



A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

On the Hill: Restoring Baba's Ashram Rooms

OVER THE PAST YEAR some rooms on Meherabad Hill have undergone important maintenance and restoration work, as part of an overall plan to restore upper and lower Meherabad buildings and areas as they were during Baba's time. This preservation work is for generations of Baba lovers, now and in the future, to be able to see these places for themselves and to connect with their Beloved through the precious artifacts of His time with us. Let us look at three examples of this ongoing work.

BABA'S KITCHEN

On the Hill stands a building of long association with Baba and the mandali's ashram life — Baba's Kitchen and related rooms. Standing directly opposite the Meher Retreat building on the north, it served as a boundary to the very cloistered women's ashram of the early years. Built in 1933, the building's large room served as the main kitchen for the ashram for several years. Mehera and Naja cooked Baba's food in that kitchen until 1938. Baba and the women had tea and their meals there. Baba had His meals and rested on a tin-topped table with a mattress on top, which can now be seen just inside the door of the kitchen.

From 1938 onwards Mehera used the smaller room next door (to the east) to cook for Baba. This is now known as Mehera's Kitchen. Both kitchen rooms were later used as living quarters by Mansari until she passed away in 1997. Following restoration work done last year from November to January, both the large and small kitchens are open for pilgrims and look much as they did during the ashram days in the 30s. It was Mani's wish that this kitchen be returned to the appearance of its 1933–1938 phase to show how simply Baba and the women mandali lived at Meherabad.



Volunteer craftsmen contributed their talents restoring Baba's Kitchen — shown below.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DOUG HARE

BABA'S EARLY BEDROOM

For two years (1933–1935) Baba slept in a room adjacent to the kitchen on the west side while the women stayed in the East Room of the Meher Retreat. This small bedroom of Baba's was later used as a bathing room for the women mandali and much later as a store-room. Now it has been restored as it was when Baba slept there and is open during certain hours for Baba lovers to see.



Young Adult volunteers helped move Baba's bedding into the bedroom.

The bed which we can now see in Baba's early bedroom was used by Baba in this room and also in the Cabin from 1935 onwards. Before the New Life the bed was put for storage in the East Room and remained there until it was moved back to the small bedroom last year. Moving Baba's bed was a small

project in itself. The bed is fairly large and cannot fit through a normal sized doorway. It is constructed so that it can be disassembled when necessary. In December 2013, volunteer workers who had attended the Young Adult Sahavas earlier in the year returned to Meherabad to participate in service projects. Approximately 20 young adult volunteers helped with maintaining and cleaning buildings and rooms at the Meher Retreat Compound. On the last day of the service project, Baba's bed frame was dismantled inside the East Room, where it had been stored, and carefully moved to Baba's bedroom where it was put back together, and Baba's mattress was put into place. Some volunteers had earlier sewn a new cover for Baba's mattress. The bed was then carefully made up, and His photo placed on the bed and garlanded.



Baba's bedroom on the Hill, as it was when Baba stayed there (1933-1935).

THE EAST ROOM

The next room to be restored is the East Room of the Meher Retreat building. This room, originally part of the large water tank which was on the property when Baba and the mandali first came to Meherabad, played a number of roles in Baba's ashram life. In the 1920s Baba spent many seclusion hours in the water tank and even used it as His bedroom. Converted into rooms, it was used for the Meher Ashram and Prem Ashram boys. But the phase of Baba's activities most associated with the East Room is as living quarters for Mehera and the other women mandali.

Now the East Room is undergoing restoration to prepare it for being open for pilgrim viewing, furnished as it was during the women mandali's residence there. We look forward to this wonderful privilege when the repairs and furnishing are complete.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF PAUL LIBONIAN



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Meherabad Water Supply Update

The beginning of each pilgrim season in June, while a joyous occasion in the abundance of Beloved Baba's Love, is always accompanied by the uncertainty of just how abundant the coming monsoon will be. This June Meherabad had been in a state of drought for several years with rainfall at or below average. Wells were not producing adequately, municipal supplies from Ahmednagar were inconsistent, and the Trust resorted to supplemental supply being trucked in by tankers. Water had become enough of an issue that serious restrictions on usage were being maintained and the opening of pilgrim facilities was delayed in the previous two years. On top of this, the early forecast was for a below average monsoon throughout India in 2014.

However, all pilgrim facilities were opened on time this year due to several factors. An aging-pipeline, which supplies water from Ahmednagar and was prone to excessive leakage and regular breakage, was replaced with modern piping. This greatly improved the amount of water that could be received at Meherabad. Also, due to increased efforts on the part of Trust personnel in coordination with municipal officials, water has been more consistently sent from Ahmednagar. Because of these improvements, no tanker water was required during the 2013–2014 pilgrim season, even through Amartithi. Additionally, a new check dam was constructed and the resulting large reservoir is now 50% full. A new site was purchased with an existing well which is showing

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Jai Baba Dear Family,

It is now one year since I addressed you first as Chairman of the Trust, but it feels as if it was only yesterday. How time flies in His Service.

Meherabad had over 23 inches of rain during the just concluded monsoon but the showers were sporadic, meaning there were almost no big showers that last a few hours and percolate deeply in the ground to replenish the water table. While there is greenery all around, the wells may not provide enough water to last until the next monsoon. Luckily the Mula Dam that supplies water to Ahmednagar city filled to capacity. So hopefully we shall be getting enough water from the Municipality through our pipeline till next monsoon.

In October, during Diwali (India's Festival of Lights), Avatar Meher Baba Mumbai Centre presented a beautiful play at our Theatre in Meherabad based on Beloved Baba's work with masts, the God-intoxicated souls. This aspect of Baba's life is unique, the first time any Avatar has undertaken such work. Many stories of Baba's contact with masts were depicted by the dedicated actors, bringing out both the humor and the passion of real Love. Though the play was in Hindi, this year simultaneous translation in English was provided through an FM radio channel which could be heard on one's mobile phone with earplugs. So everybody was able to enjoy the play.

The Trust has just concluded a Prasad (wages) agreement with Sevak/Sevikas (employees) for three years from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2017. The increase represents a total 47% raise over the three years, and as such is well above projected cost of living increases. This will increase the annual wage expense for the Trust to Rs. 2.5 crores (USD 416,666).

We are particularly happy that the teachers at Meher English School have also been given a good raise in their Prasad. Education was a cause very dear to Beloved Baba. Meher English School caters mainly to underprivileged children from surrounding villages, from families where the parents are mostly illiterate. Presently we have about 900 students in the school. While the Trust will spend in the current year about Rs. 64 lakhs (USD 106,666) on the school, the income by way of school fees and transportation charges will be only Rs. 15 lakhs (USD 25,000). There will be a shortfall of Rs. 49 lakhs (USD 81,666). In the next two years this shortfall will increase as there will be an increase in expenditures due to the raise in Prasad and other expenses, while there will be no appreciable increase in income. The shortfall will be made good from the loving voluntary donations that we receive from His Lovers like you.

With loving appreciation for all your support in Baba's love,

Shridhar

YOUNG ADULT SAHAVAS



To feel His intimate presence and hear the eloquence of His Silence, 105 young adults from India and abroad gathered for the annual Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas, October 12–18th, 2014. Volunteers had made painstaking preparations to ensure all the arrangements were near-perfect, setting the tone for intimacy and the theme of His Divine Silence. The week was brimming with activities, arts, music, talks by special guests, stories, discussions, movies — all focused on bringing the sahavasees closer in their love for Baba. Service projects found the participants making parts of the new Amartithi banner, planting trees behind Baba's Samadhi, cleaning the East Room, white-washing pathways . . . each project giving the priceless opportunity to

the lovers to serve the Master.

This year a trip was organized to take everyone to visit Narayan Maharaj's Samadhi to learn more about one of Baba's masters. They visited the museum there, ate the ashram meals, and saw the magnificent throne on which Maharaj sat. Evening programs such as Quiz Night and the Meher Melange show of song, dance and drama, kept everyone both challenged and entertained.

Though the Sahavasees had come from their respective cities and centers, at week's end they found themselves transformed, as they shared their experiences on the final day. In the words of one member, "teary eyed and overwhelmed, amidst unlimited hugs and unending goodbyes, we are all of one family, one in Baba's love, forever."



Silence Day 2014

The commemoration of Baba's 89th Silence Anniversary was held at Meherabad on 10th July, 2014. Baba pilgrims from all over India and around the world came together primarily to maintain silence together for 24 hours and to take Darshan at the Beloved's Samadhi. Baba's Jhopdi, the small room at lower Meherabad where Baba was staying when He began His Silence on 10th July, 1925, is open for pilgrims all day on 10th July each year. Several films of Baba were shown in the theatre on the 10th. This year a Bhajan program of singing for Baba in Hindi and

Telegu was presented on the 9th July and a special program, *The Importance of Silence Day*, was presented twice on the 11th, once in Hindi and once in Telegu, which included a speech, skit and film on the topic of Baba's Silence. Baba lovers also visited Baba's home at Meherabad which was open on the mornings of the 9th and the 11th July this year. Approximately 1400 pilgrims were accommodated at Meherabad, in Hostels C and D, the Dharamsala and Meher Pilgrim Retreat.

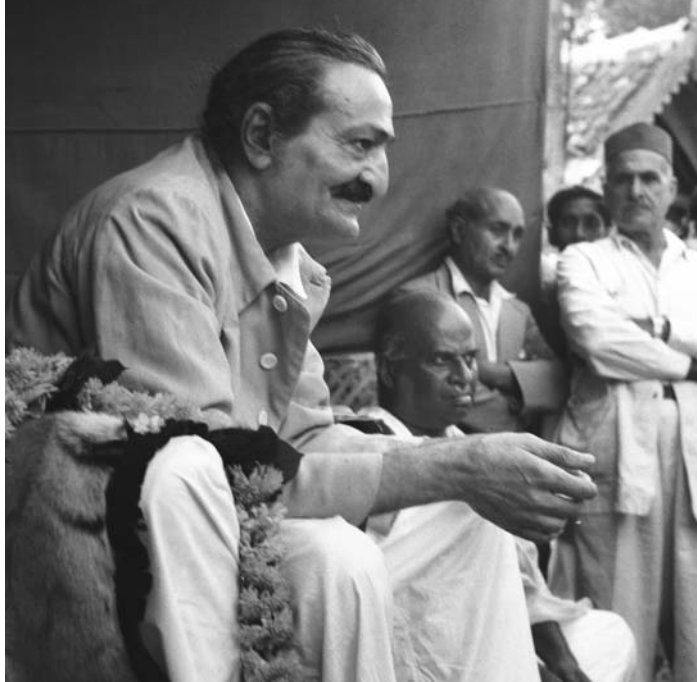


PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORON

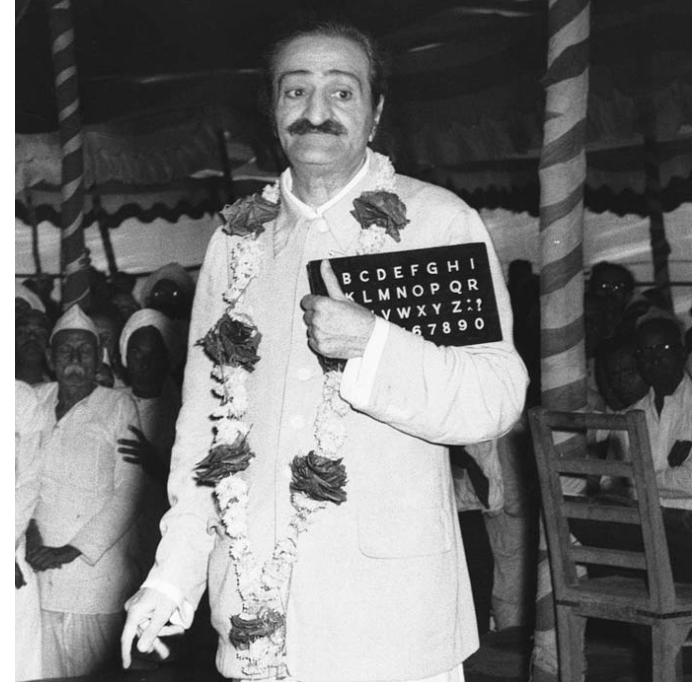
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MBV'S MULTIMEDIA TEAM



Baba in Wadia Park, 12 September 1954.



Small Darshan in Khushroo Quarters, 26 September 1954.



Final Declaration in Meherabad, 30 September 1954.

1954 ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMS

IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR another September was celebrated at Meherabad and Meher Nazar. It was the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Darshan and Sahavas programs which were part of the “Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba” and during which time Baba gave His Final Declaration. This year’s anniversary events gave Baba lovers a chance to hear first-hand accounts from some who were there and to stand on the ground where Baba gave His darshan and precious sahas. Here are the three events from September 1954 and the 2014 programs commemorating them:

I. WADIA PARK DARSHAN

On September 12, 1954 Meher Baba gave darshan in Ahmednagar to a multitude of people in a large cricket stadium called Wadia Park. Baba prostrated Himself to the assembled crowd with the words read out for Him: “Not as man to man, but as God to God, I bow down to you, so as to save you the trouble of bowing down to Me.” From 9:00 am to 6:00 pm Baba gave darshan to the tens of thousands who came, in what was described as the “grand and glorious darshan at Wadia Park.”

The commemoration program this year began with a brief gathering at Wadia Park, still a cricket stadium today. While a cricket game went on in the field beyond, Baba lovers joined in Baba’s prayers and arti. The program continued at the Avatar Meher Baba Ahmednagar Centre with tea, bhajans, film scenes from the darshan, poetry, readings of His words, and remembrances by Baba lovers who were present at the 1954 darshan.

II. THE SMALL DARSHAN

Baba gave a smaller darshan just two weeks later at the request of His followers, as some people had not been able to take darshan due to the crowds at Wadia Park. This “little darshan” was held at Khushroo Quarters (now the Avatar Meher Baba Trust compound). Darshan continued from 3:30 until 6:00 pm and over 2000 were able to have Baba’s touch and receive His prasad. Baba dictated, “No explanations or discourses can compare with this personal contact. I feel that I am in all, so it is Baba bowing down to Baba.”

The anniversary of this occasion was held on the same date, 26 September. Baba lovers gathered at the Trust compound for arti, talks and stories, and a film. The organizers had arranged a replication of Baba’s dais, chair, carpet, steps and His alphabet board, from that momentous occasion.

III. BABA’S FINAL DECLARATION MEETING

On September 30, 1954, Baba gave His Final Declaration to 948 invitees who gathered for a two-day meeting at Meherabad. It was a solemn occasion. The

Declaration contained many messages of love, oneness and brotherhood between all people, but also the foretelling of a strange disease attacking Baba’s body, Baba’s humiliation and violent physical end. Those who attended were in shock after the reading in which Baba foretold that He would break His silence, speak the Word of Words that would transform the hearts of all mankind, and announced that three-quarters of the world would be destroyed. Some simply could

not speak because of the impact of Baba’s words.

The 60th anniversary of the Final Declaration was held 29th September in the MPC meeting hall. The objective was to discover the meanings and impact of this great event. Using film, readings from Baba’s messages, and shared accounts from those who were with Baba, the group explored together the relationship of Baba’s pronouncements in 1954 and Baba’s dropping His body in 1969.

PART FOUR | HISTORY OF THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST

MEHER BABA’S DIRECTIVES TO THE TRUST, AS RECORDED BY BAL NATU, CONTINUED

The most recent article in this series by Bal and sent to Eruch Jessawala shortly during this period of the 1960s. The previous published some of the notes that Bal Natu after Meher Baba dropped His physical form article reproduced Bal’s notes taken on May took in the 1960s at Guru-prasad recording in 1969, these precious transcripts preserve 14, 1963. This article resumes with Baba’s the substance of conversations between Meher Baba’s instructions for the future comments given on May 21, 1963. (In the Meher Baba and His mandali on five conduct of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, cre- text below a few minor misspellings and occasions between 1963 and 1967. Typed up ated by Him in 1959 but still nonfunctional details of punctuation have been corrected).

May 21, 1963.

Guru-Prasad, Poona

Finding Baba in a communicative mood Eruch reminded Baba about the guide-lines (instructions) that He wished to give for the clause under the object (b)(F)(vii) given in the Trust Deed (of Avatar Meher Baba Trust). This was the day when some of the Trustees, the mandali and a few close Baba-lovers (from Poona) were present, in Guru-Prasad.

Baba began, “You know my New Life phase; it holds a unique importance. If you could follow the spirit of the New Life, you would come to know how you as well as the people should lead their lives. My coming in your midst is to manifest the way of life; for I am the Way. Presentation of my life — in its different phases will offer necessary training (for leading the real life).

“To serve this purpose you can assemble or produce or exhibit films on different aspects of my life and works (of course in later years) such as The New Life, helping and serving the poor, the programmes with the lepers, darshan to the masses and other activities of sowing the seeds of Divine Love, to awaken humanity and divinity in each and all.

“You know what I have mentioned in the discourse on New Humanity. You have to play the part of digging and filling in the Foundation or

forming a nucleus to usher a New Era for New Humanity which will live in peace and cordiality — eliminating selfishness, greed and discord.

Those who love me should realize the Oneness of humanity; and then your life shall be devoted to the realization of Godhood within each.

“You can also encourage writing and production of plays and skits based on the messages, discourses, sayings given by me and also on the events you know, from my life. You can also encourage music, songs, kirtans, kavvalis, bhajans (either vocal or instrumental) disseminating my life and work — messages and dissertations included — for the benefits of the public — for all.”

Baba stopped giving further instructions and concluded, “No more headache today! There is already a great spiritual burden on my head! I came to mandali’s room with an intention of playing la-risk but Eruch reminded me about the clause in the Trust Deed!” Eruch said, “Baba, it was in fulfillment of your order, that I just brought the matter to your notice!” Baba gestured, “Yes, these instructions too were necessary and you were right to remind me but now is the time of playing cards.” Someone took out the pack of cards and the players formed a circle to begin the game. In the meantime Baba told Pendu to remind Him about this matter at an opportune time, later, not too early.

Meherabad Water Supply Update

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promising signs of productivity. Several wells were cleaned of significant amounts of silt that had accumulated over the years, thus increasing their storage capacity.

More good news is that rainfall has been above average this monsoon. In fact, Baba sent an early harbinger of this in March with an unseasonable two inches of rain! Small rain showers fell on Meherabad even in April and May. By early October, Meherabad had received about 30% above average rainfall amounts for the season. And thunderstorms swept through Meherabad with even more rain later in the month.

It is important to remember, however, that in spite of current improved conditions, Meherabad remains a drought-prone, semi-arid place. Even in the best of circumstances, careful use of water is essential. All who visit or stay at Meherabad may take freely of His unlimited Presence, but please take care with His limited water.

How to Contribute

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust is supported entirely by love-gifts from Meher Baba's lovers around the world. In truth, it is Baba Himself who gives through your hands, and it is Baba Himself who brings the objects to completion which He Himself laid down in the Trust Deed, when it pleases Him to do so.

Contributions can be made directly to the Trust at: AMBPPC Trust, Post Bag No. 31, King's Road, Ahmednagar 414001, MS, India. Donations may be sent by personal check or demand draft payable to Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust and may be in any currency. In addition, a few Baba organizations in the USA and UK have established legal means to accept tax-deductible donations and transfer them to the Trust.

In the UK: Please send tax-deductible contributions to Avatar Meher Baba Association, c/o Sue Chapman, 2 Chapel Hill Row, Craster, Northumberland NE66 3TU, tel. 01 665 57 69 57, e-mail suchapman@hotmail.com.

In the USA, to make tax-deductible contributions or to name the Trust as a beneficiary in your will, 401K, IRA, or insurance policy, please contact Susan Ayers at Avatar Meher Baba Foundation, e-mail TrustPlan@ambppct.org. AMB Foundation will send you relevant information along with a list of eight Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that have grants in place to support the Trust. These include a Trust Development Plan grant, an Operating Expense grant, and a grant for the construction of the Memorial Tower.

Trust financial information is provided annually in the Trust Financial Report, sent out with the June/July issue of this newsletter and posted on the Trust website. The Financial Report details information on Trust receipts—including current donations to the three grants—and expenditures; it provides a current and projected expenditures report for the Trust Development Plan. More information can be found in the Trust's website at www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org.

PERFECT MAN

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings in Mandali Hall at Meherabad, Meherwan Jessawala shares intimate glimpses of his life with Meher Baba. Eruch's younger brother by fourteen years, Meherwan met Baba as a child and was the only little boy that Baba allowed to live in the women's ashram.

It is a heartwarming experience to hear his stories, as they are often framed from that unique perspective. Recently, in Mandali Hall, Meherwan spoke about Baba as Perfect Man. It gave us all a delightful peek into life with Baba from the perspective of a child and a greater understanding

of what Baba means when He tells us that He comes as man to make His love and being more tangible.

Meherwan began, "Baba's sense of humor sustains Him in illusion. He descends from that state of absolute bliss and suffers infinite agonies for the sake of Humanity. He becomes loveable and approachable to us. Baba has told us, 'I played marbles with the Universe in my original state and I have that habit.' So, in His childhood He was very good at marbles and also excelled in other games and sports like cricket.

"I was very small when I came to the ashram and was the only child. I was eight or nine years old and, naturally, had nothing to do all day. At the time of this story, we were staying in Jabalpur. My dad had given me a sack of marbles and I would carry them around and play with them.

"One day Baba was passing by and He glanced at me as I played with the marbles. I wasn't very good at it and kept missing the shots. Baba noticed this and immediately squatted down beside me and said, 'No, this is how you do it.' He had an unerring aim and was showing me how to place my fingers and hit the marble accurately. 'See how I do

it?' He gestured. He was just like a little kid, jumping from place to place in order to shoot the marbles. He was so human and very approachable to me. In fact, if I had a problem, I would tell Baba rather than my mother.

"As a child I was fascinated by colored stones and would collect them and keep them by my bed on the windowsill. My sister Manu had the duty of cleaning the room and when she saw all these stones and pebbles on the windowsill, she threw them out. When I saw that my collection had been thrown away I was very upset and went directly to Baba. I told Him that Manu had thrown away all my rocks. Baba called Manu and scolded her. 'Why did you do that? Go and get the rocks and put them back.'"

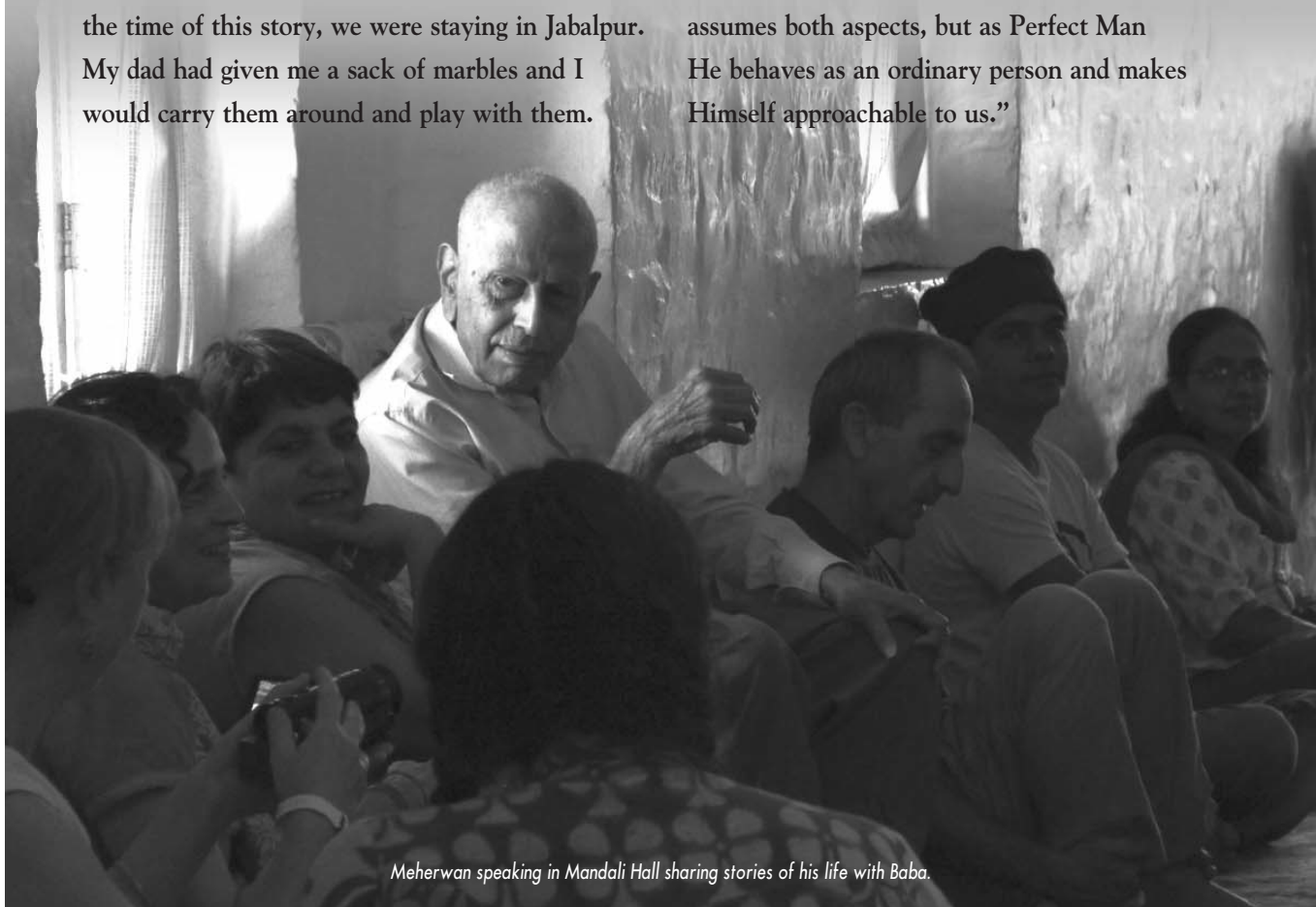
Meherwan concluded, "With Baba, He was on all levels at all times. With a child, He was like a child and with a philosopher He was also that. He is perfect man as well as perfect God. He assumes both aspects, but as Perfect Man He behaves as an ordinary person and makes Himself approachable to us."



Baba showing Meherwan how to shoot a marble. Kakubai, Vishnu's mother watching. Jabalpur, 1939.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MEHER NAZAR PUBLICATIONS

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DAVID MCNEELY



Meherwan speaking in Mandali Hall sharing stories of his life with Baba.

WHAT IS THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST?

Created in 1959 under Meher Baba's direction, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust has the purpose of fulfilling the objectives in the Trust Deed set out by Baba and the Trustees He appointed. The Trust Deed calls for the maintenance of Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb; for the creation of pilgrim facilities; for educational, medical and other charitable services; for estate development and procurement of sources of water; for the advancement of Avatar Meher Baba's love-message through melas, museums, lectures, publications, and the arts; and for spiritual training.

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For Meher Pilgrim Retreat: pimco@ambppct.org
For Hostel D/Dharamshala: jaibaba@ambppct.org

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