. In between his sobs, he often glanced at Baba and the dry-hearted caretaker chided the boy for expressing his emotions.

Perhaps the 101 circumambulations made by Baba's people represented the 101 Holy Names of God. When this was completed, Baba looked satisfied. Before leaving, He instructed one of his men to give some money to the caretaker as a reward. Some who were with Baba, however, thought that the real recipient of Baba's gift was the young boy, whose heart was awakened to God's love in His presence. The Avatar has the habit of bestowing gifts in disguise, but the greatest and the most incredible gift in disguise to humanity is the Avatar Himself in whom the Infinite God becomes man.

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On His return to Hardwar, Baba contacted a mast in the early hours of the morning. Before reaching Dehra Dun, Baba wished to pay His homage at Manik Siddha's *samadhi*, situated near the Forest Research Institute. The road leading to this *samadhi* was so poor that half-way there the idea of the visit had to be abandoned. By late morning on September 15th, Baba and His people reached 101 Rajpur Road, the place where the tour had begun. Everyone who had accompanied Baba looked extremely tired and worn out.

About this whirlwind tour, one of the *mandali* from Dehra Dun wrote Adi at Ahmednagar as follows:

Baba wants me to write and let you know that He has returned from His 'mast-trip' on 15th September. He worked relentlessly, traveling night and day, without sleep and with little food. The last stretch of drive was sixty hours' drive, stopping on the way only for extreme necessities. Baba and the *mandali* returned completely fagged out and exhausted. But during this tour, Baba contacted some excellent *masts* and told us that His work was very well done, which is of course the main thing.

## SOME STRIKING INCIDENTS 1953—Part VIII

### *Darkness Prevails over God's House*

During Baba's stay at Dehra Dun, there were several incidents that were particularly poignant in that they expressly illustrated Baba's love and compassion for those ordained to meet Him. Though not in strict chronological order, each of the stories that follow brings to light one of the graceful aspects of Baba's omniscience, and delightfully portrays His unique sense of humor.

Vir Inder Singh, a retired police officer, was among those who met Meher Baba for the first time in early April of 1953 during Baba's stay at Dehra Dun. As time passed, Baba was so pleased with Vir Inder Singh's intense love and one-pointed conviction that He nicknamed him the "New Daulat Singh."<sup>1</sup> Baba's ways of bringing His lovers to Him display various facets of His fascinating methods depending upon the individual nature of the people involved. The saga of Vir Inder Singh's meeting with Baba unveils one of the charming aspects of the Beloved's love.

Ever since his youth, Vir Inder had spiritual leanings. He was blessed with robust health and began a career with the police department, where he served for many years. It was a life of challenge and adventure for him. The police service brought with it many hazards, as the criminals who had to be dealt with were often ruthless and cruel. In such a perilous life, one special incident established him firmly in his spiritual life.

Once in the course of his duties, he found himself confronted by a gang of twelve *dacoits* (highway robbers). The chief of the ring attacked Vir Inder and began to wrestle with him. While struggling to free himself, Vir Inder shot the leader in the thigh with his revolver. The *dacoits* thought that their head-man was mortally wounded and were enraged. They took their

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<sup>1</sup> Daulat Singh, a former member of the city council of Srinagar in Kashmir, was one of Meher Baba's companions in the New Life. See: *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. II, pp. 116-118, 260-263.

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clubs and began to beat Vir Inder. One of the blows struck him over the eye and he lost his balance and fell to the ground unconscious, as though dead. The gang snatched his revolver, tied him to a pole inside a hut, and set the hut on fire along with other huts on both sides, so that he would be roasted alive.

The heat of the fire brought Vir Inder to his senses and he realized the great danger he was in. He wholeheartedly called on God for help. With all sincerity, he also promised God that if his life were saved he would dedicate it to Him. Just as the flames reached the inside of the hut, a party of police arrived in pursuit of the *dacoits*. Not knowing that one of their own men was inside, they were about to shoot into the huts in case any of the *dacoits* were hiding there. Just then, Vir Inder cried with all his strength for help. The police recognized his voice, and his life was saved; God had graciously responded to his call.

After his retirement, he decided to remain in Dehra Dun with his wife for the rest of his life. Now it clearly came to him that he should devote all his time to the remembrance of God. He kept busy the whole day with activities connected with the spiritual life. Being brought up in a religious Sikh family, he converted one of the rooms in his house into a *gurudwara* — a place entirely reserved for worshipping God and the Master.

Vir Inder spent most of his time, even late at night, in reciting and reading parts of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. Through constant remembrance of God and both reading and recitation of these inspirational books, a deep spiritual feeling was aroused in him, and he intuitively felt that his longing to see God in human form as a *Sadguru* would soon be fulfilled. As the days passed, his yearning became more intense and at some moments he felt exceedingly delighted with the impending prospect of meeting the Master.

One day in April 1953, after completing his regular morning worship and reading from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, he covered the holy book with a fine cloth and began to meditate. Sometimes a friend of his — Sardar Singh, an accountant in the Air Force and a learned person who took a keen interest in spiritual matters — would come to participate in the recitation

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and to listen to Vir Inder's heartfelt commentaries on passages from the holy book. He happened to come this day and while there, casually mentioned that a *Sadguru* named Meher Baba had come to Dehra Dun recently and was currently residing in a house on Rajpur Road. He also added that the Master had been observing silence for many years.

On hearing Baba's name, a deep chord in Vir Inder's heart was touched. He closed his eyes and silence filled the room. He commenced his meditation for the second time that morning and went into a trance. In his vision, he saw Meher Baba wearing a pink coat over a white *sadra*; His hair was combed and His face was so resplendent that the radiance seemed to permeate everywhere.

Vir Inder opened his eyes and asked Sardar Singh when they could have Meher Baba's *darshan*. He replied that Baba might give His *darshan* to the public in a few weeks. But the vision of Baba had been so overpowering that Vir Inder insisted on seeing Baba that same day. "How can I wait to see the Enlightened One?" he exclaimed. Sardar Singh said that although he could not be of much help in this matter, perhaps Kishan Singh, who stayed at 107-A Rajpur Road, might be able to arrange an audience with Meher Baba. Vir Inder decided to try his luck that same afternoon.

Actually, Vir Inder Singh's first acquaintance with Meher Baba's holy name was in the early 1930's through his father, who was a deputy magistrate. Being a religious-minded person, he somehow became interested in Meher Baba, and while going to his office, he often carried a copy of *Meher Message*<sup>45</sup> in his briefcase. In that issue there was an article by "Divine Lord Meher Baba" on God-realization. Vir Inder happened to read it and was greatly impressed by Baba's discourse. Even then, deep down in his heart, he felt that Meher Baba was a genuine *Sadguru*, and wanted to know more about Him. But the ordained moment of meeting Him was not to be for two decades.

Now, twenty-odd years later, he was off to 107-A Rajpur Road to see Kishan Singh. It turned out that this was the same house he had seen in his recent vision, but when he met Kishan

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<sup>45</sup> A monthly devoted to Meher Baba's work and messages (Jan. 1929-Nov. 1931). From January 1930, *Meher Message* published a series of articles by Meher Baba on God-realization.

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Singh and requested to have Meher Baba's *darshan*, he was flatly refused. Some days earlier, Baba had, as He often did, severely warned Kishan Singh not to bring anyone for *darshan*. Baba even threatened to leave Dehra Dun immediately if Kishan Singh disobeyed. Vir Inder of course, did not know this, and Kishan Singh's answer seemed to him to be a harsh and curt response to his humble and sincere request. It pained him so much that tears began to roll down his cheeks; it was beyond him to control them. In a very despondent mood, he left the house and as he came out of the bungalow he exclaimed in Hindi, "*Khuda ke ghar andhera!*" meaning, "What a wonder! Darkness prevails over God's house!"

### *He Beholds the Beloved of His Vision*

Vir Inder Singh, feeling greatly depressed, began to return to his home with heavy steps and a broken heart. As he reached the crossroad leading to 105 Rajpur Road, where Baba stayed, an overpowering wave of love came over him and he began to experience a state of vacuum in which he felt that he was gradually losing his sense of identity. When he came back to his senses soon afterwards, he noticed a friend of his standing by his side. He told Vir Inder that Sardar Singh was inviting him to come to his office for tea. Both of them then went there and had a nice afternoon tea, after which Vir Inder felt quite refreshed.

After hearing about Vir Inder's visit to Kishan Singh's, Sardar Singh enthusiastically suggested that they both go there again, which they did. Once again Kishan Singh firmly but politely repeated his earlier reply. At this time, however, Baba happened to be in the house, and without having received any report about the visitors, He sent a message that they should wait near a broken wall of the adjoining house. They would then be permitted to see Him from a distance (when He returned to His residence.)

This was indeed happy news for Vir Inder and both of them delightedly went next door to wait as directed. After a short

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time, they had the joy of seeing Baba walk briskly by, His arms swinging gracefully, as He proceeded to 105 Rajpur Road. This was a heavenly and indescribable sight for Vir Inder. As Baba was walking along, Vir Inder saw a dazzling light emerge from behind Baba. His concept of God was one of eternal Light, and he felt he was in the presence of a Master who was One with God. This glimpse of Baba compelled him from within to bow down to Baba, although he was some distance away. Seeing this, one of the *mandali* cried out, "Baba does not want anyone to pay Him respects in this way." At once, Vir Inder stood up, keeping his gaze directly on Baba.

Baba, instead of continuing, turned just then towards Vir Inder. As He approached him, He looked at him lovingly and gestured, "Don't worry; be happy." Then he spelled out some sentences on His board, but Baba's presence made Vir Inder so intoxicated that to this day he does not recall anything other than Baba's radiant figure.

After a minute or so, Baba walked on to His residence while Vir Inder continued to watch Him, his eyes blurred with tears of joy. As Baba reached the premises where He was staying, He turned His full gaze on Vir Inder and waved to him. This gesture of intimacy granted to him, without there having been any formal introduction, made Vir Inder not only immensely elated, but it made him convinced that Baba knows and that he was Baba's. In a buoyant mood, he got on his bicycle and rode back to his house.

On reaching home, he became more and more intoxicated with Baba's divinity. Some days he would sit from sunrise to sunset in the *gurudwara* at his house, dazed as though the affairs of the world held no interest for him. With this feeling, the longing to see Baba was intensified. But Baba left for Mussoorie on April 10th and Vir Inder did not know when He would return to Dehra Dun. A month and a half later, Baba returned but Vir Inder did not know this.

On the day when his longing reached perhaps the apex of its intensity, Sardar Singh came with the message, "Baba wants you to come to Him tomorrow." It is said that when a lover longs to meet his beloved Master, it is, in fact, only a feeble



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response to the deeper love which the Beloved has for the lover. Vir Inder wanted to know whether Baba had come back to Dehra Dun, and Baba responded with a compassionate call, inviting him to be in His very presence.

The following morning he rose early but soon discovered to his dismay that, in his overpowering exuberance at the thought of meeting Baba, he had totally forgotten to order flowers for the Beloved Master. As he also wanted to prepare a sweet dish for Baba with his own hands, he collected and sifted the very best ingredients for making *rava*. Absorbed in thoughts of Baba's splendor and beauty, he prepared the *rava* himself. When it was ready, to his great delight, he felt the omnipresent Master appear before him and bless the dish by tasting a bit of it.

With a glass bowl filled with *rava*, he set out with his wife to meet the Master. On the way, he saw a man approaching with a basket of fresh flowers. Vir Inder asked him if they were for sale and the man, a total stranger, lovingly looked at him and to his surprise handed him the basket saying, "It's for you," and went on his way. Incredible!

Now Vir Inder and his wife, with a bowl full of sweet *rava* and a basket of flowers, began to walk towards the main road. Just then they met one of their friends who asked where they were going. On hearing that they were on their way to 107-A Rajpur Road, he most willingly offered them a lift in his car. Everything that was happening seemed to be a marvel, and in that marvelous mood, Vir Inder and his wife reached the house much earlier than the appointed time. Such surprising happenings were perhaps archetypes for the greater coincidences that were to happen in later years in bringing Baba lovers closer to Baba after He shed the "cloak" He had worn.

Happily, Baba had already arrived and was sitting with the *mandali*. Hearing that Vir Inder had come, Baba sent word to usher him and his wife in at once. With the bowl of *rava* and basket of flowers they stood before Baba, who was obviously very pleased. After paying homage to Baba, Vir Inder desired to give a morsel of *rava* personally to Baba, but He gestured, "No." As Vir Inder looked visibly disappointed, Baba, to his

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surprise, conveyed that He had not only tasted the *rava* when it was ready, but had also relished it because it was prepared with such love.

He then asked Vir Inder to distribute this as His *prasad* to the *mandali*. This was a direct confirmation from Baba about His being present at Vir Inder's house. Although Vir Inder's experience seemed remarkable, Baba has revealed that He is equally for all and that each of His lovers receives a special dispensation of His grace and blessings.

After this memorable meeting with Beloved Baba, Vir Inder did not miss any opportunity for Baba's *sahavas* and *darshan* either at Meherabad or in Poona. Vir Inder Singh's deep love for Baba reminds me of a Hindi couplet<sup>46</sup> which states: "When the grace of the God-Man awakens love in anyone, the heart continues to feast on His loving remembrance, even when the physical body goes to sleep."

### *Overpowering Grip of Healing Powers*

Kumar also had a friend who met Baba at this time. They had both been active in the Indian struggle for independence. In the early 1940's, they and other youths from U.P., fired with love for their motherland, formed a terrorist group. Anticipating their intentions, the British government arrested them and put them behind bars for an indefinite period. Although they were political prisoners, the treatment meted out to them was brutal, and this shattered whatever little faith they had in God. On August 15, 1947, India gained its independence and by this time most of the political prisoners, including Kumar, had been discharged from jail.

Soon after his release in January 1950, Kumar met God — Meher Baba — whom he had prayed to while in prison, addressing Him as "Mister God."<sup>47</sup> From the first, he willingly accepted Baba and did whatever He asked him to do. Kumar had a friend named Surendra, a long-time associate and comrade in prison. He continued to visit Surendra who was staying in Dehra Dun, and sometimes he talked to him about

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<sup>46</sup> *Yaad unki hoti rahengi, agarche soya karengi ham.*

<sup>47</sup> See: *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. II, pp. 183-189.

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Meher Baba and the transformation that had taken place in his life.

Surendra often made fun of Kumar, saying that it was ludicrous that he was now running after "some Baba" after being such a rational, militant revolutionary. Kumar admitted that he did not really know anything about God or the spiritual path, yet declared that one thing was certain — he loved Meher Baba and had happily surrendered to Him.

Surendra respected Kumar, and after hearing such statements with their ring of sincerity, he decided that for someone to totally win over a person like Kumar was proof in itself that "this Baba" was an exceptional man. One day, he expressed the wish to see Baba from a distance, although he was not keen to have Baba's *darshan*.

Kumar told him that Baba was not seeing people for either *darshan* or interviews, however, there was a chance of seeing Him as He proceeded each day from the *mandali's* bungalow to His residence. In those days, as Baba would walk by the footpath adjacent to the rear of the bungalow on Rajpur Road, people would wait on the main road to have a glimpse of His radiant figure. One day Surendra joined this crowd.

Kumar and Aloba used to accompany Baba, alternately holding an umbrella for Him. On the way, there was a tree bearing white *champa* flowers which gave off a beautiful fragrance. On Baba's signal, Kumar would occasionally climb this tree and offer one big bloom to Baba. He would then return to the *mandali's* bungalow while Aloba would continue to accompany Baba to His residence. On this particular day, when Surendra was standing on the road, Baba had Kumar get Him a flower.

That evening, Kumar visited Surendra and found him in a very happy mood. He asked the reason why, and to his surprise he was told that Baba had given the *champa* flower to him. Surendra said that as he was standing on the main road with many others, Baba stopped in the bylane and told Aloba to give the flower to the person He was pointing to. Aloba ran over to the main road but couldn't tell which person was supposed to get the flower. So, looking at Baba, he began to query, "This

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man? This man? This man?" until he eventually handed it to Surendra and then went back to hold the umbrella for Baba.

Kumar told Surendra that he was very fortunate that Baba had specifically given the flower to him. He also asked Surendra to be careful about this gift, adding that if gifts from the Master are not treated with due respect, they sometimes "miraculously" disappear. He illustrated this remark by sharing the following incident which had taken place in January 1953, when he had accompanied Baba on His first visit to Andhra State.

As Kumar had to remain close by Baba's side, he often kept two handkerchiefs with him for Baba's use. One day at Eluru, Baba asked Kumar for one. He crumpled it up, cleaned His hands and face with it, and then made it into a ball and lovingly gave it to Kumar as a keepsake. Kumar was very, very happy to be the recipient of this treasure. Later, he went to lie down, but he found he was disturbed by a light that was on outside. So he took the handkerchief and placed it over a leaf of a nearby branch to block the light and then went to sleep.

When he woke up, he didn't see the handkerchief anywhere. Deeply disturbed, he asked if anyone had seen it or if anyone had come near him while he slept who might possibly have taken it. All replied that they had seen no one. At this point, Kumar looked down and saw a small heap of ashes with an unburned thread in it, which clearly was the remains of the handkerchief.

He picked it up, and as the ashes disappeared through his fingers, he realized what a blunder he had committed in treating lightly something as precious as a love-gift from his Beloved Master. And even now, Kumar does not know how the handkerchief could have been burned in that way. He summed up this story by telling Surendra to be very careful with the treasure he had been given.

Three days later, Kumar saw Surendra again and noticed that he was very sad. When Kumar asked what had happened, Surendra replied that he couldn't find the flower that Baba had given him, although he had searched for it everywhere.

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Soon after this, Surendra left Dehra Dun.

Surendra and Kumar met again two years later. At that time, Surendra appeared to be a different person. It seemed he had become a "man of miracles," that he had become a healer and tapped a few supernatural powers within himself. He related to Kumar how it all happened. One day he saw one of their old friends from prison in the bazaar. He could not get to him because of the crowds, so he wanted his friend to stop and called out to him internally to do so. He found to his surprise that he did. He then willed within himself for his friend to turn, and the friend did. Struck by this, Surendra mentally ordered another man to sit down and then stand up, which he too did. Surendra suddenly realized that some powers had been awakened in him. Later these powers were transformed into an ability to heal people.

Surendra went on to tell Kumar that after having lost the beautiful *champa* flower, he had continuously thought about it for days on end and also about Baba. Perhaps as a result of this, without his knowing or craving any benefit from it, the healing powers had suddenly come to him. Kumar responded that these powers were definitely Baba's gift to him and that he should be grateful to the Master and should be discriminating in their use, or else they would bind him.

Again, a year later, Kumar met Surendra. He told Kumar how his powers were rapidly developing, but by this time he was no longer attributing these to Baba but to his daily meditations. He told how, in Bombay, he had been the guest of a business magnate, and that one evening a man from the Swiss Embassy was visiting. In the course of conversation, this man had complained of serious back trouble and related that he had gone to many doctors in Europe but had found none who could cure him.

Jokingly, the Swiss official said that perhaps some Indian yogi could help him. At this, the businessman asked Surendra what he could do for him; Surendra went over to the Swiss to provide help, confident in his ability to do so. To his own surprise, the Swiss stood up, erect and without pain, immediately thereafter. Filled with gratitude, he asked Surendra

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what he could do for him. Surendra replied that he didn't charge for his services, but the Swiss was so impressed with his cure that he later arranged to bring Surendra to Switzerland and sent him traveling throughout Europe. Surendra returned to India with many presents, having visited several Western countries.

In later years, Kumar once told Baba all this. Baba smiled and commented, "Poor fellow — I simply gave him a toy to play with!" Whenever Kumar saw Surendra, he reminded him about Baba and what He had said about healing faculties. Surendra would agree but would add how much he was helping people, and he continued to give all the credit to his own meditations. The greater the results, the greater the binding! Kumar told him to stop hankering after these powers, as it was harmful to him spiritually, but it was very difficult for Surendra to release himself from the grip and charm of these healing powers. Thus, he missed his chance of receiving from the Avatar His gift of love, which transcends all healing and supernatural powers.

### *A Glimpse of the Radiant One*

After the exhaustive five day *mast-tour* in September, Baba continued to visit the *mandali's* residence every day in the morning and also in the afternoon. During the second half of September, a fortunate family coincidentally came into the orbit of Meher Baba's love. No one from this family had seen Baba before; none of them had heard His name. But Baba brought them all to Him in His own way.

On August 15th, 1947 India gained its independence from the British. Until the early 1950's, the subcontinent was composed of over seven hundred big and small states, each of which was ruled by hereditary rulers. As a result of widespread agitation, these states were totally taken under the democratic umbrella of the Indian government. In 1952, the state government of Uttar Pradesh (one of the biggest provinces in India) abolished landlordism.

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As a result of these widespread changes, many small rulers and big landlords had to face serious social and financial problems. One of them, who was known as Rajah Saheb of Sahanpur, not only had to hand over his lands, which included a forest area, to the government, but he also was declared in arrears on the forest tax for the past five years and was asked to pay an enormous sum of money within a very short time. This was a most depressing and crucial period in the life of Rajah Saheb.

About this time his eldest daughter, a charming young girl married to a prince from a royal family in the Punjab, visited her parents' house. She was pregnant, and had decided to stay under the care of her mother during the period of childbirth. Unfortunately, in spite of her mother's loving concern, she died after having delivered a healthy baby. This unexpected and ill-fated incident was a shocking blow to Rajah Saheb, and even more so for his wife, Rani Saheb. She looked so grief-stricken that others thought she would soon pass away. The combination of social and family crises shattered their peace of mind.

In September 1953, they left their village, where they had experienced so much suffering, and went to Dehra Dun for a change. Their residence was situated in the locality quite near the two bungalows housing the men and women *mandali*. On their first day there, while taking a walk, they casually heard that a new "Baba" had arrived in town and was staying there with His followers.

One thing that struck Rajah Saheb as most unusual was that this Baba apparently always had someone holding an umbrella over Him whenever He went outside. While returning to their house, they saw some people at 101 Rajpur Road, each wearing a different type of clothing. It was clear that those people belonged to different religions and were also from different parts of India.

Out of curiosity, Rajah Saheb asked someone standing near the compound if they were the followers of that new Baba, to which the simple reply was, "Yes." Rajah Saheb's attention was drawn towards Gustadji, who was arranging matchboxes

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and small discarded cartons in a fanciful way. Rajah Saheb felt like exchanging a word with Gustadji, whose child-like smile and charming personality attracted him. But he was told that Gustadji had been observing silence for many years; this added to the mystery of the new Baba he had been hearing about.

On succeeding days, during their morning walks, they saw Baba's men busy doing things but they never met any of them on the road so they couldn't ask them about Baba. They soon learned, though, that Baba was staying in another house, at 105 Rajpur Road. After a few days they felt greatly drawn to see Baba. So one night, at about eight o'clock, when all was quiet, Rajah Saheb and his wife went to Baba's residence.

They discovered that there was a high screen of matting above the compound wall. The gate had a big lock and near it was a small cabin with a large brass bell attached to it. There were no lights either in the front verandah or the adjacent rooms. It was unusually peaceful, everywhere. They could not decide what to do.

At last Rajah Saheb called out for the *chowkidar* (watchman), but there was no response. Both of them waited in suspense for some time, but there was no response and they were about to walk away when they heard someone call out, "Stop! Stop!" They looked hopefully in the direction of the voice which now shouted out, "Stop! Stop that animal!" Then they saw an English filly (Sheeba) trotting hither and thither in the compound. Finally she stopped near the closed gate. When the servant came close by, they asked him, "Can we see Baba?" The man answered, "No, you cannot. I work in this house, but I am not permitted to see Him." The situation looked disappointing, yet hoping against hope, they lingered a little while longer near the gate.

Then the thought occurred to them that Baba might have retired early and they felt they shouldn't disturb Him or anyone else residing in the house. They were just about to leave when they noticed the lights in the drawing room go on, and they could see a figure approach the verandah. It was Baba! Then someone opened the door and switched on the lights in



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the compound. Now, they clearly beheld Baba, dressed in His spotlessly white *sadra* and yellowish silk pajamas. He looked radiant and incredibly magnificent.

Rajah Saheb and his wife were totally taken by surprise. How did Baba know they had come for His *darshan*? Most respectfully, without moving, they folded their hands in *namaskar* and bowed their heads. As they looked up, Baba, his face flooded with radiance, waved twice to them and went inside. Immediately, the lights were turned off and the door of the drawing room was closed and peace prevailed once more.

In just a few minutes the *darshan* had begun and ended. Overpowered with excitement, both of them stood motionless on the road as though they could not move. "Indeed we are blessed to have our first glimpse of the Radiant One," they thought. They returned home in rapture, but with an earnest desire to know more about Baba. They had called aloud for the *chowkidar*, but the All-Knowing Master Himself answered their hearts' call, gave them *darshan* and also waved to them. Baba is incredibly reachable.

### *A Master Stroke of the Master Psychologist*

Earlier, during his walks, Rajah Saheb had noticed a species of bamboo — *yakka* — in full blossom. It was in the compound of a dilapidated house, the owner of which had died several years earlier of tuberculosis. Because it had remained untenanted for several years thereafter, local people considered it haunted and shunned the place. Coincidentally, it was situated between Baba's house and the *mandali's* residence. As for the blossoming, Rajah Saheb knew that this particular type of bamboo blossoms once every hundred years and then dies. People who witness such blossoming consider it very auspicious. Moreover, the flowers give out a sweet, soft perfume.

After seeing Baba the previous night, Rajah Saheb and his wife decided to spend some time the following morning near this fragrant *yakka*. There was no caretaker to prevent their going there, but they had to make their way through waist-

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high grass. They pulled some out and spread it on the ground to sit on. Within a minute or two, they saw Baba walking along a small footpath leading to the house where the men *mandali* stayed. He was accompanied by Goher, one of Baba's women *mandali*, who was holding an umbrella over Him.

With Baba's unexpected arrival, both of them sprang to their feet and offered their *namaskars* to Him. Baba also turned His face and smiled at them. He made one of His meaningful hand gestures by joining His index finger to His thumb, meaning, "Good." He then walked ahead, His *sadra* swinging about Him. After some time, Goher returned and found them still sitting there. She approached and conveyed to them the following message from Baba, "I have my *nazar* on you. Don't worry; be happy." This loving response from Baba deeply touched them and brought tidings of hope to their melancholy hearts.

The next day they felt like visiting the same spot again. It was afternoon this time, and they again cleared some grass to make a seat for themselves. They also removed some high-grown grass along the footpath that Baba had trod the day before. After a few minutes, they were again startled to see Baba passing by, Goher holding an umbrella over Him. Again quick and loving greetings, like those of the previous day, were interchanged between them and Baba.

When Goher was returning from the *mandali's* house, they approached her and asked if Baba would object to their sitting there, so close to where He walked daily. She replied, "I think Baba will not mind your sitting here quietly as long as you do not go close to Him or try to ask Him anything." At the close of this conversation, as instructed by Baba, she reiterated to them Baba's message of the previous day. Rajah Saheb wondered at Baba's sympathetic concern for them. In fact, they had neither been introduced to Baba nor had anyone told Baba who they were. Hence, Baba's words of hope and cheer revealed Baba's omniscience in a very graceful way to Rajah Saheb and his wife.

In spite of Goher's assurance that their presence would not disturb Baba, both of them thought it advisable to change the

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timing of their daily visits to the spot near the bamboo that was unconsciously drawing them there. On succeeding days, they went there at different times between late morning and late afternoon. But to their utter surprise, every time, within five minutes of their settling down on the grass matting, they would see Baba either going to or coming from the *mandali's* bungalow.

Each time the couple silently greeted Baba, and He in turn affectionately responded with the same gesture and a glance of love. This simple signaling awakened deep faith in Baba's divinity in their hearts. They felt Baba was one who could relieve them from the agonies of heart they were troubled with, if they could only be allowed to have a brief audience with Him and were permitted to open their hearts to Him.

With God's grace, after some days, Rani had a talk with Goher and finally succeeded in making a time and date for a personal interview with Baba. It was arranged for a day in the last week of September. None of the men *mandali*, however, had any idea of these chance encounters between Baba and Rajah and Rani Saheb, or of the proposed interview which Baba had sanctioned.

On the appointed day, Baba was seated on the verandah of the *mandali's* house. The *mandali* had gone inside for their meal, it was quiet, and there was no activity in the compound of the house. Quite unexpectedly, Eruch noticed a woman wearing a lovely sari and who seemed to be of a noble family rush in and prostrate herself before Baba. Eruch was surprised that Baba did not object to her coming. She was Rani, the wife of Rajah Saheb.

She then stood and with folded hands said, "Baba, you are *Paramatma*. You alone can save me from my intense agony." By this time, tears had gathered in her eyes and were spilling down her cheeks. Baba asked her to sit down and gestured, "Calm down. Calm down. Tell Me what you want." Rani now introduced herself and narrated the incident of the passing away of her darling daughter and how deeply this had affected her mental poise.

"When did your daughter expire?" Eruch interpreted

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Baba's gestures. "Six months ago, and I sorely miss her. In fact, it is unbearable for me to live without her. Baba, nothing is impossible for You! Will You give me back my daughter?" And so Rani poured out her heart. Baba, with a twinkle in His eye, very casually replied, "Yes, I can." "You can! And also in the same body?" Rani exclaimed. Baba conveyed, "Yes, in the same body." Rani looked astonished; she was stunned. But, in fact, Eruch was even more astonished than the bereaved mother. He knew that Baba did not encourage miracles, and yet at the moment He seemed to be openly committing Himself to one.

Baba had often made it clear that His miracle would not be to give sight to the blind, but to make people blind to Illusion; not to raise the dead, but to make people dead to Illusion. So Eruch thought, "How can the Baba I have known all these years promise such a thing?"

The personal audience continued and Baba added, "I will give you back your daughter on condition that you whole-heartedly remember and love Me more and more each day." Rani replied, "Baba, I will try my best to do that." She looked extremely relieved and happy. She further asked, "Will I get any sign before the return of my daughter?" Baba's eyes beamed with tender love and He gestured, "Yes. You will first see her in a dream." Rani felt convinced and comforted. Again prostrating before Baba, she left the house.

Later, this incident was shared with some of the *mandali* and Baba asked Kaikobad whether the promise He had given could be fulfilled. Kaikobad replied, "Baba, You are God in human form. You can do whatever You want to." At this, Baba looked at Eruch and teased him for his hesitation in interpreting His gestures about the return of Rani's daughter in the same body. Eruch said he hadn't been doubting that Baba *could* do such a thing, only whether he *would* actually do it.

After this interview, the entire family came into Baba's closer contact and on every occasion when Rani visited Baba, He would remind her about loving Him more and more. And, on His own, He would inquire anxiously if she had seen her daughter in a dream yet. A few years later, during one of her

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visits, she happily told Baba that she had seen her daughter in a dream. Baba looked delighted and gestured, "Good sign." Eruch, who was sitting by Baba's side, wondered what Baba really meant. He silently mused, "What's going on here?"

Again, some years passed, and Rani came to Poona for Baba's *darshan*, as He permitted His lovers to visit Guruprasad during certain hours on weekends at that time for *sahavas*. On one such occasion, Baba seemed to be in one of His best moods. He looked at Rani who was sitting close to His chair and conveyed, "At this moment, I am in such a mood as to give whatever you ask for. Tell me, do you want your daughter back or do you want Me? Be quick." Rani gently and gracefully placed her hands on Baba's knees and reverently said, "Baba, I want You."

Rani's choice pleased Baba and He gestured, "By having Me you have the whole world, including your late daughter." Rani, with deepest understanding, folded her hands and lowered her head in deep gratitude at Baba's concern for her. Eruch, who witnessed this whole drama with its different acts, realized what Baba had meant by His first promise to Rani when He had told her He would give her back her daughter. This incident revealed to Eruch what a master psychologist Baba is. And even today, Meher Baba, being the Omniscient One, is drawing His dear ones closer to His heart through incredible ways, each of which can be regarded as a master stroke of its kind.

### *Unprecedented Condolence Message*

Before narrating an incident that occurred at the end of September 1953 to a member of the Jessawala family, it is appropriate to briefly narrate how the Jessawalas came to stay with Baba.

On August 1, 1938, in response to Meher Baba's call, the Jessawala family sold their house in Nagpur and came to stay permanently with Baba at Meherabad. For them it was a sudden yet welcome change from a well-off life to a simple,

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rather primitive lifestyle. Eruch Jessawala stayed with the men *mandali* at Lower Meherabad, while his mother, Gaimai, with her other children, Mani, Meheru, and Meherwan, went to reside on the Hill — Upper Meherabad — with the women *mandali*. Eruch's father, Beheramshaw, known among the *mandali* as "Papa," also came to live there a few months later, after he had fulfilled certain obligations before retiring from his responsible government position as chief inspector of boilers and factories for the state of Madhya Pradesh (then known as Central Provinces and Berar).

Since then, each member of the family has led a life strictly in accordance with Baba's orders, which were sometimes not easy and occasionally very trying. Mani (Menu) and Meherwan did not marry, but Meheru, with Baba's consent, married Sawak Damania. In the 1950's, Sawak was working as a cashier and accountant in Sarosh Motor Works, Ahmednagar, which was then owned by Sarosh Irani, one of Baba's close disciples since the days of Manzil-e-Meem. Sawak was residing with Meheru at Adi's compound, where the present office of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust is located.

In the beginning of 1953, Meheru fell ill with pancreatic cancer, which seemed incurable. In that year, Baba left Meherabad for Dehra Dun in the month of February. A few days prior to His departure, Meheru had an opportunity to see Him during His visit to Kushroo Quarters (Adi's compound and residence). This *darshan* later became her strength and source of courage to accept her fatal disease. In spite of good medical treatment, on September 28th, Meheru began to feel the signs of approaching death. To those who were near, she said that life was starting to ebb from her body, beginning with her feet. When this withdrawal had almost reached her breast, she calmly said, "Tell Baba that my journey has come to an end. Salutations to Him." And she passed away.

The same day, Meherjee Mama Satha, Meheru's eldest uncle (mother's brother), sent an express telegram to Baba at Dehra Dun about Meheru's demise. Baba had stopped attending to correspondence, but He allowed cables to be read out to Him. After hearing the contents which Meheru's brother,

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Eruch, read out to Him, Baba dictated a most unusual condolence message to the Sathas. The gist of it was: Happy Meheru died. Send My *dakshana* (fee) of five thousand immediately — Baba.

One who was not intimate with Baba and His ways might feel that His humorous appeal for money at such a time was not proper. However, to Baba's close ones, His wish carried special comfort. It not only made light of death, but it also allowed Meheru's family to contribute on her behalf a handsome sum to be used in Baba's work at Dehra Dun.

Baba's telegraphic reply was in a class by itself, as it represented to what extent words can belie the import they convey. No wonder that the Sathas remitted the amount to Baba through a telegraphic money order, the most expedient way of sending money.

Meheru's cousin, Naval Satha, was a cripple. He not only bore his sufferings cheerfully, but once he also conveyed to Baba, "I don't mind suffering a little more." In spite of a disabled body, his voice was very sweet. He would sing devotional songs which would touch the hearts of all who heard him.

He felt very close to Meheru, especially when she was suffering from cancer. The news of her death shocked him so much he practically stopped speaking. The last song he sang, which is still remembered by his sisters, was a famous Hindi *bhajan*; its refrain was, "O my dear ones, join me in my journey to the Master. Let us go and stay with Him."

In the first week of October, he was removed to the hospital for kidney trouble. The color of his urine had become like that of iodine. On October 9th, his condition became alarmingly serious and the next day he died. His funeral took place at the Tower of Silence, where the Sathas had recently been to lay Meheru's physical body to rest. Meheru and Naval loved Baba dearly, and Hafiz has written, "The one whose heart has lived with love (the Beloved) never dies."

Through innumerable lives and deaths, humanity is painfully groping for Eternal Life — God Consciousness. For those who have the blessed fortune to have come in the Avatar's

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contact, the fear of death and rebirth becomes considerably less with the conviction that He keeps company with His dear ones in their journey to Him. Baba once remarked, "Those who love Me never die; they ever live in Me."

### *Love Brings Self-Effacement not Self-Complacency*

From October 1st until the 7th, Baba had an unusual schedule of night visits in Dehra Dun to the places of worship of Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Sikhs, and Parsis. Prior to such visits, special permission was sought from the authorities concerned so that Baba could be there with His disciples from midnight to one A.M. Baba instructed Nilu, Aloba, Donkin, Kishan Singh, and Keki Nalavala to be present during the above period — in a temple, mosque, church, *gurudwara*, and *arampah*<sup>48</sup> respectively.

During this particular week, Baba visited all these places every night, and at one of these houses of prayer, He quietly sat for about half an hour, attentively listening to what was being read. Sometimes He would also silently participate in the religious formalities of bowing down, etc. It could be that this was one of Baba's ways of working on the inner planes of consciousness, of bringing all religions together like beads on a string.

About this night vigil, Keki Nalavala writes:

To represent the Zoroastrian religion Baba chose me to sit in the Parsi burial ground between midnight and one in the morning, reading from the *Avesta* — the chapter, "Ahuramazda Yast." Baba asked me if I would be scared sitting in a cemetery. I replied in the negative.

On the first day, on completion of my prayers, I heard footsteps and feared that the ghost of a dead Parsi who had been buried without proper burial ceremonies had risen. Sure enough, I saw in the darkness a man in white approaching me! I turned pale and in fear rapidly repeated Baba's name.

The very next moment I was relieved to see Baba Himself

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<sup>48</sup> Burial place of the Parsis.



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standing beside me. He had come in a white flowing *sadra* and I had mistaken Him for a ghost!

I repeated these prayers for seven days and, on the seventh day, Baba came to the burial ground again, washed His face and feet and prayed with a *kusti* (sacred string). He then removed this, wound it three times around a picture of Zoroaster and left.

At the beginning of October, a letter signed by a group of Baba lovers was received by one of Baba's *mandali*. These people were from a city in Andhra Pradesh. It seemed that in their enthusiasm for Baba, they regarded themselves as special, more intimate with Baba than others. They felt that their love for Baba required extra attention from their Beloved Master. Baba did not like anyone or any group to maintain such an exclusive attitude — regarding oneself as superior in comparison with others.

As the *mandali* knew Baba's ways, Eruch thought this an urgent matter, and with Baba's consent, he read out the entire letter to Him. Based on the points given by Baba, Eruch wrote a long letter amounting to three typed pages in reply to the expectations of this group. Given below are some excerpts from Eruch's letter:

. . .in spite of all correspondence which is temporarily suspended until November end, Baba permitted the letter, signed by you all, to be read out to Him as a special case. In reply to your letter, Baba has ordered me to inform you all that on the whole the contents of your loving letter made Baba happy, though at times a jarring note or two tended to disturb the rhythmic effect of your overflowing love . . .

Baba wants you all to know: if you love Him, it is because He loves you more and that Baba certainly knows how deep and intense is the love of each one of His lovers ... However, to monopolize the Beloved Master (the way it has been expressed in your letter) vitiates the atmosphere required for true abiding love . . .

Baba therefore wants each of His lovers to be absolutely free from the possessive complex which cultivates an attitude

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of gross indifference to others. Such love if not rightly channeled may lead the lover astray from the Path . . .

Baba wants you all to understand that the very concept of intimate and not-intimate (special and ordinary) is ridiculous. If you really accept Baba as He is, then He is for all; He is One with all: He is in all and is above all . . .

Through the contents of Eruch's letter, it is apparent that Baba wanted to bring home to these lovers, who wanted to work in His cause or for Him, that there is one and only one category for His lovers — those who do not court self-complacency but self-effacement.

At the East-West Gathering (November 1962), Baba in His message, "My Dear Workers," stated:

It is not a different work . . . it is the same work done in a different way. And that way is the way of effacement, which means the more you work for Me the less important you feel in yourself. You must always remember that I alone do My work ... I allow you to work for Me so that you have the opportunity to use your talent and capacities selflessly and so draw closer to Me. You should never think that in your work for Me you are benefitting others, for by being instrumental in bringing others to Me, you are benefitting yourself.

In the words of Francis Brabazon, an Australian poet and Baba's close disciple:

Truth has ready for each one a coat of perfect fit —  
But our bodies are so ill-shaped that one can't wear it. <sup>49</sup>

At the meeting held in July, Baba had tentatively planned to visit Andhra in December 1953. Now Eruch, in one of his letters to the workers in Andhra, wrote: "Baba wants all His lovers in Andhra to know that His impending visit to Andhra in December was of His own initiative and now when He cancels this visit it is also of His own doing. Therefore, let not the cancellation of His visit affect your loving hearts." Under Baba's instruction, letters were also written to those who were regarded as responsible for the arrangements of Baba's second visit.

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<sup>49</sup> *In Dust I Sing*, p. 94.

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In October, at the end of this communication, Eruch wrote: "Baba intends to visit Andhra in the month of February, 1954 if it is convenient to all concerned from all sides. Baba wants a definite reply before the middle of November so that He can accordingly fix His future programs before He leaves Dehra Dun for Mahabaleshwar. Later than February would be too hot and earlier than February would not fit into Baba's programs."

Baba decided to leave Dehra Dun by the end of November for Mahabaleshwar, where He intended to stay till the end of May 1954. Baba lovers in Andhra happily agreed to Baba's proposal and the final dates fixed for His second Andhra visit were from February 20th until March 4th, 1954.

## LAST PUBLIC DARSHAN AT DEHRA DUN 1953—Part IX

### *"Playing with Illusions" and "The Real Darshan"*

Baba's devotees and disciples belonged to diverse religious faiths prior to their coming to Him as the Divine Beloved. In the middle of October, Baba asked Adi at Ahmednagar to issue a circular through Meher Publications to His followers in India, instructing them to repeat the same divine names of God they had been instructed to repeat on the 10th of July, 1953.<sup>50</sup> They were to repeat the name audibly and continuously for one hour, from midnight of October 28th to 1:00 A.M. of the 29th.

They were, however, warned not to write anything to Baba concerning this repetition, either before or after October 29th. Such instructions from Baba seemed to link, although indirectly, His people with His work. These occasions were opportunities Baba, out of His compassion, offered to His dear ones to bring them still closer to His heart.

Ever since July, old and new Baba families had been pleading with Baba, through the *mandali*, to give *darshan* to them as well as to the public. Usually before leaving a town where He had resided for a long time, Baba would grant such a request. So, before leaving for Mahabaleshwar, a hill station in Maharashtra, He agreed to hold a public *darshan* program on November 1, 1953.

About two weeks before giving *darshan*, Baba dictated two special messages for the general public clarifying what real spiritual life is and explaining about God-realization and the profundity of seeing the Master. The first message, "Playing with Illusions," was especially for people who associated spirituality or spiritual life with unusual clothes, going naked, trance state, or a miraculous display of abnormal powers — in

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<sup>50</sup> Zoroastrians (Parsis): *Ahuramazda* Zoroastrians (Iranis): *Yezdan* Christians: God  
Almighty Muslims: *Allah-hu-Akbar* Hindus: *Parabrahma Paramatma*

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fact, anything other than a normal lifestyle. Such an association was strengthened by the repeated stories in the newspapers about fake sadhus whose occult healing powers were played up at the expense of true spirituality.

The second, "The Real *Darshan*," was, and still is, meant in general for genuine seekers of God, and in particular for Baba lovers who are brave at heart. It reveals how the real seeing of God is different from conventional *darshan*. The way of real *Darshan* lies in total surrender to the Will of God or the God-Man. These two messages are given below.

### *Playing with Illusions*

I appreciate the faith which has brought you here. I also appreciate your love and devotion. It has made Me very happy.

I know and understand the difficulties and problems, sufferings and expectations. Not only the individuals, but the whole world is in the throes of suffering. When suffering comes, it comes according to the divinely established law of karma. It must then be accepted with grace and fortitude. But it must be remembered that your actions are the cause of much of your suffering. Through wise action, it can be minimized. What humanity needs is spiritual wisdom; and for this, it must inevitably turn to the Perfect Masters and Avatars.

Suffering comes through ignorance or attachment to illusions. Most people play with illusions as children play with toys. If you get caught up in the ephemeral things of this world and cling to illusory values, suffering is inevitable. It is not easy for little children to give up their toys, for they become the victims of a habit which they cannot undo. In the same way, through millions of lives, you have got into the habit of playing with illusions; it is difficult for you to get disentangled from them.

For ages and ages, the *atma* (soul) has been seeing its own shadow and getting engrossed in the illusory world of

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forms. It gets addicted to the spectacle of its own creation and desires to see it through cycles and cycles of creation. When the soul turns inward and longs to have self-knowledge, it has become spiritually minded. But even there, this habit of wanting to see some spectacle persists for several lives.

The soul wants to experience some miracles or spectacular phenomena, or in more advanced stages it wants to perform miracles and manipulate phenomena. Even spiritually advanced persons find it difficult to outgrow this habit of playing with illusions. Persistent attachment to miracles is only a further continuation of the habit of playing with illusions.

It is not miracles, but understanding, which can bring you true freedom. If you have firm faith and unfaltering love for the God-Man, your way to the abiding Truth is clear and safe. Then you have no time to waste in playing with things that do not matter. Be ye guided by Love and Truth. This is the simple way that leads to God. Not by endless maneuver of alluring illusions, but by loyalty to the unchangeable Truth, can ye hope to be established in abiding Peace.

When I speak, it will be only one divine word; but it will be the word of words of the manifestation of Truth. This Word will have to be hearkened by the heart and not merely by the mind. It will go home to you and bring you the Awakening.

My love and Blessings.

*"The Real Darshan"*

I am happy to be in your midst.

It is the deep love of some of My lovers in Dehra Dun  
that has drawn you all together today to have

My *darshan*.

But to have My real *darshan* is not easy.

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To see Me at close quarters, to do obeisance to Me, to offer Me fruits and flowers, to bow down to Me and then to return to your homes can never mean that you have had My *darshan*.

Having seen Me with your eyes you have still not seen Me as I am. You have not had even a glimpse of My true Being in spite of your having gone through the conventions of so-called *darshan*.

To have My real *darshan* is to find Me.

The way to find Me is to find your abode in Me.

And the only one and sure way to find your abode in Me is to love Me.

To love Me as I love you, you must become the recipient of My grace. Only My grace can bestow the gift of divine love.

To receive My grace, you must obey Me wholeheartedly with the firm foundation of unshakeable faith in Me.

And you can only obey Me spontaneously as I want when you completely surrender yourselves to Me so that My wish becomes your law and My love sustains your being.

Age after age, many aspire for such a surrender; but only very few really attempt to surrender themselves to Me completely as I want.

He who succeeds ultimately not only finds Me, but becomes Me and realizes the aim of life.

My being in your midst today would serve its purpose even if one from this multitude has understood what I want you all to know.

I give My blessing to you all.

The above messages were also translated into Hindi. A good number of printed leaflets in Hindi and English were kept ready for distribution to those expected to come to see Baba — the One worthy of being seen — on the forthcoming *darshan* day.

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### *November First, a Memorable Day*

By the evening of October 31st, 101 Rajpur Road wore a festive look. A nice *shamiana* (awning) was erected in front of the house; Prakash Wati Sharma decorated it very well. The room in which Baba was to give *darshan* presented a simple yet colorful appearance. The next day Baba was expected to arrive at eight o'clock in the morning. However, He came half an hour earlier.

Pendu, as usual, was in charge of all *darshan* arrangements and, under Baba's direction, he assigned duties to some of the *mandali* and to a few Baba families from Dehra Dun. *Darshan* was to begin at eight, but before long quite a number of visitors had already gathered near the house, awaiting the opening of the gates.

While Baba was sitting with the *mandali*, news came to Him that some of His dear ones from Delhi had also come and were standing in a group among the crowd. They had neither intimated to Baba that they were coming nor asked His permission to do so. Baba called them into His room and the Delhi group looked very happy as they were ushered into His presence. But then Baba reprimanded them for coming without His prior consent and they looked crestfallen. Baba used such situations, where opposite feelings were stirred up, perhaps to slip His gift of love even deeper into the hearts of His dear ones. Baba later permitted them to stay on for the day.

The relationship of love is incredible, wherein the Beloved Master continues to love in spite of the lapses of His lovers. This reminds me of an incident from the life of a boy who was once staying with Baba. In spite of being very careful, the lad found that some of his actions often displeased Baba. So, to avoid causing Baba further annoyance, he felt it would be better if Baba permitted him to go elsewhere.

One day he humbly said, "Baba, I often make you unhappy, although I would not ever intentionally do so. Please permit me to leave you." Baba gestured, "No, I cannot." And with a serious look He added, "When I love someone, this is My



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difficulty: it is because of love that I have to bear with you! Stay on with Me." In the game of love the Beloved and the lover both enjoy and suffer together. Love is madness. Love for the God-Man, however, is a unique madness that supersedes the domain of so-called sanity.

Exactly at eight o'clock, Baba was led to the *darshan* room by Eruch and Nilu. Eruch was to read Baba's board and interpret His gestures as and when necessary. Nilu was to keep *prasad* ready for Baba to distribute and also was to store the offerings of fruits, etc., brought by people. Pendu was supervising the overall arrangements, while Bhau (Kalchuri) and Krishna were ready with Baba's messages, printed in Hindi and English, to hand to all the visitors. The contents were intended to convey an idea of the magnitude of the occasion.

Keki Nalavala managed a small stall of Baba books and pictures. Throughout the day he did his job diligently and wholeheartedly. Baba was very pleased with Keki's work and it can be assumed that He especially blessed Keki's son, Naosherwan Anzar, who later wrote books on Beloved Baba's life and work, and who also started a quarterly, *The Glow* (later *Glow International*) totally dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba. The Nalavala family has been very closely connected with Baba's visits to Dehra Dun from the 1940's onwards, and have helped the *mandali* in providing facilities to Baba for His work. The entire family's united love for Baba and their conviction in His divinity is a blessing to them from the Avatar Himself.

People had already lined up in queue and were gradually allowed, in small numbers, to enter Baba's room. They were requested not to linger or sit in Baba's presence. Baba, with His calm dignity and radiant personality, was meeting each one — big and small, even a baby in arms — with a loving smile. His resplendent forehead and sparkling eyes gave His regal face a divine air, and as people came closer to Him for *darshan*, they either lowered their heads or folded their hands in a natural way to convey their respect.

Those who were standing in line were politely but frequently

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apprised of the following instruction: "Please don't touch Baba's feet; do not bow down to Him." Although offering of *namaskars* from a short distance was permitted, no one was to ask Baba's blessings for material gains nor to request a personal interview with Baba.

The time for *darshan* was from eight to eleven in the morning. It was to start again at two in the afternoon and continue until six in the evening. People were also told not to be too slow during their time in Baba's room, so that many could be benefitted by this rare opportunity of having the Master's *darshan*. Soon Baba was profusely garlanded and the offerings of fruits and other things began to pile up on both sides of Baba's chair; the Flower of humanity that had bloomed in the springtime of creation as the Avatar beautified the flowers with His radiance.

### *God Needs Love Not Ceremonies*

While Baba was giving *darshan* inside the room, Prakashwati Sharma and Balkrishna Bakshi were entertaining people in the *shamiana* with devotional songs. Some, as they came out after *darshan*, appeared absorbed in reading Baba's messages; perhaps they were assessing Baba's words to fit their own understanding. A few, however, silently sat away from the crowd, wrapped in a state of ecstasy. As the number of people increased outside, all of whom were eager to see Baba, He agreed to come out for awhile at half-past nine.

At this time a famous professional singer was singing songs composed by saints which had been put to sweet melodies. Baba appreciated the warbling voice of the singer. He seated Himself in the *shamiana* for about twenty minutes; all eyes were on Him. He was only sitting, but something divine seemed to emanate from Him constantly and touched many a heart. Sometimes His slender fingers moved rapidly and appeared to be moving sensitively in tune to His inner spiritual work. His eyes seemed to have a look of eternity in them. Baba returned to His room to distribute *prasad*, and

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some who had Baba's *darshan* hurried home, intending to come again with their missing family members and friends. They did not want their dear ones to lose such an opportunity.

A seeker of God from Bengal, who happened to be in Dehra Dun at the time, began, in Baba's presence, to recite Sanskrit hymns in praise of the Master. It seemed that Baba's *darshan* had stirred his heart. A Baba lover from Delhi, Was Deo Kain, knowing Baba's interest in cricket, invited Him to witness a match to be played in the capital in the third week of November. He even reminded Baba of His promise to visit Delhi before the end of the year, 1953.

Baba looked as if He were judiciously considering the invitation and then gestured, "You know My *reet* (rules of conduct), yet many from Delhi came here without previously informing Me. Had you behaved well, I would surely have thought of fulfilling My promise!" He concluded, "Now don't worry about what happened. Remember, I am omnipresent. If you take Me to be what I am, I am always there (in Delhi) and everywhere."

Some people tried to reenter the queue to have more of the Master's *darshan*. Some stood most reverentially before Baba, their eyes welling with tears. In response to their devotion, Baba greeted them with a radiant smile. To those who began to sob and weep out in joy, He signaled to come closer to Him and blessed them by placing His hand over their heads; this pacified their hearts' desire. Baba casually remarked that such spontaneous affection at first sight is the result of old connections with Him.

Among the distinguished visitors, a retired district judge, who was also a vice-chairman of the Theosophical Society, was very much impressed with Baba. He had also studied the Baba literature. He asked Baba's permission to say a few words. On Baba's consent, the gentleman spoke with great fervor and emotion. He quoted some verses appropriate to the occasion from the *Guru Granth Saheb*, the holy book of the Sikhs. Baba looked pleased and conveyed, "God needs love, not ceremonies or shows. This love has to be so profound that when heart loves Him, mind should not be aware of it."

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### *Darbar of a Perfect Master*

*Darshan* resumed at one o'clock, an hour earlier than scheduled, and with it continued Baba's dispensation of grace. Those present were alerted not to ask questions or present their personal problems to Baba. Some visitors later related that while in Baba's presence, their questions were either forgotten or lost their importance. Sometimes Baba Himself asked a few simple questions and His presence transformed the common-place inquiries into moments with great significance for those concerned. As various types of people of different religions and positions in life were coming and going from the *darshan* room, Baba once very casually remarked, with no apparent reference, "Amongst the *Sadgurus*, Sai Baba's *darbar* was unique and matchless."

*Darbar* literally means a court, especially of a king or an emperor, where the members have different ranks and special prerogatives. The same term — *darbar* — is used to designate the assemblies of the Perfect Masters. *Darbars* of different kings and emperors do not differ much in their characteristics except for their mode of dress and pomp, but a *darbar* of a *Sadguru* (Perfect Master) is a profound affair. It involves not only one's present life, but all of one's past lives as well for those who have a connection with the Master.

Each God-realized Master is a unique personality by Himself. He is a "man-become-God," retaining his individuality. So, the close ones who live with Him and the people who often visit Him, in small or large numbers, represent a cross section of humanity at large. They have experienced innumerable opposites of impressions in their past lives, which they bring unaware to the court of the *Sadguru*. Out of compassion, a *Sadguru* in his omniscience uses unpredictable methods to nullify the impressions of His dear ones and of those who come to see Him. Thus He clears their way towards the impressionless state, the goal — merging in God.

The ways of a Perfect Master in response to those who meet Him and live with Him are matchless. Sometimes they challenge the rational mind yet simultaneously they present a

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loving call to those who dare to live fearlessly a life of love for God. The Perfect Masters are greatly revered by some and severely criticized by others. The Masters are, however, unconcerned with the reactions of people and they do not hesitate to use shock tactics to further the spiritual growth (that is, weakening of the ego) of their disciples and devotees.

These techniques evoke resistance in some, and at times, opposition from many. But despite all this outer melodrama, the atmosphere in the immediate presence of the Master is surcharged with divine love which calls forth a spirit of total dedication in the hearts of His disciples.

A *Sadguru* experiences himself as the self in all. Sai Baba once said to Upasni Maharaj, "I have filled all existence. Wherever you see there is none but me." Owing to this supreme gnosis, a *Sadguru* can help all, and in fact, is duty-bound to do so. To accomplish this function apportioned by the Divine Will, many types of people are automatically drawn to Him. Some of them are highly evolved souls whose life of dedication to the Master becomes exemplary. Some who stay with him or often visit him are real characters while a few who come in close association of the Master are genuine eccentrics — an incredible combination indeed. However, everyone's love for and faith in the Master is profound.

The Master loves all equally and uses their energies to pass on his help to humanity. The variety of people — funny and fiery, loving and lively, dunce and intellectual — add to the liveliness and charm of the Master's *darbar*; for many, though, such an atmosphere is mystifying.

Baba, in one of the *sahavas* gatherings stated, "What I am, what I was, and what I will be as the Ancient One is always due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age. During the Avataric periods the five Perfect Masters make God incarnate as man. Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba, and Narayan Maharaj are the five Perfect Masters (*Sadgurus*) of this Age for me."

To narrate the atmosphere that prevailed and the incredible incidents that happened in the *darbar* of each of Baba's *Sadgurus* would require volumes. Baba once cryptically

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remarked, "All the five *Sadgurus* put together is Baba." So, instead of writing anything about Meher Baba's *darbar*, I may well say that it included and transcended the characteristics of the *darbars* of His five Masters put together.

Whenever God comes as the Avatar, no conventional combination of types of people can define or limit the nature of His court; the lives of His close ones and their love for Him are incredible. However, the beauty and unique quality of the Avatar's *darbar* can be well imagined and appreciated by those whose quest for God is real and who are blessed with a great sense of humor. Historically, it has been observed that the atmosphere and pattern of the Avatar's *darbar* is maintained for a century or more even after His dropping the body.

### *God Alone Is Worth Living and Dying For*

Vir Inder Singh had met Baba in June <sup>51</sup> and in that first meeting he wholeheartedly accepted Baba as his Beloved Master. Although he anxiously awaited the opportunity to be in Baba's company again, Baba's semi-seclusion phase did not permit anyone to see or meet Him. So, November 1st offered a great chance to Vir Inder to be in the Master's presence. Vir Inder presented himself at the *darshan* house in the morning, ready to serve in any capacity. Baba learned that he had not left the house, even during the lunch hours, and sent for him to come to the *darshan* room. Baba then inquired whether he had his lunch. Vir Inder replied that one of his relatives had brought extra snacks which had been lovingly shared with him, and added, "That was enough, Baba."

In fact, Vir Inder would not have left the house and would have gladly missed his meal rather than missing the immediate proximity of his Master. When he stood before Baba, he appeared overpowered with love and a few tears slipped unaware from his eyelids. Baba with a smile signaled to him to continue whatever work he was doing. During *darshan* programs, Baba would sometimes call a few of His dear ones on duty to Him and through casual inquiries, He helped them

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<sup>51</sup> See: Chapter 6, "He Beheld the Beloved of His Vision."

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to feel His love and intimacy.

A group of the blind from a local institution then came in. They were led to Baba's seat and had His divine touch. At the end, Baba conveyed to them that they should not worry that they could not see Baba physically. The real thing, Baba said, is to see Him as He really is and that does not require gross sight.

A visitor came in line who told Baba that he had had the good fortune to have seen Him by chance on a train in 1929, when Baba was enroute from Iran to Quetta. Baba appeared amused and gestured, "How do you find Me now?" The man answered, "At present You do not have long hair, so to me Your face appears much changed; but nevertheless You look resplendent."

By this time, many had assembled under the *shamiana*, and to appease their hearts, Baba came out of His room. He took His seat under the awning and in spite of the various conversations natural to a buoyant gathering, a sudden quietness prevailed. His searching eyes gazed over the people, perhaps to bless their loving hearts. In the case of some, His presence lifted their spirits beyond time. From the board, Baba gave the following message:

God is equally within us all and we must love Him. When we realize Him, all our suffering comes to an end; and for this we must love Him in every walk of life. Love (for God) is best expressed when we give happiness to others at the cost of our own happiness. My blessings.

On His return to the room, He was surrounded and greeted by children from a nearby school, whose principal was a Baba follower. Some children garlanded Baba and a few tied a crown of flowers around His head. This scene reminded the *mandali* of Lord Krishna's time when the little cowherd boys would play with Him. After Baba had spent a brief period with the little ones, the people standing in queue began to take His *darshan*. One of them, a young woman, could not restrain herself from singing in Baba's presence a famous song with the refrain: "He is really blessed who remembers You whole-heartedly from morning to eve."

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People's love and longing brought Baba again under the awning. At this time a group of women were performing *sankirtan* and they felt greatly honored at Baba's visit. They continued to sing, and in the august presence of the God-Man their songs of love for God sounded most poignant and revealed the depths concealed in the wrapping of words. For the general public, Baba was pleased to convey the following:

God is the only One worth living for and dying for. If we love Him intensely and honestly, we find Him in ourselves and in everyone. The least trace of hypocrisy keeps Him away from us.

When we find Him we experience infinite bliss. We then see Him everywhere and as our own self.

I give My blessing for that love which will help you to love God as He ought to be loved.

Baba's repeated emphasis on loving God and on leading an honest life of pure love in our relationship with people brings to mind the words of Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."<sup>52</sup>

As Baba left for His room, it was announced that those who wished to receive *prasad* at Baba's hands should join the line, but not rush into His room.

*Live Honestly, Act Honestly, Think Honestly*

The stream of people continued to pour into the Ocean — Baba's *darshan* room. Amongst the visitors, Baba showed particular interest in one person. When he introduced himself, it turned out that he had yearned to meet Baba for a long time, ever since he had attended a lecture by Dr. C.D. Deshmukh on Meher Baba, the Awakener.

During Baba's previous *darshan* program in March, a person who was overwhelmed with feeling touched Baba's feet

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<sup>52</sup> *Matthew* xxii: 36-40.



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despite frequent warnings from the *mandali* not to do so. In turn, Baba bowed down to him; it seemed that such an undesirable occurrence was a hindrance in His spiritual work. In the afternoon, finding the same man standing in line, some feared that he might repeat the same action again. This time, however, he restrained himself which surprised all.

The change in the devotee's attitude pleased Baba. He folded His palms and held them towards the person, who enfolded them gently with great reverence. For a short time, the man stood quietly in a corner of the room and then left. It is gathered from Baba's remarks that this person received more spiritually from the light touch of Baba's hands than from the pressing of his own head on the Master's feet. What the Master gives of His own sweet will is nectar; what you extract from Him against His will is like poison.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and Baba for the last time agreed to go out to the *shamiana*. Baba's movements in coming and going from His *darshan* room were regal and stately. With beaming eyes, He looked at everyone, and all felt aglow with His love. Most of the crowd quietly sat on the ground with eyes focused on Baba's radiance. Baba's silent presence evoked spontaneous admiration and deep reverence in the hearts of the onlookers. He looked radiantly handsome.

People expected Baba to say something, and in response to their love, Baba in a spontaneous mood dictated the following message:

Rich or poor, great or small, man or woman — everyone is under the spell of some sort of suffering. The relief for every kind of suffering is within ourselves.

If we try to live honestly, act honestly, think honestly in every walk of life, under all circumstances, and if we try to put our wholehearted faith in God, that relief is found.

We are already the possessors of infinite power and happiness, but it is our way of life that keeps us from enjoying the eternal treasures of God.

Baba was sitting on the dais with His hands clasped loosely together, His divine dignity encompassing Him. A girl came up to Baba and requested that He permit her to sing in His

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presence, to which He graciously agreed. The girl gave a performance of *bhajans* and a form of *sankirtan* that kept the audience spellbound with her melodious voice and perfect pitch.

Baba, on His return to the room, responded at times to the homage of the visitors as they passed before His great seat by nodding His head or moving His hands back and forth from His chest. Simultaneously, He was distributing *prasad*: it was a selfless giving of love in love.

Madan, Kishan Singh's son, had come with his movie camera from Delhi especially to film Baba and the activities of the *darshan* day. In the morning, while checking the electrical connections to plug in his equipment, he noticed that something was wrong somewhere, yet, with all his skill, he could not discover exactly what the problem was. He was very disappointed and upset as it seemed as if all of his efforts and good intentions to film Baba (a rare privilege that had been bestowed on him) would be in vain.

At the last moment, when he felt totally frustrated, someone told him that when one undertakes something special for Baba, one naturally feels elated. But Baba, the Master Psychologist, works on these feelings of pride and self-glorification by apparently letting one down. Soon, however, the situation changes, the problem is solved and things begin to go smoothly.

Something like this happened with Madan. After a while, the fault in the electrical equipment, which was not at all complicated, was detected and he began his filming. He took some shots of the people assembled in the *shamiana*, the singers singing *bhajans* and the women performing *sankirtan*. He had the blessed fortune to film Baba while He was distributing *prasad*, with some people standing by in rapt admiration, and also when children from the school were tying a crown on Baba's head. This turned out to be a beautiful film of Beloved Baba at Dehra Dun.

The retired session judge, who had visited in the morning came again in the afternoon, this time accompanied by his wife. With profound respect they greeted Baba who very lovingly gestured, "I am happy with you; try to find Me in you."

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The judge politely responded, "But, Baba, I do not know how. Where to begin?" Baba smiled and replied, "Simple; think of Me as much and as often as you can. That will open up the way."

It was nearing six in the evening. Beloved Baba had been giving *darshan* in this second session for almost five hours. Starting at five in the afternoon, it was frequently announced over the microphone that Baba would not see anyone after the specified closing time of 6 P.M. Now, at the end of the day, the tempo of *darshan* reached its peak.

Everyone standing in the queue wanted to see Baba, but that didn't seem possible in the time remaining. So, a little before six, Baba, out His loving concern, visited the *shamiana* so that everyone could at least see Him, although all were not destined to receive *prasad* at His hands.

As Baba reached the dais everyone looked intently at Him. On His arrival, the whole atmosphere seemed charged with His loving presence, and His irresistible love took hold of their hearts. There was a glow of divine radiance on Baba's face, but He also looked humanly tired. The gathering was informed that none should approach the *mandali* with a request to see Baba after 6 P.M. They were also asked not to visit 101 Rajpur Road during the remaining days of Baba's stay. Baba blessed the crowd by raising His hands, and amidst the cheers of "Meher Baba *Ki Jai!* Meher Baba *Ki Jai!*", the *darshan* program concluded; it had been a continuous communication of the God-Man with His own Self in many forms.

One of Kumar's friends had earlier requested Baba to bless the villagers of Chorpur by paying them a short visit. Baba made an exception and graciously agreed. The date and time allotted for this visit was November 3rd, at about three in the afternoon. After lunch, Baba left by car, while the *mandali* had gone there earlier by the local bus service.

*Darshan* was arranged in a *dharamshala* and a comfortable chair was placed on a raised platform for Baba to sit on. The hall and the wings of the verandah were packed to capacity before Baba's arrival, and there was a look of jubilation on the faces of the people. All stood at Baba's arrival; he accepted their greetings by folding His hands in *namaskar* and motioned

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to them to sit down. He appeared perfectly at ease and looked remarkably beautiful. It seemed that compassion for everyone flowed from His eyes, and it flooded the entire area. All lined up to receive their *prasad* from Him. Although it was a short program, Baba was pleased to give a message, a part of which is given below:

We should dedicate our life to God or the Perfect Master. This means that we should dedicate our happiness and suffering, virtue and vice, strength and weakness to Him. Then we become free and God or the Perfect Master takes over the responsibility (for our actions). Throughout eternity, the message of God has always been and will always be of love for Him ... I give you all My blessings.

The message was translated into Hindi and was read out to the public. At the close of this visit, an accountant at a local bank, being perhaps good at calculations, asked Baba, "What is the easiest way to realize God?" Baba's immediate and simple reply was, "Love Him so much that you totally forget yourself."

Every *darshan* of Baba's was a fresh dispensation, a new descent of His grace. Its recipients, the *darshanites*, as they stood before Baba or passed by Him, looked happy and relieved. Silently, in an infinite variety of ways, Baba's presence acted as a balm, while His grace quietly adjusted lifetimes of *sanskaras* by awakening love in their hearts. Many individuals could not contain this new found love, and it spilled over in the tears they shed or in the words of praise they could not restrain.

Just a moment in Baba's presence lights a never-dying flame, which if heeded, will illuminate one's path to Him. Once a person has the Avatar's *darshan*, in person or in spirit, or even in films or dreams, it stays, it blossoms, it flowers, and it bears fruit. It is all a part of the game played out by Infinite Consciousness, as personified in the Avatar — in this age, Meher Baba.

Baba, having fulfilled His promise to give *darshan* to the villagers of Chorpur, returned to Dehra Dun by 4:30 P.M.

## BABA LEAVES FOR MAHABALESHWAR 1953—Part X

### *Intimation of the Lord's Darshan*

Baba's long stay at Dehra Dun was coming to a close. He had already instructed the *mandali* to arrange for His stay at Mahabaleshwar from the first of December, 1953. During the last *darshan* program at Dehra Dun, one of the main events was Prakashwati's *sankirtan*. It has such far reaching effects that even to this day there is a group of women at Dehra Dun who are deeply devoted to singing the glory of the Avatar through Baba *bhajans*, and who do so regularly. Prakashwati (known affectionately as Prakash) was inspired to offer *sankirtan* programs at many places in her later years. Her coming to Baba was a slow and steady process of Baba gradually revealing to her His omniscience and compassion. It is a story worthy of the following digression.<sup>53</sup>

From a very early age, Prakash was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna. She loved to sing *bhajans* addressed to Him and longed to see Him. In the late 1930's she received word that a seven-year old girl named Pashi while wide awake was seeing and conversing with Lord Krishna.

Prakash earnestly wished to meet this girl, but when she reached the place where Pashi was residing, she found many people already assembled. In fact, there was a big crowd, a sort of village fair. Prakash was of two minds — to stay there and wait as long as necessary, or to go home and return after a few days. Finally she resolved to wait until she could meet Pashi. The moment she determined not to leave, to her utter surprise, she heard her own name and residential address being called out.

She was ushered into Pashi's hut for an audience with this child of the Lord, and during their brief conversation, Pashi said, "Lord Krishna tells me that your time for His *darshan* has not yet come." Prakash felt disappointed, but humbly

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<sup>53</sup> Abridged and edited from the manuscript, *Hurrah for the Compassionate and Merciful Father* by Prakashwati Sharma.

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inquired when that opportune moment would be. Pashi replied, "You have to wait for some years. Then, at the right time, He will give you His *darshan*; it will be in a thatched hut near the Ganges." Prakash at that time was living in a town in northern Punjab (now in Pakistan) which was far from the banks of the Ganges.

In the course of time, Prakash married, had children, and in a way became immersed in her worldly life and family duties. In the mid 1940's she was residing with her husband and children at Rawalpindi (near Islamabad, the present capital of Pakistan). Kishan Singh, who had a government job in the Controller of Defense Accounts Office of the Air Force, had built a house just next to where Prakash was living. Kishan Singh's wife had died in 1936 and he had three children. A few years later he had to leave Rawalpindi for some months because of his work, and during his absence Prakash felt moved to take care of the children. This served as the coincidence that brought the two families closer together.

In Kishan Singh's house there were many beautiful pictures of Meher Baba on the walls and on tables. Baba, with His flowing hair, warm smile, and neat, clean raiment, looked most charming. Prakash used to address Kishan Singh as Babuji, but she would refer to Baba as "Babuji's fashionable Baba."

Soon thereafter, Kishan Singh was transferred to Delhi. A few years later, due to the partition of the Indian subcontinent into Bharat (India) and Pakistan, most of the Hindu families from northwestern Punjab preferred and some were forced by circumstances to migrate to India. There were special refugee camps established in different parts of India for the large influx of displaced people. Out of all these camps, Prakash and her family went to one in Hardwar, which is situated on the banks of the holy Ganges. Whether she was hoping to see Lord Krishna there, we do not know.

The days that followed partition were terrible in all ways for those refugees who had left their homes and farms behind and had come to India with only the barest necessities. In many ways these times tested Prakash's faith in God, her Lord

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Krishna. She was soon physically battered and mentally tortured beyond her limits. Out of necessity she was rushed to Delhi for medical treatment and underwent a thorough diagnosis and extensive treatment. At last, after a blood transfusion, she felt a little better and was discharged from the hospital. By this time, her husband had secured a job in Delhi and Kishan Singh graciously accommodated the entire family in his house at 45 Pandara Road, New Delhi. Here she began to gather more information about Meher Baba, the real Beloved.

### *Meeting the Lord Behind a Bamboo Screen*

Love is self-communicative and as a person goes through life, especially after passing through an ordeal like Prakash's, the heart may either become embittered or grow more responsive to the give and take of real love. With Prakash the latter happened, and so she began to appreciate Kishan Singh's one-pointed love for Baba and the part that Baba's love played in his life. This silent and natural admiration for Baba's love opened her heart. Whole-hearted and honest adoration is the prelude to receiving pure love.

With genuine interest, Prakash listened to Kishan Singh tell of his intention of joining Baba in His New Life, and she also paid close attention to his experiences of Baba's omniscience. Gradually she grew so interested in Baba that she suggested that they start a Baba Center in their own house. Weekly meetings were held in which she fervently sang *bhajans* in praise of Baba. However, she still regarded Baba only as a saint, though perhaps of a higher order.

To maintain the atmosphere of Baba's love, Prakash also inaugurated a *sankirtan* (devotional singing in praise of God) on a weekly basis. All these meetings slowly but surely began to have a far reaching effect on Prakash, perhaps more than she could have imagined at the time. It was about then that Kishan Singh and Prakash were both impressed by the book, *Avatar: The Life Story of the Perfect Master Meher Baba*, a

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narrative of spiritual experiences by Jean Adriel. They even thought of presenting a copy to the prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and this they did.

The weekly meetings brought Prakash in contact with Baba people in Delhi. At Baba's birthday program celebrated at Was Deo Kain's house, she began to feel that Meher Baba might be the Avatar in the same sense that Krishna was. Her heart became fired with the idea of meeting Baba in person. From Kishan Singh she learned that Baba would soon be visiting Hardwar, but He was not seeing anyone in His New Life. Therefore, Kishan Singh told her that it would not be good for her to go to Hardwar during the forthcoming *Kumbha Mela* in April, 1950, as she might thereby inadvertently disobey Baba's instructions.

Although Prakash had great regard for Baba, she still did not consider herself a Baba lover as such, and felt that Baba's instructions to His lovers did not apply to her wish to see Him. She felt a great urgency to know from personal experience who Meher Baba really is.

During her talks with Kishan Singh she had learned that about this time Baba planned to stay in a secluded house belonging to Sansar Chand which was not far from Motichur, a village close to Hardwar. Unable to control her restless heart's yearning to see Baba, one day she left for Hardwar with her two-month old baby in her arms. She could not wait any longer at Delhi. Prakash hired a room near the railway station in hopes of meeting Baba on an arriving or departing train, and she also kept a watch on the road.

When the day passed without her seeing Baba, she decided to go to Motichur in search of Baba's residence. She hired a rickshaw that evening but the man proved reluctant to take Prakash there because the road led through a forest and she did not even know the exact location of the house. This did not deter Prakash, however. Filled with an overpowering urge to see Baba, she hired a horse cab and started out. After traveling some miles, the horse suddenly stopped on the road and refused to budge, in spite of a hard thrashing by the cabman.



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Prakash got down to ask a shopkeeper the whereabouts of the bungalow. He laughed aloud at her query and said, "The horse seems more sensible than you people. The dumb animal stopped exactly before the place you are seeking." On being asked who stayed in the house, the man replied, "It seems that a very rich businessman with an exceptionally charming face is staying there. But God has been cruel for He has made him a dumb person!" This was clear confirmation to Prakash that it was Baba's residence.

Prakash noticed a gardener sitting outside the gate of the house and she asked him who stayed there. He replied, "A most handsome *seth* (businessman) from Bombay-side who, unfortunately, is unable to speak has come here for a short stay." after entering the gate, Prakash noticed that someone was lighting a stove, perhaps for the evening meal. He was one of Baba's *mandali* and he told her that Meher Baba was not there but he added that He might return the following evening.

Prakash returned to Hardwar with glowing thoughts of meeting Baba the next day and hardly slept that night. With her heart full of expectations, mingled with the fear that Baba might not see her, she set off again for Motichur. It was late afternoon and without any difficulty she reached the bungalow where Baba was staying. This time, fortunately, Baba was there, and with His back to the door was communicating with Eruch via the alphabet board. Prakash noticed an enclosure of bamboo screening which provided privacy for the occupants. As she went closer, Baba turned His full gaze on her and she felt that He directly reached her heart for a split second.

Seeing the bamboo screening, and knowing that Motichur was quite close to the holy Ganges, Prakash suddenly recalled Pashi's words which had been conveyed to her in the 1930's. Baba beckoned her to come forward and asked her where she had come from. Remembering her conversation with Kishan Singh, she did not dare to give a direct reply. She said, "Baba, I have come from the place where you have kept me." Baba asked whether she had been cautioned by anyone not to see Him. To this she again replied evasively, "The gates of the

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Father's house are always open to His daughters." Baba knowingly smiled and put His finger to the middle of His eyebrows, a sign that she was fortunate.

When Prakash met Baba at Motichur it was an overwhelming experience for her, and it was hard for her to know which part of it was true and which a dream. Baba lifted His hand as a loving farewell and good humoredly gestured, "Now, go back immediately to the place you have come from and remember one thing: if you find anyone coming to Motichur or Dehra Dun for my *darshan*, stop him." Prakash enthusiastically replied, "I assure You, I will obey Your instruction even at the cost of my life!" Baba smiled again and Prakash left the house.

As Prakash was about to get into the hired cab, she noticed one of the *mandali*, Eruch, rushing towards her shouting, "Stop! Stop!" When he approached, he said, "Baba wants to know whether you know Kishan Singh and Prakashwati of Delhi." Prakash was greatly surprised and even felt guilty at having concealed her identity from the Omniscient One. However, with a smile on her face she said, "Yes. Yes," and then confessed to Eruch that she herself was Prakashwati who was residing in Kishan Singh's house.

At this point, Eruch asked her to wait while he conveyed this information to Baba. He returned in a few minutes with a message in which Baba asked her again to follow implicitly His earlier instruction to her, i.e., to stop anyone she found coming for Baba's *darshan*. She was to dissuade the person completely from his intention of visiting Baba during His New Life.

On her return to her residence in New Delhi, she found a tonga waiting in the yard of 45 Pandara Road. On inquiring she was told that Kishan Singh's son-in-law and his mother were just about to depart for Hardwar for Baba's *darshan*. Prakash emphatically and repeatedly told them Baba's order to her. Kishan Singh's relatives began to express their resentment and accused her of being selfish as she had just had Baba's *darshan* and was now telling them not to.

But finally, after a heated argument, Prakash succeeded in

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persuading them not to leave for Hardwar. This small incident provided Prakash with another glimpse of Baba's omniscience and the importance of obeying His orders. As the years rolled by, Prakash's love for Baba deepened and her conviction in Meher Baba as "Lord Krishna come again" began to germinate and blossom.

In February, 1953, when Baba's men *mandali* moved into Kishan Singh's house, Prakash went to stay with the Bakshis. Balkrishna Bakshi and his wife, Meherkanta, came very close to Baba in their love for Him during His Dehra Dun stay. On Baba's return from one of His *mast-tours*, He one day called Prakash and asked her how she spent her time. She replied, "Doing nothing, Baba!" At this, Baba teasingly gestured, "You know only to eat and sleep, nothing else! Why don't you start a *sankirtan*?" Prakash took this as a hint from Baba and purchased the necessary musical instruments, a *dholak* (drum) and a *chimta* (metal clappers).

After some days, Baba visited Balkrishna Bakshi's house and the *sankirtan* was performed in His presence. Baba was in a delightful mood and played the *dholak* Himself. He casually suggested that the women, Prakash and others, have such a program once a week. *Sankirtan* literally means rejoicing in songs glorifying God's or the God-Man's love for the Creation. Such recitals that come from the heart break the fetters of mind and help the spirit soar in unknown realms.

On another occasion, Baba asked Prakash whether she was still conducting *sankirtan* every week. She looked depressed and complained of the poor attendance. With a very loving expression, Baba gestured that she should not worry about it and added, "I am present whenever and wherever I am remembered with love. I am present at any *sankirtan* done with love, irrespective of number. And what counts is My presence!"

Baba's words of cheer and divine authority uplifted Prakash's spirit, and as instructed by Baba, she continued to have *sankirtan* programs. Many were the experiences of Baba's presence related by those who participated in or attended the functions. Baba had laid the foundation of the

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*sankirtan* and He sustained it through His presence. So, on the first of November, as the *darshan* program was going on, Prakash and those with her had a marvelous time under the *shamiana* performing their *sankirtan* — a wholehearted offering to their beloved Lord Meher Baba, the Center of each one's heart.

### *Baba's Love for Cricket*

In the second week of November 1953, towards the end of Baba's stay in Dehra Dun, He expressed a wish to play a game of cricket with the *mandali* at 101 Rajpur Road. Instead of asking someone to either purchase or borrow the necessary equipment, He surprised all by telling Kishan Singh to visit the Nalavalas (Keki and Freiny). Their son Naosherwan (Nalavala) was very fond of cricket. According to Baba's instructions, Kishan Singh collected from the Nalavalas two wickets, a rubber ball, and a flat wooden plank which Naosherwan and his friends used as a bat during their impromptu cricket games.

With this makeshift equipment, Baba and the *mandali* began to play in the open space adjacent to their residence. When it was Baba's turn to bat, He hit the rubber ball hard in all directions and the fielders were kept busy running it down and retrieving it. The passers-by were fascinated with this rare sight and they stopped on the road and enjoyed the spectacle.

Kishan Singh, who was one of the players, began to feel embarrassed that Baba had them playing with a rubber ball and a wooden plank instead of a real bat, as he feared his neighbors would think this too childish.

When the game was over, Baba came into the house. He looked very pleased. Looking at the *mandali*, He gestured, "We had a nice game. But what sort of impression must it have created on the minds of the spectators!" Perhaps this last statement was made to tease Kishan Singh as Baba knew what was on his mind. Hiding his inner turmoil, Kishan Singh said

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that he could have easily obtained good cricket equipment, including a nice bat; he added that this would have looked better in the eyes of the spectators — especially those who had been deeply impressed by Baba's *darshan* and His profound messages of November 1st. How exceedingly cunning is the mind! But Baba could be more subtle still; He did not even respond to Kishan Singh's statements, although He knew well what he meant.

Every day an English newspaper was first delivered to Baba's residence in the morning, and a little later, was sent to the men *mandali* to read. However, on the day after the cricket game, the newspaper was not received at the *mandali's* residence. That day Baba arrived as usual, wearing a silken coat over a white *sadra*, on His regular morning visit to 101 Rajpur Road. With a radiant smile on His face, He looked as fresh and pleasing as the morning sun. On His arrival, He asked Kishan Singh, "Do you know today's special news?" Kishan Singh replied, "Baba, how can I know it when You are holding today's newspaper under Your arm?" Baba had a twinkle in His eye as He handed over the daily.

While browsing through the pages, Kishan Singh read with delighted surprise the headline, "Members of Parliament to Play Cricket." The subsequent column was about a cricket match arranged between the president's eleven and the prime minister's eleven. The president of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, was older than Baba! So Beloved Baba, with a charming smile, asked Kishan Singh what he thought of this unusual news. Kishan Singh kept quiet, but he definitely felt abashed at the unworthiness of the thoughts he had had on the previous day. He silently and internally apologized to Baba for them.

Baba's love for games, especially cricket, was unique. Here, I would like to digress briefly by relating an earlier event which illustrates Baba's love for the game. During His school and college days, Baba was a good opening batsman. He was even more renowned, however, for his proficiency as a wicket keeper and His knack of stumping out batsmen. If a batsman, in his attempt to hit the ball, misses it and also steps beyond a specified distance, a wicket keeper can stump him out by

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catching the ball and then hitting the wicket with it or by simply touching the wicket with any part of his body while holding the ball, before the batsman can get back to his place. This requires superb skill and agility.

One morning in 1913 when Merwan (Baba) was studying at Deccan College in Poona, Babajan, a Perfect Master of the Age, signaled Him to come closer and then kissed Him on the forehead. That kiss gave Merwan His first glimpse of His Ancient One state. For the next year or two, Merwan looked dazed and wore tattered clothes.

About this time (1913-1914), the Mohammedan cricketers challenged the Parsi team to a friendly match. The Parsi players accepted the invitation, but some of them felt that their chance of winning was slim without Merwan, the one time star of Deccan College. Despite finding Him in an entirely different state of consciousness, they tried to persuade Him to play with them, but Merwan refused.

On the day of the match, the Parsi players happened to notice Merwan standing under a tree at the boundary line of the cricket field. Some of them approached Him and again requested Him to change His mind, but to no avail. In the end they invited Him to take His seat in the players' pavilion from where He could have a good view of the game and He accepted the offer.

Hearing that Merwan was sitting in the pavilion, the captain of the Mohammedan team, a man named Mr. Begg, came to Him and asked Him why He had stopped playing cricket. Begg himself was an outstanding batsman and in his conversation with Merwan, with a concealed feeling of pride, he said, "Merwan, you are not going to bat, I know. Agreed. But rules permit you to be a wicket keeper." (According to the rules, any person not included in the official list of players is not allowed to bat or bowl. However, with the consent of the two captains, anyone can field.) "Here is my deal," Begg continued, "When I go to bat, I will not object to your joining the Parsi team as the wicket keeper, and if you get me out, I will stop playing cricket for the rest of my life." Merwan had a whim to accept this challenge. What made Begg issue it, and

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what made Merwan accept it, God alone knows!

The play began and when Begg went in to bat, Merwan took His position behind the wickets. Generally a wicket keeper (somewhat equivalent to a catcher in baseball) puts on protective equipment, pads on his legs and gloves on his hands. Merwan simply put on a pair of gloves and took up His position.

The first over — six throws of the ball from the bowler to the batsman — presented Begg with no problems and he scored some runs. On the second ball of the second over, however, he was tempted to hook it to the boundary for four runs. He swung hard, moving forward slightly in the process and lifting his right leg, but he missed the ball, which was skillfully caught by Merwan. In a flash He stumped Begg out, threw down the gloves and left the grounds without saying a word. Having lost their best batsman in Begg, the Mohammedan team went down to defeat. And, true to his word, Begg stopped playing cricket.

About fifty years later, in the mid 1960's, when Baba was in seclusion at Meherazad, a letter arrived from Mr. Begg addressed to Baba. Given below is the gist of what I gathered from one of the *mandali* about its contents. He wrote, "I do not know whether you remember me or not, but I am the one who promised you never to play cricket if you, as a wicket keeper, could get me out. Well, you won and all these years I have kept my promise to you. I understand that now you have become a great spiritual Master and that you are referred to as Meher Baba ...

"In the course of time, I have become a trustee of the Trust that conducts the day-to-day affairs connected with the tomb-shrine of Khwaja Muinnuddin Chishti of Ajmer. We carry out charitable activities and I know that the service of the poor is dear to your heart. I thought you might like to ask your close followers to contribute some donations for the charitable objects of our Trust."

Baba did in fact remember Begg's promise and told the *mandali* what had happened nearly fifty years earlier on the cricket ground in Poona. He also asked Nariman, one of His

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close *mandali* residing in Bombay who had come to Meherazad for a short stay, to donate 500 rupees to the Trust at Ajmer.

Since then, whenever a yearly request for contributions is received, one of the Meherazad *mandali* sends some money. Maybe because of the match played between the Parsis and the Mohammedans in 1913-1914, Baba's love for cricket was retained even after He was established, with the help of Upasni Maharaj, in His Ancient One state. And later He used this interest in cricket as a medium for His inner spiritual work, as His visit to Delhi illustrates.

To resume the narration, the same morning Baba informed Kishan Singh of the upcoming cricket match, He told the *mandali* while sitting with them that He wanted to visit Delhi to witness this delightful event. He even named the thirteen people who were to accompany Him to the stadium and He instructed someone to send a telegram to one of His lovers in Delhi to get fourteen box seat tickets. The next day a reply telegram was received which said that the tickets had been purchased, but it was not possible to reserve the seats in advance.

### *Meher Baba, the Cricket Match and Nehru*

Baba left Dehra Dun on November 18th and reached Delhi in the late afternoon. The cricket match was on the following day. In Delhi, He stayed at the house of one of His lovers, W. D. Kain, in the President's Estate. The next day, according to Baba's directions, some Baba lovers from Delhi went to the stadium quite early to get good seats where they could all sit together and have a good view of the game.

Baba, after visiting the tomb of Nizemuddin, arrived at the stadium long before the scheduled starting time. It was one of Baba's habits to be present at railway stations, airports, and stadiums well ahead of time. Perhaps it was a reflection of His ancient habit of being present in our hearts long before we become aware of His presence.



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On reaching the National Stadium, near India Gate, it was learned that no seat or rows could be reserved by the spectators. The employees were still cleaning and arranging the chairs, so Baba's group occupied one of the enclosures that afforded a good view of the field. Some sat in the front row while Baba preferred to sit in the second, flanked by the *mandali*, which included Meherjee and Nariman who had been called from Bombay for this occasion. To conceal His identity from others. Baba wore a felt hat with His hair tucked under it, and He also had on dark glasses. Later, He sometimes even held a kerchief over His mouth.

Soon after they were settled in their seats, a stadium employee came up with a sign which he tied to their enclosure. It read: For Teams. Baba was informed of this by one of His men who felt that they had better change their seats now. Baba smiled and gestured, "Don't worry. Remain seated." After a little while, another person came, removed the sign, and then tied it to the adjacent enclosure. The *mandali* were relieved. It seemed that Baba's game had already begun.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the prime minister of India, who was endearingly called Panditji by the people, was the first to arrive at the stadium. Other members of Parliament, the cricket players for the day, arrived later. Nehru most unassumingly greeted and exchanged words with all. A little later, while the players were still arriving, Nehru coincidentally happened to come close to the railing where Baba and the *mandali* were sitting. Nehru began to converse with a person in the first row of the adjacent enclosure. Although Baba was incognito, something in Him seemed to attract Nehru's attention. It was noticed that periodically he turned to gaze at Baba. Most of the time Baba sat looking at Nehru.

Then Nehru went to the players' pavilion and soon the president of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan arrived. Nehru led him to the pitch for the toss. An umpire flipped the coin in the air and the president won the toss; he chose to bat and the prime minister's eleven went out to field. The people cheered merrily. There was a very lively atmosphere. It was an enjoyable sight in the sense that these illustrious Indian

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patriots, who had sacrificed all to end the British rule, were now happily playing a game which was so typically British. A good joke!

As the play began, Baba, referring to Nehru's unpretentious manner, conveyed to the *mandali*, "Nehru, in spite of being a noble and prominent personality, is playing perfectly his role as a cricketer. He was the first among the players to arrive at the cricket ground and he mixed freely with all as if he were one of them." Later, when the match was in full swing, Baba gestured, "My work is done. Let us move out of here." Immediately the *mandali* got up and left the stadium with Baba.

Baba's main work during this brief visit to the stadium appears to have been His silent meeting with Nehru. Jawaharlal Nehru first heard of Meher Baba in the 1930s when Chanji, Baba's secretary and close disciple, met him on a train. Chanji presented Nehru with a booklet on Baba. Baba often showed special interest in Nehru's decisions, speeches and statements. However, the brief contact with Nehru in Delhi was the first and last of its kind. It was also unique in the sense that outwardly no contact was made, no word was spoken, no gesture or sign of recognition given.

In connection with Nehru and Baba, I wish to recount three incidents. In two of them Baba's name was mentioned to Nehru and in the third Baba remembered him. The first two took place before Baba's November '53 visit to Delhi, and the third over a decade later.

In August 1942, Nehru, along with other prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress, was arrested by the British government. Most of them were imprisoned in the fort in Ahmednagar. They were detained there until June 1945. It was here that Nehru wrote the scholarly and widely acclaimed book, *The Discovery of India*. After Nehru's release from Ahmednagar, he happened to visit Srinagar (Kashmir) where the members of the municipality (city councillors) organized a grand function to honor this matchless patriot and politician of India.

They also held a garden party for him at which Dr. Daulat

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Singh, one of the elected councillors who later became one of Baba's New Life companions, was also present. In his unadulterated love for Baba, Dr. Daulat Singh took this opportunity to present Nehru with one of Meher Baba's messages which also had His picture on it. Nehru, who had a great sense of humor, said, "I know him. I was his 'guest' for three years!" He was referring to the fact that Meher Baba's headquarters were at Ahmednagar which is where he had just been imprisoned. Both had a hearty laugh at this.

The second incident occurred in 1952, while Nehru was visiting Switzerland. At that time the Pakistan legation gave a big reception in his honor. Irene Billo, one of Baba's early Western disciples, was also invited. She later wrote:

Nehru was introduced to important people, then he suddenly walked off and headed straight to me and greeted me . . . I then said I was happy to greet him, as India was like my home, having stayed eight years in the ashram of Meher Baba. He said that he knew about Baba and seemed very pleased.<sup>54</sup>

The third incident occurred during one of Baba's stays at Guruprasad. From 1958 through 1968, Baba visited Poona every year for three months (generally March to June), and during this period, with some of His men and women *mandali*, He resided in Guruprasad on Bund Garden Road. Some years He graciously permitted His lovers from all parts of India to visit Poona for His *darshan*, and on others He did not.

In 1964, at the beginning of March, Adi, Baba's secretary, issued a circular<sup>55</sup> for all Baba lovers, which contained the following message from their Beloved Master, Baba. It read:

I will be in Poona from April 1st to the end of June 1964. For reasons of My own, I will NOT give *darshan* to anyone this year. I will be going to Poona for relaxation and I want to be left completely undisturbed. Therefore, no one should visit Poona this summer with a view to see Me ...

A number of you who have been looking forward keenly to seeing Me in Poona this year may be upset at not being allowed to see Me, but I have previously told you that you

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<sup>54</sup> *The Awakener*, Vol. XIX, no. 2, p. 22.

<sup>55</sup> *Life Circular* No. 59. Issued on March 1, 1964.

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should hold fast to My *damaan* under all circumstances — and not seeing Me is one of the circumstances.

Accordingly, Baba reached Poona on the 1st of April for a period of relaxation. During His stay, He often anxiously asked the *mandali* whether they thought His lovers would really leave Him alone, undisturbed. The *mandali* assured Baba that His lovers by now knew it was more important to seek the Beloved's pleasure by obeying Him than to please themselves by seeing His physical form.

In the afternoon in Guruprasad, Baba would usually have Eruch read the newspaper to Him. One day it was reported there that Nehru might visit Poona. Hearing this, Baba gestured while looking at the *mandali*, "I am in seclusion, but if Nehru comes to see Me, what will you do?" One of those present replied, "We will most politely but firmly say, 'No.'" Baba continued, "But if he comes to Guruprasad without any advance warning, what would be your line of action?" Eruch answered, "Baba, Nehru is the prime minister and the protocol is there, so an unplanned visit of Jawaharlalji is most unlikely." Baba did not look convinced and gestured, "Who knows! He may come to Me!"

A month or so later, on May 27th, the news was flashed on the radio that Nehru had died in Delhi, and some of the *mandali* felt that Nehru had indeed "come" to Baba. On May 27th and 28th, during His morning and afternoon visits to the men *mandali*, Baba listened for a considerable time and with concern to what was broadcast from Delhi about Nehru, including the narration of the massive funeral procession and the subsequent cremation.

Owing to Baba's special interest in Nehru, some of the *mandali* thought there was a silent link of mutual connection between Baba and Nehru. In a way, this was confirmed by Baba when, during His conversation with the *mandali*, He conveyed:

With the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru, India has lost its first prime minister who also ranked first in his dedicated service to India that he loved so dearly . . . India will have to wait for another seven hundred years to find

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another jewel like him (Jawaharlal literally means a jewel among jewels). Only when I come again, during My next advent on earth, will there be another like Jawaharlal Nehru . . .

*"Be True to Your Duty"*

The one-day cricket match in Delhi was over by the evening of the 19th. The next day, Baba again visited the *dargah* of Nizemuddin. In addition, He also paid His respects at the *dargah* of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki at Meherauli and at Gurudwara Rakabganj, New Delhi. While returning to His residence, Baba ordered Keki Desai and Kain that henceforth they should not visit any religious places — temple, church, mosque, etc. — nor any sadhu, saint or *wali*. What a blessing that the Avatar Himself helped these fortunate souls to be one-pointed in their love for the Ancient One — who represents all saints and advanced souls of the past, present, and future.

November 20th was also the day that some Baba people in the South of India had chosen to celebrate the opening of a new Baba center, "Meher Centre" at Kovvur. This town, on the banks of the Godavari river, was one of the places Baba had visited for *darshan* during His first visit to Andhra Pradesh in January 1953.

Koduri Krishna Rao, a Baba lover from Kovvur, wanted to open a center there for weekly gatherings of Baba's devotees. He wanted to furnish a small house where Baba people could share their mutual love for their Beloved through songs and through the exchange of their personal experiences of Baba's divinity. K. Krishna Rao had written to Baba earlier to bless this new Meher Centre and had also requested Him to give a message for its opening if it pleased Him to do so.

The opening of the center was arranged for the 20th so before leaving Dehra Dun for Delhi, Baba had dictated a special message for the occasion. I personally feel that Beloved Baba, in this message, has given His followers guidelines which they should contemplate very seriously before starting any new center to spread His message of love and truth. The

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specific message, with the title, "Be True to Your Duty," is one of Meher Baba's most powerful exhortations in which, without any equivocation, He has revealed His divine authority to those who want to love Him. The text is given below:

### *BE TRUE TO YOUR DUTY*

I want you to make Me your constant companion.  
Think of Me more than you think of your own self.  
The more you think of Me, the more you  
will realize My love for you.  
Your duty is to keep Me constantly with you  
throughout your thoughts, speech, and actions.  
They do their duty who, sincere in their faith and  
love, surrender to Me, guided by the implicit  
belief in My divinity as Baba.  
They too do their duty who speak ill of Me and  
condemn Me through their writings urged by  
their genuine conviction that Baba is a fraud.  
But they are the hypocrites who, not knowing their  
own minds, are constantly doubting; they are  
at times, through false emotions, inclined to  
believe in Me; and at other times to indulge in  
slandorous gossip against Me.  
No amount of slander can ever affect or change Me;  
nor any amount of admiration and praise  
enhance or glorify My Divinity.  
Baba is what He is.  
I was Baba; I am Baba; and shall for evermore  
remain Baba.  
My blessings to you all.

Meher Baba, as Baba, the God-Man, which He eternally is, has asked His lovers in the above message to make Him their constant companion. God is the self of all, and the God-Man thus can become the most intimate companion of each. Should His dear ones dare to open their hearts to Him by lovingly remembering Him, their lives will enter a new dimension, not just internally, but externally as well.

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But for this, His people have to strive to lose themselves more and more in Him, Baba, the real Light. By doing this, one's everyday activities become the windows through which one glimpses His active participation in one's life. A participation so direct, yet at the same time so simple, so natural, that it bears the stamp not of divine intervention, but of divine companionship.

Baba respects our free will, so the first step He asks us to take is to willingly think of Him more and more. Being the Compassionate One, He will then, on His own, at the opportune moment, shower His grace on His dear ones, making them feel His intimacy with them; at times even overpowering them with His presence.

Baba's gifts, His favors, His touches of humor, are endless. He gracefully touches the heart and raises one above one's doubts and disappointments. These unexpected descents of grace help rekindle the flame of love in one's heart, and help reaffirm one's companionship with Baba — the Eternal Companion. And all this begins with simply thinking about Baba more and more, in whatever way one can.

So the real duty of a Baba lover is to make Baba his companion in every thought and word and deed. Baba has assured us that if we do this, we will then feel His love for us more and more.

In Delhi, Baba continued to reside at Kain's house until November 21st. During this short stay, Baba looked quite happy. His *mandali* would often find Him in such a good and communicative mood when His inner spiritual work was done to His satisfaction. On the morning of November 21st, Baba dictated two short messages, which are given below: <sup>56</sup>

### Conviction Through Love:

There are two kinds of experiences ... one external, the other internal. The external experience is to be had by gross means. What we actually see of the gross world with gross eyes gives us a sort of conviction, but at times even this conviction is based on false analysis: for example when we happen to see a man drinking milk from a bottle under a *toddy* <sup>57</sup> tree, we feel convinced that he is drinking

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<sup>56</sup> *The Awakener*, Vol. 1, no. 3, p. 6 (1954).

<sup>57</sup> A tree whose sap is made into a mild, intoxicating drink, also known as *toddy*.

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*toddy*, which is false. What is seen with the inner eye, however, gives an absolute and definite conviction which can never fail nor be false (misleading).

When one actually sees God with the inner eye as the Omnipresent Existence, one longs only to become that Infinite Existence. What is needed is not theorizing and reasoning, but the actual experience which gives eternal conviction, and this can be had only through love.

Spiritual Science Is Based on Love:

Science, as it is understood today, deals with energy and matter. This material science is in the domain of the mind. There is also spiritual science, which deals with the beyond-mind state. Material science and spiritual science both yield proofs . . . material science brings results through intellect, spiritual science through love. When love is experienced fully, the Source of the spiritual science — God the Infinite — is realized and all else is then found to be just illusory phenomena.

Spiritual science, being based on love and being beyond systematic mental understanding, is full of ups and downs, vagaries, and contradictions which love alone can face and overcome: because whereas material science enhances the ego-life, spiritual science annihilates it.

On November 21st, after His lunch at Kain's house, Baba left for Dehra Dun, arriving there late in the evening.

### *"Anna One Hundred and Four" Passes Away*

Upon Baba's return from Delhi, the *mandali* were kept busy packing for their journey to Mahabaleshwar. Under Baba's instructions, prior arrangements had already been made for His stay with His men and women *mandali* at this hill station a thousand miles to the south. Baba had been in Dehra Dun since the middle of February, and although He had previously announced His decision to leave by December 1st, He now moved the departure time up to the 29th of November.

Baba's long stay of over nine months at Dehra Dun is still



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remembered by the resident Baba families for the two public *darshan* programs at which Baba gave special messages. Baba's divinity on those occasions seemed to emanate from His physical presence through His glowing glances, telling gestures, and majestic movements. Entering the *darshan* room was like suddenly entering heaven.

Baba lovers will especially treasure this particular stay as it was during this period that the Avatar gave to the world His gift of the Universal Prayer, and dictated one of His most authoritative and profound discourses — "The Highest of the High."

Baba's stay was also memorable for His three "no sleep — no rest" *mast* tours. Each one was a non-stop car journey during which Baba contacted highly evolved God-intoxicated souls. These days were filled with marvelous moments, indicative of the intimate give and take of divine love.

It seems to me that the *masts* contacted by Baba were drunk with the wine of love divine. Some wandered about and some stayed put, but all were lost in their inner search for the real Beloved. In their deep contemplation of the Lord, some were exempt from the physical laws applicable to us. They were heedless of what they ate or wore. Many that Baba contacted during this period wore nothing on their bodies except their love for God. The *masts* truly travel an incredible journey to the pathless land, sustained by their unconditional love for God.

The path of love is such that the one who happens to take a step on it is lost more and more to himself. It is a madness; some call it a blessed madness. It is figuratively said:

When the heavens cannot bear the burden  
Of all-consuming love for God,  
It eventually falls to earth.  
Those on whom it lands  
Suddenly become mad for God.

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They are known as *masts* — the God-intoxicated.

Quite a lot more could be narrated about what transpired during Baba's stay at Dehra Dun, but in conclusion it suffices to say that, as planned, Baba left before noon on November 29th by the Doon Express.

In addition to Baba and His party, the train also carried Baba's pets, including Sheeba, a filly. Baba's love for His pets was matchless. In addition to a groom, Baba ordered Kumar to look after Sheeba. At one stop, while the groom was fetching water for Sheeba from a station tap, the guard whistled and the train began to pull out. Even though it was an express, Kumar pulled the chain to stop it, as he knew Baba would be upset if Sheeba's groom were left behind.

At Bombay, Sheeba was removed from the train and transported on to Mahabaleshwar. Baba proceeded in Nariman's car, and with a brief stop at Bindra House in Poona (now spelled Pune), reached His new headquarters by late afternoon.

At Mahabaleshwar, Baba and the *mandali* stayed in the Aga Khan's estate, known as Florence Hall. It was leased for several months. The women stayed in the main house and the men resided in the guest quarters. On the premises of this large estate there was a big stable where Baba had earlier done His work with the poor and the *masts*. It was also in this stable that, during the New life, Baba had held an important meeting of His disciples and devotees on October 16, 1950.<sup>58</sup>

The *mandali* thought once they arrived at this hill station, Baba would want to rest for a few days owing to the long car and train journey. But to their surprise, the next day (December 2nd), Baba wanted to visit Bombay. He was accompanied in the car by Eruch, Pendu, Baidul, and Kumar. Baba's brother, Jal, joined them at Poona, and they all reached Nariman's house in Bombay, 69-C Ashiana, by late evening. Physically Baba appeared delicate, but His loving concern for humanity sustained Him in His work. The next day Kumar (his job of seeing Sheeba safely ensconced at Mahabaleshwar done) left Bombay by train for Dehra Dun.

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<sup>58</sup> *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, Vol. II, pp. 275-293.

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On December 4th, two days prior to Baba's return to Mahabaleshwar, Anna Jakkal died at Solapur. He had come into Baba's contact in the mid-twenties when Meherabad was a flourishing community, a small village really. Anna came from a respectable Ahmednagar family that owned a printing press. Later the family shifted their business to Solapur. After his first few visits to Meherabad, Anna was convinced that Baba was his Master. In His presence he felt as if he were floating in a cloud of happiness. In those days, Baba allowed people to press His feet. Anna loved serving Baba in this way. Sometimes, while pressing the holy feet of his Master, tears rolled unabashedly down his cheeks.

His family members did not understand Anna's unadulterated and one-pointed love for Baba, a non-Hindu saint, but that did not deter Anna from continuing to visit Baba. Anna had not had much education, but of what avail is education, however great, if it is devoid of love for God, and what need is there for so-called education if the Perfect One awakens love in one's heart?

Anna also had some idiosyncrasies which made him quite a character. For one thing, he often chewed tobacco, but in such quantities that it was difficult to understand anything he said. He also tended to dress and behave in slightly unusual ways, but his faith in Baba's perfection was as firm as a rock.

Once, in the 1920s, he fell ill and could not visit Baba at Meherabad. Knowing Anna's heartfelt desire, Baba on His own visited his house in Ahmednagar to inquire about his health. Anna only knew a few words of English. On seeing his Beloved Master, he cried out, "Baba, one hundred and four! Baba, one hundred and four!" He was referring to his temperature. Baba comforted him and then left. Baba's presence proved to be the best medicine and Anna soon recovered. When he next came to visit Baba at Meherabad, Baba, with a twinkle in His eye, gestured, "How are you Anna one hundred and four?" From then on, he was known in the *mandali*, not as Anna Jakkal, but as "Anna one hundred and four."

Later Anna joined Baba as one of His New Life companions.

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During Baba's wanderings on foot, Anna did night watch. He would sit in the biting cold outside Baba's tent, but he did not complain about the duty given him. In the Mahabaleshwar meeting of October 16, 1950, Baba had asked all the Yeswallas<sup>59</sup> to decide whether they still wished to accompany Baba by willingly abiding 100% by the conditions of the New Life as laid down by Him, or whether they wanted to return to the Old Life.

Every Yeswalla was allowed to express his honest choice and Anna Jakkal opted for the Old Life.<sup>60</sup> Baba, however, permitted Anna to continue to stay with Him as an ordinary servant. Baba explained that He would send Anna away when He no longer required his services. After a few months, Baba relieved him of his duty and Anna went to Solapur to stay with his family. It was there that "Anna one hundred and four " breathed his last. Referring to the service that Anna had rendered to Him, Baba once conveyed that Anna's *tap* (penance) and service were more valuable spiritually than the rigorous austerities observed by the great yogis in the Himalayas.

### *"Drink Deeply of My Love"*

From the second week of December, Baba did not leave Mahabaleshwar until the end of the month. Every day He would attend to correspondence, especially concerning His forthcoming visits to Hamirpur and Andhra Pradesh in February, 1954. Many of His lovers requested Him to visit their villages and their homes as well. Baba very lovingly listened to all the letters. Eruch and Pendu, who had traveled earlier in these parts spreading Beloved Baba's message, were often consulted by Baba to fix the final itinerary. This was then conveyed to the group heads and to the chief organizers of Baba's visits in those areas.

While Baba was staying at Mahabaleshwar, some of His lovers in Andhra Pradesh, including E. Sathi Raju, had the inspiration to arrange a large public program in Kakinada. It was to take place in the town hall, on December 25, 1953 — one

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>60</sup> *New Life Circular*, No. 18.

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of the most auspicious days of the year. Baba lovers informed their Beloved Master of this function and, in compliance with their requests, Baba sent the following words of cheer and advice to be read on this occasion:

Let love annihilate your lower self  
and reveal My Infinite Self.  
Let your ears become deaf to delusion  
to enable you to hear My silent  
message of divine love.  
Let your eyes become blind to illusion  
to receive Me as I am.  
Let your heart open to receive Me in full.  
This is My message, with My blessings  
to you all, for December 25th.

This message was indeed most appropriate and heart warming for a function held on the sacred day when the world celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

Ever since Baba had arrived at Mahabaleshwar at the beginning of the month, He had wanted to spend some quiet time by the sea. Inquiries were made, and finally Nariman and Meherjee were able to locate a nice vacant house by Varsova beach, near Andheri (Bombay). After getting Baba's approval, they rented the house for one month, beginning on December 30th.

On the 30th, Baba left Mahabaleshwar with a few of the men *mandali*. A day earlier, Chhagan and Sidhu had been instructed by Baba to go from Ahmednagar to Bombay to see Nariman who would tell them where Baba would be staying (something which was kept secret even from Baba's close ones) so they could join Him there. Baba reached Varsova later on the 30th and liked the house that had been selected for Him.

No one now recalls exactly what type of activities or programs were performed or arranged in this quiet peaceful atmosphere. Since July 10, 1925 Baba had been observing silence, and most of His activities which were part of His spiritual work, were carried out in a similar silence — without public fanfare or attention. Baba's intermittent periods of

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seeming rest and/or deep seclusions were, perhaps, those times when He worked most intensely on the inner planes of human consciousness. It appears that a change in either Baba's external activities or His place of residence provided Him with a kind of "rest."

Baba did not always disclose the nature of the work He was doing or which He had accomplished. But we may presume that the work Baba did during His quiet stay in a secluded house near the beach at Varsova did not differ much in intensity from the work He did on other occasions in similar circumstances. Be that as it may, we can say that the year 1953 ended on a tranquil note, at least externally.

The house at Varsova was a two-story building in a quiet locality, and the open beach was just a hundred yards away, giving a nice view of the sea. Sometimes Baba would sit quietly on the verandah with the men *mandali* and watch the fascinating panorama. Baba's watching the sea reminds me of two statements He made on different occasions about it.

In April 1932, when Baba was with His English group on the seashore at Combe Martin, He pulled out the alphabet board from under His arm and spelled out, "Baba is like the sea, which receives weak or strong, diseased or healthy, dotard, sinner, or saint. Baba is like the Infinite Ocean ..."<sup>61</sup>

And about three decades later, in the 1960s, He once conveyed two short but profound sentences to some of His dear lovers which, coincidentally, are also appropriate to the setting at Varsova. They were:

The Ocean of My Love  
is yours to fill your hearts with.  
Drink deeply of My Love  
and keep happy.

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<sup>61</sup> *The Awakener*, Vol. I, no. 2, p. 8.



## GLOSSARY

**Ahuramazda:** Almighty God.

**Allah:** God in the Beyond State. Almighty God.

**Allah-hu-Akbar:** God is the Greatest.

**Amartithi:** Lit., date with the Eternal One. The day when the Eternal Beloved, Avatar Meher Baba, put aside His physical body.

**anand:** Bliss.

**a'ramgah:** Lit., place of rest. A Zoroastrian burial ground where the last rites are performed.

**ardasa:** A Sikh prayer.

**arti:** A traditional Hindu method of worship, consisting of waving small lighted lamps or joss sticks in a circle in front of the person, idol, or picture of the God, saint, *Sadguru*, or the Avatar being worshipped. The lovers of Meher Baba do not necessarily do this when His *arti* (song of praise and dedication) is recited or sung.

ashram: A place of residence for spiritual aspirants.

**ashramite:** A person living in an ashram.

**avatar, an:** An incarnation manifesting a specific divine quality.

**Avatar, the:** "God-become-man." The incarnation of God, the infinite, in a finite human form. The God-Man, Messiah, Christ, *Rasool*, *Saheb-e-Zaman*.

**Avataric:** Pertaining to the Avatar.

**Bhagavad Gita, the:** Lit., "Song of the Lord." A section of the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, consisting of a colloquy between Krishna and Arjuna on the eve of battle. It was in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the Avatar, as Krishna, revealed the Avatar's status as being everyone and everything, and also beyond everyone and everything.

bhajan: A devotional song or the singing of devotional songs.

**champa:** A tree and the flowers it bears.

**chapati:** Flat, unleavened wheat bread.

**chappals:** Sandals with straps over the instep, but not necessarily around the ankles.

**charpai:** A wooden bed frame strung with thin ropes.



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**chimta:** Lit., a pair of tongs. A metal clapper used as a percussion instrument.

**chit:** Knowledge. Principle of consciousness.

**chowkidar:** A watchman.

**dacoit:** A highway robber.

**dak bungalow:** A rest house built at the turn of the century by the British for officials and travelers. It was located on the mail (*dak*) roads; currently a government rest house.

**dakshana:** Money given as a fee to a person, usually a priest, who offers prayers or worships on behalf of someone.

**darbar:** A place (court) of audience graced by a king or a Perfect Master.

**dargah:** A place where a Moslem saint — *wali*, *pir* or a Qutub — is buried.

**darshan:** Formal or informal audience given by the Master who bestows his blessings on his devotees or visitors and receives their homage. Sometimes the Master uses the occasion to distribute *prasad* as well.

**darshanite:** One who has come for *darshan*.

**das:** Lit., a slave.

**dharamshala:** A free rest house for travelers.

**dholak:** A cylindrical Indian drum with a leather head at each end.

**dhoti:** A long white piece of cloth, sometimes with a colored border, worn below the waist in various ways by the Hindus.

**Elahi:** (Hebrew *Elohim*) The One God.

**Ezad:** The One worthy of worship.

**ghee:** Clarified butter.

**granthi:** A Sikh priest who offers prayers for others.

**guman:** Lit., a fancy, whim. The Whim of God which caused the Creation.

**guru:** A teacher, a guide or spiritual master.

**gurudwara:** A Sikh place of worship.

**Guru Granth Saheb, the:** The holy book of the Sikhs.

**hairat:** Enchantment.

**havan:** A ritual in which an oblation in the form of clarified

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butter, boiled rice, grains, etc., is offered in a fire to invoke a diety.

**holi:** An Indian festival.

**Insha-Allah:** God willing.

**jai:** Hail, praise, victory to.

**jalali:** Fiery or hot tempered.

**julebi:** A kind of Indian sweet.

**Jeevanmukta:** The Liberated — incarnate. A God-realized person, conscious of Creation but with no duty towards it.

**Kali yuga:** The fourth, or present, cycle of time (*yuga*).

**karma:** The working of the law of action and reaction in relation to oneself and others.

**Fate:** The happenings in one's lifetime preconditioned by one's past lives.

**Khordad Saal:** The birthday of Lord Zoroaster.

**ki jai:** Lit., victory to. Used in the sense of "hail to."

**Koran, the:** The holy book of the Moslems.

**kundalini:** The vital force residing at the base of the spine, symbolically represented as a coiled serpent.

**Lahar:** Lit., a ripple, fancy, whim. The Whim of God which caused the Creation.

**Lila:** Lit., playful activities. God's "Divine Sport."

**ma:** A mother.

**Mahabharata, the:** The great epic poem of the Hindus by Vyasa. It mainly recounts the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a part of this epic.

**mahant:** A chief of an ashram or a sect.

**mahapurush:** Lit., a great person. A fifth plane saint.

**mahatma:** A great and noble soul.

**majzoob:** Lit., absorbed in. One who is absorbed in a plane of involving consciousness.

**majzoob-e-kamil:** One who is merged totally in God.

**mandali:** The intimate disciples of a *Sadguru* or the Avatar.

**manuka:** Raisins.

**mard-e-Khuda:** God's fearless lovers, especially the *masts* of the fifth plane.

**mast:** (Pronounced "must") A God-intoxicated man on the path.

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- mastani:** A God-intoxicated woman on the path.
- Maya:** Lit., illusion — that which does not exist. The principle of Ignorance which makes the Nothing appear as everything. In a general sense, false attachment.
- mayavic:** Pertaining to Maya
- muqam-e-hairat:** A place of enchantment — a station on the Path between the third and fourth planes of involving consciousness.
- naga:** (Also *nanga*) naked.
- namaskar:** A salutation, with the palms joined together.
- nimaz:** A prayer.
- Prabhu:** The Lord. The All-Powerful One.
- Parabrahma:** The Supreme Spirit. God in the Beyond, Beyond State.
- Paramatma:** Almighty God, the Oversoul, God in the Beyond State.
- Parvardigar:** The Sustainer (*Vishnu*).
- Pesh Imam:** The head priest who leads the prayers conducted in a mosque.
- pranam:** A respectful form of salutation.
- prasad:** Lit., anything that is first offered to God or the Master and then distributed in His name. A gracious gift, usually edible, given by the Master, as an expression of His love, to his lovers or visitors.
- pardah:** A curtain, a veil.
- pyare:** Beloved.
- Qutub:** Lit., a hub or an axis. A Perfect Master.
- raja yoga:** The yoga (path) of meditation.
- rajah:** A king.
- Ramnavmi:** The ninth day of the first Hindu month (Chaitra). The birthday of Rama.
- rava:** A sweet dish.
- Sadguru:** A Perfect Master, Man-God.
- sadhana:** A system of discipline or spiritual practice.
- sadhu:** A pilgrim, an advanced soul.
- sadra:** A thin, ankle length muslin shirt.

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**sahavas:** Lit., close companionship. A gathering held by the Avatar or arranged in His honor where the lovers and followers intimately feel His presence.

**salik:** One who consciously experiences any of the six planes on the spiritual path.

**samadhi:** In a general sense, a trance induced by spiritual meditation. Also a place where the body or the last remains of a saint, a *Sadguru* or the Avatar are interred.

**sanyasi:** One who has renounced the world and its ways.

**saqi:** Lit., a cup-bearer. Symbolically often referring to the Master as the One who pours the wine — divine love.

**Sat-Chit-Anand:** Infinite power, knowledge, bliss.

**seth:** A businessman, a man of wealth or property.

**sev-gathia:** A salty Gujarati dish.

**swami:** A term of respect used for a person following a particular spiritual path.

**tongawalla:** The driver of a horse-drawn carriage (*tonga*).

**upadesh:** Instructions or words of advice given by one's elders or a Master.

**Vishnu:** The Protector and the Preserver of all. In Hinduism, every incarnation of the Avatar is regarded as a manifestation of *Vishnu* (*Parvardigar*).

**wali:** Lit., a friend. In a special sense, a friend of God, or someone on the fifth plane of consciousness.

**yakka:** A species of bamboo.

**Yezdan:** Almighty God.

**yoga:** Lit., union. A method and practice leading to conscious union with God.

**yogi:** One who practices yoga. A person traversing the spiritual path.

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