

RAMJOO'S DIARIES 1922-1929

By Ramjoo Abdulla

An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook
May 2017

SOURCE: This eBook is based on *Ramjoo's Diaries 1922-1929*,
edited by Ira G. Deitrick
published by
Sufuism Reoriented
1300 Boulevard Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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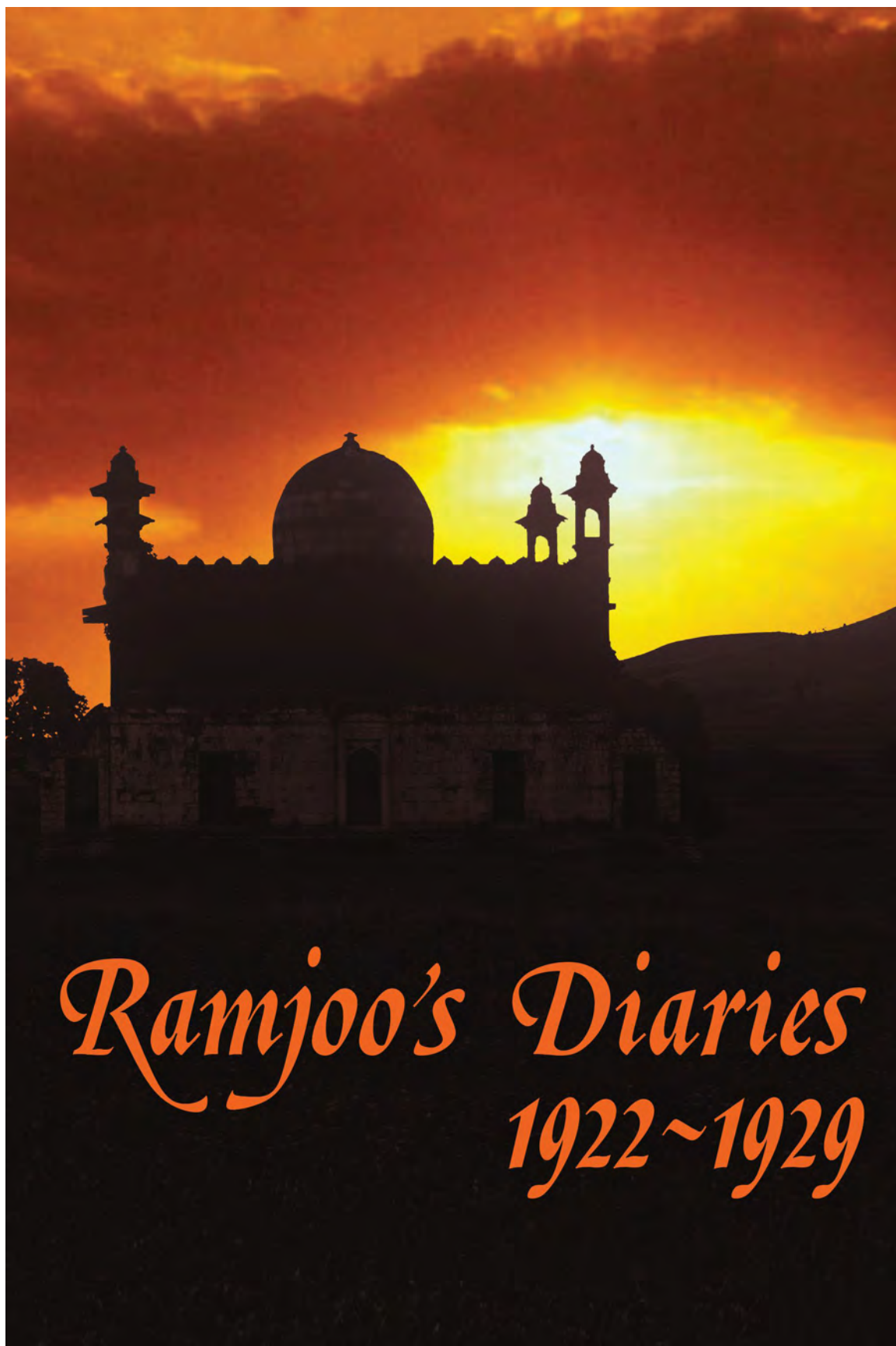
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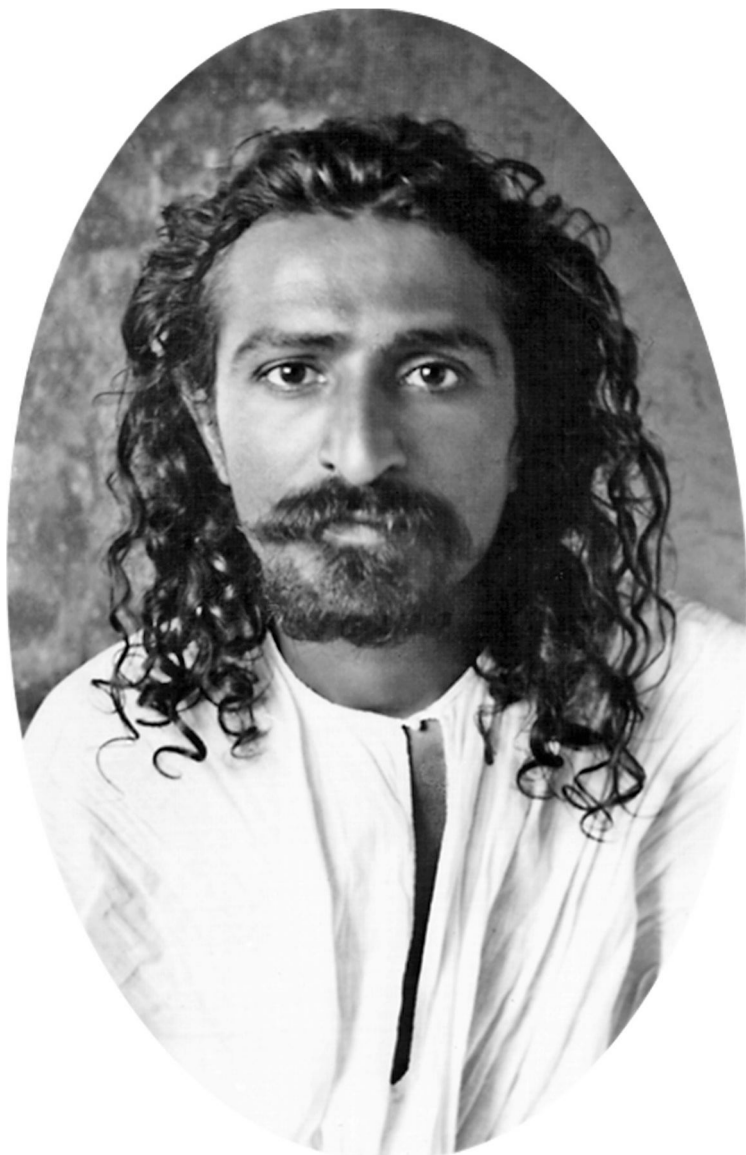
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Ramjoo's Diaries
1922~1929

RAMJOO'S DIARIES
1922-1929



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MEHER BABA AT MEHERABAD, 1925

RAMJOO'S DIARIES

1922-1929

A Personal Account of Meher Baba's Early Work

by Ramjoo Abdulla

Edited by Ira G. Deitrick

Manzil-e-Meem

1922-1923

Sobs and Throbs

1927-1929

Arangaon & Tours

1923-1925

Prem Ashram Boys

Supplement



SUFISM REORIENTED

WALNUT CREEK, CA.

Published by
Sufism Reoriented
1300 Boulevard Way, Walnut Creek, Ca. 94595

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Abdulla, Ramjoo.
Ramjoo's diaries, 1922-1929.

1. Meher Baba, 1894-1969. 2. Hindus-Biography.

I. Deitrick, Ira Gorman, 1937- II. Title.
BL1175.M4A595 294.5'6'30924 78-32145
ISBN 978-0-915828-16-6

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge with thanks permissions for reprint given to me by Francis Brabazon for *Stay with God* and *The Quest*; by Adi K. Irani, G. L. Pawar's diary, K. J. Dastur's biography of Meher Baba and *Meher Baba Journal*; by Naosherwan Anzar, *Glow International* by Filis Frederick, *The Awakener*; by Irwin Luck, Dr. Farhad Shafa and Anne Breen for interviews with the Prem Ashram boys and by Lawrence Reiter for the photographs of Meher Baba.

My grateful thanks to all those who so lovingly helped in bringing out this book: especially to Sharon Parker, who typed the complete manuscript and helped in so many additional ways, to Barbara Smith for additional typing, to Benjamin Wells for proofreading and copy editing the manuscript, to Tracy Craig for proofreading, to Adi K. Irani who so graciously translated the words and poems appearing in various Indian dialects in the diaries, and most importantly to Murshida Ivy O. Duce without whose unfailing guidance, love, support, effort and wisdom this book would not be.

Ira G. Deitrick



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RAMJOO ABDULLA, 1920's

RAMJOO'S DIARY
1922-1925

Introduction

First, the gathering of His disciples—those men
Marked out by the round of time, and God's grace,
To be finished with time, to erase
From their hearts, through perfect service,
Self's delusion of self: His testing them
By admonition, changes of food, fasts,
Changes of habitat bringing in extremes of climate,
Long miles in the dusty roads
Repeating the Name on each breath and each step;
Testing them, smelting the ore of them
So that the gold of them might shine
As satellites to the gold of His sun;
So that each one, cooked of his rawness,
Became a pliant hand or foot or eye or ear
Of God and His work.

Francis Brabazon, *The Quest*
(Sydney, Australia: 1958) p. 26

MEHER BABA, in compassionate foreknowing of our passion to know every detail of his life, directed Abdul Karim Abdulla, called Ramjoo, to keep a diary of the first years of his Avatarhood. The diary extends from January 23, 1922 to January 1925, covering four distinct periods: (1) the gathering and wooing of the *mandali* (intimate disciples) (January 1922—late May 1922); (2) "there was a period of nearly a year of strict discipline and fixed routine" (May 21, 1922—April 14, 1923); (3) "then followed a similar period of more freedom in petty affairs, but with physical hardships and constant change, and under the impression of a fixed period" (April 14, 1923—January 20, 1924); (4) "now, there is no limit to the time, place, and circumstances

under which one is to keep company with Baba! Complete surrender is the order of the day." (Entry for January 24, 1924).

The first period, the wooing and gathering of the disciples is not chronicled in detail in the diary because during that period Ramjoo himself was just coming to Baba and had intermittent contact. To give a flavor of this time, I turn again to Francis Brabazon, Baba's poet, to whom Baba gave an unequaled ability to weave Baba in words:

Now he began to gather his disciples; it was one of these
Who first called him Baba, Meher Baba or Compassionate
Father.

Some felt his light in their hearts and came;
Some picked up the hint from Babajan and Maharaj, for
these Masters

Were now openly declaring him: "He is now capable
Of moving the world at a sign from his finger." "I have
given

The key of my treasure to Merwan—do what ever he tells
you."

Some he drew directly to him, using the patience
Of a master lover, flattering their whims, widening
gradually

The space in their hearts to receive his love; playing upon
The flute of their hearts till their souls' ears became en-
amoured

Of his music; drawing ever more closely the net of love
about them

And pulling them in from the terrible ocean of
conditioned existence

Where they swam with the millions other fishes of us
bright-hued or dull.

One, who had been his school-fellow and was unaware
That the universes and the wonders of the six planes lay at
his feet

Baba greeted in well-meeting, left the veil across his eyes
And resumed the friendship at its former level,

Indulged mutual inquiries recalling episodes
And incidents and engaged in discussions on philosophy
In which subject, his friend had become adept.

Left the veil and led him on—as a hunter veils the quarry
with security;

Then suggested that he himself sweep out each morning
the small hospital

He owned. He did; and within six months had swept
away his practice

And was free to follow God. So God plays out
 The little plays of men. If it's worth a consummation
 It's worth a wooing! The sudden sun burns on the west of the
 ridge

But on an east slope draws up the plants to growth gradually.

Like the chap who had two valuable pots, dirty. One he gave
 To one man to clean, the other to another man. One back
 The next day, shining, but the temper gone out of the metal;
 The other returned after forty days of careful cleaning also
 Shining, and useful. It takes time to scour pots or grow
 tomatoes;

It takes a lot of time to clean out a man's heart and grow love
 in him

So that as well as being bright with God he can be useful to
 men.

Love's claiming of another lover also followed an excursive
 course.

"At this time," this one said, "I used to visit a friend's house
 Where we young men discussed everything under the sun.
 One night there was a new face. No one paid particular
 attention

To him, but gradually he seemed to become the focal point
 Of the gatherings and it was his say that was granted.

'Merwan
 Says this; Merwan says that.' I got sick of hearing his name.

"But incidents occurred which puzzled my intellect
 And nagged intelligence for answer—as on a boat excursion
 When we went ashore on an island. It was noon
 And being a Moslem I went off and found a secluded spot
 And offered my prayers. When I got back Merwan was
 grumbling

That we had all left him, 'One goes off and offers prayers,
 Another goes fishing.' None of us had said what he had in-
 tended doing.

"I found I was always thinking of him. I told him one day
 I was going on a train journey. He said it was a coincidence
 that

He was going on the same train. Soon after we started he said
 gently,

'Ask anything you like of me—long life, wealth, fame—
 And I will see that you get it. But the better thing would be
 To make up your mind to do whatever I tell you to do.'
 My mind was made up.

I have followed this Man now for thirty years and obeyed him."

But another as a boy when sick needed only a few visits
To wonder at a kindness greater than his parents'. And when
again well
Asked his father's permission to give up his life for him. But
his father
Saw no good in this man and forbade it. But in Baba the boy
had seen
His true father, so he saluted his father and went to him.
Another
(But with his father's blessing) left his home set
In desirable gardens and gave up his life to him.

Stay With God, pp. 23-24.

During this period Baba held out before the gathering disciples the hope, nay, the promise of spiritual advancement and spiritual experiences. "The indirect hints of Baba that he has a Circle of certain numbers of persons with whom he has connection since the day of beginning, and that this certain number of persons will in the near future get real Knowledge and Experience of Truth has set most of us guessing, guessing, guessing, as to the identity of this lucky number. Here was an Ideal Life painted before our imaginations, which under ordinary circumstances we dare not think upon . . . 'It is the connection again that will make me share this Infinite Treasure among 12 of my Circle in the near future.'" (January 26, 1922). "Although he said 12 were the all-important members of the Circle, yet the Circle had really 14 members, while there were 14 more as shadows of the original 14; thus in all, there were 28 in the Circle. The 'originals' he said will become just like the Master himself, and so will get one with God, while the 'shadows' will only see God. Yet even seeing God was not a trifling matter." (January 27, 1922).

That these and similar hints were intended as promises was made entirely clear in the stamped agreement signed by the *mandali* on October 18, 1922: "We the under-signed, in full possession of our senses, of our own free will and accord, hereby agree not to leave Meher Baba under any circumstances from the 1st of November 1922 to 25th of April 1923. We also agree to stay with him regardless of any family events, such as the death of any nearest relation, friend, or parents. After the lapse of the said period, Meher Baba binds himself to fulfill the prom-

ises which he has already verbally agreed to before the 10th of June 1923. If any of us fails to stay with Meher Baba under any trying circumstances, then he is not responsible for carrying out the promise given."

Gradually, as the disciples grew in maturity in Baba's training, the promise of advancement, the inducement of achievement and gain, began to unveil itself as an intermediate palliative necessary to the disciples in the youth of their discipleship, to be discarded when no longer necessary. January 20, 1924 the promises were discarded: "Whatever hopes and expectations Baba had held before us as going to happen and fructify by the 28th February 1924, were now to be considered to be all a FAILURE! Consequently, if we felt to have passed the last two years in vain, as well as no longer taking Baba for what we believed him to be for so long, he said he was sorry and asked to be pardoned! Nay, further, we could do what we liked with him by way of punishment. But on the contrary, if we still liked to pull on longer with him, we could do so, but for an indefinite period and on unconditional terms without any hopes and without the object of their definite fulfillment." By that time the disciples had sufficiently matured in the work that none left Baba when the carrot was removed.

After wooing and gathering the disciples, Baba marched them off to Bombay where they lived together for 10 months in the Manzil-e-Meem. During this period Baba imposed very strict discipline, controlling every aspect of the disciples' lives. It appeared that Baba, having severed the disciples physically from their home environment and commanded all their time, was going to build the foundation of their new life by prescribing every mote of sand in the new edifice. First, this was accomplished by a set of explicit orders.

The Seven Special Orders!

- 1) To follow to the letter the spiritual instructions given by me.
- 2) To keep or break any special connection with one, or more than one, from the company, or otherwise, that I order.
- 3) To totally abstain for twelve months from intoxicating drinks or substances, as well as sexual intercourse, except when allowed with legal wives.
- 4) To eat, drink, and dress according to the residence sys-

tem. To avoid fish, flesh and eggs under any circumstances.

- 5) To be present in the bungalow premises from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M., barring accidents and mishaps.
- 6) To follow faithfully the external duty given to each.
- 7) Under no circumstances to give up my company even if you find the whole world turned against me, except when ordered to do so.

N.B. If any of the above seven orders is intentionally broken by anyone who binds himself to my orders, I shall lock myself up in my room alone, avoiding completely all food, drink, and company, which please note. (June 7, 1922)

These seven special orders were complemented by a network of verbal orders which were eventually reduced to 28 and codified as follows (December 28, 1922):

Rules to be observed in addition to the seven principal orders.

1. Baths to be taken daily. Extra baths are allowed after haircuts.
2. One hour between 7 A.M. and 8 A.M. is reserved every morning for cricket (or any such game). Members attending duties are exempted.
3. Rooms to be cleaned once in a day by the occupants.
4. Dining hall, top hall and back compound are not to be treaded on with shoes. As far as possible, shoes or sandals may be avoided in the bungalow.
5. Entering the bungalow latrines is strictly prohibited unless the wooden sandals supplied for the purpose are put on.
6. No one should enter anyone's room without the permission of at least one of the occupants.
7. Ringing of the bell means the prompt attendance of members in the dining hall, except the 5 o'clock bell in the morning which indicates the starting of morning prayers.
8. The respective food or clothing should not be given or exchanged by members amongst themselves.
9. Eating less than full satisfaction is strictly prohibited. Report should be made in case of inability of eating even in spite of hunger, and in case of no appetite after accepting the food.
10. Any unfavourable change in the health should at once be reported.

11. Books, magazines, newspapers and others' letters must not be read.
12. While out on duty, more than two annas should not be spent on drinks, and money should not be kept in possession while off duty.
13. Beating anyone under any circumstances is strictly prohibited even in cases of self-defence. Wrestling and boxing are prohibited.
14. Lies, abusive language, and ill-feeling towards one to the point of breaking my order are not allowed.
15. Visits to relations are not allowed unless permitted.
16. Letters are not to be posted unless previously sanctioned.
17. Permission is to be taken before going out.
18. In order to avoid impure actions, even a touch to anyone while the mind is occupied with passionate thoughts is strictly prohibited. Vulgar stories or passion-exciting topics must be avoided.
19. Touching any young women, except one's own mother or sister, should be avoided.
20. Eating food not cooked in the Manzil or any eatable from outside must not be eaten unless otherwise ordered.
21. Any action indicating lust or passion should at once be reported.
22. Shaving and hair cutting are allowed on Thursdays and Sundays before 12 A.M.
23. No report should be made for any breach of orders except in cases where asked to do so.
24. None should enter the office of the manager (R. K. Irani) of the Circle & Co. except with the manager's permission and his writing table should not be touched during his absence in his office. Adi is appointed as vice-manager.
25. Ears should be kept covered before going to bed either by putting in cotton or tying a piece of cloth.
26. Everyone must sit down while drinking, and plates should be removed after every meal by the members themselves.
27. Bathrooms should not be used as urinals.
28. Falling at the feet of Meher Baba is strictly prohibited.

The overpowering dominance of Baba's discipline was keenly felt by the *mandali*. "Baba's words and orders are to be followed *to the letter*. For instance, if one is washing his face, and has applied soap all over it, and if he is called just then, he must

repair to Baba at once in the same condition at the pain of a great storm. Similarly, if one is asked to stand up, he should remain so until further orders; or when ordered to sleep, one should try to do so where he is without going to his room. Then, besides the Seven Orders, there are hosts of unwritten but standing orders for following the commonest daily routine, all at certain fixed times, such as, sleeping, eating, playing, writing, going out for business, etc., etc. One feels as if there is hardly scope left to use one's own will-power, since almost everything is to be done under orders and with permission, and that, too, with a mechanical regularity and precision! Just a minute's chafe and the unfortunate member is sure to pass a bad hour." (June 15, 1922). "For the first time today, the element of physical labour is introduced into the term of our simple mental imprisonment in the Manzil. Imprisonment, because, despite all the physical comforts, the network of orders and instructions leave hardly a free breathing space in this commodious bungalow." (September 29, 1922).

The sense of being without free breathing space was rendered positively claustrophobic when Baba revealed gently but unmistakably through a series of incidents that he was omniscient—that he knew everything that any member wished, thought or did everywhere and at every moment. There was no escape. For example, for several days Baba put up a notice on the board that an impure action had been committed on the premises; then Baba put up the following two notices: "Unless the culprit confesses his fault concerning impure action within three days, he shall leave the bungalow;" "Only one day has remained in which to confess the fault concerning impure action; otherwise I leave the bungalow." "It was almost taken for granted that the whole affair was made up with some different object in view by Baba, when suddenly he confronted Mahboob with the guilt to the utter amazement of all. At first, Mahboob denied all knowledge; but Baba give him clear details about the particular part of the premises where the action was committed, the circumstances under which it happened, and even the third party outside the *mandali* concerned in the affair. It was as if Baba himself had a look at the incident, although when Mahboob made a clean breast of it, he admitted to have committed the action when Baba and the *mandali* were not in or near the premises." (December 6, 1922).

Sometimes Baba with exquisite tact, gentleness and love helped the *mandali* adhere to the rules. "I [Doctor Ghani] sat

by Baba chafing his hands, and as the time given to me was approaching near, I was at a loss to understand how to know whether it was 1:30 A.M. or not. I thought, if I don't go away at the given time, his order will be broken, and if I get up, his sleep will be disturbed. Such were the thoughts running in my mind when to my great relief and surprise, Baba moved in bed and opening up his eyes asked me to see what time it was. I got another surprise. It was exactly 1:30! When I informed this to Baba, he asked me to put out the lamp and go." (February 5, 1923).

At times Baba, when confronted with breaches of discipline, or even for no apparent reason at all, would become extremely angry and abusive, even physically, with the disciples. Baba gave an interesting explanation of both situations. 1) After subjecting Adi to a tirade of chastisement in front of the *mandali* for some breach of discipline, Baba explained. "When all had dispersed, Baba asked Adi not to feel for or brood over the humiliation he was subjected to in the presence of all. He said it was one of the ways of cleaning away the guilt of the guilty party by passing the person concerned in some such trying and exciting ordeal" (March 4, 1923). 2) Apparently referring to situations where he created a storm for no apparent reason, he said: "When a Master is in the most perfect and peaceful internal state, or that some internal work is nearing completion and success, there is sometimes an overflow of the internal state externally. The external outburst is the shadow of the internal perfect state and is quite the opposite, and thus takes the form of abusive language, beating, etc. But whoever receives these is a fortunate man since these abuses and beatings work a good deal of benefit for him, specially in external affairs." (January 31, 1923).

It is interesting to note that the threatened or stated punishment for breaches of discipline by the *mandali* was twofold—that Baba would punish himself by fasts, etc., and that Baba would deny the *mandali* his company for some time. One can so clearly see the master psychologist at work. Yet while the discipline and rules were all-pervading, leaving no choice as to the slightest detail, Baba paradoxically instituted regular meetings where all the *mandali* were to express their opinion and vote on Manzil activities: "When all were present upstairs today in the evening, Baba broached the subject of setting aside an hour or two daily for all the members to get together in the evening to discuss and decide various questions of the domestic as well as recreational life in the Manzil. All favoured the idea,

and some rough preliminary rules were formed for the conduct of business therein. First of all, after much discussion, the meeting was decided to be called a *Gutta* (tavern). Everyone from the *mandali* was decided as having the right to attend, take part and give votes equally in the proceedings of the Gutta. Doctor [Ghani] was selected as the secretary to note down and keep records of the proceedings, while Baba himself was declared to be the Chairman. Everyone was asked to take keen interest in the proceedings, and give one's own opinion freely without being led by other's words, leanings, and considerations. All were to speak one after the other, and with the permission of the chair to avoid the technical Gutta becoming one in the real sense of it, i.e. a place of chaotic hum-drum. To solicit permission to speak one should lift his hand upwards without making any sound, and to begin speaking only when the chair grants the permission! Thus the time was passed very interestingly today in witnessing the institution of local self-government being inaugurated in the autocratic atmosphere of the Manzil!" (January 3, 1923).

In April 1923 Baba ended the first phase of his training of the *mandali* with the closing of the Manzil and dispersal of the *mandali* to their homes for a month's vacation.

Ramjoo, while at home at Lonavla on his vacation noted the change, April 1, 1923: "It has long since been decided by Baba to leave the Manzil for good in a few days, and after Rustom's marriage which is to take place in the next month, to stay at Arangaon near Ahmednagar under quite changed conditions, with a limited number of members only, who will be willing to undergo the more difficult next term. Whatever be the future programme, the strict disciplinary period of staying in the Manzil under almost a strict routine, quite aloof from the external world was at an end, with the prospect of a very active and lively future. So much so that already, as per Doctor's pun on the name Arangaon, it is generally referred to as "Hyrangaon" (place of hardship) by the *mandali* on account of the hardships and difficulties that are predicted by Baba to fall to the lot of those who will be with him at the time. Hereafter members sent to their respective homes or out of Bombay, are to observe the following: Special Orders: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7; General Orders: 1, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19 and 25."

For those *mandali* that Baba did not call back for the next two phases, Baba's orders kept a tight clamp on the basic outlines of their lives, while leaving them free to make their own choices

as to details while living in the world. "Baba said that to be externally far away or to be nearby does not make any change in the spiritual working. So long as one followed and remained under his instructions, he was with him. I decided to stay with Baba as I preferred it under the circumstances; though I believe the mind of a Perfect Master to be universal and thus omnipresent." (May 7, 1923). For those *mandali* that were called back, who varied in number from four to over twenty at times, Baba began a period in which he severed them progressively from any ties to familiar environment, routine, caste, or upbringing until they came to live day by day under his orders, looking only to him for guidance and sustenance of every kind. From mid-April 1923 to January 1924 the *mandali* made four short stays at Arangaon fixing up the deserted army premises and doing physical labor beneath their caste status. They also made four train trips throughout north and central India, one boat trip, two major foot journeys carrying their own belongings and sleeping under the stars as well as two fairly extended stays in Bombay.

One of the foot journeys, namely from Ahmedabad to Navsari (July 1, 1923—July 6, 1923), is specially remarkable because it seems so suggestive of the New Life:

June 22, 1923

Final Meeting

A discussion took place this afternoon between Baba and the *mandali* when all were present. The following points were agreed to by all after careful consideration and mature deliberations:

1. That those who accompany Baba for touring on foot do so under any circumstances by their own free will and on their own responsibility. Further, as a proof of this, all have agreed to sign on a stamped paper to the effect.
2. All are agreed not to leave Baba under any circumstances before the tour ends, but have also agreed that whenever and wherever anyone or more is ordered to do so, they should leave for whatever place ordered to.
3. As Asthma persists to join the party, in spite of the repeated preference given to him by Baba, at his own responsibility and at any cost or risk, it is decided after a lengthy discussion that Asthma should accompany the *mandali*.
4. None of the *mandali* expect any supernatural acts from

Baba as help under any circumstances, even in case of passing away of one or more of the *mandali* as has been said by Baba to happen in the future. After noting Baba's explanation that while touring he will be in such a spiritual stage that he will be quite helpless and might have to suffer even at the hands of mere yogis and advanced souls both internally and externally as has been the case with Shri Maharaj, Swami Vivekananda and Ghaus-Ali-Shah.

Signed stamped agreements between Baba and the *mandali* reappear constantly. One day he gave a clue as to their meaning and effect: "When questioned about the *sanads* of *vilayat* (confirmation of a spiritual charge) in relation to Hazrat Ahmed Ali Saber, Baba said, 'That is one of the ways of giving charge externally. The last four months that I was with Maharaj at Sakori, I had to externally take the charge in writing. The stamped paper agreements written here by me, although not so very important as compared to the *sanads* of *vilayat*, is still not without meaning too.'" (February 8, 1923).

The last phase of the training period covered by Ramjoo's diary was initiated in January 1924 during a stay in Bombay. As already mentioned earlier in this introduction, at that time Baba announced that all his promises as to realization, advancement and experiences were off: "The sugar-coating of quick results was at last off the bitter pill of spiritual research." (January 20, 1924). No longer was the *mandali's* commitment for a definite term on explicit conditions, but "hereafter only those could keep company with Baba who were willing to surrender completely and indefinitely." (January 20, 1924). Since Baba emphasized that failure to meet the new conditionless conditions would not affect their spiritual advancement in any way, so long as they followed his instructions wherever they were, because of their spiritual connection with him from the past, it suggests that these new conditionless conditions were the necessary basis for any of the *mandali* to carry on as instruments for Baba's work. During this last phase there was a short trip to Persia, one month and a half of hard labor at Arangaon, one month's stay in Quetta, one week in Karachi, one week in Bombay and then most of the *mandali* were dispersed to be recalled in January 1925 when Baba began his First Great Stay at Meherabad.

This diary contains many fascinating discourses on the path and God, as well as vignettes of Baba's working, a veritable feast

for the discerning, well beyond the scope of this introduction. I found it very interesting, however, that Baba denoted only two orders as "spiritual orders": "Getting up at 4 A.M. and attending morning prayers from 5 A.M. to 6 A.M. Attending the places of worship every day according to respective religions, or carrying out other individual spiritual orders." (December 28, 1922). The specified morning prayers were:

Then between 5 to 6 A.M. all should engage themselves in repeating prayers according to their respective religions for some time such as *namaz* (Muslims), *kasti* (Parsis), *puja* (Hindus), etc., and pass the major portion of the time repeating the name of the Almighty; this too, according to the respective faiths, viz.: Allah, Yazdan, Ram, etc. But it is to be done mentally and while sitting in one fixed position. Although the repetition is to be carried on in the mind without moving the tongue or lips, the eyes should never be closed. This belongs to the line of study of yogis. With a spiritual aspirant there is no closing of the eyes, nose or mouth, and neither the external following of religious rituals in details. Once sitting in the position, one should stick to it throughout the period till the bell rings for breakfast at 6 A.M., without changing the place or position; and keep on repeating in the mind the Divine Name with a free heart, without thinking of time, etc.

Here, all were asked to inform him as to the name and position suitable to each of us respectively. The Muslim party naturally chose "Ya Allah," the Zoroastrians, "Yazdan," and the Hindus, "Ram." Almost all selected varying positions to sit as per individual point of comfort and ease. After hearing the respective decisions, Baba said all are to stick to their selected names and positions for ten months without change, and finally added, "This is my first spiritual instruction of its kind and therein fail not." (October 1, 1922).

Preeminently, however, the diary is a charming chronicle by a young man, 23 at its outset, describing simply and at Baba's direction the daily events in the first three years of Baba's Avatarhood. Ramjoo, named in accordance with the Muslim custom of so naming children born in the month of Ramadan, was born April 18, 1899 in Bombay. His mother died when he was two months old, so he was raised by his father and aunt. Perhaps because he was fearful of any harm coming to his only son, the father did not put Ramjoo in school until he was 12 years old and that stay lasted only one year. Shortly thereafter he

went into business; he had a cloth shop at the time he came to Baba. He was reared amidst strict Muslim orthodoxy and until coming under Baba's tutelage felt pity and contempt for all non-Muslims.

Despite his lack of formal education, Ramjoo was selected by Baba, not only to keep this diary, but to author "Shri Meher Baba—His Philosophy and Teachings" and *Sobs and Throbs*, forming the second part of this book, as well as to handle many legal affairs for Baba. Ramjoo wrote this diary in English. In order to preserve its charming quality, I have restricted editorial changes to the absolute minimum necessary to make it understandable, generally retaining idiomatic Indian English. Ramjoo, apparently for convenience rather than linguistic accuracy, sprinkled the diary with many untranslated Indian words. Adi K. Irani, Baba's long-time secretary, who was himself at the Manzil, has very kindly translated all these words and poetry. Only the English translation has been printed in the text, unless there was no exact English equivalent, in which case the Indian words and their translation are included. The diary is supplemented by a chronology, notes containing explanatory background material and a section giving brief biographical sketches of a number of the *mandali*, many of whom are not well known in the West.

Ira G. Deitrick

Walnut Creek, California
June 1978

Chronology

January 23, 1922—January 27, 1922. Baba and a few close ones stay with Munshi Abdur Rahim at Charni Road in Bombay.

January 27, 1922—May 21, 1922. Baba lives in small hut in Poona, Fergusson College Road.

May 9, 1922—May 19, 1922. Baba and *mandali* go to Sakori for Upasni Maharaj's blessing and stay a few days.

May 21, 1922—May 27, 1922. Baba and *mandali* (40) tramp on foot to Bombay.

May 27, 1922—June 7, 1922. Baba and *mandali* stay at Munshi's Charni Road house in Bombay.

June 7, 1922—April 19, 1923. Stay in Manzil, 167 Main Road, Dadar, Bombay.

August 6, 1922—August 7, 1922. *Mandali* visit Upasni Maharaj in Sakori.

Sept. 11, 1922—Sept. 20, 1922. Baba and a few *mandali* visit Ajmere.

Oct. 14, 1922—Oct. 16, 1922. Baba visits Sakori.

Oct. 20, 1922—Oct. 23, 1922. *Mandali* visit Maharaj (Sakori) and then Babajan (Poona).

April 1, 1923. Most *mandali* dispersed to their homes. April 12, 1923—April 13, 1923. Baba visits Kalyan.

April 20, 1923—April 30, 1923. Baba and a few *mandali* stay at depot in Ahmednagar.

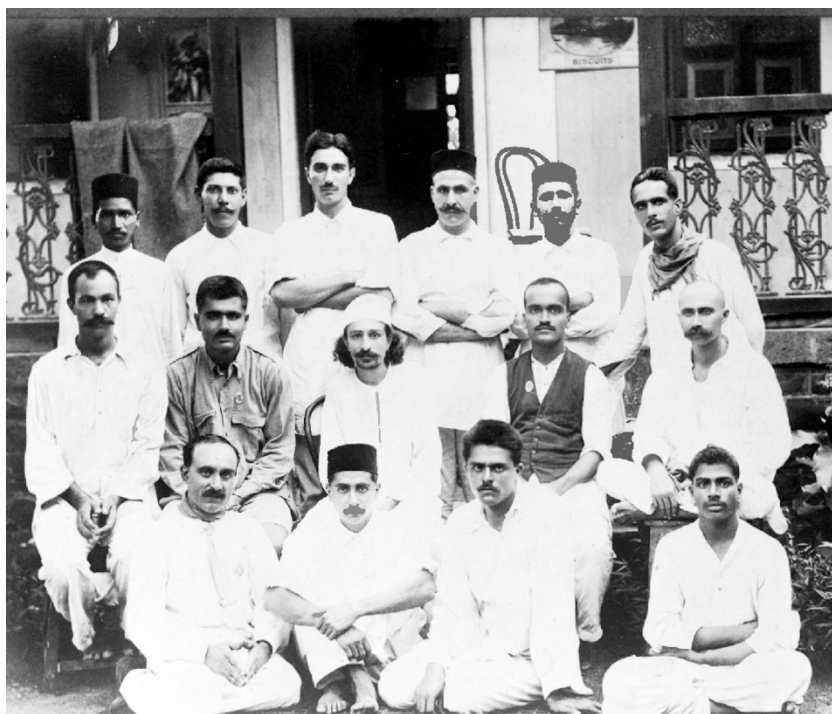
May 1, 1923—May 3, 1923. Baba and a few *mandali* visit Happy Valley.

May 4, 1923—May 24, 1923. Stay in Arangaon.

May 6, 1923. Many *mandali* recalled and join Baba at Arangaon.

- May 8, 1923—May 11, 1923. Baba and *mandali* in Ahmednagar for Rustom's wedding.
- May 11, 1923—May 13, 1923. Stay in travelers' shelter, Ahmednagar.
- May 13, 1923. Return to Arangaon.
- May 22, 1923. Baba finds snake in completed building.
- May 25, 1923—May 31, 1923. Train trip to Karachi via Agra (17 *mandali*).
- May 31, 1923—June 7, 1923. Stay in Karachi.
- June 8, 1923—June 25, 1923. Stay in Quetta.
- June 24, 1923. *Mandali* sign walking-tour stamped paper.
- June 25, 1923—June 27, 1923. Train trip to Ahmedabad.
- June 28, 1923—July 1, 1923. Stay in Ahmedabad.
- July 1, 1923—July 6, 1923. New-life-type foot journey from Ahmedabad to Navsari.
- July 7, 1923—July 9, 1923. Train trip to Nasik.
- July 9, 1923—July 12, 1923. Stay at Arangaon.
- July 13, 1923—August 16, 1923. One-month stay for Baba and a few *mandali* in outbuildings behind Manzil in Bombay.
- August 16, 1923—August 23, 1923. Stay at Lonavla, Doctor's and Ramjoo's hometown.
- August 23, 1923—August 30, 1923. Stay at Abdullahhai's in Poona.
- August 30, 1923—Sept. 7, 1923. Another stay in outbuildings behind Manzil.
- Sept. 7, 1923—October 19, 1923. One and one-half months' stay at Irani Mansions No. 6 in Bombay.
- October 19, 1923—Nov. 1, 1923. Foot journey from Bombay to Sakori.
- Nov. 1, 1923—Nov. 4, 1923. Journey to Ahmednagar.
- Nov. 4, 1923—Nov. 11, 1923. Stay at travelers' shelter in Ahmednagar.
- Nov. 11, 1923—Nov. 14, 1923. Train trip to Karachi via Sind Hyderabad.
- Nov. 15, 1923—Nov. 22, 1923. Stay in Karachi.
- Nov. 22, 1923—Nov. 24, 1923. Boat trip to Bombay.
- Nov. 24, 1923—Nov. 29, 1923. Stay at Lonavla.
- Nov. 29, 1923—Dec. 31, 1923. Baba, Gustadji and Behramji tramp around Sholapur and then stay in seclusion at Arangaon.
- Dec. 31, 1923—Feb. 21, 1924. Stay at Bharucha Building, Dadar, Bombay, planning Persia trip.
- Feb. 2, 1924. *Mandali* visit Shri Narayan Maharaj.

- Feb. 15, 1924. *Mandali* sign agreement on trip to Persia.
- Feb. 22, 1924—March 16, 1924. Board ship for Persia—return immediately—*mandali* dispersed—Baba and a few travel to Nepal border, Magar.
- March 16, 1924—March 25, 1924. Baba wanders alone near Itarsi.
- March 26, 1924—June 2, 1924. Baba and *mandali* undergoing labor yoga at Arangaon.
- June 2, 1924—June 9, 1924. Preparation and train trip to Quetta.
- June 9, 1924—July 16, 1924. Stay in Quetta—looking for permanent place in Quetta and Sukkur.
- July 17, 1924—July 24, 1924. Stay in Karachi.
- July 25, 1924—August 2, 1924. Stay at Irani Mansions No. 6 in Bombay, most *mandali* dispersed.
- August 2, 1924—August 30, 1924. Baba, Baily, Padri and Behramji on search for 5,000 pilgrims through Madras, Ooty, Calcutta, Dakshineshwar, Hardwar, Baroda, Ankleshwar.
- August 30, 1924—Sept. 1924. Stay at Irani Mansions No. 6, Bombay.
- Sept. 1924—October 1924. Baba, Baily, Behramji and Vajifdar on trip through Portuguese India.
- October 1924—January 1925. Alternating between Arangaon (November) and Bombay (December and January).
- January 25, 1925—October 1926. First Great Stay at Meherabad.



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MEHER BABA AND MANDALI AT MANZIL, 1922

Left to right, front row: Adi K. Irani, Ramjoo, Raghunath.

Middle row: Behramji, Rustom K. Irani, Meher Baba, Doctor Abdul Ghani, Gustadji.

Back row: Babu Cyclewalla, H. J. Vajifdar, Sarosh Irani, Baidul, Slamson, Asthma

Part 1

Manzil-e-Meem (Jan. 1922 — April 1923)

The Poona Hut

January 23, 1922

The Beginning of the End

SINCE the last few months I had some faint impression that Merwanseth (Meher Baba) is taken to be a divine personality to some extent in our circle of friends. As such, I had made some offhand attempts to solicit his blessings in my external affairs but could not succeed so far in having a direct talk with him, although, somehow, I used to come across him in almost every visit of his amongst my friends Doctor² and Usman in Bombay without being informed or invited.³ Last evening was the first time that my friend Usman directly invited me to accompany him to Bombay, to join in the party to Mandwa where they were going with Merwanseth for a pleasure trip. It was with great persuasions that I agreed, and came to Bombay with Usman this afternoon. As soon as the train steamed into Victoria Terminus we took a horse-drawn cab and drove straight to the docks. It seems we were just in time; as soon as we boarded the steam launch it weighed anchor.

We joined the party on the deck, including Merwanseth, Munshi,⁴ Dalvi, Latiff, Gustadji,⁵ Baily⁶ Doctor, Abdulla and singers. The party was seated in a group around baskets of sweets and other eatables. There was every air of a pleasure party in the atmosphere; yet I could not help being deeply impressed with something supernatural about Merwanseth's personality and movements. Very soon wheat bread and gram-powder cakes were distributed to all and a great justice done thereto amidst the pleasant surroundings of a calm sea and bright sunshine.

The First Explanation

After finishing with the meals, we all were just chit-chatting and cracking jokes, when suddenly Merwanseth started quite a new subject. Pointing to the panoramic view of Bombay with all its beautiful buildings, domes, towers and mill chimneys, he began to muse about the grandeur and greatness of Bombay. Almost all concurred with him that Bombay was really great. Then he suddenly asked all whether that which was seen was great (viz., Bombay) or the seer? A very lively discussion followed upon this, during which Merwanseth kept on adding silently some very suggestive points, creating a divine atmosphere. It was as if a new life was begun with wonderful ideas and thoughts flashing across in the mind.

After an hour or so the steam launch stopped at a distance from the shore, which we reached through small boats. From the shore the party started walking towards a bungalow which Mr. Dalvi had arranged for our stay. A few miles of brisk walk brought us to the small bungalow where most of us made ourselves comfortable. While some went out on the shore for strolling, etc., I thought it a good opportunity of offering my usual evening prayers unobserved. So I quietly retired to a corner behind some rocks and finished my prayers, quite unobserved by anybody, specially of the party.

Coincidence?

When I returned to the bungalow, the party seemed to be waiting for those of us who were out. Merwanseth seemed in an irritable mood and I heard him uttering these words: "Fancy keeping us waiting here! Some go for strolling and some for *praying*."

It may be a coincidence or a chance utterance about this hint of my having gone to prayers; but taking it all, with the general impression formed with a few hours close company and his magnetic personality, his "Babaship" got a close and firm hold over me.

After supper the singer began to play his *sitar*, over which he proved his good command. On the whole, the singing programme, too, proved very entertaining, so much so that Abdulla began to weep and dance to the music, while Latiff kept on asking Meher Baba to get some snakes to come from the surrounding jungle to dance against the music!

Without any further event we retired for the night, and thus it was for the first time that today, I met with Meher Baba as Meher Baba.

January 26, 1922

The Circle

The last two days and nights can well be termed the most pleasant and interesting of our life so far. The explanations and discussions by Baba on religions and spiritual points were simply engrossing. The indirect hints of Baba that he has a Circle of certain numbers of persons with whom he has connection since the day of beginning, and that this certain number of persons will in the near future get real Knowledge and Experience of Truth has set most of us guessing, guessing, guessing, as to the identity of this lucky number. Here was an ideal life painted before our imaginations, which under ordinary circumstances we dare not think upon, being almost beyond the grasp of ordinary human beings of the world at large.

Connection

Baba also said that it was one out of ten millions that reaches this Perfection after unimaginable hardships and privations. But the Perfect One can, in the twinkling of an eye, turn the worldly minds towards divinity, and the Master does it at the right moment for those with whom he has a connection. As an example, he said, supposing a man suddenly comes into great wealth. However kind and generous he may be, he will not make every beggar he comes across a partner in his happiness, but rather the few with whom he has had some intimate tie of friendship or relationship. For instance, this rich man, while passing a street in his costly car, sees a person in a very pitiable condition begging for food and clothes. He will just feel some pity and pass on, or at the most throw some coins at him. But if this same man comes across a less needy man who also happens to be his brother lost to him years ago, then what will happen? In spite of his important and urgent engagements, and without this second beggar having looked at or asked of him anything, he will certainly stop his car and, whether the beggar wants it or not, bundle him in and take him home and bring him to his own level of happiness. Similarly, Baba said, "In spiritual affairs, too, one must have a connection with the Master to receive the

highest state of existence. It was this connection with Babajan that gave me the Experience in a second, without any striving or longing for it; and it is the connection again that will make me share this infinite treasure among twelve of my Circle in the near future."

Another Coincidence?

In the evening, when all of us were seated round Baba at Charni Road,⁷ he asked us one by one as to our respective external affairs, if there was any trouble or obstacles in our way. This was just the moment I had been waiting for, since the last few months, of placing my external difficulties before Baba; but the recent spiritual talks had created a desire of remaining as much with Baba as possible, and hence I thought it would be better if Baba did not ask me about my affairs just then. Strange enough, mine came the last turn, and Baba didn't ask me anything. Upon this, Usman broached my subject, but Baba said, "I will see about him tomorrow since he is coming with us to Poona," and thus I could see that Baba acted just as I was thinking in my mind at the time.

January 27, 1922

The Circle's Shadow

It is said that after some time, Baba will come and stay in Bombay with the *mandali* (close disciples). In the meanwhile he will pass some time in a hut in Poona. Accordingly, Baba, Doctor, Gustadji and Baily started from Bombay by 3:15 afternoon passenger train for Poona, while I joined them on my way to Lonavla. Again in the train Baba opened the subject of the Circle. Although he said 12 were all the important members of the Circle, yet the Circle had really 14 members, while there were 14 more as shadows of the original 14; thus in all, there were 28 in the Circle. The "originals," he said, will become just like the Master himself, and so will get one with God, while the "shadows" will only see God. Yet even seeing God was not a trifling matter.

Out of thousands of yogis and advanced souls who strive for Truth on their own initiative without the guidance of a realized Master, a very, very few reach the stage of seeing God, while to become one with the Oneness, it is impossible without the grace of the Guru.

Trapped

After some more such explanations, Baba asked me if I wanted to follow him, and added that in that case, I will have to do just what he says, irrespective of any mental or physical considerations, and so I should answer him very carefully.

Whatever hesitation I felt at being bound over body and soul by a sacred promise, the recent atmosphere proved too tempting, and I agreed to obey Baba in all affairs!

The First Order

Thereupon, Baba asked me to inform him of all my affairs and situations. Upon learning of my public activities in connection with the Khilafat and Swaraj movements,⁸ Baba asked me not to take any more share in these movements, and to resign from the posts I had been holding in the Khilafat Committee immediately, saying this was his first order, and after that he will give me further instructions for the future adjustments of my affairs. At about 8:15 the train reached Lonavla where I got down, while the rest of the party proceeded to Poona.

February 18, 1922

The Hut

Since coming to Poona on the 27th of January, Baba has got a hut set up in a secluded farm near Chatarsinghji along the Fergusson College Road and is putting up there. A large number of people have already begun to come every day to receive Baba's blessing. Specially on Sundays, the quiet locality of the hut buzzes with life and merriment when most of the Bombay party including Gustadji, Doctor, Syedsahib, Latiff and myself come from Bombay, while the Kasba party under Patel⁹ with Arjun,¹⁰ Kondiram, Syedsahib Jamadar, Chowdhary, Vithal also assemble there, presenting a scene like a small gathering at the tomb of a saint. The hut itself, being just six or seven feet in length, half that size in breadth and made of grass and bamboo, like a small tent, is only used by Baba himself for the night. In the daytime generally, all gather round Baba under the shade of a tree near the hut.

The time is mostly passed in singing devotional songs and love poems, an occasional game of *gili-danda* or *atya-patya* and

sometimes explanation about divine subjects. In the night only Baily remains by Baba.

Baba's Birthday

Today being Baba's birthday, suitable celebrations have been arranged at Kasba Peth in Patel's house over the toddy house,¹¹ while Baba has also come from the hut to stay the night there. After supper, the *sitar* master from Bombay once again gave us a treat of his beautiful *sitar* playing and suitable singing. The entertainment lasted for a considerable time. It ended after all repeated Shri Maharaj's *arti* (song of dedication) to the accompaniment of the *sitar*.

February 25, 1922

Disobedience Punished

While some of us were sitting about Baba near the hut at about ten in the morning, Doctor was marked to have come from Bombay. He left the carriage on the road and came walking through the adjoining fields with a heavy-looking basket of fruits and sweets on his shoulder and a broad smile on his face. Quite unexpectedly Baba seemed to be very upset, and he took Doctor right and left for coming to Poona without permission! So much so that the basket Doctor has brought from Bombay was thrown down the well nearby, with all its fine contents! After some time the atmosphere got cooled down, when Doctor related that as per the present custom, he first went to Babajan at Charbawdi¹² before coming here to the hut. There Babajan gave him a sound hammering all over his face and head by keeping hold of his throat with one hand and at the same time telling him to go away. Now as soon as he escapes from Babajan, thinking of getting a nice welcome from Meher Baba, here too he got the threat of his life. But this impressed us very much as something in common between Meher Baba and Babajan, and the necessity of following Baba's orders to the letter.

March 11, 1922

The Strange Cremation

Today *Holi*¹³ was observed at the hut. In the evening Baba brought big pieces of firewood himself in a small bullock cart. A fire was duly lighted in the night and devotional songs were

sung when the Kasba party was present in full strength. *Sitar* and drums were also burned in the fire and a grave made thereof.

March 25, 1922

A Cycle is Drowned

Since some time Latiff's new cycle has been, under Baba's instructions, offered in raffle. The numbers having been almost taken up, the drawing is to be held today. Baba and the whole *mandali* have come to Chinchwad for a pleasure party, as well as to go through the drawing of the cycle lottery. In the evening the drawing is finished up and Khodoo gets the cycle. In return for this new cycle Khodoo's old cycle is taken away from him. Under Baba's instructions it is broken into pieces with big stones and then thrown into a well nearby by the *mandali*!

Some time after the cycle-drowning, Baba asked Khodoo if he felt for his cycle and its going down into the well. He said not at all, but added he is willing to follow the cycle into the well if ordered by Baba. Afterwards we came to know from Baily that just at the time the cycle was smashed and thrown in the well at Chinchwad he very narrowly missed being himself drowned in a well near the hut.

This coincidence sheds some understanding over the strange incident of throwing away the cycle in a well!

April 1, 1922

Nightmare

To enable me to stay with him in Bombay, Baba has asked me to dispose of my shop at Lonavla and be quite free. Once, while going to the hut from Kasba Peth, Baba told me not to be anxious about any matters. Besides the spiritual future, he said, he will also see that my external affairs do not suffer. Although, he added in a very impressive and ringing tone, this external side of affairs is merely imagination and not even a dream, but a dream into a dream. Well, at present this dream is becoming almost a nightmare. In spite of my best efforts, I can find no buyer for the shop. Hence the latest order for me, since the last few days, is to say, "My shop is not yet sold," to anybody and everybody I meet in the street with whom I have to talk! Well, this means I have got to repeat the blessed sentence if I go to a funeral, marriage, mosque or bazaar! It is the most awkward situation of my life. My sudden resignations from public

life, the talk of disposing of the present business, and this recent order all have made me feel the greatest fool that ever graced this lovely Lonavla. It is only for a very important matter that I ever go out of the house nowadays for the fear of having to repeat the dreadful words, "My shop is not yet sold." How I wish I never had a shop! Well, to end the matter soon, I suggested to Baba perhaps I could dispose of the things through lottery! Baba readily allowed me to do so, and cancelled the order of repeating those terrible words. Little did I know at the time that this relief was nothing short of falling into the fire from the frying pan!

April 7, 1922

From the Frying Pan into the Fire

The shop lottery business has proved more awkward than the mere repeating of those words! In the former case I could somehow save my face; as once, when I was obliged to go to a relation's funeral, the chief mourner unfortunately was the first I came across! Now that phrase, "My shop is not yet sold," was grating in my ears and the funeral was waiting before my eyes, and the chief mourner was staring at me, expecting some excuse for not coming earlier! With one deep breath I came by him and said, "My shop is not yet sold," and the consequent engagement forced me to be late and so I was sorry, etc., etc., and thus escaped from a tight corner. But this lottery business is simply dreadful. There is no escape in soliciting favours from friends and relatives whom I had not seen for years, as Baba insisted that I should finish the matter soon and at least get half the numbers filled in myself.

April 20, 1922

Gustadji

Munshi, Doctor, Latiff, myself and Gustadji went to Shivapur today for the gathering at Kamarali Darvesh's tomb. After taking the usual baths in the natural springs, in which Gustadji also participated, we went for the Friday prayers.

After the prayers, we had our meals, while Gustadji had only a glass of cooled milk, he being a vegetarian and the food brought being chiefly meat. Nowadays, Baba pays much attention to Gustadji. Every one of the *mandali* is impressed upon to pay due

respect to Gustadji through various means. For example, some time back, Baba got Gustadji's photo fixed in the center of his hut with garlands around it, saying if Gustadji is garlanded, it amounts to himself being garlanded.

While talking about the Circle, in a metaphor Baba said, "I am the driver, Gustadji is the engineer, Sadashiv is the couplings between engine and the carriages, Behramji¹⁴ is the guard and Baily is the rail, while the rest of the members are different carriages of different classes according to respective connections with me."

May 1, 1922

Ready

It is being arranged for Baba and *mandali* to go to Sakori for Upasni Maharaj's birthday next week, and after that, to go to Bombay on foot. Most of the *mandali* are ready. My shop has also been disposed of, the main subscribers being the *mandali*. Babu Cyclewala¹⁵ has also fired off his cycle shop and is ready for the march.

May 6, 1922

The First to Retreat

It was understood of late that Usman seems to be on the verge of a revolt against Baba, somehow his faith having got a shake.

Baba wrote a letter to Usman to come to Poona and see him, and also offered him any supernatural phenomenon by way of a test for his satisfaction. But the following reply is received today and already marks the falling of the first leaf:

Bombay 5th May '22

Dear Merwanseth,

Yours to hand. You called me there, but sorry I can't come. Nothing more to pen except my best salaams to you and all.

Yours Sincerely
(Sd.) S.M. Usman

P.S. As per your words regarding your test, I should like to add that I neither want to test you, nor anyone from the company should test me. (Sd.) S.M.U.

May 9, 1922

A Sudden Illness?

Baba and party are to start to Sakori this evening by the 4:30 train via Dhond.

Since this afternoon all have begun to gather at Sadashiv's place in Kasba Peth.

While Baba is singing to us and playing the drum I suddenly feel feverish. After some time the fever is beginning to rise at a rapid pace and I feel streaks of chill flash across my body. Marking me in a trembling and dazed condition, Baba called me near him, and inquired the reason of my so doing. I said, I can't make it out; just a few minutes ago I was quite healthy and now I suddenly find chill and fever. Doctor felt my pulse and said I had fever, thereupon Baba made me lie down in a corner of the room well wrapped up in a blanket until further orders.

The Strange Delirium

After some time the chill and cold ceased; but I began to feel very hot, probably the fever was increasing; and so the subsequent experience I passed through was a delirium state. However, since it was peculiarly strange, I would like to narrate it in detail. Now the heat kept increasing, so much so that I began to get alarmed, and my head also got in a dazed condition. After some time I did not feel anything about the fever, but I began to find breathing a difficult thing. By and by I felt I was being suffocated. I felt at times like throwing away the blanket to ease my breathing, but the thought of Baba's order again checked me. Now I was so alarmed that I was almost out of my senses, but for Baba's singing, which I could clearly hear, every syllable of it, the poem being, "Of what consequence is *fana* (annihilation of lower self) or *baqa* (abiding in God) to a man who is a confirmed lover of the Master. At his choice he goes to the upper house (God consciousness) or comes down to the lower house (man consciousness)."

A Supposed Death

I suddenly got the idea I was dying! Unless I threw away the blanket I felt I would die. But to do so would be breaking his order. Conflicting emotions began to surge round in my mind.

The picture of my wife and relatives on one side and Baba and his singing on the other hand put me in a dilemma. At last I decided to remain as I was, wrapped up in the blanket resigned to my fate. I began to feel my toes becoming lifeless and so gradually the lifelessness began to creep up. Tears began to flow freely from my eyes, when I felt the part of my body below the waist lifeless! This lifelessness kept on creeping up. Now my alarm knew no bounds, I simply felt lifeless save for my eyes which, too, with a jerk and a shock . . . and I was dead!

Queer Illusions

Dead and alive both at a time! This was the peculiar feeling I felt. I could hear preparations on foot for my funeral and telegrams sent to my relatives about my death. This rather pained me, but on the whole now, I did not feel any physical pain or discomfort. The blanket was taken away and I was made to sit, but I could not help feeling two existences: one, the dead body for which funeral preparations were going on, on a grand scale, and the other, being lovingly treated and patted by Baba. I was given a drink and then asked by Baba to take a seat in a carriage with Baily. While descending the stairs of Patel's house I felt I was following my own coffin. When we came to the station, Baba asked me to get down from the carriage, and while I was doing so, he went in the station with some of the *mandali*. Not finding him near me, I refused to budge an inch from where I stood, in spite of Baily, Asar and some others' entreaties to me to at least come out of the way of the surrounding carriages, if I did not wish to enter the platforms. I just stood where I was sandwiched between so many carriages and victorias. Thinking myself dead at first, I did not feel afraid of the carriages; but when I found myself dangerously near their wheels, I had a queer feeling that I would be crushed, and again *get alive*, so I began to call repeatedly "Meher Baba" at the top of my voice to avoid the shock of becoming alive! At last, to my great relief Baba came back to where I was standing, and led me on the platform where I carefully sat very near him. Here I felt that thousands of persons had come to pay respects to my corpse and the platform was overcrowded. Even a military guard of honour was drawn prominently for the last honour! And at the same time I felt amongst the *mandali* going to Sakori! When the Raichur Passenger steamed into Poona platform, we all got in. Baba asked me to lie down quietly on a bench and added,

"Stop your mental films." I was gradually beginning to feel alright in every sense, seeing, hearing and thinking, but for the fact that I was dead and to become alive again I would have to undergo the same shock and alarm I felt while dying this afternoon. To avoid this shock and alarm, I thought it would be better if I remained "dead" as I was. When the train reached Dhond, I began to feel more sense and for the first time I felt doubt about my "death."

Finding Khak¹⁶ alone I approached him and asked him very pleadingly if he would oblige me. Thinking me to have come to my senses, he said, "Yes, go on, what do you want?" "Then will you tell me truly whether I am dead or alive?" I asked. Khak simply laughed and advised me to sleep. Almost all were laughing and cracking jokes about my strange behaviour and the more I was getting nonplussed.

May 10, 1922

Sakori

After having a good sleep in the train, I woke up quite my old self again. There was no longer any dual existence feeling, and I simply felt my experience yesterday to be a mere hallucination—although this much is true, that I had a strong attack of fever and consequently felt weak and thirsty. Baba made me sit in a carriage with Khak, Masaji and family, while the rest of the *mandali* started walking from Chitali station to Sakori. About eleven o'clock we all reached Sakori for the first time.

Shri Upasni Maharaj

After some time, all of us went for Maharaj's blessing. We found him just outside his hut, standing with a piece of gunny cloth held about his person. Although I had some idea of his personality from the photos I had seen, I was not prepared for so much magnetism and attraction about him. From the flowers presented by the *mandali* Maharaj picked up some champa tree flowers and distributed one to each of us and said, "May you realize God soon."

May 14, 1922

Maharaj's Birthday

The last four days were very engaging, particularly the day on which Maharaj's birthday was observed. Devotional songs,

worship processions by lifted chair and feeding the poor were the order of the day. During these days, Shri Maharaj granted lengthy interviews specially to the *mandali*, when he also explained to the *mandali* in a fascinating and loving tone divine subjects.

A Mandate from Maharaj

Once while explaining to us the divine subject, Maharaj came upon Meher Baba's name, and then most solemnly addressing us said: "You listen to me most carefully what I say. I have given the key of whatever I have to Merwan, and now you people stick to him and do as he instructs you. By God's grace, you will soon reach the goal."

The *mandali* left Sakori for Poona at about 9:30 A.M. while Baba remained here to follow us later on.

May 19, 1922

Baba Returns from Sakori

Baba came back from Sakori this evening. Arrangements for engaging a bungalow in Andheri for the *mandali* and Baba's stay in Bombay is already in progress. In a couple of days we are to start for Bombay on foot.

Poona to Bombay on Foot

May 21, 1922

Good-bye to the Hut

BABA and *mandali* came to the hut tonight at about 10:30 P.M. by way of a last visit to the site where Meher Baba came out in public as such for the first time since his enlightenment through Babajan. It can again be said to be the cradle of the *mandali's* formation too. Hence, it was meet that before starting from Poona we should come to the place where so many happy and instructive hours of our lives were passed.

After taking away Gustadji's photo, we came back to Kasba Peth and began preparing for the march. The beddings and other necessities were, however, packed in a small bullock cart specially procured for the purpose.

Iron Discipline

Doctor, Adi¹⁷ and Slamson¹⁸ quietly slipped away to a hotel nearby, and refreshed themselves with bread, cream and tea. Somehow, Baba got wind of their selfish treat, and they were taken right and left. Although there was no definite contravention of his orders, Baba seemed to be greatly upset.¹⁹ At first, he asked Doctor, Adi and Slamson to cut out, and when they were on the point of backing out with some hesitation, Baba called them back and allowed them to remain in the *mandali*. After forbidding Adi and Slamson to have any connection, he advised all to be very careful in all matters while with him. This demonstration has created quite a new atmosphere of responsibility and seriousness amongst the *mandali*.

May 22, 1922

Chinchwad

In the early hours at about 2 A.M. we all started and first went to Charbawdi where, excepting Baba and Baily who kept at a distance, the rest of us went to Babajan and paid our respects. From here, we started direct towards the Bombay-Poona road. Being the first day, and in the early hours of darkness, we could make but a very slow progress, and hence after four hours walk we reached Chinchwad. Here Marjoon had arranged for our halt in the big stone bungalow just opposite to the Chinchwad railway station. Not having slept overnight, many were marked to be unsteady while walking. Behramji, who walked beside me, would actually take a nap while walking, as it was often that he would lurch against me with half-closed eyes and bump the *sitar* he carried in his hands against my head. Good strong tea was prepared and was distributed with some biscuits to the *mandali*. After some rest and refreshment, we started again on our tramp. Patel and a couple of others were sent to Talegaon by train, being badly shaken up already. This latter part of the day's tramp proved very trying owing to great heat and the blazing sunshine.

Talegaon-Dhabade

At about 2 P.M. we passed the village of Khind and came on the outskirts of Talegaon. Here a group of big, shady trees was selected by Baba for our encampment. The last mile or two can well be said to have been covered by most of us dragging and shuffling our legs through mere will-power. It was almost one hour after Baba, Sarosh²⁰ and myself arrived that the rest of the *mandali* came trudging one after the other. Doctor was the most done-up—having got a raging fever—to whom a strong dose of quinine was given by Baba.

May 23, 1922

Kamshet

After taking the much needed rest and sleep overnight under the shady trees, we again started from Talegaon this morning at 5 A.M. It was an easy tramp of a few hours that brought us in good spirits to Kamshet at about 9 A.M. Here Abdul Tayeb

of Lonavla, with the previous permission of Baba, had brought in his car a lot of bread, butter and jam. This made an excellent breakfast together with the fine tea which was also made by Abdul Tayeb.

After taking the breakfast in the travellers' shelter near the station we came to a cluster of trees along the railway line, just a furlong off from the town, and put up there for the day.

May 24, 1922

Khandala

Again at 5 A.M. this morning, we started from Kamshet for Khandala. The early hour walking was very pleasant amidst the hills, excepting for Baba himself who had a very bad pain in one of his ankles, which was clearly visible to have gone pink and yellow through pus and inflammation. Yet for all that, Baba kept on leading the party briskly, and we reached the outskirts of Lonavla town by 8 o'clock.

Tea was brought from the town and after having the same, we proceeded to Khandala which we reached after another hour. Syedsahib Jamadar, who some time back was in the local police force, arranged for our stay in the shady compound of the local temple, beautifully situated along the picturesque bank. Some big vessels were procured from the town and Masaji prepared a *dal* and rice dish. For the first time we got a square meal today since leaving Poona! Masaji seems to have used his best skill in cookery as the *dal* (split pulse) and rice was overeaten by almost all. This was an ideal encampment beside the towering hills and pretty surroundings. Khandala is so well known for its refreshing and cool climate, specially in the month of May. It is therefore decided to stay here up till tomorrow afternoon.

In the evening a game of *iti-danda*²¹ was played for some time, and after supper we retired for the night in the best of spirits.

May 25, 1922

Spoilt Soles

Although generally we all got refreshed for the onward march, yet most of us had blisters by now on the soles of our feet which would not permit the use of ordinary foot wear. Forethinking this possibility, Baba had asked Baily, who was sent to Bombay

the other day, to bring some light canvas shoes, which he did bring on his return today. Those shoes were distributed among those who had their soles badly punctured with blisters. It was at about 5 P.M. that we left Khandala and began our march towards Khapoli. A one-mile walk from Khandala brought us to the top of the Bhore Ghat proper. From here, the bullock cart began to give us trouble. The sharp decline was too much for the sturdy but small bullock to manage the slipping wheels. We tied a piece of wood by way of a brake against the wheels. Yet we had to lend a hand on the steep gradients.

Syedsahib Jamadar and Chowdhary were suddenly found to have disappeared from the *mandali*, just as we passed under the greatest arch in India forming the viaduct overhead for the railway lines near the reversing station. Baba became very upset at the disappearance. A search was made for the pair, but to no purpose! It was presumed they had dived in the hills through short cuts, and so we continued our tramp through the winding and crooked road round the hills. About sunset, we reached Khapoli and found the pair of absconders safe there. The subsequent lecture they received might have taken away the little advantage they enjoyed by coming through the short cuts. Doctor tried to arrange for our stay at Mr. Abdurrezak's place, but Baba eventually selected a spot under a tree far out of the village proper and along the banks of the water flowing from the Tata Power House. Being Thursday, Maharaj's *arti* was recited here; after that the tea and mangoes brought by Mr. Abdurrezak were distributed amongst the *mandali*.

The Night March

At 9 P.M. we again started from Khapoli towards the village Chowk with lighted lamps in the dark but starry night. Poor Asthma's²² feet became quite out of order by now. It was the funniest sight to see him still trying to walk on those parts of his soles that were free from blisters. It seemed as if he were trying to master the art of dancing! Seeing this, Baba made him sit in the bullock cart with a few more who were in the same sorry plight. Our occasional marching tunes, such as, "Master Upasni, my mother, I know he has realized God," etc., repeated collectively, sounded and resounded in the still air of the night in echoes. The rest at Khandala had to be paid back with interest by the night march of about 20 miles!

Chowk

To the great surprise of the Chowk residents we marched through the village at about 3 o'clock in the night. At first we were taken for robbers by the half-sleepy villagers and were challenged, but upon close inspection, the few people that had come out of their houses could see that we looked more like having been robbed than robbers! We were directed to some suitable sites for our encampment further along the road. It was no time for site-selection. To lie down anywhere on solid earth was the foremost thought with most of us, owing to heavy drooping eyes, and legs on the verge of collapse. Baba picked at random a certain site in the darkness, an exact idea about which could not be had in the dim light of the hand lamps. As soon as we could spread our scanty beddings, we drifted into that something called sound sleep.

When we woke up, the sunshine was freely playing over us, its hot rays kissing the bare parts of our body to our great discomfiture. But we never expected the present site to be so very suitable! There was a huge tree sufficient to protect the *mandali* with its shade, while a good water well was nearby and the general surroundings the best under the circumstances.

After taking grub and rest we started for Panvel at about 4 P.M. By sunset, we had covered half the distance.

The remaining portion of our tramp towards Panvel was again trudged in the dark of the night with the help of the lanterns. Nearing our destination, a peak of a hill was seen to have caught fire and the burning circle of light thereon looked very pretty and attractive.

About 9 o'clock in the night, we reached Panvel, and put up at the travellers' shelter where we soon retired for sleep.

May 27, 1922

Tramp Ends

To the surprise of all, Baba suddenly declared today our tramp to have come to an end! Having reached Panvel where the sea touches the land, Baba said the limit is reached and now we will proceed to Bombay in a motor lorry.

Accordingly a big lorry was arranged, and after taking meals we started for Bombay. At Mumbra, a small wayside tea shop, Baba gave the party a jolly good treat of tea, sweets, aerated

waters, etc., as suited our respective tastes. Even cigarettes were provided to Khak and Asar.

Bombay

About 4 P.M. we entered this great city and drove straight to Abdur Rehman Baba's shrine.²³ All were asked to go and pay our respects at the shrine while Baba remained in the car. After returning to the lorry, I marked Baba lying in the bottom of the car flat on his stomach in the manner a Hindu bows to a master, with his head towards the shrine. From here we drove straight to Charni Road at Munshi's quarters where we are to remain as guests pending the arrangement of a suitable bungalow. And thus, in spite of walking, eating and sleeping irregularly with so many people of different temperaments and physiques, the tramp was concluded quite in order and without any mishap!

May 29, 1922

Miniature Prayer Festival

All were roused at 4 o'clock this morning by Baba and immediately a record of some verses from the Koran was started on the gramophone under his instructions. A general holiday atmosphere is prevailing all over the place! A big and fine tent has been temporarily stretched over the open space opposite the quarters for the Muslim festival prayers to take place here. Munshi has also arranged for an Imam to conduct the prayers.

After bath and a change of linen, which everyone of the *mandali* takes and does, the Muslim members joined the praying party in the tent while Baba and the rest sat round the same watching the proceedings. Besides ourselves, many Muslims in the Back Bay work staff had joined us, and the congregation looked like our own small Muslim prayer festival. After the prayers, all paid their respects to Baba, and then simply fell all over the vegetarian, but assorted and tasty, dishes prepared by Syedsahib.

The auspicious day terminated throughout amidst amusement and laughter.

Early Days in the Manzil

June 7, 1922

Headquarters

THE last week was passed very busily. It took about three or four days of vigilant searching on all sides of Bombay for a suitable bungalow, then at last No. 167 on the Main Road at Dadar, near the G.I.P. railway station, was selected. It took two days more to make the landlord come to reasonable terms. When this was concluded, the work of necessary partitions in the halls and big bedrooms of the bungalow was begun under Slamson's supervision. Out of the two big central halls and four side rooms, thirteen rooms of about 8' x 8' have been made through gunny bags fixed against wood frames in an orderly and proportionate way. The big side room on the north with the stairs for the top floor has been left as it is, without any partitions, as a dining room.

On the top floor there is already a small room which is set aside for Baba and Gustadji, while another small space is partitioned off, forming small rooms for Sadashiv Patel and Behramji, and the remaining space is left open as a big hall for meetings and ceremonies. It is a very commodious and airy place having a small compound of its own, with considerable open space in the rear. Besides this main building, the kitchen and latrines have separate buildings on the north and a separate small cottage on the south in the back compound. All the arrangements being ready, Baba and party have come to stay here today. The first thing discussed is about the name to be given to the bungalow. After some suggestions and discussions, Baba's selection is approved by all, and Manzil-e-Meem²⁴ is the name given to the

place. Thereafter, Baba distributed a room each to a pair from the *mandali*. The selection of roommates was made by Baba of his own accord, without taking the opinion of the parties concerned themselves, on what possible principles he alone is knowing. My lot was cast with Slamson, in spite of our having nothing common between us by way of religion or regard.

The Seven Commandments

A couple of days ago, while at Charni Road, Doctor had, under Baba's instructions, drawn the following orders, which Baba enjoined upon all to observe every one of them very carefully and strictly from today, and which are as follows:

The Seven Special Orders!

- 1) To follow to the letter the spiritual instructions given by me.
- 2) To keep or break any special connection with one, or more than one, from the company, or otherwise, that I order.
- 3) To totally abstain for twelve months from intoxicating drinks or substances, as well as sexual intercourse, except when allowed with legal wives.
- 4) To eat, drink and dress according to the residence system. To avoid fish, flesh and eggs under any circumstances.
- 5) To be present in the bungalow premises from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M., barring accidents and mishaps.
- 6) To follow faithfully the external duty given to each.
- 7) Under no circumstances to give up my company even if you find the whole world turned against me, except when ordered to do so.

N.B. If any of the above seven orders is intentionally broken by anyone who binds himself to my orders, I shall lock myself up in my room alone, avoiding completely all food, drink, and company, which please note.

Order No. 2 can be explained by Adi's example. Long before this particular rule had been formulated for all, Adi has been prohibited to have any connection with Slamson, and since recently, he has also been ordered to have nothing to do with Asar too, which means he is not to talk, touch, sign or even intentionally *look* at them until further orders! Of course, this

is no reflection of any kind on the parties concerned, but the order is all the more an enigma, no doubt. The most noteworthy point is the punishment for breaking the orders! Instead of the guilty party being taken to task, Baba says, in case of such offence, he will lock himself up without food, water and company; that means, he will suffer himself, which speaks volumes if thought upon.

A Muslim festival was held in the evening by way of the opening ceremony when a large number of Muslims attended.

June 15, 1922

The Life in the Manzil

By now, most of the *mandali* are engaged on different jobs in government or private offices and workshops for the daytime, as those who go out have been strictly enjoined to be careful of order No. 5, i.e., to be present in the bungalow premises before seven sharp in the evening.

Among those left in the Manzil, Khak and Asar are occupied in compiling Upasni Maharaj's biography in Urdu. Masaji has got the kitchen department which he manages excellently for the general *mandali* while Chowdhary cooks separately for the Hindus. A few others have been given several domestic duties, while some arrangement is in progress to provide suitable occupations for the remaining handful.

The Food

As cooked by Masaji's masterful hands with a liberal supply of clarified butter and other first-class costly ingredients and fresh vegetables, the food did not make those of us, who have only become vegetarians recently, feel much the absence of our almost cradle food, meat. The programme is as follows:

Breakfast Bread, butter and fresh tea in abundance.

Dinner Dal-rice and a vegetable dish.

Tea

Supper Bread and another fresh dish of vegetables.

The *dal* and vegetable dishes are daily prepared in varieties. Mosquito nets have been provided to each of the members over our respective beddings. Besides these eating and sleeping facilities, there is an occasional joy-ride in taxis, a cinema show, a drama, or to use Sarosh's language, some like desserts with the

afternoon tea. A monthly remittance as per respective needs to the families of most of the *mandali* has been fixed up to be sent regularly, irrespective of whether the party concerned is working or not. And accordingly, such remittances have been sent today for the first time to the respective addresses.

Another Side of the Shield

But—and it is a very big one at that—in spite of it all, the situation and atmosphere is far from pleasant! Baba's words and orders are to be followed *to the letter*. For instance, if one is washing his face, and has applied soap all over it, and if he is called just then, he must repair to Baba at once in the same condition at the pain of a great storm. Similarly, if one is asked to stand up, he should remain so until further orders; or when ordered to sleep, one should try to do so where he is without going to his room. Then, besides the Seven Orders, there are hosts of unwritten but standing orders for following the commonest daily routine (see December 28, 1922), all at certain fixed times, such as, sleeping, eating, playing, writing, going out for business, etc., etc. One feels as if there is hardly scope left to use one's own will-power, since almost everything is to be done under orders and with permission, and that, too, with a mechanical regularity and precision! Just a minute's chafe and the unfortunate member is sure to pass a bad hour. The general orders include instructions not to read or write anything, or talk with or see friends without permission. Which means while passing in a tram, one cannot read a sign-board; or if unluckily a friend were to be encountered, one could not talk with him.

The Climax

It would not be out of place to recall an incident in this connection. While coming from his garage the other day, Sarosh met a friend in the local train. The friend, being his school chum, greeted Sarosh with great enthusiasm. But lo! there was no reply from Sarosh. On the contrary he turned away his face. The friend at first thought he had made a mistake, but after re-examining Sarosh's features closely, he blurted out, "Sarosh! Why? What's the matter with you?" Still not getting any reply, he began to express sorrow and even wept at the thought that his friend had gone stark mad!

July 2, 1922

The Supernatural

Being Sunday, the whole of the *mandali* is indoors. In the afternoon, we all go to Bandra headed by Baba, and play some exciting games of *iti-danda* on the seashore. Coming to Bandra reminds of a strange incident. Since coming to stay in the Manzil, Baba does not give interviews to the public; yet an exception is made sometimes in special cases. Such was the case when Professor Sayani came to see Baba once in the afternoon.

While sitting near Baba and talking formalities, Baba all of a sudden told the professor that "nowadays, I am putting a Turkish cap on my head when I go out." Then turning round towards the *mandali* he asked, "Is it not the fact?" Of course all corroborated Baba, as really, since coming to Bombay up to today, he uses the fez if ever he puts on a cap. At the time, we could make neither head nor tail out of these remarks of Baba as to what he wears on the head. But when Professor Sayani came out of Baba's room, and was about to leave the bungalow, he volunteered the following explanation:

"My mother, who has been sitting at Moulanasahib's tomb at Bandra for the last 20 years asked me to go and see Meher Baba and mark what particular headgear he used. Finding Baba bare-headed, I was quite at a loss to understand how to ask or inquire as to what cap he puts on; when just at that moment without any hint from me, Baba has explained away my difficulties."

A new business of hardware stores supplying under the style of S. A. Wahab & Co. has been decided to be started under the partnership of Usman and Behramji in Vazier Mansions on Sandhurst Road. Myself and Slamson are to be appointed accountant and canvasser, while Ahmedkhan will be given the job of office peon in this new concern. Thus almost all will then have occupations.

July 12, 1922

Doctor Retires

Of late, discussion is going on between Doctor and Baba whether the former can carry on his medical profession and business, and at the same time observe all the Manzil's rules and orders, specially that of reaching the bungalow before 7

P.M. every day. Finally it was decided to dispose of the stores and dispensary. After some days of negotiations with Roy & Co., I succeeded in getting it fired off on reasonable terms. And thus Dr. Ghani's American Homeopathic Stores Co. and Dispensary have disappeared into thin air today, and no trace is left of the one-time rendezvous of old friends. Before Doctor was firmly trapped, Baba used to tell him that his stores would develop so rapidly and on such a grand scale that at least half a dozen assistants will be required to handle the big business. While in the end, it has happened quite the reverse.

Although more than half a dozen assistants were required in helping to finish the final bargain of the stores, it was only for the first and last time. In any case, it has been so contrived at by Baba, that Doctor finds the disposal the best solution of his affairs under the circumstances.

July 19, 1922

Temporary Poets

Today quite a novel pastime was started by Baba. Some of us were asked to try a hand at poetry! Leaving aside the question of results—as much cannot be expected of amateur poets—the time was passed very interestingly. As a sample Doctor's poetry is reproduced here:

Your love has made me forget the variety of numerous stories that were stored in my memory.

I have pledged myself to obey him but he alone knows what a variety of doubts do I still have.

Never did I see or hear in my dreams the variety of secrets that were revealed to me.

You too now make up your mind to go to Medina since a variety of caravans are making headway to it.

For the sake of Meher, Ghani has taken up to a variety of friends of undesirable nature.

July 27, 1922

Overenthusiasm

Having heard of the recent poetic attempts of some of us, Rustom Jafrabadi²⁵ is fired with the enthusiasm of competing with Saadi and Hafiz! Every now and then, he brings some lines

generally in praise of Baba to him; on such occasions, all are called together, and Rustom is asked to repeat the gems of his crude imagination to the great amusement of all. Some idea of his brilliant poetry can be had from this example, that if one line of his verse is two inches long, the next is eight inches! He seems to have an utter disregard for the proper rhymes and follows the well-known principle, "Let the art of composing poetry be dismissed; the substance has been conveyed."

But one cannot deny his sincere feelings of devotion and regard underlying the crude and humorous manifestation of his queer poetry. Besides, it provides great amusement to the *mandali*; hence, Baba keeps on humouring him, and praising his "literary genius." The poor simple fellow, thinking this to be a genuine appreciation, is spurred to a greater thinking mood. The climax is reached today when he is over-carried past his destination in the local train when engrossed in a poetic mood.

Aga Baidul

When Baba comes to know of this, an urgent general meeting is called, and he is instructed to try his talents only when he is off duty and in spare time. Then addressing the *mandali* Baba said, "Since Rustom is on the way of becoming a poet, a suitable *nom de plume* should be suggested for him."

Many poetic and musical nicknames were hinted by some of the *mandali* during the discussion that followed, but Doctor won the day. He said there has been a Persian poet Bedil of great repute; but since Rustom's poetry is unique of its kind, the nickname should also be something very original, and hence he suggests "Baidul." It was met with unanimous approval; and Baba thereupon not only asked Rustom to adopt Baidul, but also ordered all to call him thereafter as "Aga Baidul."

At this, the newly created Aga Baidul said that at times his pen cannot keep pace with his thoughts when he once gets in the poetic mood, and hence somebody may be ordered to do the writing work for him!

To the great amusement of all, Baba appointed Doctor as secretary to Aga Baidul, and ordered him to write Aga Baidul's thoughts for him whenever the latter gets in such a mood.

Thus Baba gave us a practical demonstration that in spite of his spiritual workings, and the management of the *mandali's* internal and external affairs, he retained a great and keen sense of humour!

In the evening, Baba and a few others went to Abdur Rehman Baba's tomb and thence for a motor spin.

July 28, 1922

Baba to Sakori

In spite of about fifty persons of different religions, ideas, and ages occupied with various different duties living under the single roof of the Manzil, the atmosphere is one of great harmony. The management and duties are carried on with almost a mechanical precision, smoothness and silence. The chief indoor work going on is that of compiling and writing Maharaj's life, which is carried on by Khak and Asar, who, save for the dinner and sports hours, are always closeted in their room without letting even their neighbour be the wiser of what the pair is doing. Only a very few besides Baba know that any writing work is at all going on! It is probably in connection with the biography that Khak has gone with Baba and Trimbuk to Sakori today by the Nagpur Mail.

July 31, 1922

Baba's Return

Baba, who has returned from Sakori today, is talking of sending us all there again for Maharaj's blessing. On his arrival, Baba had a look round all the rooms and departments and made searching inquiries if any of his orders or instructions were violated in his absence by anybody from the company. Consequently many were taken to task for minor errors committed through oversight and otherwise.

August 6, 1922

Mandali to Sakori

As per previous arrangements, all of the *mandali*, under Gustadji's leadership, left Bombay for Sakori by the Delhi Express last night, and reached Manmad in the early hours of this morning. Under the plea of the Dhond train not being ready, the ticket-collector on duty refused to let us in on the other platform. Some discussion thereupon took place between him and the *mandali*. Finding himself against great odds, he got very much excited and began a display of his English talents to overawe us. But being met with stronger opposition, he blurted out to

Rustom,²⁶ "Don't show your wiseness!" At this, a great titter went round in the *mandali* and it spurred us to show the "wiseness," when, somehow, the whole lot of us squeezed in, leaving the poor ticket-collector resigned to his fate.

About 11:30 we reached Sakori and joined in the noon *arti* in Maharaj's temple. After the meals, we repaired to Maharaj's hut and paid our respects to him. Maharaj gave us a long and a very interesting lecture on Real Happiness, and in the end, advised us to stick to Merwan through thick and thin.

August 7, 1922

Great Hospitality

In the morning, we all were made to sit near the temple when Maharaj served us with his own hands fresh and hot loaves and tea for our breakfast. He actually walked to each with the loaves and kept on serving the *mandali* till we had finished to our contentment.

After paying our final respects to Maharaj and Durgamai we left Sakori about 5:30 in the evening by bullock carts, reaching Chitali station after sunset. Here, we boarded the Manmad train at 11:30, and were off to Bombay.

August 11, 1922

Peculiar Orders

Today being New Year day of the Parsis, it is observed as a general holiday for all. The Zoroastrian party went to their fire-temple with sandalwood for prayers; while in the evening Muslim musical prayers were held when almost all the neighbouring Muslims attended, including the Charni Road party.

Since some time Doctor, Adi and myself have received a peculiar order from Baba, which is that whenever free from duties, we three are to sit near him as follows:

Adi is to sit on his right side, myself on the left side, and Doctor exactly in front of him. This order is causing us great inconvenience and danger too, as it is to be observed under all circumstances, whether Baba is sitting in the Manzil or anywhere out of it, even in a car or train. Of course, in such circumstances, we are at times allowed to sit elsewhere; but it is only when permitted by Baba to do so, and for that particular time and place only. Otherwise, we are strictly enjoined to try to

take our respective seats about him under every circumstance.

It is dangerous because being always near Baba we are often asked as to what is going on in our minds! And the iron discipline compels us to disclose it forthwith! Hence, at times, the sitting becomes almost dreadful. While today, I had to see stars for the first time in my life owing to this simple-looking order. It happened this way.

Some Push, That

As per the order we three were sitting about Baba upstairs in the hall, when Babu Ghante, who had come to see Baba from Poona, was also there talking with him. Mr. Ghante made some blunder while talking at which Baba suddenly got excited and immediately caught hold of his neck! In spite of Ghante being a very bulky man (nearly 200 lbs.) Baba made very light work of his heaviness. In less time than it takes to write this, Baba brought the big victim down the stairs with a great clatter and crashing, and gave him a final push that sent him rolling like a road-roller in the back compound! We three also had to run after Baba to sit beside him, if, instead of coming up again, he were to sit downstairs. After pushing Ghante, Baba suddenly turned back only to find me obstructing his way. With a sudden long drive of his lithe arm, I got a ringing slap over my eyes which actually made me see specks and colours for a few seconds. Just as suddenly as he had become excited, he became normal again without any trace of anger or mental disturbance about his face or voice!

And of course, as usual the injured parties were patted and talked to with many a kind and loving word by Baba, and there was not even a shadow of any unusual incident in the serene atmosphere immediately after the *dhuppa-dhuppi* (slaps from a tennis ball thrown at one another during a game)!

August 18, 1922

The Spiritual Mother

Durgamai came to the Manzil from Sakori today to stay here for a few days. This reminds me of Baba's words in connection with further explanations about the Circle, that it always contains two females; one the Spiritual Mother and the other the Spiritual Sister of the Perfect Master and Circle members concerned.

And according to Baba, Durgamai is the Spiritual Mother of Maharaj and Mother Gulmai²⁷ of Baba.

August 20, 1922

Singing Party

In celebration of Usman's (a boy whom Munshi has brought up as his own son) marriage today, Munshi has arranged a singing party for Baba and *mandali*. Accordingly, we have come to Charni Road. After taking the excellent vegetable supper, specially prepared by Syedsahib, we all took our seats about Baba in the room where the singing is to take place. The bridegroom having paid his respects to Baba, the *qawwal* (singer of *ghazals*) began providing a fine, divine entertainment to all till a late hour.

August 21, 1922

Ghostly Ghodbunder

It is decided to go to Ghodbunder on a picnic as it is said to have the finest scenery about Bombay. Doctor, Slamson and Vajifdar²⁸ start as the advance party to make arrangements for Baba and the rest of us, after having their meals; Baba and the remaining members follow them in the afternoon. From Dadar, we take a local train and reach Borivli. Vajifdar has already made conveyance arrangements and we are comfortably whisked away to Ghodbunder.

The scenery is wonderfully fascinating, but the one-time old church building on the hill, the only place of shelter here, is simply weird. Besides being dull, dark and dilapidated, there are scores of birds' nests in it, and the consequent fluttering noise in every nook and corner of it, together with hundreds of lizards racing on the walls, makes the place an ideal spot for solitary confinement for great sinners. It is a sort of hell amidst the heavenly scenery of the surrounding green hills and shimmering water. Almost all of us wished we had remained in the good old Manzil.

However, we tried to improve the atmosphere and infuse some liveliness in the dead building by playing cricket in the big hall under Baba's suggestion. And so somehow, we passed the evening, and after supper retired for the night and decided to march off from here the first thing in the morning and pass the Sunday elsewhere.

August 27, 1922

Troublesome Holiday

When we woke up, we did not feel fresh. The atmosphere had, it seems, affected even our slumber. Hence, as soon as we could finish up attending to the necessities, we started from Ghodbunder on foot for Borivli. From Borivli we came to Charni Road by railway.

After taking some refreshment here the party, including Baba, came to Mr. Dalvi's place. Here again we had some refreshment and then eventually came back to the Manzil at about 12:30 in the noon, and thus a hide-and-seek excursion came to an end. Perhaps this is a signal of the tables being gradually turned, that the easy-going affairs and picnics are to revert to a more strenuous and serious life.

August 29, 1922

More Poetic Flights

Again today Baba asked some of the party to write poetry, rhyming with the following example:

Rashqa aur insafme go ashnayee ho na ho

Whether or not between envy and justice, there is comradeship.

The following two *ghazals* are the result of Doctor's and Khak's efforts:

Hai Kahan jannat me jo tere kucheki hawa

Kuch to bu mushko khutanno uski laee ho na ho

Where in heaven exists the fragrance that pervades your lane?
A small wave of perfume of His supernally scented musk
may or may not be brought to me.

Ai buto ham jinone dil tum par fida karhi chuke

Ab khudahi hai, jo tumse kuch khudahi ho na ho

O my Beloved, for those of us who have surrendered our hearts to you, God alone is our refuge; whether or not you show your Godliness to us.

*Kahelwata hai wo Munshi garche apne apko
Par Asar Dehli ka koi tanawae ho na ho*

He calls himself a Munshi; but someone from Delhi calls himself Asar; whether or not they are helpful.

*Be sabab baithe nahin hai hoke wo chin bar jabin
Hai magar shamat kisiki aj aae ho na ho*

It is not for nothing he has taken upon himself the burden of anxiety (of all). For certain, there is today someone's calamity whether or not it comes.

*Keun nahin pahalisi bate tum me ai shagird shad
Hai magar kuch aurahi dilko samae ho na ho.*

Why is it that you are not like your old self—a disciple of cheer and joy?
It is true, yet strange things come and come not to my hearing.

*Ham tere tarze bayan par hai fida dilse Ghani
Isase kya bulbul si tujme khush na wae ho na ho*

With all our heart, we accept the way you give discourses of things,
O Ghani, whether or not your expressions are like the sweet singing of a nightingale.

* * *

*Tere dar tak dekhiye apni rasaee ho na ho
Astan ki hamko hasil jabin saee ho na ho*

Let me see whether or not I am able to reach your door-step
And whether or not I am able to lay my head on the threshold of your feet.

*Nakhune tadbir se khulti nahin dilki gireh
Chhodiye taqdirse ukda gushae ho na ho*

With the nails of effort the knots of the heart are not rent asunder.
Hand over to your destiny the e'er long problems accumulated—whether or not they are solved.

*Tere kucheki hawa, rashke nasime khuld hai
Sath apne go wo bue murbu laee ho na ho*

The wind of happiness blowing in your land is the envy of
the atmosphere existing in heaven;
Whether or not it brings with it an air of protection.

*Mit gaya hun nampar tere, garaz dunya se kya
Mai tera banda hun, mujko kya khudaae ho na ho*

I have lost myself in the love of your name and I do
not need the world anymore.
I am your slave whether or not I have Godliness.

*Gair par afshan na kar, raze mahabbat jane man
Dilka wo ochha hai, darta hun samaae ho na ho*

O! my dear, do not reveal the secret of your love to
a stranger,
Because I am afraid he is shallow and will not be able to
contain it.

*Sarpe dastane fazilat zebe tan jabba to hai
Shaikh ke dilme khyale parsaae ho na ho*

On the head is a turban of honour and on the body is the
robe of distinction,
Whether or not in the heart of Shaikh is there the quality of
purity.

*Batbhi puchhi na tune bazma me aye jo ham
Gair ne bhardi hai dilme kuch buraae ho na ho*

You did not at all enquire of me when I attended your
assembly.
A stranger may have poisoned your mind with bitter-
ness about me; whether or not it did exist.

*Jisko dekha bhar raha hai dam khudaae ka tere
Josh par hai aj shane kibriae ho na ho*

Whoever I saw was getting filled in with the breath of your
Godhood.
At its zenith today the glory of your divinity is, whether or
not it manifests.

*Khak ke zarre ko hai khurshid se chashmak zani
(Khak ka zarra tha mai, akseer mujko kardiya)
Meherki sohabat me ye dowlat hai paae ho na ho*

The particle of a Khak has to face the glory of the
sun. (I was a particle of earth and you transformed me.)

This is the treasure that lies in the friendship of Meher;
Whether or not I have gained it (deserved it).

September 3, 1922

Cricket versus *Gili-Danda*

Baba and most of the *mandali* have come to Charni Road as Munshi's guests since yesterday, specially to witness Vajifdar's cricket on the Parsi Gymkhana grounds.

We marked his fine play yesterday, while this morning we played a few exciting games of *gili-danda* on the same grounds, and in which Vajifdar also participated heartily to the amusement of a few spectators that had gathered there.

We came back to the headquarters in the evening.

September 4, 1922

Muslim Festival

The month of Muslim festivals with the assemblies and other usual activities are in full swing. However, it was for the first time that the Muslim members of the *mandali* were asked by Baba to participate in the assembly which is held daily just opposite the bungalow through public subscriptions.

The expenses of today's assembly were contributed by Baba on behalf of the party.

September 5, 1922

The Biography Completed

Khak and Asar have almost finished their duty of writing the life of Maharaj. As Baba is intending to go to Ajmere shortly with a few members from the company, Khak and Asar are sent in advance today to Delhi so that the latter can see his family and also try to get the introduction of the book written by Khwaja Hasan Nizami. Accordingly, the pair of them leave for Delhi this evening.

September 10, 1922

The Pigeon

The last few days were very easy-going. On the 6th it was Adi's birthday, when a special treat was given to the company. On the 7th, we all had been to the cinema and enjoyed the

pleasure of filmdom. While today it is the Parsi festival day and the Manzil wears a gay atmosphere.

In the afternoon, a snow-white pigeon comes to the bungalow from an unknown place. It seems ill and in a very tired condition; and when some tried to catch it, it surrendered without so much as a flutter. It was taken to Baba, who at once took it in his own hands and began tending and nursing the sick bird. Since then Baba is marked to take a very great interest in reviving the poor thing which seems to be in a very inactive condition; but when at all it hops about, it looks a thing of singular beauty. Its snow-white feathers, pink eyes, a fan-like tail, and a peculiarly dignified gait of hopping, endears it to all, while Baba seems to have taken an unusual fancy to the pigeon, inasmuch as he every now and then inquires or personally inspects its condition throughout the evening up to going to bed.

September 11, 1922

The Messenger

Baba informed us in the morning that the pigeon had died overnight in spite of so much mending and tending. Baba had been to see the bird twice, or thrice even, in the night! All were asked to have a look at the remains of the bird, who left its mortal coil in a queer position, sitting down on the legs with beak and head bent downwards on the breast as if it died while making obeisance. Then all were asked if we could make anything out of the bird's sudden appearance and subsequent death. None could account for it; hence Baba reminded us of his words spoken some time ago that he will receive a very important message from Babajan very shortly, and continuing, said, "This is the pigeon that has brought the important news from Babajan. The seriousness and the gravity of the message can well be imagined, that soon after delivering the heavy burden, it dies."

After this explanation the bird was very carefully buried by Baba with his own hands and with the help of the *mandali* in the back compound near the well. A small grave was also made over the remains and a green sheet put on with flowers. Later on Baba wrote the following *ghazal* on the pigeon:

The king of pigeons became the guest of the house of
the God-Man.

What a guest! who instantaneously on arrival became
the owner of the dust of this place.

Where has this traveller come from? His coming here has caused us to undertake a journey.

Suddenly his life faded away. It was as if he appeared and disappeared.

One day before his departure (from his life) he brought a wonderful message:

The spirit of sacrifice of his life on the altar of death, in delivering the message, was enthused in him by the Beloved.

O God! Behind the curtain a wonderful game is being played.

In the eyes of the ignorant (blind) persons, the apparent has assumed the spectacle of reality.

By the evening, Baba sent most of the *mandali* including myself to our respective homes; while with the remaining few he is going to Ajmere tonight.

Trip to Ajmere and the Circle Illnesses

Extracts from Doctor's Diary

BABA and party left Bombay by the Gujarat Mail on the night of the 11th September for Ajmere, reaching there at 10:30 P.M. on the 12th, and put up in King Edward Memorial travellers' rest house. Baba began to have loose stools and there were marked signs of serious ill-health. The following day, we all took complete rest, while Baba's condition was the same, having passed nearly half a dozen loose stools in the day. On Thursday the 14th, under Baba's instructions, the *mandali* observed a fast for 24 hours and went to Khwajasaheb's tomb and paid our respects; while Syedsahib and myself (Doctor) also recited a Muslim prayer. There was no change for the good in Baba's health. On the contrary, he looked more weak and pulled down.

On Friday, the *mandali* went for sight-seeing: the Jain Golden Temple, Daulat Baug and the picturesque lake called Ana-Sagar; while myself and Syedsahib also went to Shahjehan Mosque where we offered the Friday prayers. On the 16th, Khak also joined the party. Both of us went to Tara-Garh and the hut said to have been erected within two and a half days.

There was no improvement in Baba's condition. The stools are marked to be of a variety of colours, such as green, brown, black and gray, and he seems to be very weak. A day before leaving for Bombay on the 18th, Baba asked the *mandali* on Sunday to visit Pushkalraj, an important and historical place of pilgrimage of the Hindus, situated 10 miles to the north-west of Ajmere. Finding Baba in the condition that he was since com-

ing to Ajmere, without any improvement up to date, the *mandali* did not like to go for any more sight-seeing leaving him alone in the rest house.

Reading out their thoughts Baba said, "If I remain alone here, I will recover completely from the trouble by this evening. However, I don't like to spoil your pleasure; but mark my words that this illness will leave me after 15 days from now." And Baba, too, accompanied the party to Pushkalraj in a small carriage and in spite of his pulled-down condition, submitted himself to the rough joltings of a ten-mile drive. The temple, besides its architectural beauty and historical interest, has a charming natural scenery all round, particularly at the bathing steps along the sacred Bhima River. It is the only temple in India dedicated to Brahma of the Hindu Trinital conception of God. The whole *mandali*, including the Muslims, were subjected to all the Hindu ceremonies of pilgrimage, such as taking bath in the river along the specially built steps and then having a coloured spot marked on the forehead by the Brahmins after their ceremonial chanting and paying respects to the symbol itself. Thus, after a busy and interesting time, we all came back to the rest house late in the evening.

At 10:30 P.M. the same night, Baily also came from Poona and joined us. On Monday the 18th, we left Ajmere at 11:30 P.M. for Bombay reaching Dadar on Wednesday morning at 7 o'clock.

Although Baba is slightly better, yet the main complaint of diarrhoea has not in the least subsided.

(end of Doctor's diary excerpt)

September 27, 1922

A True Prediction

Since Baba came from Ajmere on the 20th, the diarrhoea continued to harass him more or less till yesterday evening. Throughout last week Doctor continuously kept himself by Baba's bedside till late hours in the night, and once or twice, he remained with Baba throughout the whole of the night by way of company.

In spite of so serious a nature of the ailment, Baba never took any regular medical treatment, but just carried on, with some apparent quack doses or drinks occasionally throughout the illness. But strangely enough, just according to his prediction,

he became quite alright today, exactly 15 days after the day he reached Ajmere. And so it was after such a long time that he gave the *mandali* a song in his melodious voice, to the accompaniment of drum and sitar today. The latter was played by Adi. Baba also sat for a snapshot which proved very successful.

September 28, 1922

Dreaming the Undreamt

Naval²⁹ saw a very suggestive dream overnight. He saw five triangles of light suspended in space without any support, but they were regularly suspended at that, four of them forming a square with the fifth exactly in the centre. Now he saw Maharaj and Meher Baba come there, and as soon as both of them are seen by Naval, the former disappears. Baba takes his position in the central triangle, and no sooner does he do that, then there is a crash and with a lightning splendour the scene disappears. But Naval continues dreaming, and again he sees a triangle of light, but this time only a solitary one, with Gustadji in it. Gustadji is seen in the triangle with his legs dangling out. Baba who happens to be nearby, lifts Gustadji's feet, and puts them in the triangle in the right position, and the dream ends.

Wake Up!

In the afternoon the following is written by Baba on the notice board:

To come in force from the 1st Oct. till God knows when:
To sleep at 9 o'clock in the night and get up at 4 in the morning.

From 4 to 5 A.M. finish up with call of nature, bath, etc.

From 5 to 6 A.M. engage oneself in devotion to God in the manner to be explained by me one day previous.

28.9.'22 = 59 = 14. (Sd.) Merwan

The above was followed by this couplet:

Arise early, O heart, and serve the master of the tavern.
Offer prayers to the cup bearer in remembrance of God
and the cup of divine wine.

September 29, 1922

Some Exercise

For the first time today, the element of physical labour is introduced into the term of our simple mental imprisonment in the Manzil. Imprisonment, because, despite all the physical comforts, the network of orders and instructions leave hardly a free breathing space in this commodious bungalow. And now, under the excuse of preparing the back compound to be suitable as a playground, Baba has asked the members to repair it to produce a clean, smooth space from the rough and stone-studded surface that it is!

Accordingly the whole day is passed strenuously digging it out a foot deep all round the compound to eliminate the stones, glass pieces and other rubbish before beginning to add fresh material.

September 30, 1922

The Sleeping Sam

Today all were roused at so early an hour as that of 3 o'clock in the morning by Baba! Maharaj's *arti* is recited, and then all are asked to attend the compound mending. Swearing and muttering (not loudly, of course) we take to the blessed work of mud spreading, hammering, and watering the grounds which is continued throughout the day. Doctor, who happens to be the "sleeping Sam" of the *mandali*, finds the task all the more trying. But he hatches out a brilliant plan to escape the ordeal. Just as Baba is seen standing in the verandah in the afternoon surveying our work, Doctor starts chanting a well-known love poem in Urdu in accompaniment to his hammering of the ground with a wooden hammer.

At first, the *mandali* were amazed to find Doctor trying to be so active, but when the worthy began to repeat continuously this couplet:

Do not molest Farhad with the task of digging the mountain.
O Shirin, he is your lover and not your labourer,

the meaning dawned upon us, and all laughed out including Baba himself. Then calling Doctor near him, Baba asked the *mandali* to have a good look at the features and face of his

lover. But eventually, Doctor was exempted from labour for the day!

More Coincidences

Munshi was given a letter written by Doctor on behalf of Baba addressed to Prof. S. Abdul Kadar of Elphinstone College. The letter was delivered to the Professor today when he was sitting with his friends, Messrs. Bekirali and Hasanali. As soon as he had gone through the letter, the Professor is reported to have exclaimed, "Lo, here we were settling amongst ourselves to go to Dadar to see Meher Baba at 5 P.M. today, and the very day, this letter comes to us, asking not to come until we are called for."

October 1, 1922

Spiritual Instruction

The programme put up on the notice board on the 28th September did not exactly come in force from today as mentioned therein, and instead of getting up at 4 A.M., we left our beddings at 6:30 A.M. as usual. At breakfast, Baba asked Doctor to see that all were informed to be present in the upper hall to receive instructions as the programme is to come in force from tomorrow, the 2nd, instead of today. The back compound repairs are continuing. A big roller has been brought on loan and is being rolled on the ground after watering the same and the nooks and corners are hammered with wooden hammers.

The work is continued throughout the day. Doctor is again let off from the daily toil on account of his poetic protest yesterday, and instead, goes through the proofs of Maharaj's biography. In the evening at 6 P.M. sharp, we all assembled in the upper hall to hear Baba's instructions in connection with the notice put up on the board on the 28th, and again repeated today in four languages, Urdu, English, Marathi and Gujarati. Baba then delivered a lengthy explanation. The following is a gist of what he said:

"The main object of my asking you to follow the new programme is to keep you awake in the early hours of the morning, specially between 4 and 5 A.M. It is the most valuable and important time from the spiritual point of view. The important prayers in every religion, and the practices of advanced yogis are indulged in, in these hours. In fact, from the yogic point of view,

it is imperative to be awake in the early hours of the morning.

"Although I am not going to ask you to follow any yoga or any particular religious ritual, as it is quite apart from both, I want you simply to keep awake in these hours. I have already told you that besides the viewpoint of religion, study, meditation and yoga, the early hours are important from the higher spiritual point too. It was between these hours that Babajan gave me the Experience and also it was the same time when Maharaj brought me out of the Ocean. The Circle too will get Realization in these hours.

"But now the question here arises as to how to pass the time after getting up—certainly not in lolling about or playing at cards and draughts. It does not become us to do such things being in the line [i.e., on the spiritual path], as we are, in the early hours of the morning. Then the best method of passing the hours will be this:

"From 4 to 5 A.M. all should attend the daily necessities and take cold baths.

"Then between 5 to 6 A.M. all should engage themselves in repeating prayers according to their respective religions for some time, such as *namaz* (Muslims), *kasti* (Parsis), *puja* (Hindus), etc., and pass the major portion of the time repeating the name of the Almighty; this too, according to the respective faiths, viz.: Allah, Yazdan, Ram, etc. But it is to be done mentally and while sitting in one fixed position. Although the repetition is to be carried on in the mind without moving the tongue or lips, the eyes should never be closed. This belongs to the line of study of yoga. With a spiritual aspirant there is no closing of the eyes, nose or mouth, and neither the external following of religious rituals in details. Once sitting in the position, one should stick to it throughout the period till the bell rings for breakfast at 6 A.M., without changing the place or position; and keep on repeating in the mind the Divine Name with a free heart, without thinking of time, etc."

Here, all were asked to inform him as to the name and position suitable to each of us respectively. The Muslim party naturally chose "Ya Allah," the Zoroastrians, "Yazdan," and the Hindus, "Ram." Almost all selected varying positions to sit as per individual point of comfort and ease. After hearing the respective decisions, Baba said all are to stick to their selected names and positions for ten months without change, and finally added, "This is my first spiritual instruction of its kind and therein fail not." With this, the meeting dispersed. Although Baba has told us

all that this sitting and repeating is nothing but devotion, yet most of us are expecting to feel or see something unusual by way of spiritual experiences because Baba had once said before that the *mandali* will get experiences in September. Hence experiences is the burning question of the day.

The early awakening matter reminds me of a Gujarati couplet which aptly describes the auspiciousness of the time. It runs:

Everyone keeps awake the first 3 hours of a night,
The next 3 hours keeps awake an indulgent in sex,
The third 3 hours keeps awake a burglar,
And the fourth 3 hours keeps awake one occupied in
spiritual practice.

October 2, 1922

Early to Bed and Early to Rise . . .

As per the new orders, all got up, or were rather made to get up, at 4 A.M. With half-closed eyes, most of us were found fumbling near the closets and bathrooms.

The cold baths, however, dispelled the weight over the eyelids to some extent, and the devotions began. Exactly at six the bell rang, and one after another, we all trooped in the hall for the inviting cup of tea, bread and butter. Thereafter, the compound mending was resumed which chiefly consisted of rolling the big roller over the grounds and watering the same. Throughout the day, Baba was seen to be cheerful; but about bed-time, he called Doctor upstairs, and according to him, "Baba complained of having burning fever and on feeling the pulse, I found a little fever; but not as much, that could warrant for the extreme heat felt on the face and chest of Baba, by me."

Baba's Third Illness

Continuing, Doctor said, "Baba told me that it was another sickness quite distinct from the last one, and also complained of great pains in the extremities, specially the knees and feet." Thereupon, Doctor added, he began chafing Baba's legs when he saw that he was extremely uneasy and in a dazed condition, muttering incoherent words all the time. At first, in spite of the open windows, Baba complained of great heat; but soon after he felt chill, and after Doctor had covered him up carefully, he was asked to retire for the night.

October 3, 1922

Baba Cries

In the morning, we found the following notice on board:

The whole night, fever was my strict companion. Now tell me, sleepless nights, weakness owing to the last illness and fever, all three combined, how can I hope of avoiding the fatal sickness that has begun its attack?

3.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

This means that the attack of fever early last night developed greatly with Baba during the night when we all were snugly tucked under mosquito nets, and that he really passed a very painful night. At breakfast time, Baba told us that he actually cried again in the night; and for verification, he referred us to Gustadji who had actually seen Baba shedding tears. Continuing, Baba added that the nights that he was passing through, may they not fall even to the lot of an enemy!

28 Deaths

Again referring to this subject of his present illness in the afternoon in the presence of Sadashiv Patel, Baba said it was the third time that he actually cried and fell ill during the last eight years (the two past illnesses referred to are the shoulder wound and the subsequent diarrhoea while at Ajmere). Likewise, he said, in all he would die twenty-eight deaths for the Circle in this way, that he would cry in each of his illnesses; but the subsequent illnesses will be lesser and lesser in severity. This fever is for Patel who always suffers from it. From this it could be safely concluded that the last two ordeals were for Gustadji and Behramji respectively. Continuing in the same strain, Baba said that the next batch for whom he will have to fall sick includes Doctor. His (Doctor's) number is perhaps the 5th or 6th; but after a little consideration, Baba said Doctor's number is the 7th in the Circle; and hence very important, specially in this respect, that this number always remains with the Master even after Realization. The next three or four illnesses will be a bit troublesome; but after that they will lessen down in severity to a great degree.

After some time, the topic of blessings and curses came to be discussed. Baba gave a long explanation on the subject, which

in short means: "A Perfect Master neither curses nor blesses, he works. Saints and advanced souls can be said to bless; and hence, simply their words bring about the desired results."

Then explaining the difference between worldly joys and divine bliss, Baba said that an ocean of worldly joy is merely but the shadow (not even the drop) of a single, small drop from the vast and infinite Ocean of Divine Bliss! And it is for this reason that the Perfect Master is also addressed as Satchitananda (Divine Truth, Knowledge, Bliss).

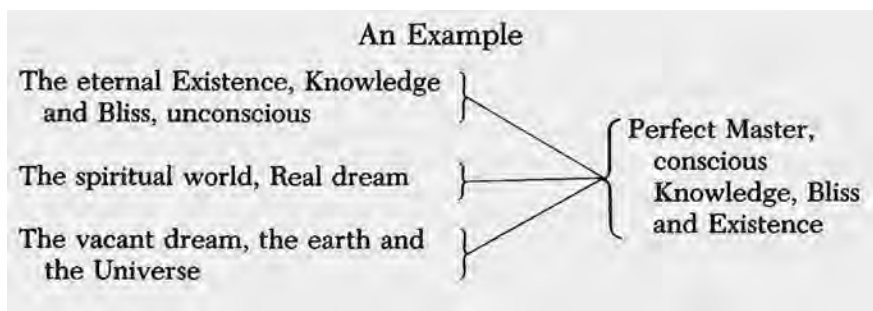
In the evening, Baba again became very restless, and when I was near him in the night upstairs, I heard Baba muttering, "They are beating and torturing me!" This reminds me of Baba's occasional sayings that he is likely to suffer at the hands of yogis and aspirants who are sufficiently advanced in the line.

October 4, 1922

The Perfect Master

Maharaj's and Sai Baba's photos were given by Baba to Doctor to be dispatched to Patel who has gone to Sakori since yesterday evening. In the afternoon the question of Adi's attendance at his college was discussed at length, and settled according to Baba's own plan and wish. After tea, Baba had a game of draughts with me; and although he played off-hand style, I was swept off of the board. Here, a discussion took place as to the best draught player in the Manzil. The issue, however, remained undecided between Jal,³⁰ Vajifdar and myself, and quite another topic came out of the discussions when Baba said if he were to put his mind into the game, he would beat anyone at it, however an expert or champion player he might be. Here, Doctor asked Baba as to what he meant "by putting the mind in." Explaining the point, Baba said, "One who is a slave to his mind belongs to the ordinary run of human beings; and one who conquers his mind, but at the same time is overpowered by it, is called a *majzooob*. One who has advanced towards Truth belongs to the spiritual planes.

"The first is a worldly state of mind and the second is a Godly state of mind, i.e., a state of mind with divinity manifested in it. But the Perfect Master, however, takes up his stand quite apart from all these three states; and is in such a position that he can enjoy and experience all the states of the mind whenever he likes to do so.



"A Perfect Master is rarely required to put his mind in things worldly; though sometimes he has to do so for the sake of his Circle. As an example, the residents of Kamatipura Lane No. 7 are His Majesty King George's subjects. But does His Majesty know anything about Kamatipura [Bombay slum area], whether such a place exists at all in his dominions, far short of the individual residents of the locality? If, however, he wishes to know anything about Kamatipura or even one particular resident of the place, he can be furnished with the necessary information in no time through the various departments and services of his government, the wireless, the Post Office, the C.I.D., etc. Similarly, a Perfect Master can reach to the very source of anything and everything that he cares to know—that is, puts his mind into it. But generally he does not do it. The interest he seems to take in the things that belong to this world by word or deed is simply off-handed, however serious it may look outwardly. The mind that he seems to engage on such occasions is the mind devoid of divinity. He simply does things AS THEY OCCUR TO HIM at the time, almost mechanically, without thinking about it!"

The back compound, which is now quite ready with a billiard-table-like surface provides a good site for Baba to take some rounds on Asthma's cycle, which the latter brings at about 4 P.M. direct from the shop where he purchased it today. Asthma is the nickname given by Baba to Khodadad K. Irani, because of his chronic sufferings from asthma which troubled him very much in the past, in spite of his great precautions and treatments. But since he is nicknamed Asthma and called as such by all of the *mandali* under Baba's orders, he is quite free of the attacks, in spite of taking cold baths in the very early hours of the morning as per our latest programme. As soon as Baba had finished cycling round the compound, Mr. Jehangir Moos's arrival was announced; and we all were asked to leave Baba alone with

Moos and go and play seven tiles on the newly-prepared playground.

The following notice was put up on the board in the evening:

None should use Asthma's cycle, except Asthma himself.
Remind me tomorrow evening at 7 to tell you the wonder of
Jehangir Moos's case.

4.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

Sanskaras

After supper, Baba discoursed at length on the question of "yoga, study and liberation." The important points remembered are repeated hereunder:

"A yogi, even if he attains the highest yogic state in his study, does not reach freedom, because there is still for him the *sanskaras* (meaning impressions) to finish up with. *Sanskaras* means the impressions left behind while doing any good or bad action. Even a thought creates a *sanskara*. Talking, hearing, thinking, seeing, eating, sleeping, etc.—in fact, even subtle movements—cause *sanskaras* or impressions which have to be experienced without a single hitch, with a mechanical precision, unless removed away root and branch by a Master's grace or blessing. Our present existence and all the related experiences of pain and pleasure, virtue and sin, about it are the results of our past *sanskaras*, or *amal* as termed by the Muslims.

"The very breath we breathe, the eyelid we twitch, the finger we lift, are all due to past impressions. Our present existence is the mere unfoldment of our past subtle impressions in gross form. And again, it is our present gross actions that recreate impressions, and so on. A good word or good action has its good result compressed in an impression, suppose in the form of a circle; and a bad word or action likewise stores up a bad result in a similar subtle form. That is, good actions in this life necessitate acquiring a happier state in the next formation; and similarly a bad action in the present life brings about a bad result in the same way. There is that *tie*, which has not been dispensed away with in any case!

"Good actions bind a man with a golden chain, and bad actions with iron and spiked chains. But the chain is there in either case; the man has not been set free! Yoga or other studies are good actions; and they give the person a better chance in the next incarnation; but it does not set him free or give liberation.

Therefore to have liberation, one must neither have virtue, nor vice, on one's credit or debit side. But it should be a clean slate to reach the state described in an Urdu couplet:

We shall not go either in heaven or hell;
But on the day of final judgment we shall stand gazing at
the face of Muhammad.

And this is impossible to reach without the grace of the Guru. For a Master, it is the work of a moment, though! The vast and almost infinite impressions of a person may be likened to a heap of dry grass which it is impossible for the person to clean out. Even the process of cleaning out, without a Master, that is, through yoga, etc., means contracting impressions again in different forms. But this heap of dry grass is a work of a moment for a lighted match, but which alone the Perfect Master possesses. The Perfect Master uses his matches, but mostly for the members of his Circle only; and thus at the right moment brings them to his own level in less than a second. But even those who have no direct connection with a Perfect Master can derive the greatest possible benefit merely through the contact and company of his personality:

One moment, half a moment and even half of a half of a
moment
In contact with a Perfect Master, then 10 million of your sins
are washed off."

October 5, 1922

A Spirit

As soon as we had finished our morning bath, and were going to sit for repeating the Almighty's name, Baba told us that again he could not sleep overnight. The reason being, he explained, the noise of hammering the back ground by someone in the dead of night. It is, he said, a spirit that always accompanies him nowadays wherever and whenever he goes. It is the same spirit that Baily had seen while he was with him at the hut in Poona. Maharaj has entrusted this spirit to Baba, which it is said will also be seen by some of the *mandali*, even in this bungalow. In that case, none should be afraid about it when seen, while absolutely no fear should be entertained in moving about

the bungalow and compound in any time of the day or night; and Baba concluded that thus none should hesitate to move about the bungalow in the night because of this.

Heaven and Hell

When Baba had gone to Ajmere, he had sent me home for a few days along with the others who did not go with him there.

At that time, I once came across my old friend Usman in the Poona Express one morning at Lonavla station; and in response to my friendly overtures, some taunting remarks were flung at me. It included a couplet from Shaikh Saadi's *Gulistan*, which I couldn't remember while repeating the incident to Baba after my return. At dinner time, however, Doctor told Baba that he had come upon the particular couplet repeated by Usman to me at the time, and it is: "Reaching heaven following a friend is truly equal to going to hell."

Hearing this, Baba said that "Usman is cent per cent right in what he told Ramjoo. Paradise should be earned by one's own exertions. It should never be gained by favour, or by the help of someone else. It should be deserved! To enter paradise without deserving it, merely through favour or grace of someone is no doubt not only equal to, but worse than, burning in the fires of hell. Hence, so far as Usman limits himself to this meaning he is perfectly right. If, however, his intention was to ridicule you, or taunt you for following me, then he has ridiculously failed therein. Here, the question of heaven and hell does not concern you at all.

Neither have I lost heaven nor do I need to flee from hell.

The call of the Perfect Master is supremely distinguished.

"I have held out to you expectations of something much higher than this dream of paradise and hell. By remaining with me, you hope to understand Truth, i.e., God, and thus fathom the secret of the universe. This knowledge is impossible for anyone to obtain without the help of a Master. Individual attempts in this direction are of no avail without the guidance of a Realized Guide. That divine poet of Persia, Hafiz, exclaims: 'Without a guide, don't enter the Path of Love, as I failed hundreds of times while doing so.'"

Continuing, Baba said, "Moulana Rumi, whose *Masnavi* Usman

is so fond of repeating, corroborates Hafiz when he writes: 'Priest Rumi would never have become Master Rumi if he had not become the slave of Shams-Tabriz.'

"One whose object is God, what does he care for heaven or hell? Hafiz aptly describes the feelings of such a one in this couplet: 'Since I see my Friend throughout both the worlds, what do I care for heaven and hell and the spirits, etc.?'"

"Poor Usman does not understand what he himself speaks. To say and claim that the Prophet will lead or give all Muslims paradise is a beggary that begs a description. His case is so helpless that instead of searching for Truth for himself, even the question of paradise he leaves entirely in the hands of the Prophet, and at the same time he confesses that heaven is to be earned or deserved, or otherwise, it is equal to hell. To preach that which you don't practise is hypocrisy in its worst form."

After purchasing the cycle, Asthma still had a surplus balance of 50 rupees remaining with him. Half of this amount is kept in reserve to provide a treat to the *mandali*; and half was given to Doctor by Baba yesterday to utilize in feeding and clothing the needy near Abdur Rehman Baba's tomb. Accordingly, Doctor and Slamson go out to carry out the instructions. They are also asked to take with them Mr. Burjorji Engineer, the author of a book called *Karamate-Khuda*, while distributing the food and clothes. A chit was given him from Baba asking Mr. Engineer to accompany Doctor and Slamson wherever they went and see whatever they did without asking any questions.

Mr. Engineer's Strange Case

This gentleman has come in Baba's contact since very recently. Some time ago, Baba asked him to relate his state to the *mandali* when almost the majority of the party were present in the upper hall. Sitting in the middle of the hall, surrounded by eager ears and searching eyes, Mr. Engineer began his strange narration. With profuse recitations and quotations from different religious scriptures and literature, and with almost a throbbing voice, he tried to give us some idea of his queer position, when at times even tears were rolling down his cheek.

A gist of his repetitions is as follows:

"Some years ago, I was working as an engineer drawing a fat salary. Somehow, I tumbled into the spiritual line, and of course, with great efforts, I managed to reach a stage when I

could easily foretell important events, and even at times, could get my prayers fulfilled simply for the asking.

"In fact my prayers and appeals could provoke a perceptible response from the unknown. This went on for a long time until I began to misuse my supernatural achievements by helping the public at large with my foretellings in a professional way in connection with cotton and other gambling.

"At first the work looked to pay very well, and I did not find the necessity of carrying on my service; so I left it, and paid more and more attention to the new business. To my utter horror (and here, Mr. Engineer cried like a child) I very soon found out the divine gift had escaped from me! Now, in spite of my best efforts, far greater than my original attempts, I cannot still regain that state. In vain I am crying day and night, but there is no response from Him. Leaving aside the mercenary benefit I derived (which now I don't care about, and will never indulge in) I really cannot describe the intense joy and bliss that I felt while in communion with Him. Although I have lost the treasure, still I can feel and perceive things, unseen and unfelt by ordinary human beings; and hence, I need no introduction or explanation about Meher Baba in whom I find a very extraordinary manifestation of Divinity. I firmly believe that Meher Baba can restore me my lost treasure in the twinkle of an eye if he wishes. He is very great indeed."

A Noisy Car

In the afternoon Baba, Gustadji, Adi and Behramji went with Munshi in his newly purchased, secondhand car, "Dedion." It was purchased for only a hundred rupees or so at Naval's recommendation that the car is a steal at that price. Since then, two or three hundred more are spent to make it go. It did go after all, and even climbed the Malabar Hill, but with two or three halts, by way of rest and for tinkering with the overworked engine! As we came to know from Baba, the ride was far from pleasant. The old, old engine would make such a screeching and spluttering noise accompanied by an occasional phut from the exhaust that it necessitated the occupants to carry on conversation at the pitch of their voices; so much so that when the car once came to a dead stop, Munshi was heard to impart the driver some instructions at the pitch of his voice, which almost amounted to shouting in the ensuing silence.

Doctor and Slamson came back from Abdur Rehman Baba's

tomb at about 9 P.M. after distributing the food and clothes. A letter is received by Baba from Asar with a few copies as specimen of the poster advertisement of Maharaj's biography today, which was gone through by Doctor before retiring for the night.

October 6, 1922

Baba Ill Again

In the morning, Baba said that he slept for three-quarters of an hour overnight and felt fresh today, although he has again been passing stools about seven to eight per day since the last illness. From today, the diarrhoea increases considerably. By ten o'clock in the morning, Baba has had about four stools which, strangely enough, are copious and healthy.

Some complaints as to the unclean state of some rooms in the bungalow being received, Baba ordered Doctor to write the following note on board:

All should dust and clean the rooms daily, as well as the portion of the open passage opposite to the respective rooms; otherwise a serious disease shall enter the premises.

6.10.'22

(Sd.) Merwan

A Simple Mistake

At dinner time, Baba told some of us to water the newly prepared playground after 12:30 P.M. Today being Friday and the Muslims being strictly enjoined since the beginning of our contact with Baba never to miss the Friday prayers, even if our lives be in danger at the time, we were rather in a dilemma. To go for prayers as per the old order or water the compound according to the latest instructions? At last, not being able to decide, we approached Baba himself for solution. Upon hearing the difficulty, he simply reprimanded us for not having sufficient common sense to understand that there was really nothing like an enigma. The watering is to be done after 12:30, and that means, of course, after finishing up with the prayers which are ended by 2 o'clock. We were once again enjoined never to miss Friday prayers.

The washerman having exchanged some of our clothes with those of his other clients as well as missing some, Baba took him severely to task, and at first dispensed away with his services. When the man kept on waiting in the compound asking to be

excused, Baba offered to let him remain in the bungalow and only to wash his and the *mandali's* clothes in the premises, and to do no other work from outside, at the pay of 50 rupees per month. The washerman readily fell in with the proposal, and one more addition is made in the Manzil residents today.

Baba's Utterances

About three in the afternoon, Baba called Doctor to chafe his body. While Doctor was so engaged, Baba said, "Doctor, may God help you." On hearing this, Doctor laughed, and when Baba asked the reason of his merriment, the former said, "We generally find it very difficult to follow the drift of your utterances. Your words seem to have a deeper meaning than that denoted at the surface. For instance, it was only yesterday, that you passed a remark that Doctor looks very healthy, and particularly said that my neck had grown very thick and strong and lo! it has gone very stiff today and pains very much." Then he added, "This reminds me of the oracles of Greece read in Greek history; were you as cute and adept in oracular jugglery as you are now?" Baba replying in the negative, Doctor further asked, "Then how is it that some time ago you had told us that worldly knowledge, education and cleverness in a person before Realization remains the same after the Realization too?" Baba, explaining the point, said, "What I had told you is quite correct. There are two kinds of Knowledge. The worldly knowledge, or the knowledge relating to the material world, and the Divine Knowledge, which is acquired after becoming one with God. So a person having become one with God, when dealing with matters relating to this material world, his action and words reflect the Divinity in him; although no divine knowledge is spent therein by him. Hence, the utterances and actions of such a person are invested with a sort of secrecy and grandeur about it. But this is often lost sight of by worldly people. For example, a ruby in the hands of a rustic will not be really appreciated by him; but the same piece of stone in the hands of a jeweller will speak value."

Continuing, Baba said, "The person who has become one with God is able to make the best use of his worldly knowledge on the strength of his divine knowledge, which, however, is not drawn upon in the least—hence the difference between the utterances and actions of the ordinary human being and the divine personalities."

After this, Baba asked Doctor to bring a little coconut oil with which he began rubbing and massaging Doctor's stiff neck and said, "Hereafter, you shall never suffer with stiff neck."

At tea time, the question of utilizing the amount of 25 rupees kept aside from Asthma's surplus balance was discussed. Suggestions of a motor-spin, cinema and drama did not meet with the approval of sufficient majority. At last, it was decided all round to go to a place for a picnic where *iti-danda* and kite flying can be indulged in freely. Vajifdar is elected to select a suitable site for the proposed picnic on Sunday next.

Owing to a passing shower of rain, we could not carry out the evening programme of sport in the back compound. Nevertheless, Baba asked us to play a few games of seven tiles in the front verandah proper of the bungalow which we did, much to the amusement of passers-by, a lot of whom collected out at the compound gate from where they marked on the strange and queer behaviour of the equally "mysterious" residents of the bungalow. It was indeed funny to play an outdoor game indoors.

After supper, poor old Syedsahib's case came out for discussion. In view of prolonged illnesses in his family he had sent word to Baba a few days ago that his house had become a regular hospital. When he came this evening, Baba gave him a sound lecture which lasted for about an hour on the subject matter of that very message! Munshi put in, in defense of Syedsahib, "He does not mean what he says. It is his nature to grumble."

Nature

On the word "nature," Doctor's question to Baba in the afternoon whether the nature of a person changed or not after Experience, again came to be discussed; and Baba once again explained the subject as follows:

"The nature of a Saint after becoming one with God remains the same, but in a different light. Formerly in the ordinary state his anger, his curses, his strong language, etc., were for himself only, since there was egoism in him. Where there is ego, there is no God, and where there is God, there is no egoism. Hence, his actions and words in the Divine state have no motive of egoism in them, but the special freak of nature possessed by him remains the same even after Experience. But when given an outlet through such moods, they do nothing but the greatest good to others. The following couplet of Hafiz carries the same meaning, but through another example.

At one time I craved to see various things;
 But since I saw you I did not desire to see anything else
 but You.

"It clearly explains that it was ingrained in his nature to see different and various objects; but on seeing Him he now does not want to see anything else but Him.

"Thus it is clear that the nature *to see* is still there. First, he wanted to see a variety of subjects, and *now* he wants to see God only; that means, the desire of seeing remains the same, but undergoes a change, and that of the taking out of egoism. Likewise, the *habit* of anger, and beatings, etc., ingrained in a person, remains the same even if he becomes a saint; but a gigantic change takes place in action: it has no personal motive behind it. It is simply an impulse with Divinity behind it, and hence, it is very beneficial to the receiver."

After this explanation, Baba began to play cards with Munshi and some others for about an hour, when he suddenly became very excited and began abusing the Hindu members of the *mandali* in general and Patel and Arjun in particular. The reason was that they could not eat up the vegetable that Baba had arranged with Chowdhary for all to finish up.

While in this mood, Baba told Arjun that his household will be swept clean by plague!

October 7, 1922

The Predicted Plague

Today news came by telegram that Arjun's brother's son had died of plague in Poona! The coincidence is very suggestive in view of Baba's uneasiness about the Hindu *mandali* last night. In fact, Baba had foretold the advent of the present plague that is raging hot in Poona while he was playing *iti-danda* some two years ago at Bhanburda! The Kasba party members, of whom many were present at the time, now recall the exact words of Baba which they say were something to this effect: "The plague would begin at Bhanburda and begin spreading towards Kasba Peth and then gradually affect the whole city."

Besides this, Arjun said that Baba had given him a hint about these calamities a few days beforehand; but that could not, of course, take away his grief and anxiety. It is only a few days ago that his wife had died of plague, and now comes the news of his nephew's death.

At the death of his wife, Arjun had managed somehow his

emotions, and according to Baba's order did not bring out the question of going home. But the subsequent death proved too much, and he begged of Baba to let him go home for two days. Thereupon, Baba gathered the whole of the Hindu *mandali* and told them that "one member from the family of each of you will be carried away by this plague that is raging hot in Poona; and hence, those who want to return home should do so immediately; otherwise, henceforth, none should talk of going home under any circumstances." With the exception of Arjun, all agreed to stick to Baba through thick and thin, while Arjun insisted on going home in any case.

Baba vs. Gustadji

Hardly the matter of the Hindu party was decided when somehow Gustadji butted in, and then ensued an interesting parley between Baba and Gustadji on the subject of the latter's failure on more than one occasion to comply with Baba's orders to eat a certain quantity of food daily. It is reproduced here in the form of a dialogue to give an idea of what Gustadji can do if he gets in the talking mood (in which he often is):

B: Gustadji, please take your food as soon as you feel hungry, irrespective of time. Don't tell me afterwards that I did not tell you.

G: That is just what I am doing, that is, creating hunger, by moving about here and there aimlessly. It is the cup full of cow's clarified butter that I *had* to take at 10 o'clock that has done away with my appetite. I don't like custards and puddings in and out of the season.

B: Don't harp upon the same tune again and again. It is this which puts me out of temper. You must concern yourself with doing just what I tell you to do. It is because you don't pay attention at the time to what I say that you make mistakes.

G: You know full well that I am doing my best to please you. Sometimes I am eating less, and sometimes more, just as it suits the vagaries of my stomach. I cannot, however, understand why you force me to eat more against my will and wish. If I were to fall ill thereby, who is there to look after the petty and trifling affairs and matters in the bungalow as I do from morn to eve?

B: These words clearly show that you have a very poor under-

standing. If I cannot understand the pros and cons of an affair, if I ask you to do a certain thing the consequences of which I am quite ignorant, then I am no Master at all, and no earthly good can come out of your staying with me.

G: I have come to you under Maharaj's instructions to follow your orders and listen to you in each and every thing, and hence, I am staying with you.

B: And that is exactly what you are not doing while remaining with me. On the contrary, you want me to act in your own way! Hereafter, I won't tell you anything. You give me a programme and I shall follow it.

G: If the situation were really like that, I would not have come to you; but on the contrary I would have taken you to my house. If you mean to try me by such confusion, I don't see the necessity of it since I have already suffered enough at the hands of Sai Baba and Maharaj. You are welcome to try the novices in the line. In spite of my seeing no necessity for it, I do things and work with others just to keep them company. Now just when things appear to go on smoothly, every second or third day you bring up some such matter and cause mutual annoyance. Such incidents damp my spirits and I feel disheartened.

B: Having such a grand connection with me, being actually my dark side, does it befit you to suggest that my orders and actions are at random, with no meaning in them? I have not gathered the whole of the *mandali* to try them, much less yourself. Maharaj made me sit in filth after Experience. Where was the necessity of it? Should I consider that as a trial in my case? I don't intend to try anyone. I only ask you to do just what I tell you. In so doing, you will help me in my work.

G: I am always ready to obey your orders, and with a clear conscience I can say that I have done my best till now.

B: Don't try to read my actions; you will never fathom them. Even if I offer you a cup of poison, drink it without the least hesitation. By so doing, you will greatly ease my work.

After this repartee Baba came to Doctor's room and asked him what he thought about this episode. Thinking awhile, Doctor said, "A person—however used up he may be in this line—without Experience, he is after all human, and as such, there is a

limit to his patience and forbearance; Gustadji has at last spoken his mind."

Baba said, "Conscientiously, Gustadji tries his best to help me, but rather in his own way and therein makes the mistake. Else all can see that he is the man who looks after my own person and comfort from morn to eve."

In the afternoon glass powder, thread, cooked rice and other necessary ingredients are distributed amongst the *mandali* to prepare cutting thread for competitive kite flying and fighting on the day fixed for this sport.

October 8, 1922

Horrible Hammering

Baba once again passed a sleepless night and was most of the time moving about the upper hall.

While sitting for the morning prayers since the 2nd of this month, I could hear a great hammering noise somewhere in the premises in that dead silence when all the inmates were engaged in devotion. At first, I did not consider seriously about this disturbance, but when I found it emanating daily throughout our praying hours at regular intervals, I enquired of Gustadji the reason; to my great surprise I was told it was Baba who used to hammer his head on the floor upstairs! Although Gustadji also gets up with the rest of the *mandali*, he is exempt from the prayers, and thus he is the only person moving about the premises save for the kitchen department. Gustadji's explanation thus accounts for Baba always having a kerchief tied round his forehead these days. Although I knew, for reasons unknown, Baba at times in the presence of the *mandali* in daytime hammered his head against doors and windows, and consequently got ugly bruises over his apparently tender forehead. I even remember having actually seen Baba once smashing to splinters a ventilator of one of the windows in the upper hall with one of the powerful impacts of his head. But this daily hammering of the head, as if it were a blacksmith's big hammer, only came to my knowledge today.

This shows clearly that Baba is suffering heavily from every point of view throughout the 24 hours, in one way or the other; and yet for all that, he is alive as electricity in the general management of the affairs, in keeping an eye over the conduct and looking after the mental and physical conditions of the *mandali*, and even taking as keen and active share in all games and plays as the most robust and active amongst us. In fact, if ever he

seems to be worried or anxious at any time, it is for the sake of someone from the *mandali* who happens at the time to be out of sorts mentally or physically.

Juhu

As per arrangements, Vajifdar has selected Juhu for today's picnic in the bungalow of Mr. Narotam Moraji, whose permission he has already secured. Finding Baba's condition not fit for the excursion owing to a severe pain he has had since this morning, the *mandali* did not like to go out on a pleasure trip. In spite of it, Baba insisted upon all to come out for the treat, and himself accompanied the party to Juhu with a willingness that would surpass that of a student leaving college for vacations. Reaching the destination, we took rest in the bungalow, which is a lovely place situated on the seashore about two miles to the west of Ville-Parle. After refreshing ourselves with the aerated water brought with us, we looked round to see if any game could be played. As it was blazing hot at the time with bright sunshine, we began to play a game under the shade of the coconut trees. The game lasted for about an hour when we were called in for the meals.

Baba distributed the food with his own hands to each of us which consisted of puffed wheat bread and sweet dessert. After finishing with the meals, we were asked to keep indoors during the heated hours of the afternoon.

Caught Napping

At 2 P.M. Baba asked Doctor to see what we all were doing. We were found scattered all over the bungalow lying, sitting, talking and singing, with the exception of Vithal who was snoring at the time. Baba called for Vithal, and asked him to leave for Poona immediately. He again asked Doctor to report as to who were occupying chairs and sofas. Rustom and Patel were the only two members found to be taking advantage of the tempting furniture liberally spread in the bungalow!

A Select Sermon

Hearing this, Baba at once sent for all in his presence and delivered himself as follows:

"In spite of my wretched condition, I have brought you all to this place to give you a sort of change. It is for you all that

I am undergoing all this suffering. What matters it to me if I be at Dadar or here? Hence, it grieves me to find that you have no consideration or regard for me or my sufferings. Here I am lying on the ground, undergoing excruciating pain in the stomach, and having had four stools since the morning, while you have ensconced yourselves comfortably on sofas and easy-chairs. I know it full well that you come of high families, and have been used to all kinds of luxuries and have utilized the best of furniture. Now, on my word, you have discarded the said luxuries for the time being; you should not let go the hold on your mind on such as the present occasions, and should at once remember the line you have adopted, and the spiritual goal you have fixed as your ideal. You should just consider yourself in a jail for the period, that is all. You should not let your minds go to that which you have discarded for the present, the moment a chance is offered your way.

"You have, however, not to undergo the hardships entailed in this line when with me. You are simply required to go against your will and wish, and not to do certain things which you have been doing up to now, and to do certain things which you have no liking for! For example, on feeling hungry, you used to eat; and now you are asked to eat when you have no liking to take food, and not to touch it when you have a craving appetite for it. You used to sleep in daytime, now you are not to do so. Similarly, you were never used to physical labour; while here, at times, you are asked to work in the blazing hot sun. These are instances of your going against your mind and in this way you will gradually learn to control it.

"Look at the Indian leaders of fame and repute like Gandhi and the Ali brothers. From a sense of patriotism and for the sake of the nation, they have left everything of the luxuries of life and are undergoing the hardships of prison life for a long period. For the sake of their country, and the good things of this world, which is a mere dream, these leaders are suffering so much. Just imagine how much more you should do for God, the very source of all that is! Your term of so-called imprisonment with me is only for ten months, wherein you are required to go a little against your mind. It is the least you are to do to attain or reach the Highest. Hafiz says, 'You should go out of the abode of your nature, temperament and thoughts, without which you cannot reach the lane of Truth!' People have discarded the world, and have undergone untold hardships for the sake of God; but here you should admire your good fortune

that you are to realize Him so very easily. Living with me as you are, you are considered to have discarded the whole world in spite of living in it.

"This whole universe, with all its vastness and grandeur, is nothing but mere imagination! In spite of so many discoveries, researches, and scientific knowledge, Creation remains a great riddle. With all the latest inventions of steam and electricity, humanity at large is quite helpless against nature and its so-called freaks. The greatest warriors, scientists, doctors and astrologers have to bow low to one of nature's commonest laws, death, without exception. Everyone of the world is helpless, ignorant, and is for himself.

"The worldly ties of relationship are mere hypocrisy. Swami Vivekananda aptly compares this with Truth when he says:

"They know no truth who dream such vacant dreams as father, mother, child, wife and friend. . . ."

"God is for all; then comes the Prophet and the Master. Barring these, no one in the world possesses what is called true Love!

"Just see how very anxious Maharaj is for me, always sending word to me to go to Sakori so he can take over some share of the terrible spiritual sufferings I am undergoing."

Then the subject turned toward religions, and Baba continued:

"The spirit of Zoroastrianism has been spoiled by the followers. His was the highest form of Sufism. If Zoroaster were to come again in this material world, he would find it very difficult to recognize his own religious tenets as practised by the present-day followers of his creed. The same is true of all religions. The priests have mutilated the original to gain their own motives." Instances were cited here of how this priest class, in every religion, has made religion its stock in trade and of which it makes a very profitable use in various ceremonies and rituals. The lecture continued for about an hour, delivered by Baba in his own free and simple style with so many suitable quotations and examples that they are hard to remember.

The Fourth Illness

About 3:30 in the afternoon, we again were asked to play *itidanda*. Baba also took some part in the game at the onset, but retired very soon in the bungalow asking us to continue the game. After an hour, we all were called to witness Baba vomiting copiously. The ejected matter contained the food taken at about 11:30, almost in its original state before it was eaten,

without undergoing any chemical change, in spite of remaining in Baba for five hours! Doctor said it was very strange and surprising from the medical point of view. Baba told us that he was feeling very weak and would not be able to walk back to the station.

Thereupon, Vajifdar was sent to Andheri to get a taxi. Baba then took a soda, but even this was shortly brought up. Here he reminded the *mandali* that this was the fourth illness mentioned before in connection with the Circle.

Baba left in the taxi with Gustadji, Rustom, and Jal at about 5:30; while the rest of us followed him by train reaching Dadar at 7:15 P.M. We found Baba lying in the dining hall, having passed four more motions since his arrival, and consequently in a very exhausted and pulled-down condition.

A Comedy of Errors

It seems while we were away at Juhu, Abdulla H. Jaffer had been to the bungalow to see Baba. He had come from Poona expressly for the third time, as somehow, he was turned away from the bungalow twice before. Hardly half an hour had passed since we had come back from the seashore of Juhu than Abdulla came in again at about 8 P.M. I went to announce his arrival to Baba. Finding him in a very bad condition I told him that Abdulla had come, but in a very hesitant and low tone. Baba, taking it that Abdulalim had come, asked me to tell him to go away and inform Munshi and Syedsahib that his condition was critical and hopeless. Accordingly, I carried out the awkward duty of turning away the invited guest for the third time from the bungalow, with greater hesitation. Thereafter, I became rather gloomy and irritated, and to my great chagrin I soon found out that I had myself to thank for the awkward situation, although the fact that now I had Syedsahib to share the chagrin with me gave me some relief. It happened thus. Hardly half an hour had elapsed since Abdulla's retreat that Syedsahib came rushing from Charni Road fluttering and fuming like a fire engine as a result of the message which, it seems, Abdulla delivered there rather exaggeratedly in his own excitement to the effect that Baba was in a hopeless condition and dying. Finding that he had become a victim of a misunderstanding, Syedsahib became very cross, specially with me. The poor fellow had every reason to do so, as he came post-haste from home on hearing the message, leaving his wife and children, who all are ill in

bed, to the care of God. Of course, I denied all responsibility as I never sent Abdulla purposely; on the contrary, it was an unpleasant task for me. Hence Syedsahib kept on grumbling as is his wont for a long time, saying Munshi was too cute to be taken in by the message, as after hearing the same he said, "If Baba's case is hopeless it matters not, I have full hopes in him."

When Baba came to know all this confusion he was not a little amused, and asked to write a letter to Abdulla explaining the jumble and asking him to come back once again immediately.

Before 9 P.M. Baba passed four more stools!

October 9, 1922

Rapid Recovery

When we woke up at 4 A.M. as usual, Baba was not seen downstairs as he usually was. However, when we finished with the prayers and trooped in the dining room, in response to the breakfast bell, we found him sitting there. Save for signs of weakness there was no trace of the terrible ordeal through which he had passed last night. On the contrary he looked quite alright and cheerful. This is all the more wonderful that even in the night he passed some six or seven motions besides about 12 yesterday. Perhaps the fourth death has been passed through.

A large stock of wheat bread was still remaining from the lot we had taken to Juhu and these made our breakfast today in place of the usual fresh and crisp bread. Under the excuse that wheat bread requires good exercise for thorough digestion, all were asked to sweep out the back compound and afterwards were made to run a race of "running round" in a circle in small batches in which Rustom was declared to have won.

In spite of his very bad condition, and having had scores of motions yesterday, Baba looks quite his usual self again save for some weakness. And the strangest feature about these illnesses and recoveries is that without any medical treatment, Baba has had no motion at all throughout the day.

In the afternoon, some discussion was going on between Baba and some of us when the topic drifted on the question of ages. Baba said that Doctor's, Adi's and my ages were 20, 16 and 10 respectively. When asked for explanation as to what was meant thereby, the subject was abruptly changed.

5

Continued Life in the Manzil

October 10, 1922

The Spell of Sleep

SINCE the morning prayers are started, we have to get up at 4 o'clock daily. So far, the enthusiasm and expectations of witnessing extraordinary sights and sounds while engaged in the repetitions made us shake off the alluring sleep of the early hours easily.

But in view of so many days having passed away without a single member of the party having reported experiencing any supernatural phenomenon, all are resigned to the situation that the prayers are prayers in the ordinary sense of the word. It means that Baba's hints about the company experiencing supernatural phenomena in or after September did not mean that which we understood from it. Hence, day by day, the question of getting up so early in the day has become one of the most inconveniencing practices these days. Behramji, who has the duty of awakening all, first used to cry out the names of one or two persons while standing by a group of the rooms in one part of the bungalow, and all the persons in those rooms would come up or raise a voice in reply. Now no one answers the rising call unless particularly addressed oneself. Besides, the awakener himself, i.e., Behramji, coming to each room with half-opened eyes, repeating the names of the respective occupants in the tone of an exhausted gramophone, taking a lightning nap with the support of a half-opened doorway while he gets a reply, provides a funny scene. Besides, somebody running into a door or window or a collision between two persons is an occasional feature of the sleeping atmosphere. The funniest incident in

this connection was Behramji's missing some steps today while descending downstairs, and consequently making a short cut of the journey with a crash.

The Baths

The scene at the bathroom is amusing. Strange noises and sounds occasionally emanate from this direction, proclaiming the fact that the particular member inside has had turned down upon himself the first dreaded tumbler of cold, cold water and is beginning to have an upper hand with dame sleep! In this connection, Doctor's peculiar "Shash, Shoo Shoosh" is very prominent. Whenever this curious hissing comes out of the bathroom it is safe to bet that it contains Doctor. There being only two bathrooms and about 30 persons having to take bath within the fixed time of 4 to 4:45, a string of candidates is always found along the hall containing the bathroom waiting for one's turn in an orderly line. But even the short period of waiting for a few minutes is utilized by most in taking a nap, only to be pulled up with the jolt of a neighbour.

A Wave of Cleanliness

Leaving aside the question of supernatural change in the atmosphere expected by some, there is, however, a marked physical change in the atmosphere of the Manzil of a recent date. Perhaps it may be due to an imperceptible change from the spiritual point of view also having taken place. The new change chiefly consists in a wave of cleanliness having passed over all the multifarious departments of domestic life in the bungalow. Even Baba himself is marked to be observing strict cleanliness in all matters about his person. While taking a bath, Baba is observed to use soap very frequently and freely, and insists upon having his clothes, towels, and sheet scrupulously clean and clear to a fault! He has separated his own kitchen department from the common one too. Nowadays, Gustadji cooks the meals for Baba, observing great care about cleanliness.

This is very contrasting to Baba's earlier activities in the beginning of our stay in the Manzil. In those days, almost twice a week, Baba and Gustadji, used to clean with their own hands the dirty gutters running from the closets and privies to the drains outside the compound. While doing this highly stinking work, none of the *mandali* was allowed to take any share at

first, excepting Gustadji; but after some time, some of us were also asked to lend a hand in this gutter-sweeping work.

The change is very far reaching so far as it concerns the *mandali* at large. All are strictly enjoined not to sit on bare ground, but to spread something before going so, in spite of the present dry climate. During the monsoon when it was wet and damp everywhere, we used to sit and lie down anywhere we liked on bare ground.

Water is not to be taken from the earthen water cooler directly with the glasses belonging to the individuals as heretofore, but a goblet tied to a string is now attached about the cooler and the water has been ordered to be taken out only through these goblets, and then drink the same only after transferring it into our own respective tumblers. Rules have been framed as to when and how far the footgear is to be used in the bungalow premises, while special wooden slippers are provided near the latrines to be used while going to the W.C. In short, a complete change has overcome the Manzil to ensure cleanliness in almost every walk of life—eating, drinking, sitting, etc.

The Mosquito Killing

On top of it all, everyone is ordered to destroy about 50 mosquitoes daily so as to clean the Manzil of these fever pests! This latter order gives rise to many funny scenes. At every odd hour, in nooks and corners, one mosquito hunter or another can be marked fumbling, jumping, clapping and, in fact, making use of all available tactics to fill up the bag of the day with the required number of the pests as quickly as possible. And this duty usually ends with the stained hands of a butcher just returning home after the day's work.

Baba is found cheerful throughout the day without any trace of his recent illness. He also told us that he feels very fresh owing to his having slept for an hour and a half overnight which he attributed to the cow's butter sent by Maharaj for him from Sakori with Patel that had been massaged on his head. In the afternoon, Baba asked Doctor to remind him to explain to us about the exciting game he had once said would begin in September, at supper time.

Outwitted

Just at the moment Doctor was about to carry out the order of reminding Baba about his promised explanation at supper,

he was suddenly asked not to speak or utter any sound until he finished the food which was already served just then. After the meal Baba said, "Doctor has failed to carry out the order of reminding about the explanation at 7 o'clock as instructed, and hence it is posted *sine die*."

Doctor put in that he did not forget the order: "On the contrary, I was eager enough to remind Baba at the right moment, but I was gagged for the time being, under a fresh order." Baba said, "The latest order simply made you observe silence. You could still have reminded me with or through signs."

All had to agree that Doctor could have observed and obeyed both the orders at a time. Even Doctor had to plead guilty to unintentional disobedience in the end.

Dhuppa-Dhuppi

As soon as the plates were removed, Baba asked all to be ready for a game of *dhuppa-dhuppi* which was indulged in heartily for about 20 minutes in the dining room. This game is played while all are sitting in a room along the walls with an open space in the middle. A tennis ball is thrown at each other with full strength, and different tactics, so as to hit as hard as possible on any unguarded point, particularly on the head or face of the opponent. The one who manages to get hold of the ball can hit anybody sitting there about him, as all the rest become opponent. Full liberty is given to all to hit as hard as possible anyone in the party including Baba himself! Of course, all are strictly enjoined never to hit with malice or anger but merely for the fun of the fun! Doctor and Baba can be said to be the champion hitters, the former for sending the ball in an unexpectedly reverse direction through his peculiar twist and the latter for the terrific direct hit, while Behramji fares the worst in this game. In punishment he gets the lion's share; but the ball seldom gets in his hand, and then too, not having the knack or trick, it is a mere throw, only to be returned on his head or face with a great bump. Although at times the game causes some black eyes, yet on the whole it acts as a great mental refreshment as it requires a great concentration throughout the game. For the short duration of some 15 or 20 minutes everyone is compelled to leave aside all other thoughts and concentrate on the one point—the ball—to derive the full pleasure of the game as well as to save a black eye or bump on the head or face.

October 11, 1922

The Alarum Causes Alarm

The alarum having failed, we all got up ten minutes late, i.e., at 4:10 A.M., and consequently we did not finish with our baths, etc., to be present in the dining hall by 4:45 as usual. At this few minutes' difference, Baba got into a temper, and asked all not to sit for the prayers. "The morning programme is hereby cancelled," he added. But the simple words spelt thunder for the *mandali*; and for the ensuing half an hour dead silence ruled supreme in the Manzil. Everyone kept himself out of the way lest he be caught in the expected hurricane!

When in such moods, Baba seems to possess the strength and energy of a steam-roller and electricity combined; the manifestation far exceeds his apparently frail physique! However, by 5:30 Baba got cooled down without any untoward happening and all were asked to retire to their respective rooms and sit down as usual for repeating God's name.

One More Coincidence?

In the afternoon Baba suddenly ordered Doctor and Adi to keep aside the *sitars* after putting them in their respective cases and covers. The order looked very strange on the face of it, as the *sitars* were never put in the cases these last four months. Even when unused for days together they were allowed to lie about uncovered in a corner of the storeroom. But some meaning in the order suggested itself and Adi found a dead rat lying in one of the cases in a horrible stinking condition.

The matter being reported to Baba, the case was ordered to be cleaned and washed with phynile by me. While doing the same, Baba came and took equal share with me in washing the stinking case with his own hands! Baba then again explained to us with great emphasis that unless strict cleanliness is observed in all matters a serious disease will originate in the premises. Doctor was ordered to write the following on board:

Most Urgent

A dead rat was found in the box when the *sitar* was ordered to be put in it. This shows a serious disease is likely

to invade the premises unless the rooms are kept scrupulously clean as already ordered.

11.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

But shortly afterwards, the above notice was wiped out by Baba before all could read it, probably to avoid a general stir and fright, and the following was substituted:

Tincture iodine should be applied on ringworms, pimples, and any other skin trouble. 11.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

At about 6:30 in the evening, myself, Doctor and Adi were sitting talking things at random on the front steps of the bungalow. The topic gradually turned on the present situation and how, by and by, Baba was making things more difficult. Of late, the afternoon tea has been stopped, the sleeping hours curtailed, the forcible stuffing of the stomach with food in spite of no inclination to eat, absence of fresh bread at breakfast, as well as the increase of so many more minor orders, especially that of killing a fixed number of mosquitoes daily and so on—in this way, we were giving vent to our feelings of resentment. Doctor said, "I for one do feel his grip tightening or growing stronger day by day."

The Divine Wireless

Hardly had he finished the sentence when suddenly Adi was sent for by Baba upstairs! Shortly after, we both were also called for, and Baba began reprimanding Doctor for not doing any work himself, and on the contrary trying to lead others to become idle too.

Baba kept on a volley of such remarks towards Doctor for some time and ordered the three of us not to talk with each other for ten months. After a while, he asked us if we had felt anything. Adi and myself replied in the affirmative, while Doctor said he did not feel anything; on the contrary, he was thinking about the mistake he was likely to commit owing to faulty memory in following this fresh binding of an order. Thereupon, Baba cancelled the order so far as it concerned Adi and myself, but ordered Doctor not to talk with anyone in the bungalow for ten months!

I was ordered to write the following on the board:

Everyone in the bungalow is strictly prohibited from talking or holding any sort of communication by signs or through writing or in any other way with Doctor.

11.10.'22

(Sd.) Merwan

Sent to Coventry

At supper time Baba again enjoined upon all not to have any sort of connection with Doctor, and all should act in such a way as to forget his very presence in the bungalow. Baba himself, having stopped talking with Doctor, asked him through Gustadji if he had felt anything. Doctor replied in the negative. Thereupon, Baba got further excited and began swearing at Doctor, saying if he is anything, he would surely make Doctor feel. And then added the following words to the notice which is already on board:

If Doctor has any sense of shame, he will leave the bungalow at once.

During this excitement, Baba asked us if we all had received the M.O. receipts. Hearing this, Doctor went to his room and brought the receipts that remained to be distributed as usual and gave one each to Ahmedkhan and Kondiram. Baba, seeing this, got wild with the latter two and ordered the pair to leave the premises as soon as possible and take Doctor along with them.

At this sudden outburst, both of them got funky, and poor old Ahmedkhan was all perspiration from head to foot. Although a short while after Baba excused Ahmedkhan and Kondiram on the plea of their not having properly grasped the latest order, Doctor seemed firm in his attitude and showed no sign of relenting in spite of so much excitement. Baba suddenly changed his tactics and became very calm and in a quiet but serious tone told Doctor, "I order you to go to Poona and stay there. I am not sending you away for good. You can let your things remain in your room and come and stay with me one day every month. Your connection with me will remain intact, and I shall surely do for you what I have to do."

Doctor replied, "I am bound to follow your orders, but I don't like the prospect of remaining one month in Poona, and out of that only one day in Bombay with you. I do not know how I shall be able to pass my time there." "Then this shows that

you have felt the last order," asked Baba, to which *at last* Doctor gave in and said yes, upon which he was asked to write the following on the notice board:

Doctor is excused throughout for his admitting to have felt.

11.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

After this, once again, the atmosphere became normal and all breathed a sigh of relief. A game of *dhuppa-dhuppi* was indulged in for some time, after which Baba suddenly asked Doctor to put up the following notice:

I beg of all persons here not to convey in their actions and words bad intentions amongst themselves.

11.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

October 12, 1922

External versus Internal

Before we sat for the usual prayers, Baba delivered the following lecture at 4:30 in the morning:

"There are two states, internal and external, divided or separated by a mental curtain. Now to cleanse the internal, is a matter which is not in the hands of any mortal being. Without the help of a Perfect Master, it is an impossibility. Therefore until a Perfect Master can be come across, one should try his best to keep the external, i.e., body, clean. This is what the orthodox tenets of all religions teach. *By following orthodox tenets to perfection, one has a chance of coming into the connection of a Perfect Master.* The observance of external cleanliness as taught by different religions does brighten up to some extent the internal also.

Thus to understand or realize God, one of the two ways should be adopted; no middle course would do. Since cleaning the internal is in the hands of Perfect Master only, then in his absence, the second best method is to look after the external as laid down in one's own religion. In all the religious tenets, you can see that it is all external only, reading, sitting, standing, keeping the body clean with baths and ablutions, and in the same way observing cleanliness about one's clothes, food, etc. With the eyes you look at good and religious objects, with the tongue

and lips you utter prayers, with the ear you hear divine recitation, and so on. Thus, the rules of religions are all external only, and hence, all of the prophets from the beginning of time have enjoined upon their followers to observe the tenets.

The middle course as adopted by yogis and those given to studies is a complete failure, because they depend upon, or take the help of both internal and external for the realization of their goal. By bringing the mind into work in the process of concentration and imagination and that of bringing the upper and lower breaths into contact in the brain, they depend on the internal; but in sitting, reading, and fasting, they make use of the external, i.e., body, and for this reason, they generally fail. Therefore until your fortune takes you into the orbit of a Perfect Master's influence, it is best to follow the tenets of religion as much as you can.

When once the internal is cleansed by the favour of a Perfect Master, i.e. a person who has realized God, the external is no longer cared for and is completely neglected. It is for this reason that saints are generally seen in the most dirty state externally. What do such people care, after what they have achieved, for the external which is but to perish in the course of time?"

Frailty of Materialism

While Doctor was making preparations for Baba's bath at 2 P.M., Baba sent for some chocolates from the bazaar. Distributing a few to each of us, he asked if we liked the taste of it. With the exception of Arjun, all replied in the affirmative. After some five minutes, Baba asked us if the taste of the chocolate that we enjoyed just a few minutes ago was still there. On getting an unanimous reply in the negative, he said, "When a good thing is given to it, the mind is pleased, but soon after settles down to its original state; if some bitter medicine or a purgative like epsom salts and castor oil is forced upon it, the same mind revolts; but again, after a short while, reverts to its normal state. This proves that both the pleasures and pains of this world are so very ephemeral and short-lived.

"Just now, you ate the chocolates with a sense of enjoyment; but immediately after, the same enjoyment and taste has become a thing of the past, *since no result thereof has remained*. Such is the case with all the earthly pleasures and pains. The highest kind of enjoyment or pleasurable sensation in this world is sexual intercourse. But how long does it last? Only a few minutes. Now

this, the highest of all the material pleasures can well be compared with the Real happiness as if the former were a shadow of a drop from the infinite ocean of eternal happiness, which when once realized is felt and enjoyed every second forever! From this comparison you can imagine the hollowness of the world and its pleasures."

Again in the evening, Baba gave interesting explanations of a *ghazal* from Hafiz, which he sang for the first time. Today being Thursday, the *arti* of Maharaj was recited in the evening when for the first time, the *mandali* were allowed to pay respects to Baba.

October 13, 1922

Why Worry?

The usual routine was followed till about 10:30 A.M when Baba sent for Doctor and Adi. He asked them to keep their minds free and cheerful; and according to the latter, the following words were uttered by Baba in support thereof:

"If there be a cause, great or small, present, then a result must follow accordingly with a certainty. Now the griefs and sorrows of this world are imaginary and *self-created*, for there is no cause for them that would justify the result. The result in order to be substantial and believable must have some cause for it. If the cause be absent, then it naturally follows that the effect or result is unsubstantial or imaginary. Then why worry yourself about the sorrows, griefs, or pleasures of this world which have no cause behind them other than mere imagination? Be a passive spectator of what is passing around you, and keep the mind free and happy. Hafiz enjoins the same when he says: 'O Hafiz! both the sorrows and happiness of the world are to pass away; hence it is better that I should remain happy throughout!'"

After the Friday prayers the coldness and ill-feeling existing between myself, and my roommate Slamson, and Sarosh came up for discussion. When Baba came to know about this through Gustadji, he said he felt sorry that such a state of things still existed in the Manzil in spite of his repeated warnings and frequent notices put up on the board. A sound lecture was then given to the three of us and a promise taken from each that we would not entertain ill-feeling towards each other and live on amicable terms in the future on penalty of getting the "Order of the Boot" from the bungalow in case of a relapse.

The Great Watch

When asked to play *korda* in the compound after supper, all sat down on the ground for the game, forgetting the order to spread something underneath before sitting anywhere. Baba at once drew the attention of all to the mistake committed and wrote the following on the board:

I regret to say that the whole *mandali* broke the order of not sitting on the ground without spreading something underneath.

(Sd.) Merwan

That which slipped from the memory of more than two score of us, at once arrested Baba's attention in spite of his multifarious spiritual, mental and physical engagements! This means that even such minute and not so very important actions are also watched very closely by Baba.

October 14, 1922

A Foretold Advent

As usual, when all of us assembled in the dining hall at 4:45 in the morning, prior to sitting for the prayers, Baba asked if anyone had seen dreams.³¹ Those who remembered having seen any were asked to relate them. Doctor said he saw himself sitting somewhere near Bhendi Bazaar (Bombay) on the main road footpath in dirty brown coloured clothes, when some of his friends and acquaintances passing along pointed fingers at him and said, "This is the erstwhile Doctor of Nul Bazaar." Abdurrehman said that he saw in his dream Khak talking with Baba. Upon this, Baba told him that if what he says is true then Khak will come today from Delhi.

After breakfast, Baba asked all to play a game of cricket and said, "Ramjoo and Abdulla should select and captain the teams today." The distinction to both of us proved rather an awkward business, as without knowing properly how to hold the bat, we had to captain the teams! Doctor did not forget to make the most out of it and began cracking jokes. He told Baba that Khak would have matched well with Abdulla as both have their inevitable spectacles always clamped over the eyes. Baba laughed and said Khak will come today. After the play Khak and Asar really walked in, although for the last ten days no news had

been received from them as to where they were and what they were doing.

Amateur Washermen

Dirty clothes having accumulated in excess of the washerman's capability of clearing them away single-handed, Baba asked us all to give him a helping hand in his work. In a short while, the atmosphere underwent an extraordinary change. With so many persons seriously engaged in the different processes of washing, drying, ironing and fumbling at the steam-cleaning fires and the scores of clothes lines fluttering in the air, the back compound looked a miniature professional laundry in Bombay.

After supper, Baba sent for all and again broached the subject of his going to Sakori. The question had been partially discussed in the afternoon. Once again, Baba invited the opinions of the *mandali* since all were present there including Munshi and Vajifdar.

Spiritual Sufferings

Baba said, "My sufferings are becoming unbearable, and by going to Sakori, Maharaj will take down a little burden off my shoulders; but in this, Maharaj will have to suffer much internally. Maharaj may even beat me and disgrace me in the presence of all at *Divali* time. I have been telling you all along that advanced saints and pilgrims will disgrace and beat me since the spiritual world is against me at this time. So it is just possible that Maharaj may take the matter into his own hands by disgracing and beating me. If, however, I remain here, I shall have to suffer terribly!" With the exception of Munshi and Vajifdar who were against the proposal of Baba going to Sakori, all the rest preferred that he went, and accordingly Baba has decided to leave for Sakori tonight by the Delhi Express.

The True Teacher

Then Baba asked Doctor to bring the passage from Swami Vivekananda's book on which an explanation has been postponed for so many times. The passage was then read before the *mandali*; it ran as follows:

"The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice . . . and who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student's soul, see through the student's eyes, hear through his ears, and understand through his mind—such a teacher, and none else, can teach."

Explaining this Baba said, "A teacher, an M.A. teaching the alphabet to the students, must of necessity bring himself down to the level of his students, and so read, write, and repeat A,B,C, along with them. Then only he will be able to teach and impart his own knowledge to them and *gradually* bring them to his own level. If he does not bring himself down from the dizzy heights of his attainments, then the labour bestowed by him will be wasted upon the students. Similarly a Perfect Master brings himself down so close to the ordinary run of mankind that in course of time, he is able to impart his knowledge to them.

"Take the case of Muhammad himself; when harassed by enemies and finding himself in danger of his life, he actually fled from Mecca and took refuge in Medina! Now the greatest spiritual Master of the world, by fleeing from the place of his birth, acted after the manner of an ordinary human being when confronted with such an emergency.

"It is for this reason only that a spiritually sober Master can make others like himself, a thing impossible with the spiritually intoxicated. The latter are so much drowned in the sea of divinity that they have not even the sense of their body left with them. When such is their case, how can they give understanding to others, and show Truth?"

Interpretations

Baba continued that things that were to happen in Poona as said by him before were taking place in Bombay and added, "I told you *then* that I shall have to suffer a great deal while in Poona, so much so that my eyes will sink in their sockets. This has taken place here in Bombay. I told you that I shall be beaten severely by people; so it is just possible it may occur here! My words will all *come true* but *how, where and when*, that I know myself. You will not be able to understand them: 'To understand and talk such subjects, special ears and a different tongue are necessary.'"

Caught Between Two Fires

Continuing, Baba said, "My sufferings are twofold since the charge in me comes from two sides, a little from Babajan and a large stock from Maharaj. Maharaj knows this and therefore sends word constantly with Rustom, Patel, etc., asking me to go over to Sakori so that he may ease my burdens and sufferings a little. But by so doing, the old man will have to suffer greatly internally. If, however, I don't go, my sufferings will also have gone past bearing and I am, so to say, placed between two fires!" After these explanations, Baba asked Doctor to explain to Khak and Asar, this being their first night back, the spiritual order that the *mandali* have been following from October 1st. Doctor thereupon told them in detail the new programme about getting up in the early morning, taking a bath, and then sitting in one position repeating the name of the Almighty, as well as observing a prayer according to our own faith during these hours.

Teaching the Teacher

Asar however raised objection as to the particular prayer to be observed in the particular hour and time. The matter being reported to Baba, he became very angry and excited and took Khak and Asar both roundly for doubting and finding fault with his instructions. He then ordered all the Muslims to discontinue getting up in the morning, and to do what we liked best. Cooling down a little, Baba continued his remarks: "Who is there amongst you who knows more about religion than myself? You can't show a more true Muslim than myself. I am what I am externally. Who knows what I am internally? Prayers and worship are only meant for God; while you are so much lost in the formality of the thing and its details that leaving aside God, you worship the prayers."

During this excitement, since the above remarks were pointed towards Khak, the latter lost his balance and in self-defence tried to throw the blame on Asar's shoulders, who so long had been silent as a graveyard, burst out, and made counter-allegations against Khak. The matter reached such serious points that, leaving aside the question of prayers, both of them began quarrelling amongst themselves. Asar even went to the length of saying that he will no longer be Khak's roommate, and asked for a separate room. At this, Baba put in, and insisted upon

both of them remaining on amicable terms as before on the pain of leaving the bungalow.

After some more explanations Baba left for Sakori at 10 P.M., taking promises from Khak and Asar that they would forget and forgive mutually and become their old selves again. And the temporary exemption to the Muslims from the morning duties was also rescinded.

It seems the question of the prayers was simply found fault with by Khak and Asar only to bring before Baba the mutual animosity that had sprung between them of late, and it no doubt provided them with a good safety valve!

October 15, 1922

Gari-Bon-Ka-Asra

The usual routine was gone through apparently without any hitch in Baba's absence today under Gustadji's guidance. The interesting feature of the day was to hear of Khak and Asar's recent visit to Delhi and Ajmere and the incidents connected therewith—specially their meeting with Khwaja Hasan Nizami.

It seems they offered Khwajasahib an opportunity to rewrite the biography, but he refused owing to other engagements, and they had to be content with a few lines from his well-known pen by way of an introduction to the book, which was titled by him as "*Gari-Bon-Ka-Asra*," i.e. "The Shelter of the Poor." It is said that he did not even go through the whole of the manuscript, but simply had a random scanning; and yet, the introduction is simply a grand review of the contents. Not only that, but it is in itself a very interesting and instructive discourse on spirituality. As soon as he saw Sai Baba's photo Khwajasahib remembered having met him when he was alive, and held a very high opinion of him. Khak and Asar also had some discussion with Khwajasahib about the coming great personality which is expected in many quarters. He was told Baba's words in this matter uttered long ago that the new Teacher will manifest himself very soon in the world and that the first outburst will be in India and in particular in Karachi. Asar pointedly asked him what he thought of Baba's words in this connection, specially about the manifestation of the Messenger in Karachi, while according to Islamic traditions, the manifestation of *Imam Mehdi* will be in Jerusalem. Khwajasahib said there is not much importance in this point. *Imam Mehdi* will be a Perfect Master (a *Salik* or *Sadguru* as termed by the Hindus), hence it will not

be difficult for him to appear even at hundreds of places at a time, however great the distance be between the different places.

The special programme today was kite flying which was heartily indulged in under the instructions left by Baba. How very considerate of him in providing amusement to the *mandali* even in his absence.

October 17, 1922

Baba Returns from Sakori

While we were engaged in spreading cow dung on the back compound, Baba came back from Sakori at about 8:30 A.M. and after going through some letters, etc., received in his absence, he wrote the following notice on the board:

If anyone has, during the last two days, broken any order of mine, slight or prominent, either knowingly or unconsciously, he should reveal it to me by 8 o'clock tonight.

17.10.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

All therefore began recounting their mistakes before Baba. Doctor pleaded guilty to having read Asar's *ghazal* that had appeared in an Urdu daily, and was fined to bring a volume of Swami Vivekananda's works from the market; and so on, some more confessions were rattled out and adjudged suitably.

Phenomenon of Music

Gustadji thereafter told Baba that in his absence a hot discussion took place between Rustom and Naval on music. Naval maintained that *dipak rag* (fixed form of classical music) if properly sung could bring down rain; while Rustom said that it was impossible to do so merely through the science of singing. Unless one had some spiritual powers, the question of bringing rains was exaggeration, pure and simple.

Hearing this, Baba agreed with Naval that it was possible merely through the science of music to bring about rainfall without any supernatural powers, and further explaining, said, "It is generally admitted that rain falls as a result of the dashing together of vapour clouds in the sky. Now, sound also travels in waves and science has proved that it takes time to travel so. This travelling of the sound waves can easily be understood if you look at a washerman washing clothes at a distance. When

he strikes the clothes on a stone, the sound of the impact does not reach your ear at the same moment, but just a few seconds after the act. Similarly, in *dipak rag*, the voice, attaining the required pitch or vibrations, reaches the clouds and creates a disturbance; consequently, the clouds are dashed against each other causing rainfall. It is quite a natural phenomenon, and what is there to disbelieve in it?

"Compared with this, the discovery of wireless telegraphy is more difficult to believe since without any apparent connecting link such as wire, etc., messages or sounds are made to travel great distances between two different points. Now what is voice? Where does it originate? When we hear it coming out of the mouth, it must be in existence somewhere! Really speaking, voice is everywhere in the universe. God is voice, light, everything. The voice has been given a door, that is, the mouth, to manifest from. When a sound is let out of the mouth, it is lost in the universal Voice which is everywhere. So, what wonder is there if the voice, emanating from the music, reaches the clouds which are at the most two miles from the earth, while it is a recognized fact that sound waves are sent through wireless telegraphy through thousands of miles. There is nothing spiritual or unnatural about getting rains through sound waves.

Scripture Reading

"It is for this reason of the sound travelling and creating various vibrations that one should read the holy books, although the meaning may not be understood. The words in the Zend-Avesta of the Parsis and the Holy Koran and other scriptures are so put and arranged that when read out, the voice or sound created comes very nearly into unison with the universal Voice, and that goes a great way in effecting something spiritually."

God's Family

While Doctor was preparing water for Baba's bath in the afternoon, Baba suddenly asked me if God has a mother. I said I don't know. Thereupon Baba took me to task for not knowing the ordinary tenets of Islamic faith. To finally decide the affair, Khak and Asar were requisitioned. The latter, in trying to defend me, added, "Ramjoo was right in the reply he gave. How can one tell with certainty that God has parents or not?" Baba said, "If you are not certain about the point, why should you fall

foul of the Christians and cry them down for believing that Jesus is the Son of God, as you yourself are not certain about God and whether He has parents or not. Whatever it may be, you should not forget or put aside your religion so very easily. Externally you must hold on to it."

Asar tried for some time to defend his point of view, but ultimately had to give in against Baba's logic and arguments, while Khak simply looked on with a pensive look through his spectacles as is his wont on such occasions. Then turning towards Doctor, Baba asked, "Has God any children?" Doctor replied in the affirmative, while the rest of us said no. Thereupon, Doctor was asked to explain what he meant to which he said, "Having heard you tell that Muhammad is the father of God in the sense you mean, what harm is there to imagine that God has children?" Baba replying, said, "Having a father does not necessarily mean that one must have children. But certainly, God has innumerable children. The multifarious powers that emanate from Him can be said to be God's children. According to the Hindus, God is called *Deo* and the three hundred thirty million powers of God are the *Deotas* (deities)."

The Third Eye

When Baba came down after taking a bath, he found Asar sleeping in his room. He was severely taken to task, and during the conversation Baba explained, "There is, besides our two external eyes, a third eye internally, which sees through the two external eyes, and is situated between the eyebrows and which even the yogis know about. The yogis, in the height of their attainment, see with this third internal eye God, or Brahman as they call it, contained in the skull. A Perfect Master, however, can see three things as pleases his fancy: with the external eyes, he can see this world and the universe, with the internal eye, he sees God, and again with the external eyes, he actually sees all that exists as emanating in the form of innumerable circles out of himself through the point of the third eye. It is for this reason that those who see Brahman can be counted by thousands, while Perfect Masters are always very few."

Baba's Sleep

After this, Baba fell asleep in the dining hall while Doctor was chafing his limbs, and got up as late as quarter to six in

the evening! After this long slumber, when he got up Baba thought it was morning and asked Gustadji if tea and breakfast was ready. When informed that it was time to take the evening meal, he at once took in the situation and said he had never slept like this before, and that he brought the sleep from Sakori.

Happenings at Sakori

Then, after supper, Baba explained and narrated the events of his recent visit to Sakori to all the *mandali*. Instead of going and talking against him, Maharaj made all people there pay homage to Baba in his own presence. He slept well, and what with the concourse of people always round him wherever he went or sat, he had very little time left to talk with Maharaj himself, with whom he has arranged to send the *mandali* for two days on *Divali* occasion. In all, Baba stayed at Sakori for 18 hours. Thence he went to 'Nagar before returning to Bombay this morning.

October 18, 1922

Agreement Again

After supper, all were called together in the upper hall and were informed that from the 1st of November, Baba was to begin his internal work very seriously. Those who wanted to remain with him throughout should put their signatures on a stamped paper to that effect. But before doing so, all should think twice and be prepared to stick to him even if there is a calamity in the family after they give in their signatures. There may well be a death, a serious injury or other losses in the families of those who are to stay here. Then the agreement was read and translated before all by Doctor under Baba's instructions, which runs as follows:

We the undersigned, in full possession of our senses, of our own free will and accord, hereby agree not to leave Meher Baba under any circumstances from the 1st of November 1922 to 25th of April 1923. We also agree to stay here with him regardless of any family events, such as death of any nearest relation, friend, or parents. After the lapse of the said period, Meher Baba binds himself to fulfill the promises which he has already verbally agreed to, before the 10th of June 1923.

If any of us fails to stay with Meher Baba under any trying circumstances, then he is not responsible for carrying out the promise given.

The paper, after being read and explained, was passed round for signatures, which was put by all except Asar. He refused point-blank to put his signature without assigning any reason for it! At this, he was asked to go out of the compound by Baba; Asar then begged to go out for the night only, but it was refused by Baba who said that once one leaves the bungalow without signing the new agreement tonight, he leaves for good. During this excitement, a wordy duel took place between Doctor, Gustadji, and Behramji too. The former was severely rebuked by Baba, and consequently he became very dejected. Some time after, however, Baba asked Doctor the reason of his depression and as to what he was thinking about. Doctor replied that it was some personal matter and hence he would tell Baba afterwards in private. But Baba asked Doctor to unburden his mind on paper with a pen there and then. The long time that he took in preparing his complaint showed that he took full advantage of the opportunity. Baba having gone through it, laughed a little and asked Doctor to remind him about it the following day. Then again, Asar's case was taken up by Baba and the rest of us were dismissed for the night. Leaving Asar with Baba, we all retired downstairs and took to our respective beds.

October 19, 1922

Asar Retreats

In the morning we came to know that at last Asar had gone. He has, however, gone after putting in his signature on the new agreement along with the others so that in case he wants to return after due consideration, he can. Even then, he signed, after adding the words, "Shall do as much as I can," as late as 11 o'clock last night.

Baba sent word with Doctor when the latter went with Khak and Patel to the press and binders this morning, asking Asar to return by 12 o'clock in the noon. However, he did not turn up, and Doctor told Baba that when he saw him, Asar was not in a mood to return. Thereupon, Baba made Doctor write two letters to Shermohomed and Papamyan, respectively, at Poona not to come to Bombay with the students as already arranged

on the 26th, and Baba asked Doctor to show these letters to Asar. If he returned by the evening, well and good, otherwise to post away the two letters. The letters were accordingly shown to Asar by Doctor who also tried personally to persuade him to return. But Asar stuck to his guns. When Baba learnt of this, he ordered Jadhav also to go out of the bungalow, and thus, all those who had come in Baba's contact through Asar were directly or indirectly disconnected completely. The atmosphere has become very packed: Asar's revolt, the *mandali's* proposed departure for Sakori tonight, and the negotiations briskly going on for the purchase of a flour mill at Parel by Rustom, Behramji and Asthma to provide some extra occupation to those who are out of jobs. Besides all these external engagements, the daily routine of early getting up, baths, prayers, play, mosquito killing and what not, is being rigidly observed; hence the atmosphere be better imagined than written. Leaving Baba, Khak, Doctor and a few others, the rest of the *mandali* left Bombay tonight by Delhi Express for Sakori.

October 22, 1922

Mandali at Sakori

Since our arrival here on the morning of the 20th, the time was well passed. Maharaj often sat with the *mandali* giving interesting explanations and advice. His main object seemed to impress upon all to stick to Meher Baba through thick and thin, and the gist of what he said in this connection is as follows:

"Hear and obey Merwan's orders. In doing so, it would be necessary to suffer a little, which, however, you should try to bear cheerfully. If, however, the limit of suffering is reached, then the matter should be humbly placed before him, and he will be able to lessen the sufferings a little bit. Put up with things comfortable or otherwise, but on no account let go hold of him. God is getting more and more manifested in Merwan day by day, and good days are to come for him. Stick to him at all cost," and so on through various explanations and arguments, Maharaj directly and indirectly kept on impressing on us the necessity of keeping to Baba and his words. Besides the interesting discourses of Shri Maharaj, Durgamai's efforts and care after the *mandali's* food did not play the least part in making our visit as comfortable and pleasant as circumstances would allow.

October 23, 1922

Visit to Babajan

Leaving Sakori, instead of coming to Bombay direct via Manmad, we came to Poona for Babajan's blessing under Meher Baba's instructions. Khak and Rustom also joined us at Poona, when they, after Babajan's blessing, returned with us to Bombay where we reached in the afternoon at about 1 P.M. After we had refreshed ourselves, Baba asked all to repair in the upper hall, where we gathered all together and narrated our experiences of our visit to Sakori and Poona.

Agreement Confirmed

Baba asked Doctor to get the stamped paper again containing the *mandali's* signatures, and informed us all to reconsider our decisions, and if still we felt hesitation or unwillingness in giving the signatures we could withdraw, and that he would willingly free us from our undertaking. But all declaring their determination to stick to their promises come what may, the agreement was finally declared to be binding on all excepting Asar whom Baba said he is going to make free in spite of his having signed the agreement unconditionally in our absence.

While we were at Sakori it seems Asar kicked up a great row about signing that agreement. But eventually after so much fuss and excitement, through Munshi's persuasions, he gave in unconditionally and did sign the document after all like others. But now, as already declared by Baba, in spite of his having been bound over in black and white he will be made free unless Asar remains with the rest of the *mandali* with a free mind and open heart. He has been given time to decide by the end of the month whether to remain in the *mandali* or to sever his connection with Baba and take to the worldly life again.

October 25, 1922

The Flour Mill

Besides the daily routine, the preparations for publishing the Life of Shri Maharaj, which is almost out of the press and being bound, are in full swing. Posters are being stuck over big cardboards and other necessary advertising preparations are made. The mill that has already been bought on the very day the

mandali left for Sakori is also being overhauled to start working forthwith. It is situated on Elphinstone Road beyond the railway overbridge in a thickly populated mill area amidst the dirty surroundings of gutters and sewers. The premises or building is also quite in keeping with the surroundings, being dark and dilapidated. The machinery consists of three engines and about half a dozen flour mills, all in a very dirty condition requiring extensive overhauling and repairs.

October 27, 1922

Poona Rumours

The following programme is put up on the board this morning:

28.10.'22 To go to Victoria Gardens

29.10.'22 To feed the poor and blind

30.10.'22 To go to Kalyan

By Order

Doctor, who had been to Poona the other day, returned back to the Manzil this morning. According to what Doctor told Baba, many tongues are wagging about Baba and the *mandali* in Poona with all sorts of exaggerated and false stories. With the exception of the few people who know, the general opinion prevailing in Poona was that the party was out for mischief, looting the Bombay public, and that the whole affair of the Irani saint and his assorted followers was a huge fraud!

October 28, 1922

To Victoria Gardens

As per the programme already arranged, we all came to the Victoria Gardens with Baba. Vajifdar managed to get us special facilities from the superintendent who happened to be his old friend. The excursion on the whole proved very successful. Specially the programme of food was very attractive amidst the beautiful surroundings of shady trees, water canal, and flower plants of various hues and shapes. Baba also gave some interesting explanations while inspecting the animal cages. Particularly monkeys and bears came out for extensive comments as to their position in the chain of existence and life. This evening preparations are being completed to feed the blind and disabled tomorrow, while the *mandali* are to observe a fast until the time the feeding work is finished.

October 29, 1922

A Novel Hunt

The first thing in the morning myself and Doctor were sent to Bhendi Bazaar to get 100 shirts to be distributed to the poor after feeding them. Then began the hunt! Almost all of the *mandali*, singly or in small groups, were let loose by Baba to search out and bring to the Manzil such persons as may be found in the most disabled and needy condition, specially lepers and blind. Instead of 200, a couple of thousand beggars can be found in a place like Bombay very easily where there is a prospect of feeding and clothing. But leaving aside the professional beggars, the question of fishing out the really needy and genuinely disabled persons was not an easy work. Doctor could collar only a single man in his round of three miles that answered the standard! Vajifdar, in the heat of the search, tramped as far as Bhendi Bazaar, when he came across a bunch of such persons, but how to get them to Dadar was a problem.

Begging of Beggars

However, the well-known cricketer proved equally sharp in this game too. He persuaded one of the beggars to stand the tramway fare of the party to Dadar on a promise of repayment in addition to return fare; and thus, to the utter amusement of the other passengers, Vajifdar boarded a tram with a pick of Bombay's neglected society. I had to go as far as Byculla Bridge and the locality adjoining Jacob Circle where I was successful in getting hold of a lot of such people. Luckily I had not to beg of the beggars for the conveyance fare, as I came across an old acquaintance from whom I got a loan of a rupee and thus brought them safely to the Manzil. Safely, because it was a task all along the way to keep the beggars sticking to their agreement of accompanying me to Dadar, as often they showed signs of seceding for the fear of being trapped in some asylum. In short, almost all had considerable difficulty and some adventure in leading in their quota of guests for the feast.

Feeding the Poor

The feeding programme was carried on till 2 P.M. when about 200 of Bombay's most needy gentry were fed and clothed. In some cases, some were given a bath in which Baba took quite

an active part. In a couple of cases, in addition to food, bath and change of linen, Baba also garlanded the parties. After finishing with the feeding work, the *mandali*, who were throughout on fast, broke the same at 2 P.M. and took their meals which included *dal*-rice and a vegetable dish, the same as served to the beggars.

October 30, 1922

Towards Malangarh

Baba and party started from Dadar by an early morning local train for Kalyan. A couple of motors were engaged at Kalyan to take us to the foot of the hill having Malang Shah's tomb. Owing to the recently finished monsoon the roads were in a very bad condition, yet somehow, with jerks and sharp zigzag driving, the cars made headway to about six miles. The drivers of the cars asked us to finish the remaining distance on foot through short cuts, as the road hereafter was said to be in a prohibitive condition for motoring. Consequently, we left the cars, and began tramping towards Malangarh.

In spite of walking for about an hour, a distance of roughly three miles in the fields and hills, we did not seem to be making any headway. On the contrary we found we had lost the bearings.

Imaginary Tomb

Hence, Baba asked all to lay the flower sheet we had brought with us on a site selected by him under a certain tree in the area in the name of Bawa Malang Shah, and were further asked to pay our respects to the site as if it were the tomb of Bawa Malang itself. We were also asked to repeat our promise of coming again some other time to the actual tomb, and our present inability to climb over the hill was excused.

While coming back to the motors, we again lost our way and came out on the main road quite a mile in advance of the motors. But the latter mistake was very welcome, as we came across one of the drivers comfortably seated in a bullock cart and going to a village nearby, thinking us to be returning in the evening. Were it not for this, we would have been obliged to wait for him till the evening! When we came back to Kalyan, Baba allowed us to take a badly required meal in a local Irani's hotel to our full satisfaction.

Better Luck Next Time

We came back to Dadar at about 5:30 when Baba remarked that the day's trip was not incomplete but just according to programme, as Kalyan and not Malangarh was written on the board. "Next time," he said, "we would take care to write Malangarh!"

November 3, 1922

A Tight Corner

Another novel experience fell to the lot of some of us. We were asked to go and distribute the handbills announcing Shri Maharaj's Biography, *Shelter of the Poor*, in suitable localities and stick the big posters in similarly opportune sites.

Today being Friday, the principal mosques were to be attended. Doctor got the Friday Mosque to his lot. Arjun and Aspad were given in his assistance. Thus the one-time-would-be Doctor was a sight to behold with handbills and posters and gum bottles, bravely going out to fight the great battle that the mind was sure to wage at the uncomfortable experience of being laughed at, jeered and pitied by friends and acquaintances that were sure to come while he was doing the unusual duty. At first, Baba gave me the Jackria Mosque to attend—the very place I would have liked last in view of it being situated in the heart of the Muslims from Cutch section, and with the possibility of coming across every second or third man an acquaintance!

Guessing the great mental revolt going on in my mind, Baba cancelled the order and directed me to the Phul-Gally Mosque near Nul Bazaar, while Abdurrehman was sent to Jackria Mosque.

An Advertisement Campaign

The big posters were stuck on doors and walls of the mosque in prominent positions, and after the Friday prayers I took my stand at the main entrance of the mosque and began broadcasting the handbills to each and everyone coming out of the mosque, including Usman and his brothers. And thus, somehow, the never-ending experience was passed through and with a great sigh of relief, we came back to good old Manzil!

November 15, 1922

Book Selling

Book selling is the order of the day. Besides Rustom and Vajifdar, who are exclusively working whole time in disposing away the copies in quantities, almost everyone in the bungalow has been given different number of copies as to respective capabilities, to be sold away in spare hours to friends and acquaintances. The following was put up today in this connection:

Notice

All sending books by V.P.P. should include the V.P.P. charges in the amount of the price of the book.

15.11.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

November 16, 1922

Busy Time

The Manzil atmosphere was never one of laziness, but yet a good part of the day could regularly be spared for *tete-a-tete* and pastimes. But since yesterday, the book-selling work has simply brought about a choking atmosphere. Every available spare hour is to be utilized hawking the book which, at the same time, is not an easy affair. It requires great persuasive powers and an extremely cool head in even bringing round friends to go in for the book. The following notice was put up on board for no apparent reason.

Please be telling the Truth.

16.11.'22 (Sd.) Merwan

November 19, 1922

A Slow Progress

In spite of so much canvassing and personal appeals for the last four days, I could dispose of hardly a dozen copies. Many funny and instructive adventures were met with in this connection. For instance, I had to give the other day a short lecture at a wedding party of friends at Bandra, to my great discomfiture but to the merriment of the friends as they insisted upon my explaining the merits of the book. Likewise, Doctor has sold only two books today although he must have walked two miles while canvassing for it.

Mr. Nasir Ahmed, who had been to Baba this morning, narrated a very strange incident. When he returned from Bhandardara, where he had been to see his brother Aziz Ahmed, who is said to have got his mind unhinged, he was informed by one of his servants that a guest had arrived in his absence who at the time was praying in the mosque.

Prediction about Baba

When Mr. Nasir Ahmed saw this uninvited guest, he found him to be a very old man with eyebrows white with age. The latter introduced himself as Abdulwahad, and during the conversation asked the former as to why he does not go to Meher Baba. Mr. Nasir Ahmed replied because Meher Baba was not a Muslim externally. The old man said, "Masters have no religion. He (meaning Meher Baba) is the first one of his time who has been appointed on a special duty of making as many saints as possible. His stage is such at the moment that he can turn anyone whom he embraces into a saint. He will be the first to follow and help the next Prophet. I am also with him for the last so many years, and now the time is fast approaching for me to appear and declare myself to the world. Go and see Meher Baba and give him my salaams."

In the evening, Mr. Aziz Ahmed also came to Dadar but was sent by Baba to Charni Road.

Spirited by a Spirit

Mr. Aziz Ahmed's coming was prompted by more peculiar circumstances. According to his words, he was told by a spirit to go down to Bombay and see Meher Baba at once. Thus, the two brothers had strangely experienced extraordinary phenomena about Meher Baba almost simultaneously.

November 20, 1922

The White Elephant

The following notice was found on board this morning:

As prearranged no one should even speak about going home till the month of April 1923.

(Sd.) Merwan

Fardoon,³² myself, Barsoap and Slamson have been given duties at the flour mill, the former as a general mechanic, the following as cash collectors, and the latter as the general manager. The mill, in spite of providing a paying occupation, has turned up a regular white elephant. Hardly it works for a day without a quarter dozen stoppages, and the consequent jumble and excitement may well be imagined. Besides the stinking smell of the surrounding sewers made the business a horrible affair, when taken with the variety of noises the different old machinery gave out.

November 24, 1922

A God-intoxicated Soul

At about 5 P.M. this evening, a personality known as Kadar Vali, accompanied by a couple followers, came in the bungalow compound and asked for an interview with Baba which, however, was refused. But Baba sent Doctor, Khak and Chowdhary to see them in the hotel where they had retired.

When Doctor returned from the hotel half an hour later after seeing Kadar Vali off in a motor car, he described his impression of the saintly person before Baba and the *mandali*. According to his description, Kadar Vali looked every inch a God-intoxicated soul and in spite of his big, bulky body he was very active all the time that he was in the hotel. His activities, talking and eating were just like a small child. We had a good laugh when Doctor tried to explain his attempt to refer to a motor car, as he every now and then asked of his followers whether it had come or not. He would fold his hands in such a way as if he were squeezing a horn and tried to produce a similar sound of pom-pom.

A Voice from Beyond

When Syedsahib came in the evening, he brought another strange narration in connection with Mr. Aziz Ahmed. It is that when Munshi, accompanied by Aziz Ahmed, had gone to Abdur Rehman Baba's tomb on Thursday, at the moment of touching and kissing the covering over the tomb, a voice from inside the tomb spoke in Mr. Aziz Ahmed's ear as follows: "Say our salaams to Sheikh Baba Merwan and convey this salaam there through the medium of Munshi Abdur Rahim!"

December 4, 1922

The Unknown Guilty

As per the present system in vogue of not allowing outsiders an interview with Baba, the brother to the Maharajah of Keshavnagar (Hyderabad) who had specially come down to Bombay to see Meher Baba under Babajan's advice was turned away without an interview being granted. When Baba came to know the details of this visitor's call, he got the following notice put up on the board:

If a visitor of any caste, creed or position happens to come from Shri Upasni Maharaj or Babajan, I should be reminded of giving him admission even though I were to refuse in the first instance.

4.12.'22

(Sd.) Merwan

Since recently Baba has been putting up a notice that impure action has been committed in the bungalow premises by someone whom he refers to as the "innocent hypocrite." At first, the *mandali* at large thought this to be a mere reminder for all to be on guard against a slip, but the subsequent and persistent notices, such as promising the culprit the secrecy of his guilt and a clean pardon, set us all thinking.

Ultimatum

Specially the following notice put up on board today has simply set each other suspecting and making inquiries.

Unless the culprit confesses his fault concerning impure action within three days, he shall leave the bungalow.

(Sd.) Merwan

December 6, 1922

The Final Hint

The all-engrossing problem of the day was this unknown black sheep in the fold. Everybody was seen to be trying his best in finding out the culprit. Directly or indirectly everyone in the bungalow suspected someone. Faces were carefully marked and unusual movements were minutely observed, but all to no avail. The question was a perfect enigma.

Save for Baba's repeated notices, most of us were ready to put off the possibility of such an action being ever committed in the precincts of the Manzil! But there were the repeated hints on the board. The latest was the following:

Only one day has remained in which to confess the fault concerning impure action; otherwise I leave the bungalow.

(Sd.) Merwan

Just as the day began advancing, the excitement grew stronger and stronger. The climax was reached in the evening; the third day was nearing completion and yet there was no sign of the culprit coming forward.

Culprit Unmasked

It was almost taken for granted that the whole affair was made up with some different object in view by Baba, when suddenly he confronted Mahboob with the guilt to the utter amazement of all. At first, Mahboob denied all knowledge; but Baba gave him clear details about the particular part of the premises where the action was committed, the circumstances under which it happened, and even the third party outside the *mandali* concerned in the affair. It was as if Baba himself had a look at the incident, although when Mahboob made a clean breast of it, he admitted to have committed the action when Baba and the *mandali* were not in or near the premises.

The Miraculous Discovery

There is no question of a coincidence in Baba's discovery, but in spite of having knowledge of the affair, the preceding narrative shows he still tried to know or bring out the affair through a natural course. Of course, Mahboob was all over tears and in the most repentant mood, and Baba too forgave him after giving him strict warning. But he was not allowed to remain with the *mandali* and was sent over to Charni Road immediately where Munshi was asked to give him a job.

December 11, 1922

A Terrible Accident

The flour mill, as has already been mentioned, was far from being a comfortable job. Minor repairs and sudden stoppages of the rotten machinery was the daily feature of the rotten busi-

ness. But this evening, the blessed affair reached quite a climax. On the plea of irregular attendance of the mill hands, I have been promoted as one from the work of cash collecting. Thus, when I was working one of the flour mills at about 4:30, there was a deafening and crashing noise. The next moment, there was all chaos. Everyone was running here and there with scared faces and bated breaths. With trembling limbs and a throbbing heart, I, too, cautiously advanced towards the engine room. The piston, which had been wrenched out of the cylinder through the apparent breakage of the big end braces, was lying a few feet away from the 20 H.P. Crossley engine. Hardly had we come to our normal senses and found that there was no serious injury to life, when a policeman came in to enquire. Slamson, although having got a slight injury through a flying piston ring, had the presence of mind to ward off the policeman, saying that there was no accident and it was a mere experiment with a new part recently fitted in the engine. When the guardian of the law had departed, we made full investigations, but through some strange coincidence found that in spite of so serious an accident, no considerable damage was done to life or property save the engine itself.

Another Mishap

When we came to the Manzil in the evening, we came to know that Syedsahib's wife passed away the same evening at about 6 P.M. Besides these two incidents, an article was published in the local newspaper against Maharaj and his followers. It was read before the *mandali* today when it caused quite a flutter. Taking in all these three happenings the same day prominently, reminds me of Baba's passing remark in the morning that he was not feeling well today and had passed three motions like those of Ajmere illness. The serious calamities predicted to fall in the families of the *mandali* seem to have taken a start from Charni Road, and poor Syedsahib gets the first stroke in losing his better half.

December 16, 1922

Message in Dream

Naval, who is of late at home lying on bed having just passed through a serious illness, dreamt a peculiar dream as follows:

He saw Sai Baba at his place addressing the following words to him, "Whatever difficulties you are undergoing, are given

to you intentionally by Meher Baba. You and others do not know who Meher Baba is, because of his young age. He can even be called Avatar, and there is nothing wrong in it. Don't leave him. From your *mandali*, all will run away; only 14 will remain. But myself and Maharaj will try to keep you till the last in the *mandali*."

It is all the more strange since Naval never met Sai Baba in life.

Some changes were made today in the partnership of room occupants, and consequently, a sort of shuffling took place in the bungalow.

December 22, 1922

Baba Keeps Aloof

On the plea that the mandali are not quite trying their best in carrying out various duties entrusted to each, Baba went away upstairs at about 4 P.M. this evening with a resolve to be aloof from the company without eating or drinking anything.

December 23, 1922

Following his retirement, the following notices appeared under Baba's signature on the board today:

(1) If the sale of the allotted books and lottery tickets is not completed by the notified date, i.e. the 31st of Dec. 1922, Manzil-e-Meem will be out of bounds for those who fail.

(Sd.) Merwan

(2) Because I am keeping aloof, it does not mean that minor orders are not to be followed. The more you all are careless in regarding my instructions to be seriously accepted and acted according to, the more I'll stick to my privacy. But if you all desire to see me playing, eating, chatting and working in your company, please be following the orders sincerely.

(Sd.) Merwan

December 24, 1922

The Last Confirmation

Baba requisitioned about 14 members upstairs today at 11 A.M. when I was also specially called away from the mill. He

began to explain that his retirement upstairs was due to special spiritual circumstances. Shri Maharaj's self-imprisonment in a cage at Sakori was also referred to by Baba, when he said that Maharaj was undergoing voluntary suffering for the sake of the Circle only. His lengthy discourse centered round two prominent facts, that for one, the spiritual or real working had begun, and secondly that more should leave him. All those present once again gave solemn promise to Baba to stick to him through thick and thin under any circumstances till the stipulated time.

After the interview, Doctor and Khak were sent to Charni Road to explain and convey the sum and substance of today's meeting to Munshi and Syedsahib.

December 27, 1922

Baba's Fasting Begins

Baba sent for all to come upstairs. This is the fifth day that he is keeping aloof *without food and drink in the upper room*. When all had assembled, Baba broached the subject of dispensing away with the minor orders, and invited the opinions of all in the matter. Heated discussions followed. In the end some 28 orders were agreed to remain in force, and the remaining ones cancelled. For so long the orders had been issued verbally, but now that the matter is decided once and for all, Baba asked these 28 orders and the principal seven orders to be typed on a sheet of paper and a copy be given to each member. When the matter was settled to the satisfaction of all concerned, Baba declared that he would come down in the evening and take food. But from today, he added, he will be taking food once in every 24 hours and thus will be observing a continuous fasting until further notice! Baba then told Doctor that since all were in the bungalow it would be well if the *ghazal* singer that the bookbinder wanted to send down here can be brought this evening.

Doctor in a Fix

Accordingly, Doctor went and arranged with the bookbinder for the *ghazal* singer to come this evening; but through mistake, Doctor invited the bookbinder also to come with the singers, although Baba had expressly instructed that the *ghazal* singer and his assistants alone should come and none else. When Doctor informed Baba of his having invited the bookbinder also through mistake, Baba expressed displeasure and insisted upon Doctor

to turn him back when he comes! The following hour or two were found to be a very awkward time for Doctor. He was looking very uneasy at the prospect of turning away the man he himself had invited to come, and specially when the same man had arranged the day's programme for Baba's entertainment.

Strange Coincidence

However, to the great relief of Doctor, when the singing party arrived, Mr. Mirza, the bookbinder, was not amongst them. On enquiries his servant explained the Mirzasahib could not come as he was suddenly taken with fever.

A Nightmare

Similarly, I too passed through a very tight corner. After returning from the mill in the bungalow, I suddenly found out that I had lost the day's cash. For some time, I fumbled here and there, but to no avail. When I was convinced of the loss, I was shocked beyond description. Cold beads of perspiration sprang out on my forehead, and I felt dizzy. The atmosphere became dim and blurred. The question of the actual loss of money was very trivial; but the point felt by me at the time was of my failure in duty.

Baba's Magnanimity

Since some slight mistakes, even to the extent of casual negligences, are very severely taken to task by Baba, the penalty for the present failure was quite beyond my imagination. Hence it was with great hesitation and with distracted features that I approached Baba, and falteringly explained the situation. To my utter amazement, he smiled at me and asked me to dismiss the incident completely from the mind without in any way being anxious about it, and come and hear the singing with a free heart!

The *ghazal* singer Bakri-Idi then entertained the *mandali* with choice *ghazals* up to 9:30 P.M. after which he was given 25 rupees

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The 28 Rules; the Gutta

December 28, 1922

The 28 Rules

THE following notice was found on the board this morning:

The Parsis and Iranis are allowed to read their Avesta, the Muhamaddans, Al-Koran and instructions for prayers, the Hindus, their Gita; Maharaj's Life can be read if desired. All orders previous to this are hereby cancelled.

(Sd.) Merwan

Shortly afterwards, all were called upstairs, when the typewritten copies of the 28 and 7 orders were distributed to all which run as follows:

The Seven Special Orders as already written herein when they came in force on the 7th June.

Rules to be observed in addition to the seven principal orders:

1. Baths to be taken daily. Extra baths are allowed after hair-cuts.
2. One hour between 7 A.M. and 8 A.M. is reserved every morning for cricket (or any such game). Members attending duties are exempted.
3. Rooms to be cleaned once in a day by the occupants.
4. Dining hall, top hall and back compound are not to be treaded on with shoes. As far as possible, shoes or sandals may be avoided in the bungalow.
5. Entering the bungalow latrines is strictly prohibited unless the wooden sandals supplied for the purpose are put on.

6. No one should enter anyone's room without the permission of at least one of the occupants.
7. Ringing of the bell means the prompt attendance of members in the dining hall, except the 5 o'clock bell in the morning which indicates the starting of morning prayers.
8. The respective food or clothing should not be given or exchanged by members amongst themselves.
9. Eating less than full satisfaction is strictly prohibited. Report should be made in case of inability of eating even in spite of hunger, and in case of no appetite after accepting the food.
10. Any unfavourable change in the health should at once be reported.
11. Books, magazines, newspapers and others' letters must not be read.
12. While out on duty, more than two annas should not be spent on drinks, and money should not be kept in possession while off duty.
13. Beating anyone under any circumstances is strictly prohibited even in cases of self-defence. Wrestling and boxing are prohibited.
14. Lies, abusive language, and ill-feeling towards one to the point of breaking my order are not allowed.
15. Visits to relations are not allowed unless permitted.
16. Letters are not to be posted unless previously sanctioned.
17. Permission is to be taken before going out.
18. In order to avoid impure actions, even a touch to anyone while the mind is occupied with passionate thoughts is strictly prohibited. Vulgar stories or passion-exciting topics must be avoided.
19. Touching any young women, except one's own mother or sister, should be avoided.
20. Eating food not cooked in the Manzil or any eatable from outside must not be eaten unless otherwise ordered.
21. Any action indicating lust or passion should at once be reported.
22. Shaving and hair cutting are allowed on Thursdays and Sundays before 12 A.M.
23. No report should be made for any breach of orders except in cases where asked to do so.
24. None should enter the office of the manager (R. K. Irani) of the Circle & Co. except with the manager's permission, and his writing table should not be touched during

his absence in his office. Adi is appointed as vice-manager.

25. Ears should be kept covered before going to bed either by putting in cotton or tying a piece of cloth.
26. Everyone must sit down while drinking, and plates should be removed after every meal by the members themselves.
27. Bathrooms should not be used as urinals.
28. Falling at the feet of Meher Baba is strictly prohibited.

Spiritual Orders

Getting up at 4 A.M. and attending morning prayers from 5 A.M. to 6 A.M. Attending the places of worship every day according to respective religions, or carrying out other individual spiritual orders.

December 29, 1922

Stringency

The notice board was graced with the following today:

As terrible scarcity of funds is facing the Circle, please do not undergo unnecessary outdoor expenses and each do the book-selling duty with full vigour.

(Sd.) Merwan

Baba is continuing his fast begun on the 27th and, consequently, takes food only once in the 24 hours, yet, for all that, he is as active as ever!

A Passing Gale

In the morning while Baba was serving food to us (as he has been doing since he himself is observing the fast), Doctor told him that he had no inclination to eat although he felt a bit hungry. And the signal for a great storm was given. Baba began taking round Doctor for breaking one of the 28 rules, while he maintained he had not done so as per his own understanding. In the verbal warfare that continued for some time, Baba threw at Behramji the plates that the latter had in his hands, and so a tense atmosphere was created. However, after some time the storm passed away and normal atmosphere prevailed; but Doctor was marked to be greatly depressed and dejected throughout the day.

December 31, 1922

Strange Dreams

Doctor, who was very disheartened throughout the day yesterday, and even according to his own words cried and shed tears many times, saw a comforting dream last night which is reproduced here from the dream register:

"I was sitting near Babajan at Charbawdi, Poona. At first, Babajan looked at me frowningly. Then drawing me near, sat back to back with me and began rocking to and fro. Then reclining in my arms, began playing with me in the most loveable manner. In this latter action, I had a novel experience. One moment I used to feel Babajan fondling and playing in my arms and the very next moment, Meher Baba instead, and this continued for some time after which I woke up." As if this were not quite sufficient, when sleeping for two hours in the afternoon, Doctor saw two more dreams, which, to use his own words, took away all the uneasiness of his mind.

When Baba came to know of the latter dreams, he asked Doctor to get them typewritten to be put up on the board for the information of all. They are as narrated by Doctor himself as follows:

"I saw Shri Narayan Maharaj walking the streets (place and time forgotten) with a throng of people following him. Some of our *mandali* people were also there. When my turn came to approach him, I salaamed him in the most respectful manner. He asked me very many questions about my life. The latest information I gave him as regards myself was that I was having discarded the world in the service of Meher Baba. Narayan Maharaj then took my hand in his, and after a time, looking at the palm of my hand said, 'Your age is 25 years.' What else he said I have forgotten."

Here the scene changes. "I find myself standing on the road in front of my house at Lonavla. There were many people besides, some standing and others loitering here and there. I see Asar talking loudly and cracking jokes about women in an obscene manner. Finding me turning a deaf ear to his obscene words, Asar remarked, 'Why will Doctor not listen to us? He has become a saint.' Shortly after this a cry was raised by the people there, 'Upasni Maharaj—Ki Jai'. Turning round, I saw Maharaj coming along the road towards my house. From the groaning sound that he made, I could see that Maharaj was extremely tired. Also since he was covered with dust from head

to foot, it appeared that he must have walked a very long distance. Khak and myself were the first to approach him and kiss his hands in reverence. Although internally I lay prostrate before Maharaj with heart and soul, externally we hesitated doing so, finding the crowd there consisting mostly of Muslims. In reply to the obeisance given by the people, Maharaj prostrated himself to all, and then walked straight into my house, with myself in his wake. Inside the house, there was no one except the female members, who all kissed Maharaj's hands in respect. Maharaj then sat down on the bare ground, and when we expressed our desire to spread something for him to sit on, he, pointing out a particular piece of gunny-cloth lying in the corner, asked me to bring it.

"Spreading the same with his own hands, he sat down on it. Then, addressing the female members, Maharaj said 'I have come down to speak something to *these people* (meaning thereby the whole *mandali*, although I was the only one present from the *mandali*). They don't understand things and misinterpret them. They are trying to find nook and corners to escape the severity of the orders instead of facing them boldly.' Then addressing me direct, he said, 'Are you a child not to understand these things? Do you eat hen's shit? Be particular about taking bath.'" And the dreams ended abruptly here when Doctor woke up on hearing his roommate Khak's call to get up.

To use Doctor's words, considering the dreams in the light of his disturbed mental equilibrium during the last 24 hours, they are most impressive, instructive, and opportune. Be that as it may, Doctor once again became his old self again in the *mandali* and the atmosphere became completely normal.

January 3, 1923

The Gutta

When all were present upstairs today in the evening, Baba broached the subject of setting aside an hour or two daily for all the members to get together in the evening to discuss and decide various questions of the domestic as well as recreational life in the Manzil. All favoured the idea, and some rough preliminary rules were formed for the conduct of business therein. First of all, after much discussion, the meeting was decided to be called a *Gutta* (tavern). Everyone from the *mandali* was decided as having the right to attend, take part and give votes equally in the proceedings of the Gutta. Doctor was selected as the

secretary to note down and keep records of the proceedings, while Baba himself was declared to be the Chairman. Everyone was asked to take keen interest in the proceedings, and give one's own opinion freely without being led by other's words, leanings, and considerations. All were to speak one after the other, and with the permission of the chair to avoid the technical Gutta becoming one in the real sense of it, i.e. a place of chaotic hum-drum. To solicit permission to speak one should lift his hand upwards without making any sound, and to begin speaking only when the chair grants the permission. Thus the time was passed very interestingly today in witnessing the institution of local self-government being inaugurated in the autocratic atmosphere of the Manzil.

January 13, 1923

The Duty of Duties

The one important chain of events in the Manzil taking place for the last ten days is about the book selling. Vajifdar, Rustom, Khak and Doctor are the principal parties engaged in this difficult duty; specially the first two. Every day almost, a new party is approached from the prominent and leading citizens of Bombay to solicit sympathy and help in effecting a quick and complete sale of all the copies of Shri Maharaj's Life. The queer situation may well be imagined from the extraordinary jumble of contradictory circumstances: the life of a Brahmin Master with a Muslim guru and a Parsi disciple, written in the Urdu language, and yet trying to be sold off to persons for whom Urdu might be Greek, by salesmen belonging to different castes, professing to lead a spiritual life, and yet apparently keen to collect money through the sale of the books—facts which would eclipse the strangest fiction! And yet this complex duty had to be carried out in the face of great opposition carried on by some through rumours and writings in the press, trying to paint the affair in the worst colours.

While we were playing a game this morning, Baba came and related a dream which he said he saw overnight.

Baba's Dream

Baba saw himself going in a train with the *mandali*. From the opposite direction of that in which the train was going, an open coffin was coming with a large crowd around it. On enquir-

ing it was found that it was the coffin of Babajan. Thereupon, Baba got down and went to Charbawdi, Poona, but again Baba saw Babajan to be lying there. The people round about were, however, talking and behaving as if Babajan was dead and gone. Baba then placed his hand on Babajan's head, whereupon she got up. On being asked, "How is it that people have taken you as dead and gone?" Babajan replied, "Yes, I am really dead."

Baba seemed to be uneasy and very weak today. It is almost a fortnight that he has been observing a fast continuously of 24 hours and there seems no early prospect of this fasting system coming to an end.

January 15, 1923

The Pathan in the service of Tipoo Baba brought today one bouquet and one garland of flowers from the latter for Baba. In return, Baba also sent with him a garland for Tipoo Baba, and a flower sheet for Abdur Rehman Baba's tomb.

The Three Stages

While explaining to Doctor and Khak the reason for the present general depressed condition of the *mandali*, Baba said one generally passes through three stages in this line.

"The first is *shauq*, i.e. fondness and intense desire to know and experience the unknown and the consequent pleasant expectations. Then comes the second stage, that of disgust, disappointment and apathy, and the third and last stage is that of Realization. All are now in the second stage, which is generally a long one; hence you should all put up with it cheerfully, since you cannot avoid or remedy it. Don't leave me in any case."

January 16, 1923

A Parade

In the evening at about 7:30 when I came back to the Manzil from Lonavla, I met with a strange sight. The whole of the *mandali* was present in full strength in the back compound and undergoing some military parade under the sharp and ringing commands of Ahmedkhan! The latter having seen a long service in the army was seen to be reviving his old spirit with a vengeance. Before I could grasp the situation completely, I was also pushed in the medley by Baba. After about an hour's

marching backwards and forwards with many different tactics of left turn and about turn, the extremely amusing as well as perspiring exercise was brought to an end. It was then that I learned that today being the birthday of Kaka's daughter, he had brought for the *mandali* quite a feastlike affair from his house by way of eatables. And on the plea of the rich food requiring drastic exercise for digesting the same, Baba had started the game. At least it afforded an opportunity for Ahmedkhan to take a leading share in an affair, in contrast to his retiring nature and almost forgotten presence in the *mandali*. Patel left for Nagpur in connection with the book-selling work.

January 17, 1923

Baba's Sleepless Nights

The following notice on the board greeted us early this morning.

I was all the time downstairs last night.

(Sd.) Merwan

The day passed away in routine, excepting for the fact that all were asked to sing instead of conducting the usual proceedings in the Gutta, which was open today.

January 18, 1923

Again last night Baba was downstairs, where he at times slept and walked in the compound throughout the night up to 4 A.M.

As per the decision arrived at in the Gutta some time ago, the Muslims did not take part in the usual Thursday *arti* for the first time today.

January 21, 1923

After dinner Baba asked Doctor to write the following notice on board.

Today Gutta from 1 to 5 P.M.

(Sd.) Merwan

The proceedings of this meeting are noted in detail in the minute book kept by Doctor.

An Interesting Dream

The latter again saw an interesting dream today which he describes as follows:

"I saw Baba explaining to the *mandali* the subject of Experience and Realization. Rustom and Khak were prominent amongst those gathered there. In reply to my counterquestions and by way of giving a practical idea he made me fly in the skies or heavens. The position in which I felt myself floating in space and the clouds was like the shape of Muhammad in Urdu; the position however was not very comfortable and hence I told Baba that my back would break thereby. Baba replied there is no question of the body here. This is simply the form of the spirit that is floating. After giving me this experience, Baba addressing the *mandali* said that this experience will be realized by you after years from now, but in the case of Doctor a special arrangement has been made by Babajan and it is that he will get this experience six months after his death." When Doctor repeated this dream before Baba he was particularly anxious about the latter part of the dream and the hint of experience *after death*, but Baba explained that in general one-quarter of a dream comes true and hence he would get Realization after the time hinted.

January 23, 1923

The Poor Mosquitoes

As early as 4:30 in the morning we found the following order on board!

All should kill mosquitoes daily from 6:30 A.M. to 7 A.M.

(Sd.) Merwan

After all had retired for the night Baba, Doctor, Khak, Baily and myself went upstairs and sat discussing the plot of a drama which is under consideration to be written by Khak. During the conversations Baba said:

"The present internal working which is now in full swing will tone down a little after February 15, 1923, and in this working of Maharaj I have also been dragged in internally; hence it is that I am fasting for 24 hours every day. After the 15th February, I shall become my old self again, and in a way the atmosphere here will become more cheerful than it was at Charni Road.

This is the last internal working of Maharaj, the result of which will come exactly after 12 months, whether we work for it or not. The result is bound to come. Maharaj also may either come out of his cage, pass the 12 months of his life therein, or come over to Bombay as it may take his fancy!"

January 26, 1923

The Book Customers

The book-selling duty afforded meetings with persons of varied thought and standard.

The other day, when I approached a rich relation of mine with great expectation of selling a good many copies, I was coldly met with a question: "Since how many days have you taken to this business?" I had to beat a quick retreat after forcing a couple of copies on my personal request.

In another instance, I tried to bring round another relation on the merits of the book, but found him very unconvinced; so by way of playing a trump card, I triumphantly said, "At least you cannot deny the high opinion expressed by such an eminent authority on the subject as Khwaja Hasan Nizami." My amazement may be imagined when the worthy who, although he had considerable rupees, annas and pies with him, was hardly competent enough to give opinion on any literature, far short of spirituality, unhesitatingly blurted out, "What? Khwaja Hasan Nizami? Oh, he is a first class . . . !" Well, again I had to exercise discretion as the better part of valour, and back-pedaled contented with the sale of a couple of copies.

Contrary to this, Rustom and Vajifdar came across a solicitor in his office one day. After just scanning a few pages of the book here and there he asked them what they wanted him to do. By way of a joke Rustom said buy a hundred copies! Immediately the gentleman brought out his cheque book and wrote off a cheque for Rs. 300/-. It transpired in subsequent contacts with him, that he himself had some personal inkling through experience of the affairs beyond the apparent materialism of the world. While he was a prominent merchant in Bombay having a huge business establishment in his own palatial building, well known in public and government circles, and carrying on business externally with all pomp and show, when he came in close contact with our book-selling party, he was found to be leading a very plain and simple life privately. In a corner of the luxuriously and costly furnished building, in a small room

which had nothing but a small piece of matting as the only furniture, this apparently material man was leading a right royal spiritual life!

The C.I.D. Interested

Another noteworthy meeting of mine in this connection was with Mr. Banemiyar Taqui, a C.I.D. officer in Bombay. On the strength of old family acquaintanceship I approached him and found him unexpectedly attentive to my story. In fact he kept on calling me twice and thrice when he used to cross-examine me systematically in an innocent, matter-of-fact way. I thought him to be deeply interested in spiritual matters when in the last meeting he told me plainly that his interest in our affairs was professional. The C.I.D. was deeply interested in the Manzil! The premises were watched, some of the members followed and shadowed, messages and communications in the post scrutinized and so on. The way the domestic life of the Manzil was described in detail by the C.I.D. officer proved it clearly. But my frank answers to his questions convinced him, and explained away his own pieces of news, gathered bit by bit, that the Manzil was what it was claimed for it to be, a gathering of devotees serving and following a personality which they believed to be supernatural, and not a secret society with political or criminal motives. Then he himself purchased five copies of the book from me!

January 28, 1923

The Supernatural

For the last month or so Baba has been living a supernatural life from the external point of view also. A miracle or extraordinary phenomenon may dazzle one for a moment, unless it is not passed over as a mere coincidence. But the present living of Baba, defying nature with a vengeance, if taken to by an ordinary man would surely land him in an early grave or a lunatic asylum. While in spite of it all, Baba is the very picture of activity and action in the Manzil. What with the continuous fasting, as he eats and drinks only once after every 24 hours, and that too, very *little*! He takes raw tobacco every now and then, throughout night and day, chewing it on an empty stomach, a thing which intensifies thirst. Then every evening he takes a hot bath daily with about three or four scores of gallons of water,

which according to Doctor from his medical point of view is extremely weakening to the nerves. On top of it all Baba is often found restless in bed and, according to Gustadji and Doctor who generally keep about him in the night, he scarcely sleeps. At times he keeps on walking for hours in the bungalow or compound. Last night was also one of the many such nights passed by Baba, as is seen by the following notice that we saw on the board as soon as we were out of bed at 4 A.M. as usual:

Last night was a terrible night for me (written at 2 A.M.).
28.1.'23 (Sd.) Merwan

While Doctor was reading the poet Amir's *Divan Miratul Ghaib* ("The Mirror of Things Concealed") to Baba, he asked him to write the following couplet therefrom on the notice board:

First of all, it is difficult to have a passage in the Beloved's lane;
But those who pass through it, pass away from worldly affairs!

The Raw Gold

Today the raffle of the Stower car was drawn, and the prize went to Shri Satchitananda of the *bhajan mandali* (devotional singers) of Mahim. This car originally belonged to Khak and was in a very old condition. In the beginning of the stay in the Manzil Baba had asked the parties concerned to dispose it away, as it was, at any price. But Naval put in his uninvited tongue and told Baba that the engine was simply a beauty. A small amount, if spent after overhauling it, would repay tenfold as it would turn the wreck that it was at the time into *some car*. In fact poor Naval's imagination had so dazzled him that he unhesitatingly described it as raw gold! As is Baba's wont, once a side suggestion is made in spite of his direct instruction, he falls in readily, and he forthwith authorized Naval to carry on the necessary overhauling.

Then began the prolonged repairs. For days and months, Naval fumed, fretted and perspired his big, bulky body trying to turn the raw gold into ready-gold, but it proved a wild-goose chase in the end. In spite of so much energy and money wasted after it, the car did not come up to the high expectations. It was hardly valued at more than what was put in it by way of overhauling, leaving aside the question of its original value. Thus poor

Naval had to dispose it away. But that proved more trying to fill up numbers, and so, after so much trouble, Naval's "raw gold" is disposed of today to the great relief of all.

Love

When Doctor was alone with Baba overnight, he was explained some aspects of love as follows. Baba began with the following quotation: "Love originates first in the heart of the beloved; unless the lamp burns, the moth will not be mad after it!" Continuing, Baba said, "It is assumed that there is a lover and the beloved, and the connecting link between the two is love. Although God is love universal, let us for the sake of explanation suppose that God at first begins to love or attract a desirer who, however, not understanding it, begins to resist. The moment that sufficient love has been created in the desirer for God, he then becomes indifferent. In this way, the process of attraction and repulsion continues for a long time, ultimately ending in the union of the two. This is exactly what Hafiz tries to explain in the following couplet: 'With one end of the *hair* in my hand, and the other end in the *Friend's*, since years, the tug of war is going on, on this point!'"

Continuing, Baba said, "In proportion to the love that you have for me, at some such moments, you will hate me also. This hatred or repulsion is the resistance offered by you when I am trying to attract you towards me by my *internal love*. In time, you will begin to respond to my love with equal force, and then, the force of my love will slow down, i.e. I shall become indifferent!

The Legacy of Love

"The Perfect Master has love for all the members of his Circle and this love derived from Babajan and Maharaj *will be* shared with the members of the Circle according to their connection with one or the other."

January 29, 1923

The day passed away in routine, excepting for the *mandali* being rung for in the dining hall to hear Vajifdar, who had just returned from Nagpur, tell his experiences of his visit, specially in connection with his cricket play there, and his meeting with

Baba Tajuddin. The topic of Aziz having received a letter from Mr. Paul Richards about his arrival in Bombay from Karachi, and the former's request to Baba through Munshi for an interview was also discussed. The *mandali* were all for Baba giving an interview if asked for.

Also the question of publishing a printed pamphlet correcting the exaggerated and false rumours spread in the press and public by mischievous persons, about Baba and the *mandali* was also considered.

Splintering Hits

Doctor, who has been exempted by Baba from the cricket play in the morning to pass the time in sleep instead, since late, is not quite finding the favour very fruitful. The back room facing the compound with scores of glass windows, all round the two sides of the room occupied by Doctor, has of late become a target for Baba to send his well-driven balls through. Occasionally, to the great merriment of all, Doctor used to bring out his head with half-blinking eyes whenever a pane went out with a crash and a shower of splintering glass in his room. So much so that because of teasing Doctor, Baba has almost cleared half the windows of glass, but Doctor too is grimly sticking to his sweet sleep! But this morning, being rather sound asleep, Doctor got a real shock because of an exceptionally fat ball catching a big pane in the centre. For about ten minutes he had to sit with his hands pressed against his heart. However, after this, Baba has asked Doctor to change the time of his extra nap to the afternoon, to avoid the repetition of the shock, even through accident.

Although outsiders are not allowed interviews by Baba nowadays, one Chhagoomiyan singer came for a blessing and singing, and he was at once allowed in since Baba is so very fond of music. He sang for about half an hour and then departed.

There was no Gutta today. Instead, Baba, Behramji, Khak, and myself played cards upstairs, while Doctor sat back to back against Baba by way of a support! I don't think Baba found the pillow very comfortable.

January 31, 1923

The Divine Breeze

There was a "breeze" in the afternoon! When Doctor went in the office on duty and talked with Adi in an ordinary jocular

manner, Baba who happened to be there, suddenly checked Doctor not to talk in that tone with Adi who officiated there. Doctor became rather excited, and talked on in an angry tone, at which Baba became very angry and asked Doctor and Khak to leave the bungalow for Poona and *come back in April!*

However, after an hour Doctor was called upstairs. When he returned after some time, he informed me and Khak that peace had been declared upon his having promised Baba not to speak in an angry tone. Baba explained to Doctor that "when a Master is in the most perfect and peaceful internal state, or that some internal work is nearing completion and success, there is sometimes an overflow of the internal state externally. The external outburst is the shadow of the internal perfect state and is quite the opposite, and thus takes the form of abusive language, beating, etc. But whoever receives these is a fortunate man since these abuses and beatings work a good deal of benefit for him, specially in external affairs. Now you people, since your matter is settled and your connection with me is of the day of beginning, that no power can alter, you have no need of these outbursts in the form of abuses and beatings, which I have completely put a stop to; and now if you cannot even bear my words, then it will be troublesome to both you and me. In that case, I shall have to give up mixing with people altogether, and then it will go very hard with you all."

February 2, 1923

Doctor to Malangarh

As per arrangements made yesterday, Doctor left for Malangarh Shariff this morning at 5 A.M. to take part in the annual celebration at the saint's tomb on behalf of the *mandali* and consequently he was excused from the morning prayers. Some extracts from his diary are reproduced here:

"I started by the 5:30 Kalyan train reaching there at about 7 A.M. Within 15 minutes, I caught hold of a carriage for Rs. 2/- for the seat, and started forthwith. The carriage had only one passenger, me, since the people were returning from the fair as the ceremony had already taken place overnight, while today being Thursday was the fair day.

"Reaching Bomanwadi at about 10, I began ascending the hill after half an hour with the flower basket in my hand, and reached the tomb at 12:30 P.M.

With Impunity

After performing ablutions, I went into the shrine and spread the flower sheet on the tomb and then offered prayers. Some loose flowers that I had found in the basket, I had kept aside for other surrounding graves. Just when I went to take them, they were pounced upon by an unknown person! And in spite of my telling him that the flowers belonged to me and I had kept them there for other tombs, the man turned a deaf ear to me. Although a bit flurried at the cool impudence of the stranger, I checked myself at the thought of the sanctity of the tomb nearby, and secondly Baba's words, which I suddenly remembered, were, 'Put the flowers on *the* tomb and after reciting the prayers, come away.' On this, I gave up the idea of even visiting the other graves, far short of putting flowers. Owing to some quarrels amongst the devotees, the usual head devotee did not sit this year, but for all that the anniversary was, as per the rule, a successful, brilliant and gay festival. After taking rest, and a final prayer, I started descending back at 3 P.M. and took a carriage at Bomanwadi. On the return trip, I got an interesting companion in Mr. Abdul Latif of Malegaon, one of Sai Baba's admirers and the tutor of Bara Baba's two sons, who also knew Maharaj, Gustadji, etc. Reaching Dadar at about 10 P.M., I came to the Manzil forthwith and found Baba waiting for me in the verandah alone in the dark, all having retired to bed. Before retiring for the night, I accompanied Baba upstairs and related the above incidents in detail."

Again some trouble arose about Doctor having overslept by an hour, followed by a "breeze" with Gustadji in the afternoon, when at the latter's mistake in not keeping Baba's food in the exact place shown by him, the food was thrown away, and Baba declared he will go without food that night which means the 24 hours' fast will be continued without a break. In the evening, Baba did not take the usual bath as well.

When all had retired for the night, and a few remained about Baba and Gustadji, the former explained to the latter that all the excitement in the day was due to his having resolved to keep fast for 36 hours! Today is the 38th day that Baba is continuously observing fast, i.e. eating and drinking once every 24 hours, while today's has been extended to 36 hours. Doctor is asked by Baba to keep ready a glassful of fruit juice for him tomorrow at 9 A.M.

February 3, 1923

Liquid Food

Baba broke his fast after about 39 hours with some fruit juice prepared by Doctor.

Thereafter the following notice was put up on board:

I have decided to keep on liquid food, such as tea, buttermilk and aerated waters till 15th February 1923.

From 11th to 15th inst. singing, etc.

On 15th inst. feeding of 500 people and clothes for 100 poor.

(Sd.) Merwan

The Gutta was held at about 4 P.M. because of the music programme in the evening.

As arranged by Munshi, the Bakri-Idi *ghazal* singer came at about 7 P.M. and continued his singing up to 10 P.M. for three hours. Baba did not seem to take keen interest in the singing and was most of the time in his room. He looked very ill and weak and said that he had 5 or 6 stools very much like those he had in Ajmere.

When the singer was gone, and all had retired for the night, Doctor and myself sat up with Baba till 12 P.M.

The Perfect Master

During discussions on many subjects, the following points were explained by Baba:

"Realization is one only. The difference in masters lies in the power and the authority to use it. That which is given by a Master to his Chargeman is not power, it is already in him, but the authority to use it. A Perfect Master, in body-form, can work a lot of good for the world. After his death, he enjoys eternal bliss, and the power is there with him, but not the authority to use it. So wherever there is a tomb of a Master, there the power is; but it is the faith which becomes the medium and utilizes that power. It is for this reason that people generally derive benefits from the tombs of Saints. Internal benefit can, however, only be imparted when the Master is in bodily presence. From eternity without beginning there is only *one* Perfect Master that has come to this world from time to time.

"Moulana Niyaz Ahmed says: 'The names and signs of my

Friend are different in every epic, in features and distinctions there is difference; but in fact it is all One.'

"The last and perfect form of that Perfect Master is that of Muhammad. There is nothing outside ourselves! All the seven heavens and spheres, and earths and planes are within ourselves. The Perfect Master gives us nothing. He shows us the treasure that is within us. Duty therefore is authority, and it is for this reason that saints long to leave the mortal coil which keeps them from enjoying the eternal bliss."

February 4, 1923

The Broken Toe

During some conversations at breakfast, Baba told Gustadji that in case he falls ill, and all find him senseless and in a very dangerous condition, even then "no doctor should be brought in spite of my order."

The Gutta was called this afternoon at 2 P.M. when all were asked to come with paper and pencil. After some minor points were discussed about domestic affairs, all were allotted the respective parts in the drama that has been decided to be enacted in the coming birthday celebrations.

As a sample of their acting, Arjun, Rustom, Asthma, Nervous, and Jal displayed their respective talents as imitation drunkards to the merriment of all.

The Gutta was dispersed at 4 P.M.

Between 5 to 6 P.M. a few games of *kho-kho* were played, while preparations for *atya-patya* tonight are afoot. Naval is arranging to have strings of electric bulbs across the compound to provide light. After supper, at about 9 P.M., the game started. The compound was flooded with brilliant illumination and all were in the best of spirits. Baba also seemed to take a very keen interest in the game, although since evening he was much reserved, dull and seemed to be brooding over something. The game was in full swing, being continued since only half an hour, when all of a sudden, while running across the lines drawn on the ground for the game, Baba collided against Babu (Cyclewala) with a terrific impact. Apparently his right toe got dislocated.

A Divine Ordeal

The very next moment, Baba ran into the dining hall limping on one foot. Immediately he seemed to be suffering excruciating

pain, his face was all aghast and pale, and beads of perspiration came out all over the face and body. He even vomited out the stomach contents. All the while, Baba kept on telling us that he was dying, that he wanted to do one thing and quite the contrary has happened! The gay atmosphere was thus suddenly transformed into one of tense excitement. With anxious faces, and in whispering tones, we discussed the possible means of relieving the pain, when twice or thrice, Baba repeated that a doctor be brought. In the heat of excitement we all were taken in, even Gustadji whom Baba had that very morning particularly instructed not to call in medical help for him in any case—and so Rustom and Nervous went out for a bone-setter.

Baba was seen to be suffering with violent internal shocks, so much so, that in spite of so many of us trying to press and massage his arms and limbs, the whole body was thrilling and vibrating. In spite of the pains and the apparently terrible condition, Baba explained that he does not mind if instead of the toe, even the whole leg is broken; but it is the internal shocks that are taking the very life out of him, and which the body is hardly equal to bear in this weak condition due to continuous fasting. He said he knew all this and it was one of the phases of his internal working, which not being spent in the direction desired, has come back upon him with such severity.

After an hour or so, the paroxysms of shock ceased, and then measures were adopted to alleviate the external pain of the toe. In order to demonstrate that it was not really the dislocated toe that had caused him so much agony Baba suddenly got up to the great relief of all, and actually ran around the compound without any limp or lurch. Soon after, the bone-setter arrived! But contrary to allowing him to treat the dislocated toe, Baba even refused him an inspection, and the bone-setter had to return back without even seeing his supposed patient. Although he was paid his full charges, Rs. 35/- as agreed, the doctor was much disappointed and even mystified. When Rustom in an awkward way finally told him that the patient was now all right and there was no need of any inspection, the doctor could not help putting in, "Even if you don't require any further treatment from me, I won't insist; but what harm is there if I inspect the injury, since I am here, and have received my full fees? An accident, sending you out at late hours in search of medical help from a great distance, you now say, has proved a trivial affair. Perhaps it may develop seriously and there may be only a temporary lull in the pain." Yet, we somehow managed to

take out the bone-setter Saheb and came to Baba in the dining room. Hot water was poured on the injured toe as fomentation, and then a medicinal root applied, and finally it was securely bandaged. Once again, the atmosphere became normal and all began to breathe freely.

The Unfortunate One

Then addressing the party sitting round him, Baba asked, "Can anyone guess as to what is the meaning of this accident?" Thereupon, one by one, all tried to solve the puzzle and gave the possible explanations as per respective opinions; but none came up to the mark. Baba explaining further said, "You remember, I have told you very often that — is the most unfortunate of the Circle and that either he will go mad or die some death." All acquiesced in this. Then continuing Baba said, "This shock concerns him, I tried for him but failed. Really he is the unfortunate of the lot and you will hear something about him within a week or so."

It being past midnight, Baba asked all to go to bed excepting Doctor.

February 5, 1923

The Silent Alarm

Doctor repeated an interesting incident witnessed by him last night, while he was asked to sit up by Baba up to 1:30 A.M. as follows:

"I sat by Baba chafing his hands, and as the time given to me was approaching near, I was at a loss to understand how to know whether it was 1:30 A.M. or not. I thought, if I don't go away at the given time, his order will be broken, and if I get up, his sleep will be disturbed. Such were the thoughts running in my mind when to my great relief and surprise, Baba moved in bed and opening up his eyes asked me to see what time it was. I got another surprise. It was exactly 1:30! When I informed this to Baba, he asked me to put out the lamp and go."

Baba was not feeling quite well today. Besides the paining toe which was considerably inflamed, he was again passing loose, watery stools, the wonder of it being that he had nothing in the stomach—whatever little he had taken yesterday evening was almost all brought out last night after the accident

The Unknown Interview

After sunset, when Baba was standing in the front verandah, Mr. Chothia, a solicitor, came there for Baba's blessing. Not having seen Baba ever before, Mr. Chothia without recognising him as such, shook hands and talked with him for some minutes. After Baba had slipped in, to the amusement of all, Mr. Chothia was explained that all the while he was speaking with the one whom he had specially come to see, that is, Meher Baba himself! The visitor then was taken round the bungalow and shown the separate rooms and the office where he was also given the dream register to read. He was also invited to partake of the homely food cooked for the *mandali*, which was complied with.

February 6, 1923

A Test Call

About 4:30 this morning when we were taking baths, etc., as usual, all were rung for upstairs. The gathering was rather funny. Almost all were semi-dressed, some were with actual tooth-brushes stuck in the mouth and soap boxes clutched in their hands or dental powder smeared on teeth. A couple of us had just rushed straight from the bathrooms with towels and sheets wound round and water still dripping from our bodies. The business for which all were stampeded upstairs so urgently meant only the admonishing of Naval and Masaji for talking about the bungalow and *mandali* affairs with outsiders in a burst of confidence or for the purpose of gossip. All were asked not to speak of the Manzil affairs with outsiders, and Masaji and Naval were specially warned to hold their tongues in check.

After this, all were asked to repeat dreams seen overnight. A few only had seen dreams and those, too, were not very interesting when repeated by them. Thereupon all were dismissed and asked to finish the morning programme as usual. At supper time, the drama pieces were distributed to the parties concerned, and the following notice was put up on board by Baba:

Everyone should particularly note that when out of every duty allotted by me and only in leisure time should he learn his part by heart.

(Sd.) Merwan

February 8, 1923

The Canopy

A huge tent is put up today over the back compound in connection with the coming Hindu festival and birthday celebrations for which other arrangements also are in full swing. In spite of taking a keen interest in all these affairs and showing great activity, Baba really seems to be very pulled down. The watery stools begun since the third are continuing to be passed out. He has had about eight stools, very profuse and watery, during the last 24 hours in spite of his fasting of 24 hours when the food taken is very light and little.

Baba, when he used to eat a lot before his fasting programme, always complained of constipation and scanty stools. When closely observed, many points are marked in Baba to be quite contrary to nature's expectations.

The Master

While Doctor was sitting up with Baba after the rest of us had retired for the night, reading the *Tazkire-Gousya* ("Memoires of Ghaus"), the former asked him as to why Ghaus-Ali-Shah found it necessary to acknowledge 19 Masters, out of whom 11 were Muslims and 8 Hindus! Explaining, Baba said, "Really speaking, there is one Master who gives Realization. It is for knowledge, *dnyan* or *irfan* as referred to by Hindus and Muslims respectively, that sometimes it is necessary to approach one or more Masters. It also happens that the Master who gives Realization also gives understanding.

"In my case, Babajan gave me Realization; and for understanding I had to go to Maharaj, who took eight years to finish the process of understanding. During this period of my process of understanding, if I had connection with some others, I would have gone to many for such understanding. Such Masters who advance the student are also entitled to be called a Master, although, in the real sense, there is only one Master."

The *Sanads*

When questioned about the *sanads* of *vilayat* (confirmation of a spiritual charge) in relation to Hazrat Ahmed Ali Saber, Baba said, "That is one of the ways of giving charge externally. The last four months that I was with Maharaj at Sakori, I had to externally take the charge in writing. The stamped paper

agreements written here by me, although not so very important as compared to the *sanads* of *vilayat*, is still not without meaning too."

February 10, 1923

A Costly Eloquence

Baba's liquid food programme is still going on and with it every day, he is also having six to ten loose motions. In the afternoon, all were made to carry on a rehearsal of Julius Caesar, etc., which resulted in many funny incidents of over-acting and slips of the tongue. But finally, the question of performing a drama on the birthday was dropped, being voted against by the majority while it came on for discussion in the Gutta today. After this discussion, all in the Gutta were asked to repeat short stories. Doctor recited one or two from *Tazkire-Gousya*, followed by Khak, whose Urdu-Persian language could not be picked up properly by the Hindu *mandali*. Then came my turn. I was just beginning to repeat an incident from *Kasasool-Ambiya* when, quite unconsciously, but perhaps due to having just finished hearing Khak's high-sounding sentences, I unfortunately blurted out *has-be-mamool* as the first words, in Urdu, meaning "as usual," and up went a titter of laughter. Generally, I was a very plain Urdu speaker and this rather bombastic word immediately following Doctor's and Khak's repetitions was too much for the majority of non-Urdu speaking *mandali*. So much so that I was passed on and the next man was ordered to proceed and thus for a long time the pastime was indulged in.

February 11, 1923

Anti-Plague Measures

Besides the usual routine, an idea may be had of how the day was passed from the programme of the day put up on board this morning:

9:00 to 11:00 A.M.	Any games
11:00 to 12:00 Noon	Dinner
12:00 to 1:00 P.M.	Gutta meeting
1:30 to 3:30 P.M.	Rest
3:30 to 5:00 P.M.	Any games
6:30 to 7:00 P.M.	Supper
7:00 to 8:00 P.M.	Devotional singing

The chief topic in the Gutta was whether in face of plague in Poona, the *mandali* from there should be allowed in or not. It was decided that they should be sent to Charni Road as soon as they arrived in the Manzil, and asked to take sea baths there, and then admitted.

Khak and Patel arrived from Poona at 8 P.M., but before being admitted in the premises, they were given a hot bath in the compound along with their wherewithal.

February 12, 1923

Ducking in the Back Bay

Since there was to be singing tonight, all were allowed to sleep in the daytime between 1 and 5 P.M. The Poona *mandali* duly arrived in the morning, but as already decided, all of them were dispatched to Chowpatty for sea baths, and a general wash up, and were only admitted after they returned from the sea face after undergoing the queer, restrictive measures.

As the singing is to begin at midnight, we were allowed to sleep as usual at 9 P.M.

February 13, 1923

Hindu Festival

Punctually at 12 in the night, we all were roused up and joined the singing. Most of the time Baba was upstairs with Doctor, while the singing was held in a big tent stretched over the back compound.

Supernatural versus Unnatural

While conversing with Doctor, Baba explained the difference between unnatural and supernatural phenomena. "The result arrived at after acting according to nature's course and not going against it, if it be unnatural, then it is called supernatural. But the same unnatural result if arrived at by adopting an unnatural course is called unnatural only. For example, the process of eating by way of the mouth and bringing out refuse is natural. If the food, though eaten by the mouth, does not bring out refuse at all, then it is called supernatural. If instead of eating through the mouth one eats the other way round, and there is no refuse, it is called unnatural."

The singing lasted till about 4:30 in the morning and then as usual we all retired to our rooms for prayers.

Again all were allowed to sleep in the afternoon between 1 and 5 P.M. as the singing is to last all night.

February 14, 1923

The Ringing Singing

The one-time silent and quiet Manzil is, since the last three days, ringing with a deafening chorus of bells and drums. Besides the usual singing party from Mahim comprising about 50 persons, the party from Poona under the leadership of the old but spirited Bhikolya are, so to say, carrying on a competition at the pitch of their voices and pealing of their bells. In the early hours, at about 2 A.M. in the morning, Baba called me, Doctor, and Khak and discussed with us the question of our taking part in the Hindu worship. Since Doctor and myself explained to Baba that we had no scruples on any ground if we were to be ordered by him, he ordered both of us to attend the Hindu singing and worship, while Khak who seemed to be hesitating on the point, was therefore ordered not to attend even the singing.

The rest of the programme for the day was as follows:

To sleep from	12:30 to 2:30 P.M.
To attend singing	3 to 7 "
Tea with sweets	4 "
Complete fast for 24 hours from 9 P.M.	

It all came out as arranged and we retired for the night as usual at 9 P.M.

February 15, 1923

Feast for the Poor

Once again, the hunting for the blind and needy was indulged in. But this time, the standard of the poor people to be collected being rather general it was not very difficult. Doctor, myself and Abdurrehman could bring about 25 of them. The feast was continued up to 4 P.M. when about 800 poor were fed, while the *mandali* were observing a complete fast since last night, which was ended at 9 P.M. tonight. However, Baba did not break his liquid fast as he had previously announced to do on the

15th February; his keeping on, on liquid food is to be continued as usual for an unknown period.

February 16, 1923

A Solace in Time

Although the buzz and din of the singing has ceased from today, yet the atmosphere is far from normal, as preparations for Baba's birthday falling on the 19th are going on. For about half an hour, Baba gave a short lecture on the importance of religion when with a Master and without a Master. It was mainly addressed to Khak and Rustom. Baba also came afterwards to the room of Khak, and explained away his doubtful points and put his mind at rest which had been very uneasy for the last few days. Syedsahib Jamadar left for good for Poona with the Poona singing party and Kasba party last night.

February 17, 1923

A Strange Visitor

Myself, Doctor and Khak were engaged in our respective rooms repeating "Ya Muhammad Mustafa," as we have been doing of late under Baba's instructions daily for one hour, when Baba stopped us. He asked us to attach more importance to this duty and repeat the name in a sweet tone with a regular rhythm, and to sit alone while doing so, locking the room from the inside. He added, "This is not study or meditation; it is a kind of pure devotion."

Then the question of Moulvi Abdul Wahid of Hyderabad was discussed. This gentleman was seen sitting and standing near the bungalow gate since yesterday evening, without trying to seek entry or talk with anybody.

The Alleged Revelations

From what Gustadji—under Baba's instructions—understood this Moulvi to say, he had come down to Bombay in search of a friend of his at Matunga. Not finding his friend, he was almost stranded in Bombay, and consequently took shelter in the Dadar mosque just opposite the Manzil. He told Gustadji that he saw some light in his meditations in the direction of the bungalow, and from this he concluded that there must be some divine personality in that locality.

The second time, while again engaged in his daily meditations, he saw the same light, and in the centre of the halo, he could read the name Manzil-e-Meem. At this, he came out in search of the premises and was sitting there, because he felt peace and comfort in its atmosphere. When asked as to his antecedents, he explained the strained circumstances under which he was obliged to leave his family at Hyderabad, but added, he did not want anything from Baba. The old man indeed looked a very good man.

Hearing all this, Baba asked Doctor to take him to Munshi's and feed him; and said afterwards some arrangements will be made for giving him an occupation in the school or elsewhere. At Munshi's place, Doctor came across Aziz Ahmed who, in the course of conversation said that if he were to stay with Baba for only two months, he would become quite a different man spiritually. Within the five minutes that he was standing in the verandah of the bungalow he felt and experienced such a grand confirmation of feeling and experience within himself.

Darkness below the Lamp

After supper, Gutta meeting was rung for. The principal points that came for discussion were naturally as to why outsiders like Aziz Ahmed, Moulvi Wahid of Hyderabad and Moulvi Irfamrullah of Touk were receiving such experiences from and concerning Baba, while those who are said to belong to his own Circle are in the pitch dark spiritually. Baba gave a convincing explanation on these points for a long time. On the day of the accident to his toe, Baba had said that proofs of what he said would be forthcoming within a week. Baba said, "They are already with me in the form of letters received after the incident from — which I would show to anyone selected with the majority of votes by the *mandali*. But that person will be sworn to secrecy and he will only say this much, that he is satisfied or not satisfied. Otherwise, when the right time comes, the letters will be shown to all." The latter course was decided to be adopted and for the present, the mystery of the broken toe remains unrevealed.

February 18, 1923

The Divine Hurricane

The day was passed away without any abnormal incident taking place. But at supper time, Baba got into a temper on the

plea of the food cooked by Davla Masi (Baba's aunt) having run short. The mistake was not quite serious, and by no means intentional; yet the poor old lady was caught in the whirlpool of divine wrath. For the time being, the silence of death reigned supreme over the bungalow save for Baba's thundering voice and lightning activities and movements. Everyone was trying his best to get under cover and out of the way. Almost all rooms had closed doors, particularly that of Khak, he being very afraid of his tempting spectacles! And yet Baba was fasting and having dysentery and consequently in normal hours in a very weak condition physically.

However, very soon after, the atmosphere became normal and as if nothing had happened there in the calm and quiet Manzil! Besides Baba's mother and Davla Masi (her sister), some more ladies have arrived for the celebrations, Baba has decided to sleep in the back hall below, and the upstairs have been exclusively set aside for ladies for the night.

February 19, 1923

Baba's Birthday

The much expected day at last arrived! One by one, the guests began to arrive, and the Manzil became full with merriment and animation. The tent has been beautifully decorated by Navroz; specially a corner of it has been turned into a fairyland, with buntings, plants and flower sheets ingeniously contrived into a conclave with a pretty little settee or sofa placed there for Baba. After taking bath upstairs, Baba came down at about 9:30. It was decided or rather agreed by Baba that for 24 hours today, he will act up to the *mandali's* instructions and orders! But when all desired him to sit on the specially decorated sofa he refused and brought forth apparently lame excuses. In spite of repeated requests, Baba finally sat down in the tent, and to the disappointment of all, he was garlanded there.

A very big heap of beautiful garlands, bouquets, and flower baskets was accumulated around Baba. Many presents were also forced upon Baba by friends, relatives and admirers which were all distributed amongst the *mandali* with his own hands soon after. Thereafter, all freely indulged in feasting and frivolity. When Munshi came in the evening, he was very confident of persuading Baba to sit on the special seat. Once again, all tried to induce Baba in changing his decision, but to no purpose. Mun-

shi too had to content himself in garlanding Baba while sitting on the ground.

Late in the evening some guests arrived from Poona including Messrs. Usmankhan, Abdulla, Abdurrehman, and Elim.

The most entertaining programme of the day, that of singing, then began after supper. Three *ghazal* singers were brought for the occasion in which Yassin held the field to the end, and pleased Baba and all. The singing lasted till 4:30 A.M!

February 20, 1923

The Indigestion Cure

As soon as the singing came to an end, most of the guests departed. The remaining went to sleep, while the *mandali* retired for the morning prayers. After the prayers, the *mandali* were allowed to sleep up to 11 o'clock. Breakfast was omitted today and all took dinner after getting up. Thereafter, a sports and playing programme was indulged in. Almost all the guests having departed, the atmosphere was more free and comfortable. Baba, too, freely participated with the *mandali* in the games and plays. Laughing was the order of the day. Everyone was made to laugh and laugh by Baba because he said it promoted digestion!

The following notice was put up in the afternoon:

In the afternoon from 12 to 2 is reserved for my eating and drinking daily. Thus the fast for complete 24 hours will last for days and days together.

(Sd.) Merwan

February 21, 1923

Under Baba's instructions, Syedsahib read to the *mandali* Usman's letter to Munshi regarding Asar's demand for Rs. 50/-! After severing all connections, Asar's expectation of the monetary help being continued was past description. The amount paid by Munshi every month to Asar, as told by him afterwards, belonged to Baba and was paid through Munshi. However, Baba told Usman to pay the amount to Asar as the last installment with the warning that he should expect no more!

The following change in yesterday's notice was made by Baba:

The time of my eating and drinking has been changed to 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. Thus complete 24 hours fast will be continually kept for days and days together.

(Sd.) Merwan

Being laid up with slight fever, I missed a queer job. Doctor, Abdurrehman, Ahmedkhan and Arjun however had to undergo the ordeal of distributing and hawking the biography amongst the big Muslim crowds that had gathered together about Mola-Station, Ballard Pier, to receive the flag presented by the Sultan of Turkey to the Indian Muslims interested in the Khilafat movement. In spite of about an hour's hawking amongst the hundreds of the spectators, the party of four stalwarts could sell one copy only! They returned back to the Manzil at about 5 P.M. not in a very cheerful mood.

February 23, 1923

Another Feeding of the Poor

Another small feeding of the poor was given today. About 200 poor, blind and maimed were fed and 50 clothed. At supper, after taking a few morsels of food, I reported to Baba that I had no appetite. At this, Baba asked me, "Why did you not ask me to put less food in the plate if you had no appetite?" Doctor put in his tongue here, and told Baba, "You don't even allow that." With these words the danger signal was up! Baba became very angry, and asked both of us not to eat. When Gutta was opened, the orders 7 and 28 were again read out and cancelled as suited to individual tastes. But after one hour, the atmosphere became normal again, and all the orders were declared to be in force and binding to everyone.

February 24, 1923

News from Sakori

Davla Masi today related her experience of her recent visit to Sakori. According to her, Maharaj had gone very weak in the cage, in which he has imprisoned himself. He was very often heard repeating Baba's name and seemed longing to see him. When asked by Gulmai as to how long the self-imprisonment will continue, Maharaj said, "Still there is time; and when I do come out of it, I shall either leave Sakori or leave this body."

Philosophy from Fables

When some of us were seated by Baba downstairs he said:

*Jee ne se marna bhala, marne se darna bhala;
Darne se bharna bhala, aur bhar ne se karna bhala.*

He spoke these words at random, but while explaining the meaning, interpreted them deeply. Baba said *marna* (to die) here means not the ordinary death but the real death, i.e. to die before death—meaning to become one with God. Now *darna* (to fear) is also not to be taken in its exact literal meaning only. To fear means to be in the state of one created, in spite of realizing one's self as the Creator, that is God. This is the stage of a gross-conscious Master which is more difficult to attain than becoming a divinely intoxicated one. Then *bharna* (to fill) means to fill the hearts of others with the wine of Divine Knowledge. But *karna* (to do) is the highest possible attainment, which means, to do for others what you have done for yourself; in fact, to make others like yourself in point of power, duty, etc! This is the highest stage, the stage belonging to a Perfect Master

32 hours fast from 9 tonight to 5 day after tomorrow morning.

(Sd.) Merwan

Closing of the Manzil

February 27, 1923

The Turn of the Tide

SHIRINMAI,³³ who had been to Sakori on the 25th, returned this morning from there. Under Baba's instructions, she narrated the incidents of her visit to the *mandali*. The gist of what she explained is as follows:

When she approached Maharaj for the first time she was beaten by him. Putting out his hands from the cage bars, Maharaj caught hold of Shirinmai with one hand, and with the other gave her sound blows! In the tussle, even her bangles were broken. Not accustomed to such outbursts, she got very much excited and tried to leave Sakori at once. But somehow she was detained for a day there and had in all four interviews with Maharaj, being called again and again in his presence. Maharaj not only abused her, but also spoke much against Baba and the *mandali*, saying, "Merwan is impersonating himself as a God and Master," etc., and so on!

When we had finished hearing Shirinmai, Baba sent for us all, and asked many of us as to what we could make out of this chaos, specially when quite the contradictory words and sentiments were expressed by Maharaj before Davla Masi only a few days ago. Explaining further, Baba said he had started the game himself by writing a letter to Maharaj that he "had no concern with him, Durgamai or anyone." It was that letter that had the effect of rousing Maharaj to this course, which he had long wanted him to take. Continuing, Baba said, "Now that this game has been started by me it will not end with me. The end is in Maharaj's hands. I often have spoken to many of you

that the whole world, even Maharaj, will go against me; so this is the beginning of it, therefore be prepared. Everything will happen just as I have spoken to many of you. The month of April is coming after a gap of a year."

More Fuel to the Fire

After dinner Baba made Adi write a letter to Maharaj saying that he did not like his remarks about him before Shirinmai and the Sakori people and that he has got disgusted with the *duty* and wants to leave it. The letter was read before the *mandali* and all were asked to be on their guard not to be taken in by the wordy bluffery that has been started.

February 28, 1923

Ping-Pong

Following the provocative letter to Maharaj, Rustom has gone to Sakori today to bring a message for the *mandali*.

A big table has been brought since recently for ping-pong or table tennis in the Manzil. Baba and Doctor played the game today for a considerable time, and as in almost every game and sport, Baba had the leading hand in ping-pong too amidst the whole *mandali*.

After supper, some of us sat with Baba playing cards and talking till about midnight.

March 2, 1923

The Midnight Play

Doctor, who was keeping company with Baba throughout the night, came and woke me up just after midnight under Baba's orders. Khak was also called upstairs, when we four started playing cards in the dead of night. The game was continued till about 3:15 in the morning. After this, Baba asked the three of us to sit for prayers for an hour and then go to sleep, so that we may not have to get up at 4 A.M. as usual for prayers. Just before dinner, there was again a storm.

More Storm

Baba got into a temper for some mistake committed by Khodoo and asked him to leave the bungalow. Immediately after the whole *mandali* was served the following notice:

All should tear away the order forms given to them.

(Sd.) Merwan

When the above order was complied with by those who were present then, Baba became more excited and asked everyone to leave the bungalow forthwith. For the first time, the *mandali* refused to obey Baba and there was no sign of anyone trying to get out as ordered. Baba began to get more and more heated and for some time great excitement prevailed in the bungalow. He was also heard to say, "I am tired of all this, and either you or I must go." However, after half an hour of swearing and abusing, Baba said, "I am willing to remain on one condition, that hereafter none should follow my orders." The *mandali* replied, "Be it as you wish, but remain with us." Another half an hour, and the atmosphere became quite normal and the following notice appeared on board:

All orders should be followed as usual.

(Sd.) Merwan

The Hindu Fire Festival

About sunset, the Hindu festival fire was lighted in the bungalow compound when a party of Hindu *lejimwalas* (those who play two sticks with strings on which metal pieces are tied) came and gave a demonstration of their play and dance before Baba. After supper, the *mandali* indulged in some frivolous singing and dancing near the fire, while Syedsahib filled the whole premises with neem leaves' smoke to destroy the mosquitoes. The following notice appeared on board:

Hence none should touch my body purposely.

(Sd.) Merwan

March 3, 1923

The Continuous Bells

Devotional singing was held round the festival fire after breakfast this morning. When Rustom returned from Sakori, all flocked upstairs to hear him with great eagerness. The gist of his narration is as follows:

"I reached Sakori on the 1st in the evening and had Shri Maharaj's blessing, who saw me and talked with me as usual.

Since Shri has imprisoned himself, he has advised the continuous bell beating in the temple throughout the 24 hours without a break. The following morning, at the early hour of 4 A.M., I was also requested by the people there and accordingly took part in the affair for a couple of hours. After some time I again went for Maharaj's blessing. However, I marked that the steam was getting up, and Maharaj was gradually beginning to talk against Baba and the *mandali*. On my second visit, near the cage Maharaj began to take me right and left, and at the same time, kept on abusing Baba as well. When I went there for the last time before starting back for Bombay, there was a great outburst of fury.

Take Care! Now!

"Maharaj seemed to be very angry, and during the abuses he gave the following message for the *mandali*: All should take to their own course. Merwan is not a Master and he (Maharaj) is not responsible for anything now.

A Dispute of Love

"During the prevailing excitement, I could not help remarking to Maharaj that 'these bamboo pieces of which the cage is made concern your spiritual workings, and granted that by this imprisonment you are suffering for our sake, but we don't want it and would rather see you out and free.' Thereupon, Maharaj told me, 'Then break it.' I at once started pulling out some of the wooden bars off the cage, and in fact, made a big opening, when Maharaj became all the more infuriated. A carpenter was called to repair the breakage and I was asked to stop pulling it down. Maharaj asked me why did I break his cage. I said because you told me to do so. 'Well then will you do whatever I ask you to do?' asked Maharaj. 'Of course,' I replied in the affirmative. 'Then bring that big piece of stone lying there and throw it on my head,' said Maharaj, thus putting my logic in confusion, and he continued to shower choice and select adjectives on Baba, self and the general *mandali*, and at the same time, got the broken and dislodged bars readjusted by the carpenter. Maharaj's abuse continued till the last moment of my departure, and with his angry outpourings singing in my ear I started from there yesterday evening."

After Rustom had finished his narrative, Baba asked all those who were present there if they still wanted to stick to him to the end now that even Maharaj had begun to talk against him. All excepting Doctor(!) declared their willingness to stick to their promises given to Baba not to leave him under any circumstances. Doctor said he would consider over the matter and then give his reply after some time. It was rather a bombshell for the *mandali* and set us all guessing the reason of his hesitation in confirming his promise along with the rest of us. He was the last man to be expected of being so easily affected. Baba thereupon explained to the *mandali* to stick to their words and not to leave him under any circumstances, however against and contrary they may find Maharaj and even Babajan. "It is just possible," he said, "that both of them begin denouncing me publicly, but you should always rely upon my admitting always under every circumstance both of them as my gurus and as the greatest spiritual personalities of the age throughout, without exception at every time in the future."

A Teasing

After the meeting was dispersed, Baba asked Doctor if he had finished considering over the point. With a laugh, Doctor told Baba that he was with him to the end, and his delay in replying was merely to tease him!

Thereupon Khak was called in and asked to write the following on the notice board:

Doctor's delay in giving opinion was with the object of teasing me and for no other purpose. He has no concern with anyone except myself, through whom he first approached Shri Maharaj.

(Sd.) Merwan

Just at bedtime, a large centipede was seen killed near Masaji's room, and the order of stuffing ears with cotton was again renewed and brought in force from today.

All retired for the night as usual at 9 P.M., but for Doctor who sat up by Baba's bedside. At 11:30 he woke up Baba, when he broke his 30 hours' fast. Besides the 24 hours' continuous fasting started by Baba since the last two months, occasionally he fasts for 36 and 42 hours too!

March 4, 1923

Adi on Trial

The chief topic of the day with Baba to be discussed again and again was about Doctor's constant tendency towards sleep. Today, he was looking drowsy throughout the day.

All were specially summoned upstairs in the evening when Behramji was asked by Baba to explain what the row was for at cricket time in the morning. It transpired that Adi, in the excitement of the game, had intentionally beaten Vishnu.³⁴ Baba invited the opinion of the *mandali* whether Adi had broken one of the 28 orders or not. The majority voted in favour of Adi and returned a verdict of not guilty. Yet Baba took him right and left, and humiliated him much in the presence of all.

Baba Knows All

In an excited mood, Baba turned now towards Vishnu and asked him to repeat his confession before all. Some days ago while chafing Baba's limbs Vishnu had entertained some passionate thoughts, but the moment he understood the situation, he withdrew his hands, and afterwards made a clean breast of it before Baba; but not before the notice was put up on the 2nd inst. that "hence, none should touch my body purposely." The full significance of the above notice only dawned upon the *mandali* today, and showed that no action of the *mandali*, whether physical or mental, escapes Baba's notice!

The Guilt Cure

When all had dispersed, Baba asked Adi not to feel for or brood over the humiliation he was subjected to in the presence of all. He said it was one of the ways of cleaning away the guilt of the guilty party by passing the person concerned in some such trying and exciting ordeal. Even Ramakrishna sent for Vivekananda, and on his arrival, began to embrace and caress him.

Then came Doctor's turn. Baba asked him as to whether he was to obey him or follow his own mind regarding his love for sleep. Of course, thinking the former to be safe, Doctor replied he was to obey him as he has been doing, and there the matter ended for the present.

March 5, 1923

The Lover of Sleep

In the morning while Baba was sitting on the easy chair (the only piece of furniture in the big bungalow, excepting the office) placed in the fore-verandah, Doctor was marked again in a drowsy state. Thereupon, Baba abruptly told him, "You can now do as you like, sleep anytime, and any number of hours. I won't tell you anything. Go." And Doctor retired to his room quietly and slept till 11 A.M. After dinner, he tried to play ping-pong with Jal, but he was stopped in the game, and he again retired to his room and slept till 5 P.M. All along, Baba was observed to be very calm; but after supper, he started an exciting game. Khak was asked to inform Doctor to go to Poona or anywhere else he liked best immediately. Doctor refused to comply with second-hand orders through Khak. Thereupon he was sent for and a hot discussion ensued between him and Baba. Doctor refused to accept the order of the boot on the plea that he had not broken any orders. Baba asked Nervous to take out Doctor's trunks and things from the room, but the latter remained unyielding. Hence, Baba began reasoning it out with Doctor, when at last, peace was made on his agreeing to try his best in keeping himself fresh and free-minded and avoiding drowsiness. Then Baba added, "As you have slept a lot today, you sit by my side till 2 A.M. tonight," to which Doctor heartily agreed.

March 6, 1923

Peculiar Poetry

Mr. Jehangir Moos came to see Baba on his return from Sakori with a message from Maharaj. Moos expressed dissatisfaction about Rustom's behaviour towards Shri Maharaj during his recent visit to Sakori, specially the cage-breaking incident. When explained by Baba, he went away quite satisfied.

After supper, Baba and some others were carrying on random poetry composing in the dining room. However, during the compositions, Baba said he felt like going to the water-closet and at the same time he said he did not like to break the subject, hence asked if anybody liked to accompany him. Doctor and Adi volunteered, and accordingly, both of them occupied the two latrines on each side of the central one occupied by Baba; while myself, Fardoon and Asthma waited outside the three

latrines. For about half an hour, the art of poetry composing was carried on amidst the peculiar atmosphere of dirt and bad smell of the latrines and surrounding gutters, an atmosphere in which even a genuine poet may for the time being forget his natural gift! Whatever be the real underlying reason for this strange incident, as there is bound to be, as proved by so many such peculiar actions and words of Baba coming to be reasoned out in the course of time, the pastime was highly amusing and produced some humorous poetry!

March 7, 1923

More Good Times

The tent stretched over the back compound has proved very useful, and the labour spent over it has been fully paid back since the Hindu festival and birthday celebrations came in following one after the other and were observed therein. It has not yet been pulled down, as Rustom's engagement ceremony has been decided to be held here on the 9th, and once again it is being decorated with buntings and flowers. Yassin the *ghazal* singer has also been engaged for the occasion, and another good time is soon looked forward to by the *mandali*. In the evening, after coming to know through Doctor that Syedsahib was in a very depressed condition, both physically and mentally, Baba decided to go to Charni Road.

Out after Three Months

Thus, after such a long period as nearly three months, Baba came out of the bungalow today accompanied by Behramji, Gustadji, myself, Adi and Vajifdar and we went to Charni Road by motor car. We stayed for about a couple of hours at Charni Road, and Syedsahib got a big dose of encouragement and don't worry from Baba, and looked much better at the time of our leaving him than he seemed at our arrival. At about 10:30 P.M. we motored back to the Manzil and found that in our absence Mssrs. Yeshvantrao, Gopalrao, and Trimbuk had arrived from Sakori.

March 8, 1923

Warrant from Sakori

It transpired today that the trio had come from Sakori to try to induce Baba away there. It seems Shri Maharaj had entreated

them to bring Merwan to Sakori anyhow; otherwise, he would stop his one-time meal also.

But Baba refused to accompany them and proved too much for all their arguments and inducements. They even threatened that unless Baba came there now, Durgamai would come herself to fetch him; but it was all to no purpose, and they had to return empty handed. Really, it is a great enigma to witness this invisible tug-of-war between Baba and Maharaj.

"The secrets between the Lover and the Beloved are even beyond the knowledge of *Kiramun* and *Kekehin*," meaning the two angels on the right and left shoulders of a person and believed by the Muslims to be the registrars of all good and bad actions committed and done by the person concerned. The angel on the right shoulder registers good actions and that on the left, bad actions, committed however privately and quietly. But the poet says that even these *Kiramun* and *Kekehin* have no access to the secrets and relations between the Lover and the Beloved!

March 9, 1923

The Gala Day

It was another gala day today! The beautifully decorated tent, the scores of gaily dressed guests, the hum-drum of the cooks belonging to the contractor with whom it has been arranged to cater for the day, all bespoke the happy occasion of Rustom's betrothal. However, a slight "breeze" occurred in the morning over the much discussed sleeping habit of Doctor. It seems last night, just at midnight, Doctor was called upstairs after being roused up from sound sleep, and was asked by Baba whether he liked to sleep or keep awake beside him. Doctor replied he preferred to sleep and he was sent away, while Baba got displeased. This morning the matter was stretched to the point of Doctor again being asked to go away, yet the excitement came to an end. However, it was more than made up through the following incident which sent the whole Manzil ringing with peals of laughter which kept on echoing and re-echoing from every nook and corner for a long time. Even the gravest features and faces amongst the guests could be marked suppressing a smile. It happened thus:

A Silly Slip

About 200 covers were laid under the capacious tent for dinner and when all sat for the meal, it savoured of a great feast. The

tasty food consisting of so many dishes was tactfully and satisfactorily served by the contractor to the guests.

Besides the display of varied eatables spread before all, a small, evenly-cut bar of soap was also kept near each person in a nice little plate. Just nearing the completion of the meal, and before anyone could use the soap for hand washing, Abdurrehman, who was all along talking very glibly, picked up the whole piece, and to the horror of all, just put it in his mouth! The sudden outburst of laughter, however, made him aware of the funny mistake he had made, and with post-haste, he let down the piece from his mouth and tried to sit with a well-composed face. But like electricity, the news was passed from mouth to mouth and for the time being, Mr. Abdurrehman became one of the wonders of the world, because by the time all had finished washing their hands and got up from the meal, almost every pair of wicked eyes were turned upon the poor fellow. When Baba came to know of the incident, he sent for Abdurrehman, and questioned him as to why he had tried to eat soap! The poor fellow, in trying to defend his actions, said that at places, it is a practice to provide pieces of cheese at the end of a meal; and thinking the soap in this case to be such he made the mistake. All the time he was telling, he was violently rubbing his fingers and toes out of nervousness.

Barsoap

To add to his discomfiture, Baba rang for all, and asked to read the notice that was written there and then on the board:

Henceforth all should call Abdurrehman by the name of "Cheese."

(Sd.) Merwan

After some time, again the bell rang and all were asked to read the board which contained the following:

"Cheese" is changed into "Barsoap."

(Sd.) Merwan

Out of fun and mischief, someone induced Baba to nickname Mr. Abdurrehman as Barsoap on the plea that under the circumstances it was more appropriate and with some reference to the context.

Thus another nickname, that of Barsoap, has been added today to the already peculiar names of Slamson, Asthma and Aga Baidul, under which three of the *mandali* have begun to be known and recognized.

In the afternoon Yassin's singing began, lasting (with a gap for supper) till about 10:30 P.M. It was very interesting and entertaining throughout. After this the happy occasion came to a successful termination and all retired for the night.

March 10, 1923

How to Bring Round

There was again a storm while Baba was discussing with Khan Saheb³⁵ about Rustom and Adi. Baba seemed to be very angry, but after all, the matter was wound up to such a pitch that somehow the old man was brought round and the question of Rustom's and Adi's stay in the Manzil was decided just as Baba wished.

March 11, 1923

According to the following notice, the game which had been stopped for some time, again began to be played freely and ping-pong was the order of the day. Even Baba played many games on the table with Doctor.

The notice:

Ping-pong as usual. All should receive, count and give clothes to the washerman by midday tomorrow.

(Sd.) Merwan

All the ladies including Shirinmai and Davla Masi having left by this time, Baba went upstairs and occupied his usual room there today.

March 12, 1923

A lizard having been found in the water tub in one of the bathrooms, the following notice was put up on the board:

As too many lizards are to be seen in the bungalow, members are warned not to gargle with the water in the tub, and while using tub water, it should be properly inspected.

Utensils containing food, milk, etc., should be kept covered by persons concerned.

(Sd.) Merwan

Further, it has been decided for Doctor to keep awake in the night, daily between 9 P.M. and 1 A.M., and instead sleep in the daytime from 7 to 11 in the morning. At last, Doctor got permission to sleep for four hours in the day, but it was only at the cost of a good night's sleep!

March 14, 1923

Baba on Strike

Baba, who went to Charni Road yesterday in the morning at 6:30 A.M., did not return from there since, and instead a note was received by Gustadji this morning, asking whether the *mandali* wanted him back at the Manzil or whether he was alright where he was!

All the members assembled and discussed the reply to be sent. Doctor was asked to answer the note on behalf of all beseeching Baba to return as soon as possible. Accordingly, he came back at 5 P.M. to the relief of all.

Although every now and then an outsider comes across Baba and gets a profound impression about his personality, yet those who think against him are also not few. In the press at times a controversy is raged for and against him. Today, one such highly prejudiced article appeared in one of the local Gujarati papers called *Insaf* (Justice) aimed against Meher Baba, Maharaj, and Babajan all at one sweep.

March 19, 1923

A Treat

Baba and the Parsi-Irani *mandali*, with a few exceptions from amongst the Hindu-Muslim party, went to see the comic drama "Deep Waters." The remarkable point about this excursion was that all were allowed to see the drama to the end, as seldom happens when one goes with Baba. On more than one occasion in the past Baba suddenly left a theatre when the play was hardly half finished, and in each case, naturally, the *mandali* had also to follow out after him. But as already said, today we went through the drama to the end, which was very amusing. Specially

the acting of Mr. Pesu Patipatya was very lifelike and extremely humorous.

A Distinguished Visitor

When I came back from the mill this evening, I came to know Khwaja Hasan Nizami had been to the Manzil just a while ago to see Baba. As per his present system, of course, Baba could not see him. However, Gustadji and Adi were sent to see him in the car outside the compound along with some others, when the visitor was explained the situation as to why Baba could not be seen. But an appointment was made with him for some of the *mandali* to go to see him the following day. Baba asked Khak, Rustom and myself to go and see Nizami tomorrow in the afternoon.

The Ideal Master

As per the appointment, we three went to the Rahimtulla Sea View (at Chowpatty) where Khwaja was putting up since coming to Bombay, at about 4 P.M. We were cordially greeted and made to sit near him. Khwaja asked Khak about Asar and was informed that the latter had severed his connection with Baba and the *mandali*. Then Khak introduced myself and Rustom as two of Baba's followers. Upon learning that I was a Cutchi Memon by caste, he became much interested in me. "Generally I have known the Cutchis to be only following such saints and masters who also externally wear their standard green turban, a big robe and with the usual big flowing beard. It is therefore strange to find a Cutchi interested in Meher Baba."

Faith

Then questioning me directly, Khwaja asked me, "Why are you living with Meher Baba?" I said, "I do so with the hope that by so doing I will understand the mystery of my existence and Truth." "But how do you know that you will understand it through Meher Baba?" he asked me. To which I replied that I simply believed in him and had no further reason or support beyond faith. Thereupon, Khwaja advised me to stick to the faith and belief, and he added the goal will be surely reached. Then addressing all those sitting about him, he narrated the following story:

Love versus Lashes

"A rich man had two servants. One of them was attached to the things which were paid to him for serving the rich man, while the other was attached to him through genuine regard and love.

"Now one day he gave a handkerchief to each of them and asked them to bring it back after rinsing the same in the sea which was near by (as it is here, pointing to the Chowpatty sea face). But he fixed a present and a penalty for him who came first. To the one who loved him he told him that if he came first he would be much pleased, or to the contrary, he would be displeased. While to the other he said if he came first he would be paid 100 rupees, if not he would be given 100 lashes. And he let them off in the race at the same time and from equal distance. The one who loved him started forth with only one thought running in his mind-that of success of his effort and the happiness and pleasure of his Master. The other, also trying his best, ran on, but his mind was preoccupied and he mused on the pleasure of receiving the 100 rupees and the pain of the 100 lashes. At the end naturally the lover won the race. Likewise one should have love for God and should pray to him for His sake. Otherwise those doing with the thought of Heaven and Hell stand the chance of defeat in the divine race!"

Thereafter the conversation turned upon many subjects. Referring to Baba's refusal to see him, he said he doesn't mind in the least, and then narrated a circumstance under which he had put himself behind a curtain for a certain period when even his family people were not allowed to see him! Khwaja asked Rustom who was that short man with a brown mustache that had come to see him (Nizami) yesterday at the motor car, and added that he looked very promising! We informed him it was Gustadji, the chief member of Baba's Circle! After some more conversation we took leave of Khwaja and came back to Baba. We related our experience in detail.

March 24, 1923

Uncomfortable Reception

Doctor, who had been home for the last six days, returned this evening at about 7:30. But before being let in he was made to stand on one leg on the narrow fountain wall in the front

compound after he was made to take away all his clothes except the underwear. Besides, instructions were given to prepare to give a bath to Doctor before he was let in. Thereupon he began appealing loudly to Baba, who was all the while standing on the verandah, to be spared the ordeal of a cold bath in the open air. Finally Doctor was let in without the bath but not before all had a hearty laugh at his expense.

March 25, 1923

A Tempest

Baba got very much excited and angry for some unknown reason this morning, so much so that he wanted to go away. Of course all thereupon declared that in that case they will follow him. But this time Baba seemed to be exceptionally excited; for some time he slept in the back compound while again for a long time he stood in the blazing hot sun of March! Someone was asked to bring a victoria. Three other victorias were brought by three different members. They kept going round amidst the public traffic. A terrible silence reigned over the Manzil and its occupants—even the twig of a tree or the tick of a watch being clearly heard in the tense atmosphere. After walking for a little while Baba climbed the compound wall and slept there under the hot sun. By this time so many people had come out of their houses to witness the strange sight.

To the great relief of all Baba once again came back into the bungalow and very nearly became his old self again. In the evening Doctor was once again taken to task and offered two proposals, either to go to — for two months or to remain for the same period in the bungalow boycotted and neglected by Baba. He didn't like both of them and would not give his definite answer. So Baba declared for him and told him, "You remain here and with the exception of the seven and 28 orders there are no orders for you from me. You are not to keep any sort of connection with me of talking or writing, etc., while you are at liberty to do as you like—you may sleep for 12 hours at a stretch, I have no objection."

[Ramjoo left the Manzil on March 31, 1923. The following description of the closing of the Manzil is given as a short narrative from rough notes he collected.]

By the end of March the following notice appeared on board and caused quite a flutter among the Manzil residents:

I am preparing to send most of the company to their respective homes in the very beginning of April, as I have to march off to 'Nagar in the next month with the remaining few.

(Sd.) Merwan

Hardly anyone had even an idea about the stay coming to a close so soon. At least, none expected a fresh move before the month of June. But sudden changes in programmes and movements were not quite rare occurrences and after a few hours of excitement, the *mandali* became serious about the question.

Negotiations with the bungalow landlord were immediately set on foot to vacate the same, but at the same time, to retain the outbuildings on reasonable terms to be continued as office of the Circle & Co. in finishing up the remaining book work by those of the members who would remain in Bombay for the same. The same night Baba called the *mandali* in the back compound and informed them that the Manzil stay was at an end for good. Shortly, he would be going to Ahmednagar where, after Rustom's marriage, he thinks of settling down at a village called Arangaon. But hereafter the mode of living will be very difficult and strict. Besides the usual restrictions, all will have to do actual labour work and undergo various physical hardships. Hence, all were asked to think well upon the subject during the vacation at home and come to a firm determination for the future before joining him again.

By the actual end of the month the exodus of members sent on long vacations was in full swing. Only the following of the Special and General orders respectively were left standing for those who went home:

I, II, III, IV, & VII—1, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19 & 25.

In the first week of April, the Manzil had almost changed back into its original state, after the partitions, etc., had been removed therefrom. Only a very few members remained with Baba for whom the only work to do was to pack up and dispose away the surplus things, as well as arranging the office quite independent of the main premises.

Good-Bye

By the 19th April, 1923, all the arrangements were completed in full detail for leaving the Manzil, save the disposal of the flour mill; but in spite of that Baba had decided to leave for 'Nagar that night.

The main premises were duly handed over in charge of the owner, the heavy luggage despatched to the station, and all the book matter completely adjusted in the outbuilding which was retained as an office; and just a few hours before the departure, the negotiations going on about the mill sale were successfully completed, and it was also finally disposed of the same day!

With the remaining few, Baba left Bombay the same night by the Raichur Passenger towards the much-talked-of Arangaon which had already begun to be referred to by most of the party as "Hyrangaon" (Place of Hardship) in anticipation of the hot time expected there.



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MEHER BABA AND MANDALI AT QUETTA, 1923

Left to right, front row: Jal, Gustadji, Meher Baba, Adi K. Irani, Behramji. Middle row: Slamson, Babu Cyclewala, Pendu, Nervous. Back row: Barsoap, Masaji, Baidul, Ramjoo, Asthma, Padri.