



IN HIS SERVICE

DECEMBER / 2017

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

Beloved Baba Graces Meherabad with an Abundant Monsoon

It seems that Meherabad is forever consumed with issues of water. When Mehera complained to Baba that He had chosen a hot, dry, and barren place as His headquarters, He promised her with a twinkle that He would do better in His next incarnation. Mehera commented on this later: “Baba was so sweet; He always had the right answer.” She went on to say, “Somehow the Avatar always seems to be associated with barren places.” [Mehera-Meher, vol. III, p. 284].

Whatever His unfathomable reasons, the supply of water remains a topic that always looms in our work, minds, conversations, and daily life at Meherabad.

It has been many years since the monsoon in this area was productive enough to leave the wells and reservoirs close to capacity. For much of the past decade, we have only received average rains, with particularly dry seasons in 2011–13, years of serious deficit. In fact, much of Ahmednagar District and Maharashtra were critically

low on water reserves a few years ago, and the reservoir supplying Ahmednagar city was only a month or two away from drying up.

While the early pre-monsoon here looked promising with 228 mm (9 inches) in June, it quickly gave way to the common dry spell in mid-monsoon. Things came roaring back in September, though, with heavy rains falling almost daily, adding up to a total of over 965 mm (38 inches) as of November. Ahmednagar’s average monsoon rainfall is 531 mm (21 inches).

Soon the reservoirs were full, the seasonal river to the south of Arangaon was running strong, and water seemed to be flowing everywhere. What really separates this monsoon from good ones in the past was how widespread the rains were. It seems that all the water



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF IRENE HOLIT

The extraordinary rainfall filled wells to the top.



Water buffaloes near Meher Pilgrim Retreat enjoying the occasional lake created by the extra heavy monsoon.

PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE COURTESY OF DAVID BOWLING

collection areas for miles around are brimming with water, and you can almost hear a collective sigh of relief throughout the Maharashtra countryside as the water buffalo swim in the pools, children dive into wells and lakes, ladies wash laundry in the rivers, and men wash their motorbikes.

No doubt we will face the challenges of water shortages again, but Baba has certainly given us a respite this year!

This catchment pond southwest of the Samadhi, created for percolation of runoff water into the water table, expanded this year into a beautiful lake.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBRION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jai Baba dear Family,

As you can see on our front page, Meherabad has been blessed with a bountiful monsoon season this year. As catchment ponds and wells filled up, we could see that our water table has finally replenished after several years. We are thankful to Beloved Baba for this respite from our usual drought conditions.

The Trust has entered into a wage settlement agreement with the employees for three years, from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020. As a result of this agreement, the annual wages expense to the Trust has increased by 70%, an increase of Rs. 1.66

crores (i.e., \$256,000). We are also providing Accidental Death coverage of Rs. 2,00,000 to all workers and hospitalization insurance coverage (contributory) for workers and their dependent family members.

For the proposed pedestrian underpass under the Railway Track, as mentioned in our last issue, the Trust has deposited Rs. 65 lakhs (approximately \$100,000) with the Railways for this work. The Railway authorities are selecting the contractor to carry out the construction and hopefully the work will commence by the end of the year.

We are now in our busiest time of the pilgrim year and enjoy the meeting of Baba lovers from all over the world at Meherabad and Meherazad who come with their hearts full of love for their Beloved.

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



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LUDRON

The Power of Meher Baba's Name



"The Power of Meher Baba's Name" was the theme of this year's Young Adult Sahavas, held at Meherabad from 20th to 26th August 2017. Throughout the week-long program, the 108 Sahavasees in attendance focused on Baba's name, inspired by fond remem-

brance of Meherwan Jessawala and his advice on the importance of Meher Baba's name.

One participant wrote later: "The teaching of repeating His name was imbibed by all the Sahavasees through continuously repeating 'Meher Baba' for thirty minutes, keeping their eyes and hearts open to feel Baba's presence and receive His love. The tears and emotions flowing during this repetition gave us an experience and glimpse of the power of Meher Baba's

name. . . . And this was where the real Sahavas with Meher Baba began."

The goal of this yearly program is to invite young adult Baba lovers to join together in Baba's atmosphere at Meherabad and Meherazad to experience the Ocean of His Love. This year Sahavasees from India, China, and Australia had the opportunity to meditate on Beloved Baba through diverse activities: group discussions, service projects, cultural programs, art workshops, watching Baba movies, sports, and outings.

They were treated to a presentation on the importance of Meherabad as God's abode, giving them a glimpse into the old days of Meherabad when Baba and the mandali lived there. They visited Meherazad and went on a trek to Baba Gorakhnath's shrine, which Meher Baba had walked to with the women mandali. One day was devoted to service projects. Art and music workshops and programs were woven through the days, and the beautiful music chant composed by



Sahavasees entering Meherazad from the Approach Road.

Baba in 1927 was sung by the Sahavasees throughout the week: Hari-Paramatma-Allah-Ahuramazda-God-Yezdan-Hu.

NOTE: visit www.Mbyas.org/mbyas17 to view more pictures and videos and to listen to music.

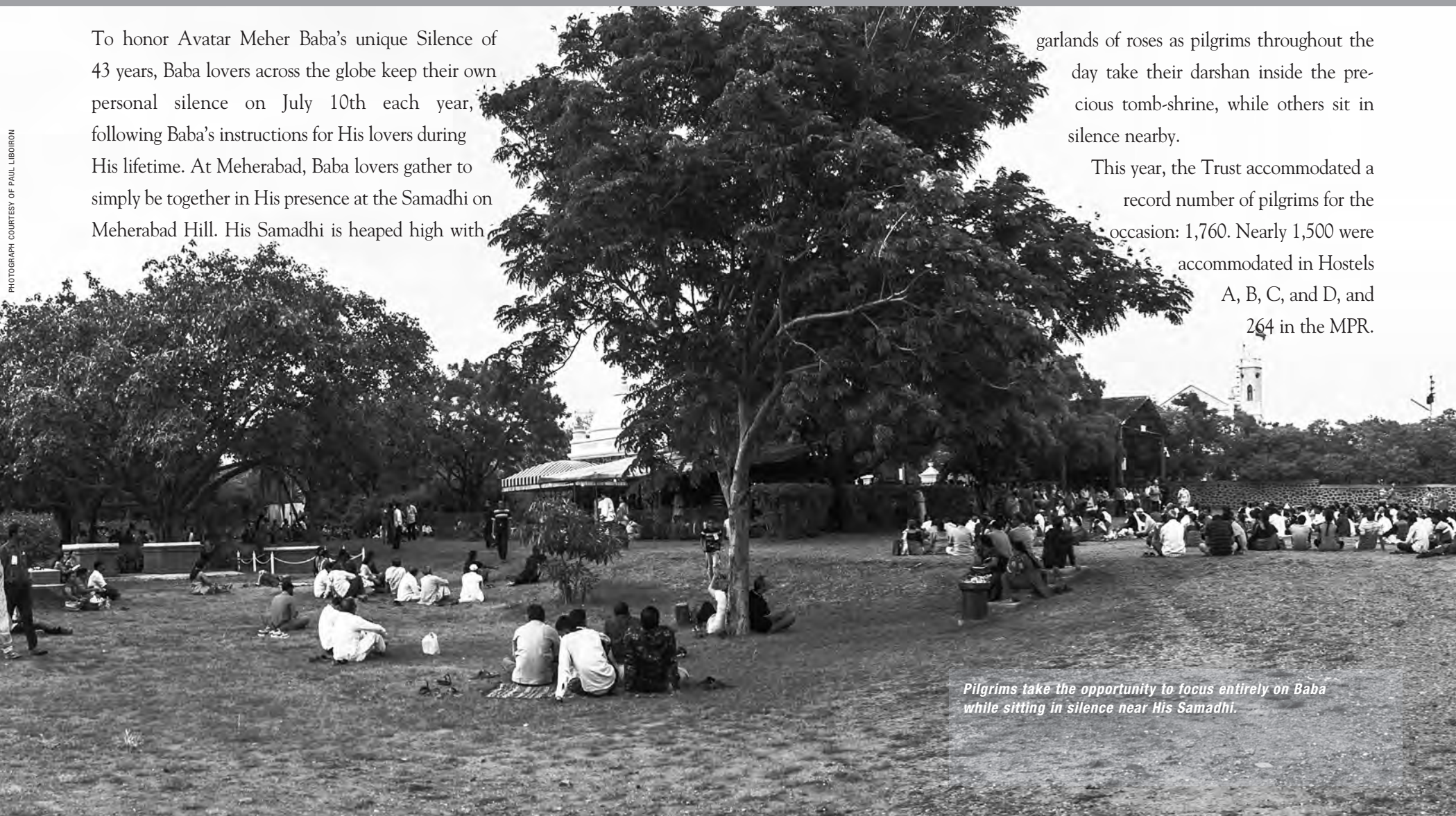
WILL VISUALIZE THE SCENE. © JESSICA NEWS/OLGA

SILENCE DAY 2017

To honor Avatar Meher Baba's unique Silence of 43 years, Baba lovers across the globe keep their own personal silence on July 10th each year, following Baba's instructions for His lovers during His lifetime. At Meherabad, Baba lovers gather to simply be together in His presence at the Samadhi on Meherabad Hill. His Samadhi is heaped high with

garlands of roses as pilgrims throughout the day take their darshan inside the precious tomb-shrine, while others sit in silence nearby.

This year, the Trust accommodated a record number of pilgrims for the occasion: 1,760. Nearly 1,500 were accommodated in Hostels A, B, C, and D, and 264 in the MPR.



Pilgrims take the opportunity to focus entirely on Baba while sitting in silence near His Samadhi.

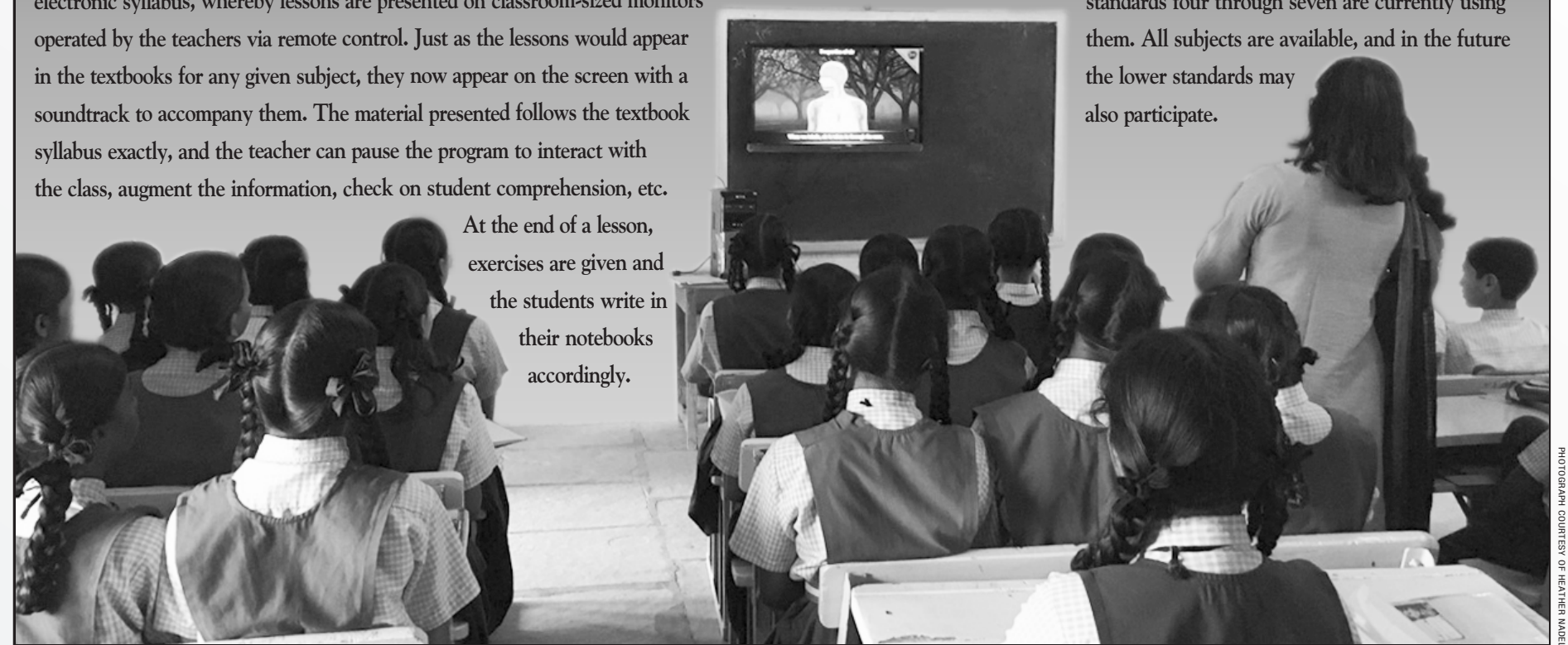
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LUDRON

E-Learning Classrooms at Meher English School

This year the Trust has provided Meher English School with the new government electronic syllabus, whereby lessons are presented on classroom-sized monitors operated by the teachers via remote control. Just as the lessons would appear in the textbooks for any given subject, they now appear on the screen with a soundtrack to accompany them. The material presented follows the textbook syllabus exactly, and the teacher can pause the program to interact with the class, augment the information, check on student comprehension, etc.

At the end of a lesson, exercises are given and the students write in their notebooks accordingly.

Two classrooms at the school are in use for the E-Learning program, and standards four through seven are currently using them. All subjects are available, and in the future the lower standards may also participate.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JESSICA NEWS/OLGA

New Educational Facility for Village Students

A new Educational Facility for tutoring the students of Pimpalgaon-Malvi village has been opened by the Trust on the Meherazad Approach Road. The purpose of this facility is to provide tutoring for academically challenged students needing help to keep up with their classes and also to provide accelerated, additional studies for those students of higher capabilities who wish to better prepare for higher education.

Mr. Karade, Principal of Ram Vidyalaya High School in Pimpalgaon-Malvi, has taken an active role along with the Trust in the creation of this facility, choosing the students who would benefit most from the voluntary program and selecting teachers who know how to encourage and support students in the learning process, whether they need remedial or advanced tutoring. The educational facility will be open four days a week—before and after regular school hours. Following the advice of Principal Karade, classes are being held in English and Mathematics for the eighth and ninth standard students.

From the earliest days of the establishment of Meherabad as Meher Baba's headquarters and ashram, improving the education of village children was one focus of His work. The Hazrat Babajan High School and the Meher Ashram were both created by Baba to help these children succeed educationally. Without restrictions regarding caste, creed, or religion, children from all walks of life were accepted, and one of the subjects Baba chose for their study was the English language.

Meher Baba's love and concern for the education of all children continued throughout

His lifetime, and, in 1959, long after the dissolution of these schools, Baba ensured such care would continue in perpetuity by delineating the creation of "schooling facilities" as one of the objects of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust. Naturally, the Trust has continued to uphold this purpose.

The Trust has been providing assistance to Ram Vidyalaya High School in Pimpalgaon-Malvi village, near Meherazad, for some time. A kitchen and store-room have been constructed for the high school, so that hot lunches for the children could be cooked in a sanitary facility. Previously, the meals had been cooked in a shed with a dirt floor. New school desks, textbooks, and other needed supplies continue to be provided by the Trust, as well as supporting extra-curricular activities, a favorite among the students being classes in Tae Kwon Do.



Baba with the children of a charitable grammar school at Akbar Press, Ahmednagar.

was officially inaugurated. Chairman Shridhar Kelkar cut the "Baba-pink" ribbon strung across the doorway of one of the classrooms. Afterwards, beloved Meher Baba's photo was garlanded jointly by the trustees and Principal Karade, as students with respect and appreciation, a

few with genuine reverence, and most with curiosity and wonder at the new opportunity for learning that awaited them. Surely Baba was smiling as He presided over the event.



LEFT: The Educational Facility on Inauguration Day.

RIGHT: Excited and happy students who wish to take advantage of the extra tutoring that will be available at the new centre.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JESSICA NEWS/OLGA

Drama Presented by AMB Bombay Centre



Meherabad was treated again this year to a wonderful play in the continuing series of original dramas performed by the Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre. *Avatarhood of Meher Baba, Part 7, Meher Baba on the Astral World and Occultism* was presented on the 21st October 2017 in the Music and Arts Centre (Theatre). These plays are conducted in the Hindi language, with a simultaneous translation in English, broadcast via FM, so non-Hindi speakers can listen with earphones while watching the action on stage.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF NALINI MATHUR

Meherabad Cricket Tournament

Considering Avatar Meher Baba's love for cricket and the fact that He Himself was a marvelous cricketeer, it is no surprise that the Trust annually sponsors a cricket tournament at Meherabad in His honor. For the past three years, the Meher Cricket Team from Arangaon has been the primary organizer for the event. This year, 16 cricket

teams from all over the Ahmednagar district played at the 10-day tournament.

There are some new features noted for the tournament this year:

- Due to weather, the event now takes place in the cooler month of November instead of the hot month of February.
- Boys from the Meher English School eighth, ninth, and tenth standards (grades) attended the Opening Ceremony to view the cricketeers.
- A renowned cricketeer (note for cricket fans: he represents Maharashtra State in the Ranji Trophy matches) kindly attended the Opening Ceremony, and afterwards went over to encourage the school boys to become involved in this great sport.
- On the morning of the last day of the tournament, two young women's teams from Ahmednagar played an exhibition match, followed in the afternoon by the tournament's final match.

This popular event reflects Beloved Baba's life-long (Advent-long!) enthusiasm for cricket.

ABOVE: This year's tournament included teams of young men and women.

BELOW: At the opening ceremony for the Tournament.

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 donations to support the Development Plan and/or Operating Expense grants being made to the Trust, please see the Trust's website (click on the "How to Help" button or search <https://www.ambppct.org/fNat.php>). The webpage lists the names and addresses of the U.S. Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that make grants to the Trust and also provides information on making donations to the Trust by bequest or beneficiary designation.

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 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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Subscribe to Tavern Talk (the Trust's electronic newsletter): <http://mymeherbaba.com/maillman/listinfo/tavern-talk>.

Or sign on via the Trust website:

<http://ambppct.org/subscription.php>.

For Reservations to Stay at Meherabad:

FOR MEHER PILGRIM RETREAT: pimco@ambppct.org.

FOR HOSTEL D/DHARAMSHALA: jaibaba@ambppct.org.

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