



IN HIS SERVICE

JUNE / 2016

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

Preserving Baba's House at Meherazad

Early this year a second phase in the preservation of Baba's house at Meherazad was completed. Baba's home, of course, is an important relic of this Avataric Advent. For pilgrims coming to Meherazad, a tour of where He slept and ate and lived conjures up the time and feel-

ing of the Godman's presence on earth. The fragrance of His being permeates and pervades Meherazad, allowing each heart to feel His ever-living presence. Thus in the last two years, work on preserving the "Main Bungalow"

where Baba lived has been of paramount importance.

Last year we reported on the roof project over Baba's and Mehera and Mani's bedrooms. This year the work entailed renovation and repair of the roofs over the dining room, Baba's bathroom, and Mehera and Mani's wash room, as well as painting the outside of Baba's home.

Originally, when the house was built in 1948, the flat roof above Baba's bathing room (and also above Mehera-Mani's adjoining little wash room) was made of a matrix of lime mortar, loose earth, gravel, and wood, which was all hidden by a false ceiling. Over time the roof developed cracks in the lime mortar and moisture began to seep into the structure. Leaks developed and unbeknownst to anyone, the beams began to rot and also attract termites and red ants. When a small section of the false ceiling collapsed it was time for major repair work on the roof. At the same time, it was discovered that a few of the teakwood rafters supporting the sloping tile roof over Baba's dining room had also rotted and had actually broken in half, leaving the tiles supported only by crosswise battens. The urgency to repair these failing structures had become clear!

Baba lover Chris Pearson and an international team of volunteers came to work on this next step in the restoration and strengthening of Beloved Baba's Main Bungalow. Joining the group were helpers from Meherazad, USA, Argentina, and Australia. With hands and hearts joined together in one united purpose, and with Baba's hand guiding all, they accomplished in six weeks their main goals and more.

In the two bathing/wash rooms, the old lime mortar and other materials of the original flat roof, plus all the false ceiling pieces, were

removed; the wooden beams were bared, treated, or replaced; and a new cement slab was poured in its place. The dining room roof was opened up from above while its false ceiling remained in place. Fourteen of the supporting rafters had to be replaced. Plywood with a radiant barrier was placed on top of the rafters, then tar paper and aluminum sheeting were placed on top of that. Square aluminum pipe was fastened to the roof to hold the Mangalore tiles in place. Many of Baba's original tiles were washed, strengthened, and reused.

With the roof repairs completed, the team went on to repair and replace the leaking awnings over most of the windows and also to clean and repaint the exterior of the building. Inside the house, the dining room, Baba's bathing room, and Mehera-Mani's washroom were all carefully plastered, sanded, and freshly painted.

Looking back in time to the original construction of this home, we find that Baba and His mandali were very personally involved in all its phases. The building's interior had

been designed by Mehera, with her every thought being to make the house as comfortable as possible for her beloved Baba, as well as to meet His practical needs. And true to her loving meticulousness, the bungalow is not only a beautiful structure, but also

reflects the life and needs of Meher Baba and His men and women mandali.

Sarosh was in charge of the project and a financial contributor. Vishnu was an on-site supervisor. Padri, knowledgeable in engineering, oversaw the plumbing and electrical work. Adi Jr. also contributed financially. A contractor named Mahiboob was in charge of carpentry and masonry. Baba visited the site often, urging Padri and Mahiboob to speed up the work, but without compromising quality!

And then when it was very nearly complete, Baba held the housewarming party, a festive half-day affair on 27 August 1948. Close Baba lovers from Bombay, Poona, and Ahmednagar attended, and the men and women mandali from Meherabad were brought by bus for the occasion. Baba unlocked the door of the new house with a silver key. Arti was performed. Snacks were served.

At the housewarming Baba had a message read out, giving His blessings to all present and also praising and acknowledging the main people involved in the construction and in the inauguration party. He had Adi Sr. garland Sarosh and Mahiboob to honor their service.

We can only wonder and hope that He may be slightly pleased with the efforts we make today to preserve His Main Bungalow at Meherazad for the benefit of present and future lovers of the Lord.



Baba and Mehera in front of the house, 1959.



Baba (and Mastan) standing behind the house. The roof over the dining room, which can be seen here, was repaired this year.



Baba pouring tea at the housewarming reception at Meherazad, August 1948.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jai Baba Dear Family,

We have closed another accounting year for the Trust. For your information and interest the seventeenth annual Financial Report is part of this newsletter. 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.

We enjoyed a good pilgrim season in 2015–2016. The number of pilgrims visiting was more than 20% higher than the previous season. I am happy to find that Baba's Love and Message are flowing here in India and that our Indian Baba lovers are finding the time and

means to visit Meherabad and Meherazad in increasing numbers and frequency. We also had pilgrims from more than 30 different countries of the world.

At the time of this writing, we are still in the heat of summer waiting patiently for the June rains. Though late rains last year helped bring the average rainfall up, they failed to replenish ground water supplies and we find a dire situation at this time in our region. We have not had really big consistent rains since 2012, and the municipal supply that is our lifeline is currently very low. The early forecasts predict good rains this year, but

unless the showers start nothing can be said with certainty. We earnestly hope Beloved Baba turns the key for big rains this season and we are able to open the pilgrim facilities on time.

We look forward to meeting all of you who are making your plans to visit His Home and Samadhi soon, to immerse yourselves in His delightful Presence.

In Baba's Love,
Shridhar Kelkar, Chairman
Avatar Mehera Baba Trust
Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORON

Trust Policy: Making Source Materials Available

The upcoming publication of *Tiffin Lectures* marks the inauguration of a new Trust policy regarding the publication of what has been designated as Meher Baba's (previously) "unpublished words."

By this policy, when messages or discourses of Meher Baba's authorship that went unpublished during His physical lifetime are published now, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, as copyright holder, requires that all

texts are and perennially will remain the source records from which such editions are compiled."

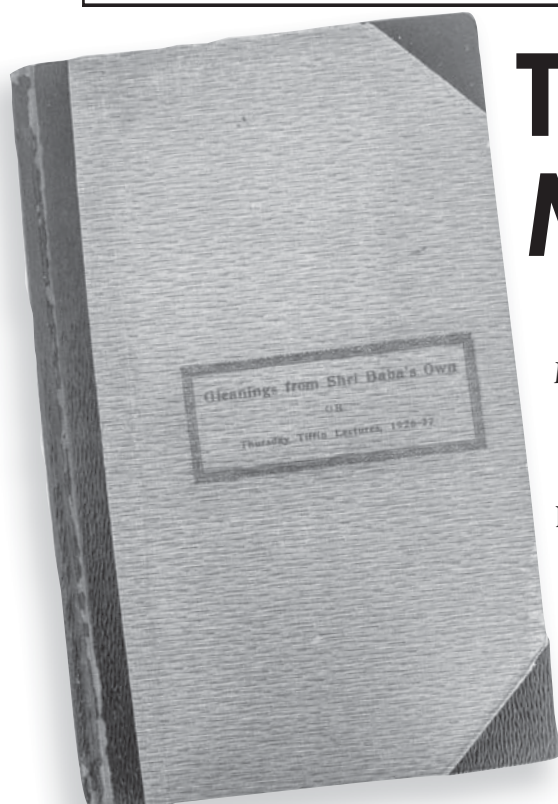
THE ONLINE RELEASE OF SOURCE MATERIALS. After *Infinite Intelligence* was published in 2005, within a year the Trust released on its website a digital facsimile of the two "Intelligence Notebooks" that are its unique manuscript source. *Tiffin Lectures* presents us with a far more complicated case, however. The primary source is the carbon copy of a typed manuscript entitled "Gleanings from Shri Baba's Own, or, Thursday Tiffin Lectures 1926–27." One copy of that manuscript was found at Meherazad by Eruch and Bal Natu soon after 1969, and the carbon copy used in preparing the book was located in 2013 among Filis Frederick's papers. That copy contained additional text and notations in Chanji's handwriting and was therefore more complete than the copy found at Meherazad.

Many other manuscripts have also entered into the editing process. The "Tiffin Lectures" were typed out in several drafts; some in the Filis Frederick collection in California, some in Beloved Archives in New Jersey, and some in the Trust Archives in Meherabad. Yet these typed versions were themselves based on Chanji's Diaries. In fact, the two diaries mainly concerned have recently been made available online by the Trust Archives. In those diaries we find certain lectures passing through several revisions in Chanji's handwriting.

All of this is explained in detail in the *Tiffin Lectures* "Supplement." Literary buffs and textual source detectives can pour over the Supplement's essays and tables and endnotes, and from there, delve into the primary sources on the Trust website. Over time the Trust hopes to create a variety of tools that will make this kind of research easier and more fruitful.

This online release of source materials is intended partly in the pursuit of transparency. Age after age the Avatar's words have an enormous impact on humanity; and Meher Baba's lovers have every right to know where the words attributed to Him come from. Yet beyond this, Baba's words are an inestimable treasury of immeasurable worth, and their study yields great rewards. Delving into the sources of His words is one line of approach to that Silent One from whom these words arise.

* From "The Combined Diary," reminiscences of five of Baba's disciples from July 1924 through August 1927.



The "Thursday Tiffin Lectures" manuscript discovered at Meherazad soon after Baba dropped His body in 1969.

and editing of that text be released and made publicly available through some suitable channel. At present the natural medium for this is the internet. Thus the release of *Tiffin Lectures* as a print edition planned later this year will be attended by the online publication on the Trust website of the diaries and typescripts used in its compilation.

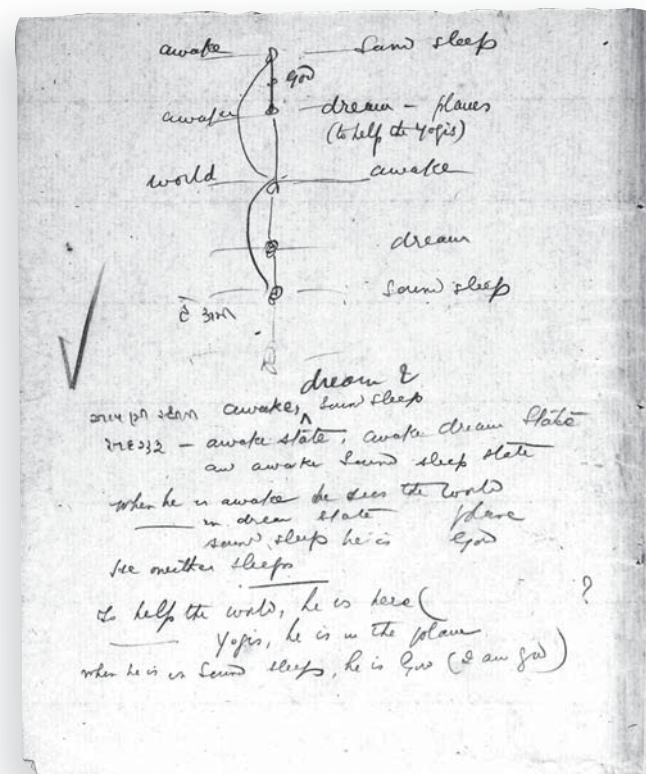
As Chairman Shridhar Kelkar explains in a preface to *Tiffin Lectures* entitled "On Meher Baba's Words," the foundation to the Trust's approach to the editing and publishing of Meher Baba's words can be found in His "Last Will and Testament," executed by Him on 17th June 1967. In the fourth clause of this document, Meher Baba writes:

Excepting such copyrights as may have been transferred by me during my physical lifetime . . . I own copyrights in all my literary works, direct and indirect, published and unpublished, including my "Sayings," "Poems," "Messages," Articles," "Discourses," "Books," "Charts," "Maps," etc. as well as copyrights already gifted to me and those that may be gifted to me in future by other writers who love me . . .

As the Trust construes this passage, works such as *Tiffin Lectures* and *Infinite Intelligence* are "unpublished" and "indirect," since they were never published in Meher Baba's lifetime and descend to us by medium of diaries. At the same time, they stand as instances of what Meher Baba calls "my literary works," and their authorship should be attributed to Him.

THE PROBLEM OF EDITING. The difficulty that arises for this body of literature is that Baba's "unpublished and indirect" words almost always come to us in the form of rough notes or unfinished drafts unsuited for the reading needs of a general public.

Baba did indicate that His explanations could be "re-composed in forceful and stylish language, but the spirit and meaning must remain unchanged."* Over the last twenty years the Trust has tried to do this; the editing of both *Infinite Intelligence* and *Tiffin Lectures* under Trust auspices began in 1997. Yet as the Chairman writes, this editing "does not and can never bear the seal of Meher Baba's own personal approval, and accordingly such work remains perennially susceptible to critique and revision. In the case of Meher Baba's 'unpublished words,' the authoritative



Page from Chanji's Diary.

COURTESY OF AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST ARCHIVES

Tiffin Lectures, a New Book of Talks by Meher Baba, Planned for Publication

Tiffin Lectures, a new major original collection of discourses by Meher Baba, is planned for publication this year, after many years of preparation. Edited by Meherwan Jessawala and Ward Parks under the auspices of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, and published by Sheriar Foundation, the new book comprises fifty-two talks that Meher Baba gave to His early men mandali between April 1926 and August 1927, at the heart of the period when Meherabad was first flourishing as Baba's ashram and when Baba's training of His men disciples occupied much of His focus and attention.



Baba at Meherabad in 1926 or 1927.

yogis, and God-realized Ones. Baba critiques religious ritualism, illuminating the original esoteric significance of, for example, the Zoroastrian *kasṭī* (sacred thread) or the Hindu *tāl-bhajan* (devotional singing) or the Muslim *namāz* (ritual prayer), and indicating the loss of meaning in these ceremonies when practiced mindlessly. Several of the lectures even speak to early twentieth-century Indian politics and the “Swaraj” (“self-rule”) movement, contrasting the limited goal of political independence with the real Independence achieved when one comes into the Realization of one's own true Self.

BABA WITH THE MANDALI. The source materials for a book such as this include writings that shed light on the ashram atmosphere and Baba's and the mandali's way of life at the time. From these sources we gain an idea of how these discourses were imparted. “Thursday Tiffin Lectures,” as they are called in one of the primary source manuscripts, were a series of discourses on diverse spiritual topics, given by Baba at meetings with the mandali. These gatherings were held at the home of Baba's disciple Kaka Shahane in the “Family Quarters” on the edge of Arangaon village, or at various other sites at lower Meherabad, such as the Makan-e-Khas (men's dormitory) or the Hazrat Babajan school building. “Tiffin” means lunch, and Thursday is named *Guruwār* or “Guru's day” in the Indic languages (and is traditionally reserved for devotional activities). Probably Kaka supplied tea and snacks to Baba and the mandali—a real treat in those days of early Meherabad

austerity. Baba used these occasions not for idle chit-chat but for serious “lectures,” during which He gave His men disciples intellectual understanding of certain spiritual subjects, as part of their greater spiritual training, which they were going to need in the decades ahead.

SUBJECT MATTER. The topics that Baba chose to impart range widely. The collection as a whole does not exhibit unity in the organization of content but rather in Baba's underlying purpose in providing his disciples with a spiritual education. Several of the lectures, for example, describe the spiritual path and warn of the dangers posed by spiritual powers. Baba explains the difference between different types of spiritual personalities, such as the Sadguru and the Majzūb, and gives new esoteric information about the Sadguru's circle. Several lectures provide a kind of “spiritual psychology,” analyzing the false self into its layers and correlating this with the experience of ordinary people, advanced

A CRITICAL EDITION. *Tiffin Lectures* has been prepared as a critical edition, that is, one whose text is compiled on the basis of a thorough study of all known source manuscripts. The primary source is a typed carbon copy titled “Thursday Tiffin Lectures,” with each lecture individually dated, recently discovered among Filis Frederick's papers in California. But many other sources have also been drawn upon, notably Chanji's Diaries, which often provide records of Baba's dictations passing through multiple drafts. All of this is explained in detail in the book's Supplement, which reviews the manuscript sources and provides an accounting of significant editorial decisions in the endnotes.

These source materials will be made available online through the Trust's website concurrent with the release of the book's print edition. *Tiffin Lectures* is being presented as a work of Meher Baba's authorship, in the category designated by the Trust as “Meher Baba's unpublished words.”



Lower Meherabad about the time the Tiffin Lectures were being given.



“Welcome to Meherabad!”

The Meherabad Welcome and Information Centre is located in the Meher Pilgrim Centre building at lower Meherabad. It opened in June 2010 through the efforts of volunteers who were inspired to have a central place where people could stop for information about Meher Baba and for a cup of tea in a congenial atmosphere, to discuss, ask questions, or look at a sketch map of Meherabad. Six years later we take a look and find the activities well expanded, with something to offer for everyone.

Still staffed by volunteers, the Welcome Centre is a place for Baba lovers to come for information about Baba in many types of media. Booklets, Baba messages and cards, and Meherabad maps and guides are just the beginning. It is also a service that coordinates and hosts



Welcome and Information Centre

activities, such as speakers, films, concerts, and a variety of other presentations for the enjoyment of the Beloved and His “guests.”

Some 25 to 50 programs are hosted during the pilgrim season. These activities include talks by those who met Meher Baba; programs planned for special events, such as Mani's and Mehera's birthdays and Baba's Birthday; concerts by musicians from various countries; and group meetings focusing on aspects of life with Baba.

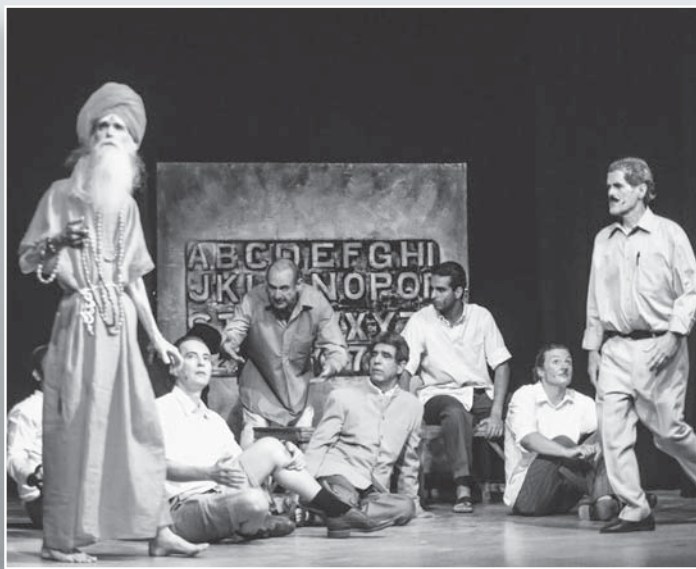
The number of people who visit the Welcome Centre ranges from 40 to 150 monthly, with an average of 75 attending programs held in the MPC meeting hall. Almost all countries of the world have had pilgrims come in, and Baba's Universal Message is now there for all to read in 34 different languages. Groups of 12 to 100

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BABA'S BIRTHDAY AND AMARTITHI CELEBRATIONS



The Samadhi in the early morning hours of Baba's Birthday.



A scene from the Birthday play, *The New Life*.



AVATAR MEHER BABA'S 47TH AMARTITHI

The Trust accommodated approximately 20,000 pilgrims for Amartithi, and perhaps twice that number attended the program on the Hill for darshan and to commemorate His Eternal Date in fifteen minutes of collective silence at twelve noon, January 31st.

Pilgrim Data: 2015–2016

MPR

The total pilgrim visits this season was 4,747, a 25% increase over last season. Total bed-days was 17,670, a 9.3% increase over last season. The MPR occupancy rate for this season was 33%, which happens to be the same percentage as the average for the 10 years since the MPR opened. Trends seen in recent years have continued, as the number of Indian pilgrims increases at a stronger rate than that of non-Indian pilgrims, and the length of stay of those from abroad slightly decreases. This season 38% of pilgrims were first-time visitors, and of those first-timers, 84% were Indian Baba lovers.

HOSTEL D/DHARAMSHALA

The pilgrim visits for these two facilities combined was 6,837, a 20% increase over last season. Total bed-days was 15,708, an increase of 12.7% over last season.

Welcome Centre

Continued from page 3

have come through the Centre, have watched introductory films on Baba, and have been given Baba literature. Guided tours for groups are arranged by request.

Behind the scenes, the staff are always working on projects, such as transcribing the audio tracks of films that are hard to understand, writing new booklets, getting pamphlet materials translated and triple checked for accuracy, doing research on Baba's life and work to offer to others, and more.

The opportunities are as varied as the people who visit, as the Welcome and Information Centre continues to create and expand in service to those who wish to draw closer to Beloved Baba.

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: Avatar Meher Baba Trust, King's Road, Post Bag 31, Ahmednagar 414 001, M.S., 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 The Meher Baba Association, 228 Hammersmith Grove, London, W6 7HG; tel: 44 (0) 208 743 4408; e-mail: centre@meherbaba.co.uk.

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 grants 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, which is sent out with the June issue of this newsletter and posted on the Trust website. The report provides information on the Trust's financial position at the end of each financial year and its receipts and expenditures for that year. More information can be found on 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.

Contact: The Chairman, Avatar Meher Baba Trust, King's Road, Post Bag 31, Ahmednagar 414 001, M.S., India.

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For Reservations to Stay at Meherabad:

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

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