



IN HIS SERVICE

DECEMBER / 2016

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

MEMORIAL TOWER MILESTONE

Glass Spire Installed

IN OCTOBER THIS year the long-awaited installation of the glass-and-prism spire atop the Memorial Tower was achieved. The Memorial Tower, planned and dedicated by Baba Himself in 1944

to honor His departed lovers, has been under construction at Meherabad for the past seven years. Rising skyward in an elegant three dimensional arc, the white marble Tower is located on the site selected by Baba and can be seen on Daund Road on the side near the railway line, opposite the Main Bungalow and Dharamsala buildings. The crowning touch of the spire is a momentous landmark in the construction process, to be followed now by the installation of the carved marble base slab pieces.



The upper portion of the spire is made of glass plates. The glass is etched so that the light shining from the top at night will be focused downward.



The etching became a work of art unto itself.

The spire consists of the upper pyramid portion, formed of artistically etched glass panels,

and the lower portion of custom-made glass prisms,

designed to scatter rainbow colors on the base of the tower below when the sunlight is refracted through them. Architect Ted Judson

explains that the patches of rainbow will be “elusive”—to be found here or there at the base of the tower,

depending on the conditions of the sunlight and cloud cover, time of day, amount

of shade present, and so on.



The four solid glass prisms, custom-made by a Chinese glass-making company who had to be literally cajoled into executing the job. When the finished prisms finally arrived from China, they were trucked from Mumbai to Ahmednagar in a typical old Indian “lorry.” They arrived in a broken plywood box with the chipped pieces of Styrofoam packing exposed. It was a ticklish and nerve-wracking moment when they were unpacked—and found to be in perfect condition!

The spire is also topped with special lenses which will shine light downward at night. The electrical light will be channeled from the base up to the top via fiber-optic cables that run through the pipe in the center of the tower.

The marble base pieces that are to be fitted next will have engraved on them the names of 353 of Meher Baba’s lovers, named by Him between 1944 and 1968. We watch the progression of this project with fascination and awe as the design elements come together, the fruit of an incredible journey and labor of love by a team of many dedicated Baba lovers.

Take His Name

**Meherwan Byramshaw Jessawala:
22nd November 1930–15th July 2016**

Meher Baba’s close disciple Meherwan Jessawala lived at Meherazad from 1990 until he passed into his Beloved Baba’s arms on 15th July 2016. He is remembered fondly by many pilgrims and residents with whom he generously shared stories and insights from his life with the God-Man.

Meherwan was the youngest of the Jessawala children, born fourteen years after his brother Eruch, on 22nd November 1930.

During her labor,



Meherwan as a child, cuddled by Baba (Blue Bus tour, 1930s).

Meherwan’s mother Gaimai had a vivid dream: Babajan had come to her and had given her a big egg, within which was a baby boy. After the baby was born, when her sister teased her that she had had another baby girl, Gaimai adamantly replied, “No, it cannot be so. Babajan has given me a boy. He is Babajan’s Prasad.” When Meher Baba was informed of the baby boy’s birth, he told the family to name him Meherwan. And, like all of the Jessawala children who had come before him, he grew up loving Baba and longing to serve Him.

When the Jessawala family was called by Baba, to leave everything and come to Him on 1st August 1938, Meherwan was just eight years old. As a child he travelled with Baba and the women mandali on the Blue Bus tours and, like the rest of his family, learned the importance of obedience directly from the God-man. From a very young age Meherwan learned first-hand Baba’s all-knowingness as well as His love.

Recalling those days, Meherwan commented, “He became my father and mother. I looked to Him for everything. . . . He was so human and approachable to me, that if I had a problem I would tell Baba rather than my mother.”

In 1943, Baba sent the Jessawala family to Poona to stay, where they lived for the next forty-seven years. Their home, Bindra House, became Baba’s halting place during the many years of mast hunting and in between His almost constant travels. The family continued to live their lives according to Baba’s instructions and this included every aspect of Meherwan’s life.

Before Baba set out on the New Life on October 16th 1949, He came to Bindra House in Poona, to give His last farewell. When the time came for Baba’s departure, the whole family accompanied Baba as He walked to the car and sat down inside. Just before Eruch started the engine, Baba called for Meherwan to come close. Baba said, “I am taking Eruch with Me. He will be looking after Me and I want you to look after the family. It is a nice division of labor and will free Eruch from any worries. Be brave and do what I tell you.” Eruch interpreted Baba’s message as Meherwan stood by the side of the car and listened. Meherwan remembered poignantly how he answered Baba: “Yes, I will do as you say.”

And that is how Meherwan’s life unfolded even after Baba returned from the wanderings of the New Life. His father, “Papa” Jessawala, wanted Meherwan

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jai Baba Dear Family,

Although the country and most of Ahmednagar District got very good rains this year, Meherabad and a few surrounding villages have experienced deficient rains so far. The few big showers we had were not enough to increase ground water level. Luckily, the Mula Dam that supplies water to Ahmednagar City has enough water to last until next season. So we will continue to get water from the Municipal supply line and we do not envision any serious water problem for this year.

The Memorial Tower continues to take shape. The spire on the top of the tower has been successfully installed. Shortly the marble cladding at the base of the tower will be laid. When that is done, the process of carving by hand the names of His Lovers, in whose memory the tower is being built, will begin.

We were very happy to have nineteen university students and five of their faculty members from Texas A&M International University, USA, visit us to collaborate with our Meher English School students and teachers in an educational project in July and August. The students from TAMIU as well

as Meher English School were immensely benefitted by this interaction.

Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre presented a beautiful play entitled "Meher Baba's Spiritual Work through Love & Music" on 31st October at Meherabad's Music & Art Centre. The play was enjoyed by more than 500 pilgrims present here during Diwali Holidays. This was the sixth play in the series "Avatarhood of Meher Baba."

As always, the AMB Board of Trustees is happy to answer questions or entertain your thoughts and insights in a spirit of family communication. Please do contact me at chairman@ambppct.org any time.

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

In Baba's Love,
Shridhar Kelkar, Chairman
Avatar Mehera Baba Trust



Meher English School Communication Project

Our Meher English School had the good fortune to receive volunteers from an American university for a project with school students in July and August this year. Four professors, one teacher, and nineteen students from Texas A&M International University came to Meherabad for three weeks to work with students in the 8th, 9th, and 10th standards (grades) at our school. The project was one of the University's accredited overseas programs for students and graduate students whose major area of study involved education and communication.

The university students and faculty collaborated with the Meher English School teachers to work with the students on the project. At the School's request, they helped the pupils deliver spoken presentations in English, on a topic familiar to the pupils, such as Global Warming, the Importance of Education, etc. This process was quite successful for all. Very small groups of school pupils met with one or two University educators at a time to discuss and prepare for their presentations. The discipline, organization, and focus of the volunteers, and the natural response of the school students to them, resulted in many confident, assured speeches in English before a large audience. This experience will be of great benefit to the pupils in many ways, especially when they apply for college.

Randel Brown, the organizing professor (who is a Baba-lover), said the younger volunteers also learned a lot about teaching, and all were very impressed by the way the Meher English School is run. They were also impressed that the pupils, hailing from rural and village backgrounds, could read and write English fairly fluently. We hope they felt the touch of Beloved Baba through the students in our school environment!

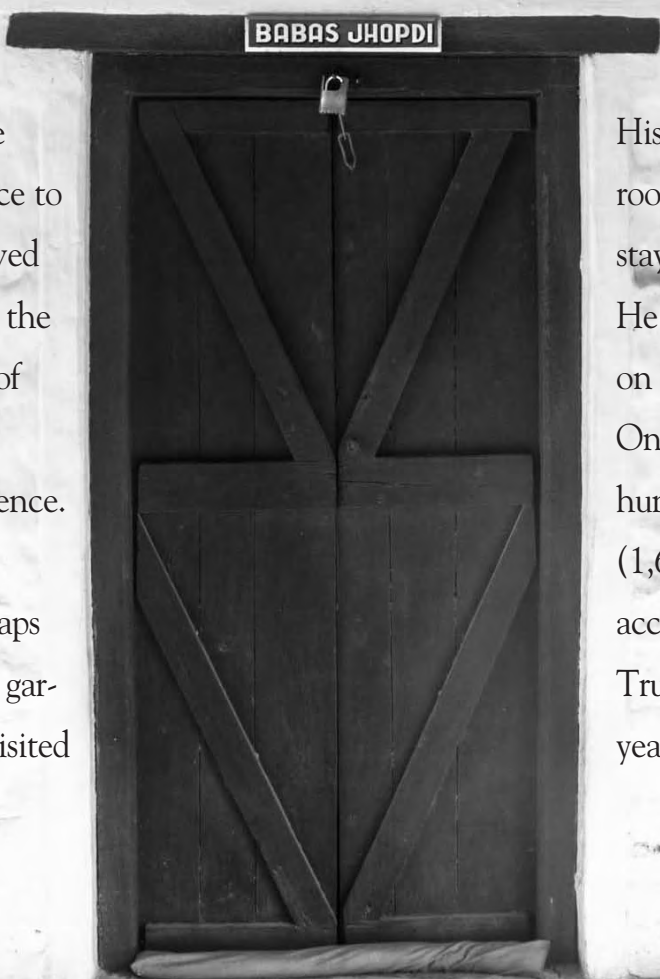


The university students from Texas join the Meher English School students in their classroom.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BIR SOFERN

SILENCE DAY

Baba-lovers came together in Silence to honor their Beloved at Meherabad on the 91st anniversary of the beginning of Meher Baba's Silence. Adorning His Samadhi with heaps of fragrant flower garlands, they also visited



His Jhopdi, the small room where He was staying at the time He began His Silence on 10th July 1925. One thousand six hundred eighty-seven (1,687) pilgrims were accommodated in Trust facilities this year.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORON

New Life Padyatra (Walk) 16 October 2016

To commemorate the anniversary of the start of Meher Baba's New Life, Baba-lovers conducted a walk from Ahmednagar to Baba's Samadhi at Meherabad. With a festive air of anticipation and camaraderie in His Love, more than 500 people gathered in the Meher Nazar Compound at 7:30 am to begin the *padyatra* for Baba. The group of walkers included Arangaon Baba Centre members,

Avatar Meher Baba Ahmednagar Centre members, Meherabad residents, and pilgrims from Baba centers around Maharashtra, from the USA, UK, and Iran. There were many children of all ages and a number of elderly people! The four-hour journey culminated in a walk through Arangaon village and up the Hill to Baba's Samadhi, followed by a picnic lunch.



The New Life Padyatra procession with its decorated cart.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JOANNA TOMLIN

Chinese Pilgrims Visit Meherabad

Among the faces from around the world who visit Meherabad on pilgrimage are an increasing number from China. In the past three seasons we have received ten, twenty, and thirty-eight pilgrims, respectively, from China, and so far this season from June–October there have been forty-three. It has become a noticeable phenomenon and we can’t help but ask: how have these people from China come to Baba and to Meherabad and Meherazad?

Since 2004, a Meher Baba website in the Mandarin language was created and subsequently maintained by Tian Xinai, a Baba-lover and professional translator. Tian lives in Australia, but keeps in close touch with many of those from China who are interested in Baba and who make their pilgrimage to Meherabad, often timing her own trips here in order to be of help to the Chinese pilgrims. Tian has also made available many Baba books translated into Chinese, including *Discourses*, *God Speaks*, *Infinite Intelligence*, *The Everything* and *The Nothing*, and 12 volumes of *Lord Meher*.

From 2006 onward people from China started ordering *Discourses* and other Chinese translations of Baba’s books. A few began to come to Meherabad too, over the next few years. The numbers really mushroomed from 2013 onward, mostly due to a few who were so taken with Baba that they spread His message among their friends and family members.

This year in August a group of thirty-one Chinese pilgrims came to Meherabad. Most of them were connected to each other through meditation. Their meditation teacher presented a practice based on the



One pilgrim presented this gift—Meher Baba’s “Master’s Prayer” in beautiful Chinese calligraphy—which he had made.

teachings of Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus. It seems some of the students were ready to recognize the Avatar of our time as Meher Baba. We heard many touching stories of their experiences.

One member recognized Baba as Krishna. Another was devoted to Jesus and Baba manifested to her as Christ. Another man, who has been to Meherabad three times, spoke of an experience of universal bliss inside the Samadhi. Quite a few had powerful experiences, visions, and dreams while here.

One young man had been a spiritual seeker, leaving his home and family and studying spiritual texts and traditions. He wanted real experience. He grappled with the idea of the Infinite being housed in a finite body; this he couldn’t understand. This seeker had a vision in the Samadhi where Baba’s head became Light. The light went inward and became the whole of Baba’s body. He felt his questions were answered directly by Baba. He has since said he finds that long-time Baba-lovers do not want spiritual experiences; they only want to love Baba, and he thinks they are the real “Bhakti” devotees, compared to others he has met.

A young woman in the group had had dreams as a girl of 13, dreams of a robed figure who said to her “I love you. Wait for me.” In the dream she asked him how she would know. “When you see me, you will know.” These dreams had faded into the past but when she was a 24-year-old pharmacist working in a hospital, she met a Baba-lover who showed her a picture of Meher Baba, and she recognized Him. She had another experience at her mother’s funeral where she had a vision of her mother dancing with Baba and she felt very happy.

These and other stories from the Chinese pilgrims have really touched our hearts. As one pilgrim enthused, “Baba is so active in China!”

Young Adult Sahavas Takes “New Life” As Theme

This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.

MEHER BABA

Meher Baba’s New Life was the theme of this year’s Young Adult Sahavas at Meherabad. Baba-lovers from diverse backgrounds came together to learn and grow closer to Him, while also offering service and creative expression to the atmosphere of His Home. Of 128 participants, 70 percent were attending the Sahavas for the first time. While most were from India, there were also some attending from China.

The Sahavasees attended talks and discussion groups focusing on Baba’s New Life, visited Meherazad and Khushru Quarters (AMB Trust Compound), and



participated in a *Padyatra* (walking procession) for five kilometres from Kinetic Chowk, Ahmednagar to Meherabad. Honoring the foot journeys done by Baba and the Mandali during the New Life, the *Padyatra* was



completed with great enthusiasm. The Sahavasees sang bhajans and “Meher Dhun” along the way, with Baba’s seven-colored flag fluttering in the breeze.

Service projects included maintenance of historic buildings and the planting of eighty trees in lower Meherabad. There were various cultural workshops as well, including a wall painting in Hostel A in the Warli style, a beautiful folk art originating in Maharashtra. The painting depicted the Samadhi surrounded by 128 Sahavasees.

Remembering Eruch in this year of his 100th birthday, the departing Baba-lovers took with them this message delivered by Eruch to the first group of Young Adult Sahavasees in 2001: “... let your Sahavas of the heart with Him stretch beyond Meherabad, beyond Meherazad, beyond all the limitations by keeping His company wherever you are and wherever He leads you. That is the Real Sahavas of heart and it is eternally accessible to all those who are determined to be His!”

Young Adults’ Procession honoring the New Life

(Top Left) YAS Service Project: Tree Plantation at lower Meherabad
(Top Right) Working on the Warli folk art painting

Take His Name

Continued from page 1

to finish his education and he did so, earning a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. But when he received his degree, in his heart of hearts he wanted to leave the world behind and, like his older brother, Eruch, live with the God-man. However, Baba had His own plans.

Shortly after his graduation, Baba visited Bindra House. “Tell me,” Baba inquired of Meherwan, “what do you want to do? Are you interested in further studies?”

“No Baba,” answered Meherwan

“So what do you want to do then?”

“Baba whatever you wish,” replied Meherwan.

“No,” repeated Baba, “I am asking you to tell me what you want to do.”

Meherwan was hoping that Baba would call him to stay in the ashram and serve Him just like Eruch, but he felt too shy to say it. Finally, just as he got the courage to tell Baba what was in his heart, Baba took the matter out of his hands. “All right, I will decide for you,” He told him. “Take the first job that

you find.” And so he found that his destiny was to continue to take care of his family and be in the world but not of it.

Meherwan became Baba’s man on the spot in Poona: scouting out bungalows for Baba, including the finding of Guruprasad, sending crates of soda water and medical supplies or other necessities required by Dr. Goher, and often scouring the markets for any other needed item for Baba and Meherazad that could not be had in Ahmednagar.

Because of the large age difference between the two brothers, Meherwan felt that Eruch was more like a father to him than a brother and he looked to him for guidance in how to please Meher Baba. Eruch, who as the elder brother would have had the responsibility of the welfare of the family if it weren’t for Meherwan taking on that role, had great love, gratitude, and respect for his brother in return, often remarking, “If it weren’t for Meherwan, I wouldn’t be here.”

As Meherwan continued to work in the world, inwardly his thoughts remained focused on Meher Baba—ready and waiting always for any opportunity to serve his Beloved. In 1990, Bindra House was sold and the Jessawala family—Gaimai, Manu, and Meherwan—with great joy moved to Meherazad.

As the years rolled by and Baba’s resident mandali passed away, Meherwan began to take a more active role in sharing stories of his life and what it was like to have lived under Meher Baba’s direct instructions, while remaining in the world. Perhaps because of Meherwan’s experience in doing what his Beloved asked of him rather

than what he had longed for, pilgrims felt a certain special connection with Meherwan, who could understand the dilemmas that faced them in the world and share with them the wisdom he gained from living according to the God-man’s command.

Not long before Meherwan passed away, a Baba-lover asked Meherwan if he would give a message to share with the worldwide Baba family. Meherwan agreed and spent much time composing one on the importance of taking Baba’s name, a topic dear to Meherwan’s heart and one that he spoke about repeatedly in Mandali Hall and carried out in his own life.

He said, in part: “Beloved Baba has told us that in this Advent, He has given no mantra or practice. He said that there is great power in His Name. He said that His Name has more power than Himself! Even He, Himself, repeats His Name.

“The power in His Name protects one from all the allurements of the world and at the same time clears all the muck within one of lust, greed and anger which otherwise would be impossible for one to get rid of. So His Name is like a double-edged weapon of protection and defense—defending one from the allurements of Maya and clearing the muck of Maya’s weapons of lust, greed and anger. Baba said, ‘make use of this ultimate weapon!’”

Meherwan’s presence at Meherazad is missed, no doubt, but if he were still with us to comment on such a thought, he would surely remind us of the futility in thinking thus, when what is needed is merely to remember the Lord and take His Name.



Meherwan sharing stories in Meherazad, 2015.



Meherwan (left) walking at Meherazad with brother Eruch.

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 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 also 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.

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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