



New Baba Photos Available for Viewing



The Trust is pleased to announce the launch of a new section of its website, making photographs of Baba from two collections available for viewing. These are pictures most people will never have seen before, which should be welcome news to our Baba family, who love to gaze on images of Beloved Baba.

One collection is that of Baba photographer Mantravedi Sriramamoorthy, comprising several hundred images taken in the late 1960s. Sriramamoorthy donated the original negatives to the Trust, along with the copyrights and accompanying cataloging information. The second group is from the personal collection of the Jessawala family, given to the Trust by Meherwan Jessawala. Digital copies have been made from the donation of original prints.

The Trust Archives maintains a database of digital images of Baba and the people and places connected with Him. This archive has grown to more than 12,000 images, from a variety of source collections. Most of these images have been cataloged in great detail, with information about where, when, and by whom they were taken. Individuals in the images are identified if possible, and a summary provides the context and story. Information is also being collated about where to find the best copy as well as who holds the rights to each image. This database has been used to assist book authors as well as for Trust and other Baba projects. The concerned researcher chooses the photos needed and then approaches the collection holder for best available copies and permissions to reproduce.

In addition to the digital images, in many cases the original negatives/prints are reproduced on film for extended life, and the originals as well as the copies are kept under archival conditions, which include long-term frozen storage. The overall goal, along with documenting information, is to ensure the preservation of all the images of Meher Baba and His advent so they can be available to His followers and the world at large, for generations to come.

Here's the URL to view the new collections:
<http://ambppct.org/ppPhotographs.php>.

LEFT: Baba in Bhandadara, December 1936. Jessawala Collection.

BOTTOM LEFT: Baba at Grafton in Satara, 1956. Jessawala Collection.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Baba in Guruprasad, 1965. Sriramamoorthy Collection.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Baba Family,

Greetings from Baba's home at Meherabad and Meherazad. We look forward to meeting many of you this pilgrim season, starting with the commemoration of Baba's unique Silence in July, when hundreds of Baba lovers will observe silence together, and others around the world will be doing the same.

This issue of our newsletter contains the annual financial report. As I have written there, the increase in Trust expenses exceeds our growth in income. Donations from the Baba community are an important part of our mission to build the Corpus to

become self-sustaining. Our future development in carrying out Baba's objectives for His Trust depends on your generous and whole-hearted support.

On the horizon in January 2019 is the 50th anniversary of Baba dropping His physical body. This milestone makes me reflect on the age we are entering in the story of Meher Baba's advent. The close mandali are gone now, and many of those who knew Baba are in their twilight years. Yet now we feel so heartened to meet new Baba lovers and to observe how He lives in each one and brilliantly crafts the journey each heart makes to Him. I personally like to

look to the younger set in Baba's family to see the future through their eyes. And to hear their stories as they share with exuberance their own experiences of following the inner path with Him. Let us all remember to share these heart stories with each other, as one family in His love.

Shridhar Kelkar, Chairman

Avatar Meher Baba Trust

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORION

Sassoon Hospital Celebration

Meher Baba was born in 1894 in the Sassoon Hospital in Pune. A new memorial room is being established at the hospital to honor that sacred place where the "Deliverer of the world" was Himself delivered unto the world! The new space will serve as a focal point for Baba lovers and members of the public alike, a starting point, perhaps, for an ongoing pilgrimage to the Beloved.

In 1968, Baba approved the installation of a memorial plaque at Sassoon Hospital, which was inaugurated with a small ceremony. Baba lovers have continued to visit that site and pay homage to His sacred birthplace over the ensuing years. The old maternity ward where Shireenmai gave birth to the Ancient One was a separate building in the hospital grounds. It was demolished in recent

years to make way for the construction of a new, multi-story hospital wing.

At the time the old ward was brought down, the hospital authorities agreed to reserve a room on the first floor (above the ground floor) of the new building to memorialize the birthplace of Avatar Meher Baba, and they gave the Avatar Meher Baba Trust permission to salvage materials from the old ward to use in the newly designated room. The Trust collected carved stones surrounding the windows, window and door frames and shutters, and marble tiles from the floor. The salvage work and preparation of the new room has been going on concurrent with the construction of the hospital skyscraper.

This year on Baba's birthday, Baba lovers were able to visit this room for the first time. Though the building is still under construction, and the Baba room is not yet open to visitors, The Avatar Meher Baba Pune Centre arranged a special visit to honor Him there on His birthday. After the early morning Baba's Birthday celebration at the Pune Centre, a group of about 100–120 Baba lovers headed for the Sassoon Hospital. A

Baba photograph was carried from the Centre, along with a table to support it. The contractor who has been working on the building was quite helpful and arranged for chairs and a carpet on the floor. Baba's photograph was garlanded amid the shouts of Baba's jai. Pratap Ahir, the Secretary of the Pune Centre, gave a short talk about how the memorial came about. The program ended with Baba's prayers and arti.



Baba lovers honor Baba's birth at the new room dedicated to Him.

Amartithi

Avatar Meher Baba's 49th Amartithi was held at Meherabad January 30–February 1, 2018. The annual gathering is a time of profound pilgrimage for thousands of Baba's lovers, and also a time when old companions in Baba's love meet from around India and the world, and new friendships are forged in His love. Silence descends on the gathering of hearts on Meherabad Hill at 12:00 pm, the time when all convene to commemorate His passing from our midst in 1969, to live eternally in all.

This year brought a change in the darshan procedure at the Samadhi. In recent years, not all the Baba lovers who came were able to take darshan on the 31st as time would not permit.

In order to move people through the process more efficiently, a low wooden railing was placed in front of the marble inside Baba's tomb, so that devotees could reach over and touch the slab without needing to descend onto their knees. It was felt this would help get more people inside for their precious moments with their Beloved. Indeed the system



A wooden railing in front of the marble inside Baba's tomb was introduced this year.

worked very successfully. The attendants at the Samadhi reported happily that there was no need to rush the pilgrims, or to ask them to get up and move along, that a natural and smooth flow was created by eliminating the kneeling. And at the end of the day, there were no pilgrims waiting who had not been able to go inside; all were finished well before midnight.

Just one aspect of the Amartithi program is the care of pilgrims' medical needs. The team of Amartithi medical volunteers this year had 25 doctors, 4 nurses, 3 pharmacists, and 4 assistants. Along with the volunteers, the staff from the Meher Health Centre (Meherabad) and Meher Free Dispensary (Meherazad), also work round the clock at the five medical sites established around Meherabad for the occasion. The medical team this year saw 2,870 patients during the two days.



The Amartithi medical team



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORION

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GANESH ADITHYAN

Meherazad’s Road and Boundary Update

As many in the Baba world are already aware, Meherazad and its Approach Road, sanctified by the footprints of Avatar Meher Baba, have been under siege over the issue of an access road to the nearby village. Meherazad has been caught in the midst of a battle involving unrelenting political pressure and vehement farmers’ demands for a road to Pimpalgaon-Malvi village, verging directly from Meherazad’s private Approach Road.

Although much effort has been made to explain to concerned government officials why the Trust wishes to preserve the sanctity of Meherazad, already declared as a worldwide place of pilgrimage by the State of Maharashtra, our pleas have fallen short of our goal. The force of the opposition has been extremely strong, virulent, and bridging on violence, and in spite of the Trust’s strident efforts to save Meherazad’s private drive

from becoming a thoroughfare used as a shortcut to the village, we have been coerced to acquiesce to the demands of these outside forces.

The Trust has been forced to purchase, at inflated cost, land from six of our neighbors, adjacent to our private approach driveway. It is on this acquired land, approximately two hundred meters from Meherazad’s main gate, that the new fifteen-foot-wide access road is built.

Since this solution has been accepted perforce, to protect Meherazad’s eastern boundary we are now in the process of building a stone wall, with chain-link fencing, all along that boundary up to the boom-gate at the entrance of Meherazad.

The purchase of land for the road and building a wall and chain-link fencing has been done at a great cost burden to the Trust, but it has become a necessity to safeguard the Meherazad property, Baba’s home.

Interestingly, it is due to this protracted controversy that the Trust has come to realize that Meherazad’s

boundaries must be protected physically—something that in the past we would not have been inclined to do. We can only wonder at the tools Baba uses to serve His work and purpose.

The work is not over, and the Trust is still hoping to find some means to overcome the current situation completely. What the future will bring is in Baba’s hands as always, but we continue to pursue every avenue to reverse this travesty of justice and to prevent the desecration of the beauty, sanctity, and tranquility that has always pervaded Meherazad.



The new access road turns away from the Approach Road, crosses farmers’ fields, and then abruptly turns again toward Meherazad.



Stone wall under construction along the eastern boundary of Meherazad

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF DAVANA BROWN



New road (bottom right) veers away from the Approach Road, about 200 meters from the Meherazad gate.

P E D E S T R I A N U N D E R P A S S

Construction began in April on the pedestrian underpass to cross the railway line at lower Meherabad, located opposite the Dhuni. It is estimated that it will take just a few months to complete. Concrete forms are poured on site, which are later lifted into place by crane, forming a tunnel below the level of the railway line.

The new underpass will be a safe alternative to the way the footpath crosses atop the tracks now. The old path dates back to Baba’s time, when He Himself walked up and back from lower to upper Meherabad, followed by



Baba walking toward the railway line at Meherabad, 1955.

the mandali and all Baba lovers since. However, that passage is becoming increasingly dangerous as the number of trains—and pilgrims—grows. A safe way to cross the line has become essential and will be even more so in the future when thousands stay at Meherabad on a daily basis. We can see this already at Amartithi time when we do have thousands of Baba lovers walking up the Hill for darshan.

The Trust’s plan for the area below the railway line is for an historic park, landscaped to highlight the sites of the former Post Office, the Hazrat Babajan School, and the Sai Darbar, important buildings in Baba’s



Work in process on the pedestrian underpass. Ten concrete sections are fabricated on site first. When they are ready, the railway line will be closed, and in a few hours workers will excavate below the track and insert the concrete

prevent motorcycles from entering. The Railway authorities are constructing the underpass, and the Trust will construct the approaches on both sides.

lifetime. The Memorial Tower to the north will be an integral part of this area. The pedestrian underpass will serve to connect this area to the footpath going up Baba’s Hill. The Trust is designing the approaches on both sides with this historical area in mind. There will be steps descending to the tunnel entrance, which will

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MEHER MAZAR PUBLICATIONS

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TED JUDSON

Celebrating Baba’s Birthday

The joyous occasion of Baba’s 124th birthday celebration at Meherabad began before dawn, as several hundred Baba lovers gathered quietly around His Samadhi for prayers and arti at 5:00 am, the hour of Baba’s birth. After arti, the music and poetry offerings from around the world continued, while the long tradition of serving early morning tea under the tin shed was enjoyed by Baba lovers, many greeting each other with “Happy Birthday” hugs.



A humorous scene from “Overboard”

Celebration and creativity for Beloved Baba continued throughout the day, with a musical concert in the MPC meeting hall, an art exhibit at the Theatre, and the much enjoyed annual Birthday play. This year’s play was “Overboard,” a lighthearted comedy in which the mysterious Captain of the ship keeps things lively, but never shows Himself to the passengers! The players delighted their audience with the amusing story-line, songs, live musical accompaniment, vibrant sets, and brilliant characterizations.

New Kiosk on the Hill

A double-sided information kiosk has been installed in the parking area on Meherabad Hill. One side has a map of Meherabad and the other side information about Baba, the Samadhi, and Accommodations at Meherabad. The information is provided in three languages: Hindi, Telugu, and English.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF IRENE HOLT

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 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.

Jehangu and Gulnar Sukhadwala Rejoin Their Beloved

On May 10, 2018, AMBT Trustee Jehangir (Jehangu) Sukhadwala passed into his Beloved’s waiting arms, at age 85. Jehangu was married to Baba’s niece, Gulnar, daughter of Baba’s brother, Behram, and Behram’s wife, Perin. Gulnar had herself gone to Baba just two months prior, on February 26, 2018. Both Gulnar and Jehangu had served Baba throughout their lives. They lived right near Baba House in Pune, where they maintained Baba’s home after Baba’s brothers Beheram and Jal had passed away. For many years, Jehangu and Gulnar warmly welcomed Baba lovers into the family home, to pay homage and bow down in Baba’s small room there. Their loving presence will be missed by the many Baba lovers who knew them.

Jehangu served as Trustee on the Board of Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust from 1993 until he passed away. His expertise in the business world was a practical asset for his work as Trustee, but his close connection with Baba was even more valuable. Baba selected Jehangu to marry His niece, Gulnar, and He lovingly referred to Jehangu as a gem on His ring. During Baba’s lifetime, Jehangu worked for Him in



Gulnar and Jehangu with Baba in Baba House, Poona. L–R: Jal, Gulnar, Sheroo, Jehangu, Beheram, and Perin. Seated on either side of Baba, Rustom and Sorab.

Pune, particularly when the large darshan programs were held, making arrangements, and following closely Baba’s directions. He was trained by the Master Himself in following His path.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MEHER NAZAR PUBLICATIONS

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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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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