

THE WAYFARERS
An Account of the Work of Meher Baba with the God-intoxicated,
and also with Advanced Souls, Sadhus, and the Poor.
Fully Illustrated with many Photographs and Maps
Third Printing (1988)

By

William Donkin

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THE WAYFARERS

An account of the Work of MEHER
BABA with the God-intoxicated, and
also with advanced Souls, Sadhus, and
the Poor. Fully illustrated with many
Photographs and Maps

By WILLIAM DONKIN

with a Foreword

By MEHER BABA



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CONTENTS

PREFACE	page
FOREWORD	
Part I by Meher Baba: The Difference between Ordinary Madness and Mast States	1
The Journey of the Masts and the Role of the Master	6
Part II by Abdulkarim Ramjoo Abdulla: The Usefulness of Masts to Humanity	13
CHAPTER I. SPIRITUALLY ADVANCED SOULS; AN EXPLANATION	21
CHAPTER II. THE FIVE FAVOURITES	41
An Explanation	41
Mohammed	43
Chatti Baba	51
Karim Baba	73
Ali Shah	79
Chacha	85
CHAPTER III. THE MAD ASHRAM	95
CHAPTER IV. THE SEVEN MAST ASHRAMS	105
An Explanation	105
Ajmer	107
Jubbulpore	113
Bangalore	121
Meherabad	129
Ranchi	135
Mahabaleshwar	137
Satara	147
CHAPTER V. THOSE WHO BEAR WITNESS	151
CHAPTER VI. THE TOURS	157
INTRODUCTION TO SKETCH MAPS	165
YEARLY TOUR LISTS	167
AN EXPLANATION TO THE SUPPLEMENT	179
THE SUPPLEMENT	183
THE ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENT	373
THE LATEST NEWS	379
THE SUPPLEMENT: MARCH 15 TO MAY 14, 1948	407
THE SUPPLEMENT: JUNE 8, 1948 TO AUGUST 1, 1949	427

ILLUSTRATIONS

Meher Baba	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
Mohammed as he is today	<i>Facing page</i>	42
Mohammed looking for "deesh"	" "	42
Baba with Mohammed	" "	43
Mohammed at Rahuri	" "	50
Mohammed at Meherabad	" "	50
Chatti Baba at Bangalore	" "	51
Chatti Baba makes signs on the ground	" "	61
Karim Baba	" "	73
Ali Shah	" "	79
Ali Shah lights a cigarette	" "	81
He enjoys the first puff	" "	82
Two favourites at Meherabad	" "	82
Chacha	" "	85
Chacha after his only bath for 30 years	" "	86
Chacha at Satara	" "	87
A group at Rahuri	" "	95
Baba at work at Rahuri	" "	95
Some faces at Rahuri	" "	98
More faces at Rahuri	" "	98
Baba plays with Punjia	" "	99
Faqir Bua at Rahuri	" "	99
The drama in progress	" "	101
Lakhan Shah in Ajmer	" "	108
Lakhan Shah at Meherabad	" "	110
Lakhan Shah being bathed	" "	110
Oabristanwala	" "	110
Two men brought to the Ajmer Ashram	" "	111
Caught in a dramatic gesture	" "	111
Phulwala at the Bangalore Mast Ashram	" "	125
Phulwala wearing flowers	" "	125
Chinnaswami with Baba	" "	126
Baba with Shariat Khan	" "	126
Baba with Ali Shah	" "	138
Shah Saheb seems puzzled	" "	145

ILLUSTRATIONS

(contd.)

Baba with Chacha	<i>Facing page</i>	148
Special mast tours, 1939	“ “	167
“ “ “ 1940	“ “	168
“ “ “ 1941	“ “	169
“ “ “ 1942	“ “	171
“ “ “ 1943	“ “	173
“ “ “ 1944	“ “	174
“ “ “ 1945	“ “	175
“ “ “ 1946	“ “	176
"Captain" of Aurungabad	“ “	199
Baba and Upasani Maharaj at Dahigaon	“ “	227
Mungsaji Maharaj of Dhamangaon	“ “	233
Mama Mast of Hyderabad (Deccan)	“ “	251
The sixth plane mastani of Hyderabad	“ “	254
Some Kashmir masts: Nur Shah; Nab Saheb; Ramba Mastan	“ “	270
Some more Kashmir masts	“ “	271
Harihar Dadaji of Khandwa	“ “	276
Pallukollah Baba of Kilakkarai	“ “	279
The "freak mast" of Nasirabad—Jhipra Baba	“ “	315
Keshwanandji Maharaj of Rikhikesh	“ “	344
Murshid of Secunderabad	“ “	355
The distribution to the poor in February 1948	“ “	386
Some more pictures of the same work	“ “	387
Map of places mentioned in summary	“ “	389
 <i>SUPPLEMENT: MARCH 15 TO MAY 14, 1948</i>		
Maharaj prepares feed	<i>Facing page</i>	1
Map	“ “	16
 <i>SUPPLEMENT: JUNE 8, 1948 TO AUGUST 1, 1949</i>		
Chatti Baba in the Bangalore Ashram	<i>Facing page</i>	8
Mauganj-ka Hafizji	“ “	24
Batwa Shah of Benares	“ “	25
Keshav in his Urinal Home	“ “	34
Keshav by the Roadside	“ “	35
Map	“ “	37

Dedication

અથા મુરશદ મેહુરબાબા ચરણપર તુજના ધરીએ સર
ખુદાના ઝાતથી વાકેફ થઈ બેઠા મેહુરબાં તુ :

O Meher Baba, our spiritual guide,
We lay our heads at thy feet,
Because thy gracious Divine Self hath
Fully discovered the essence of God.

PREFACE

FOR the commerce of thought and feeling, mankind has evolved many media of exchange. If we wish to impart an idea or a thought to another, we are accustomed to make use of gesture, speech, or writing; and should we wish to impart some complex emotional state, we may make use, if we are sufficiently gifted, of one or other of the arts of music, painting, sculpture, poetry, or the drama. Thus, in a host of obvious but *external* ways we share the experiences of others, and enable others to share ours.

This volume, however, attempts to describe spiritual contacts between Meher Baba the Perfect Master, and those who are spiritually advanced; and in these contacts almost no use is made of conventional channels of communication, for Meher Baba has been silent since 1925. It is true that this *inner* communion has certain outer features, for Meher Baba serves these God-intoxicated souls with his own hands, and he sits with them in seclusion: but he does not speak to them ; the essential contact is silent.

There are two main aims to this book. The Foreword and Chapter One explain briefly what is meant by a God-intoxicated soul, and explain to a certain extent, also, why such souls behave as they do. The rest of the book, including the supplement, contains the story of Meher Baba's silent contacts with God-intoxicated souls, with advanced souls of all types, and with the mad and the poor.

It has been assumed that this book will be read mostly by those who know who Meher Baba is and what his teachings are. It is, nevertheless, advisable to point out that the theory and practice described in this narrative become significant only when considered in the fuller context of Meher Baba's life and work. The new reader should, therefore, study other works about Meher Baba before he passes judgement on the contents of *The Wayfarers*.

There are, of course, many relevant problems that are left untouched by the explanatory pages at the beginning of the book. Many of these deliberate omissions can be filled by a study of the various volumes of *The Discourses of Meher Baba*, and many more will be filled by a volume on the entire Divine Theme, on which Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff is now working under the direct guidance of Meher Baba.

A few words are perhaps needed to explain why a western disciple of Meher Baba, who has himself played an insignificant part in this particular work of the Master, should have set out to write this book.

In the autumn of 1946, it had occurred to me that there was no complete and consecutive account of Meher Baba's work with *masts** and other advanced souls, and that if the details of this phase of his work were not soon gathered together, they might eventually be in a great measure lost. These thoughts recurred several times, so that I felt impelled at last to give expression to them. In December 1946, in Mahabaleshwar, my remarks rebounded upon me, for one day Meher Baba gave me the task of making a record of this work of his—and so the book began.

In order that the value of the mass of detail contained in this volume may be enhanced, the names of those who have contributed information of any kind, and who have helped me in so many ways, must be acknowledged. Meher Baba's activities cover a vast field and his many disciples serve him in a host of different ways. Amongst the large group of those intimate disciples who serve Meher Baba in every sphere of his great work for the world, and amongst the wide circle of his devotees, there are some who have been eye-witnesses of one aspect or another of the episodes with which this book deals. According to opportunity, I have gathered information from a certain number of these disciples and devotees, and their help has been quite indispensable in the writing of this book.

Baidul (R. B. Irani), Kaka (A. S. Baria) and Eruch (E. B. Jessawala) have contributed by far the greatest number of detailed eyewitness accounts, and without the patient co-operation of these three this book could never have been written. In addition, so many other intimate disciples of Baba, and so many of his devotees, have helped me to fill gaps here and there, that it is difficult to pay tribute to one more than to another. At the close of this preface, therefore, are the names of all who have given me help or information, and these names have been placed in alphabetical order, with symbols indicating the type of assistance they have so generously rendered. Thanks are also due to Baba's sister, Mani, who typed the entire script of this book.

Above all. I feel it a privilege to be able to say that Meher Baba has

*The word mast, which means one who is intoxicated with Divine Love, is pronounced to rhyme with the English word trust.

checked the typescript of this book, the supplement. and the additional supplement. As a result of this careful work on his part many errors have been corrected, and many details of interest added both to the main text and to the supplements.

My aim has been to give a faithful and objective account of this great work of Meher Baba, and I know that there is too much attention paid to the outer, and therefore to the least important characteristics of many masts and saints. Despite this misleading emphasis on material features, an attempt has been made to stress that the real side is the spiritual one and that, fundamentally, this is the only thing that matters.

There is one word of warning, and this is that in those instances where Meher Baba has not revealed all that one would like to know about some aspect of his work or about the qualities of some great mast or saint, the author's speculations have here and there crept into the substance of the text. I have, however, generally tried to make clear the distinctions between the statements of Meher Baba and any of my personal ideas. This is often done by such expressions as 'Baba says', 'Baba has told us', and so forth, when the matter of the text records a statement of Meher Baba; and by such expressions as 'one felt', 'one suspects', for purely personal expressions of opinion.

I believe that the supplement may seem too large, and be criticised as containing many details that are apparently unimportant. In defence, therefore, I feel it best to state my reasons for including so much material. The first of these is that I believe that Meher Baba is so great a Being that even the minor details of his life and work are important; and the second, that the subject of God-intoxicated souls has been so little dealt with in print that even trivial data may help to add something to the sum of human knowledge about it.

In order to add to the value of this book as a record of Meher Baba's work, I have put in as many illustrations as possible, and it is realized that many of these illustrations are bad from a technical point of view. The critic should therefore understand that every photograph has been taken under conditions imposed by the masts themselves, and not under those that a photographer would have chosen.

Finally, in a work of this kind, which has had to draw so much upon the memory of things past, errors of one kind or another are inevitable, and I hope that those who discern them will be merciful.

For help and information freely given, acknowledgments are due to the following, whose names are given in alphabetical order.

G=General help . . . R=Proof reading . . . T=Typing . . . I=Information . . . P=Photographs . .
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Babadas-I	Keki Desai (Keke Desai)-I
Baidul (R. B. Irani)-I/P	Kitty (Katherine L. Davy)-I
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Chhagan (Sitaram Deshmukh)-I	Mani (Mani S.Irani)-I/T
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FOREWORD

PART ONE

By MEHER BABA

*The Difference Between Ordinary Madness And
Mast States*

The average man dresses more or less like others; and he sits, talks, and walks like others. The attention that he pays to his bodily needs, the habits that he builds up for self-expression, and reactions that he shows to his fellow beings may, no doubt, have some few differentiating characteristics and peculiarities; but the variations of these characteristics and peculiarities have definite limits. They do not considerably deviate from ordinary ways. They change *within the range of normality*. Thus, owing to his conformity with the average pattern of responses and actions, the ordinary man of the world does not arouse any special interest: he is taken for granted, and does not seem to need any explanation. Explanation is necessary when the variations of his responses and actions transgress the limits of the normal range.

The average man of the world is tied to the world, and is moulded by the ways of the world. He reacts to the world according to the prompting of inclinations developed as a result of the diverse impacts that the world has on his mind. His main basis of reaction is the *mind*, as shaped by the imprints of the bipolar experience of the opposites—success and failure, joy and suffering. The responses and reactions given by the mind of the ordinary man of the world are not determined by true values, or by a real understanding of life; they are determined by the chaotic and conflicting tendencies built out of experiences that have neither been properly assimilated nor understood. Though the *outer* behaviour of the ordinary man is in conformity with the average pattern of responses and reactions, his

inner life is subject to severe mental conflicts and suffering and to an ever-renewing sense of frustration.

Outwardly, the average man may seem to have equanimity; but his equanimity is only apparent, and not real. When he gets profoundly dissatisfied with his uncritically accepted pattern of actions, he struggles to achieve a standpoint which would be unflinching under all types of circumstances, and which would ensure for him unbroken peace and fulfillment. Purely *intellectual* understanding of the world and its experience fails to provide him with such an unflinching standpoint. He therefore re-examines his previous assumptions and ways, and makes intelligent and new experiments in his own life, in order that he may discover, and obtain within his own being, a reliable directive.

Such new experimentation with life entails a severance of consciousness from the average pattern that is current in the world. It implies the faith that consciousness would be able to discover, and reach, a directive standpoint within itself. This is the beginning of true search. Ordinarily, such a person carries on new experimentation with the help of others whom he considers more advanced than himself; and in rare cases, he has the advantage of direction by a Perfect Master. In such cases, his deviations from the average pattern of life are not very considerable, and he adopts, as the framework of his new experimentation, some pattern of the life of an aspirant available from his observation, or known to him through tradition.

But if the experimentation proceeds *without* the help of available guidance, and loses all moorings, the person may, in his own right and with his own understanding, take to unconventional patterns of life. The result is that the person often lands himself into confusing sidetracks and by-paths, and sometimes into regressive channels of life. Once the average pattern of life is surrendered, it makes room for infinite varieties of self-created and provisional patterns of life and action. These patterns may deviate considerably from normality, and the ways of life that follow from such patterns may even seem to be insane, to the extent to which they deviate from the average mode of life. But they do not necessarily mean real insanity, or even retrogression on the path of inner search.

Such a person is often, in his own individual way, in earnest search of God, or Truth, as the unfailing inward directive power. In and through his waywardness, there is a logic of his own; and all his idiosyncrasies and aberrations can be understood only if they are viewed in the light of the inner motive power. Their true significance cannot be appreciated unless they are seen in relation to the objective of the animating and dynamic pattern that he has created for himself. The pattern he has selected may seem queer, out of the way, and verging on insanity; but this happens because it is isolated from its inner context and is appraised mechanically and superficially, by the outer and conventional measures of normality. Very often, the inward aim of the dynamic patterns animating the lives of such apparently insane persons is God, or Truth, as the internal directive power, and in spite of their outward waywardness, they are substantially advancing on the inner spiritual path. They are sincerely and wholeheartedly devoted to Truth as it comes to them; they are *divinely mad* in search of eternal values. They have decided to take stakes in their desire to realize God. Such persons are not mad in the ordinary sense; they are desperately in love with God, and are known as *Masts*.

Masts are totally different from ordinary mad persons. Although to the casual observer they might seem to be like each other, they are utterly dissimilar in their intrinsic nature and significance. Though both are far from perfection, and need correctives or healing, there is a vast difference in the nature of their inner mental states, and in the spiritual value of the results that are achieved by the application of correctives. These important differences need to be understood carefully.

In feeble-minded or mad persons, aberrations from the average pattern of responses and actions are the results of their mental incapacity to adhere to the ordinary ways of the world. Through inherent psychic weakness, their directive effort has come to an *impasse*, or has fizzled out. The cases of break down of the mind in ordinary madness are often due to aimlessness in life, as they are due to insufficiency, or to an inadequacy of the available "will-power" or mental strength. There are usually many other contributory factors in such cases. Persons who find shelter in mental hospitals are generally those who have been subjected to unusual mental shock or strain. They lose their

balance of mind due either to insufficient mental development, or to the operation of physiological or psychic forces of disruption. Though these physiological or psychological forces that have caused mental disruption are irresistible, they are of the ordinary kind. In ordinary madness, the collapse of the normal functioning of the mind has come about by unmanageable conflicts or disintegrating factors; and the best that can be hoped for by removing the causes of disturbance, is the restoration of the previous state of normality of the mind.

But the case of masts is altogether different in origin, as well as in potentiality. There is no doubt that masts often exhibit an incapacity to deal with the ordinary situations of life; and they are, in this respect, comparable to those who are deranged in mind. But the departure of masts from normal behaviour and responses is not due to lack of sufficient mental development, nor is it due to any chaotic forces of disruption; it is due to a suspension of interest in the ordinary pursuits of life, and to an absorption in the spiritual realities encountered on the path towards Truth-realization.

Like cases of ordinary mental derangement, the cases of many masts may show signs of mental conflict, when considered from the purely theoretical point of view. However from the point of view of their intrinsic nature, the two mental conflict are poles apart. Ordinary mental derangement is due to an acute and insoluble conflict between incompatible sanskaric inclinations in connection with the world. But the unusual psychic states of the divine madness of masts are due to *the dispersion of sanskaric inclinations* by the powerful urge to realize the God state.

In the divine madness of masts, the advancing urge to realize the Highest brings about a complete shattering of the mental structure, and of all its normal tendencies and capacities. This condition of the mind ultimately leads to a total *inhibition of the mind*, which is the gateway to the *unmani state*. The successful termination of the steady impulsion to Truth initiates the mast into the supra-mental state of integral understanding and direct realization of the Supreme Self. But this drive for the Truth, in its process, entails far-reaching ravages in the psychic field. It involves a com-

plete *break-up* and a *reconstitution* of the mental structure, and of existing tendencies. There is no wonder that the inevitable, intermediate mental states are, in their expression, found to be as much removed from average states as are the abnormal states of mad persons.

Confusion between the abnormal and the supernormal states of consciousness arises due to mixing up *two ways* of interpreting and measuring madness and its degrees. According to one way of interpretation, madness is a deviation from the average mode of consciousness and behaviour; and its degree is to be measured by the amount of its departure from the average pattern. But according to another way of interpretation, madness is the incapacity of consciousness to understand or express truth; and its degree is to be measured by the extent to which it deviates from truth. If these two distinct standards are mixed up with each other and applied simultaneously, they inevitably lead to a confusion between the abnormal mad states and the supernormal mad states.

When the mad states are measured by the standard of the average pattern of responses and actions, they will inevitably be interpreted as having an even greater degree of madness than ordinary madness. But if we change the standard, they will be interpreted differently. When the mad states are measured by the standard of realization and expression of truth, they will inevitably be interpreted as having increasing degrees of sanity. When viewed in the light of the Truth, the average pattern of responses and behaviour, which is the most common standard for measuring degrees of madness, would itself appear as a veritable form of madness; and ordinary forms of madness, which have failed to reach even the average pattern, would present themselves as deeper levels of madness. However, all these different phases of unfolding human consciousness are better understood when they are viewed in their continuity, and in relation to the ultimate objective of realizing and expressing the Truth. When viewed in this way, ordinary madness is seen to be the most dim reflection of the Truth, and the average mode of consciousness, and the mad states, are both seen to be increasing degrees of sanity and approximations to the Truth that becomes completely manifest in its unqualified reality and fullness only when the domain of the mind is crossed.

The Journey Of The Masts and The Role Of The Master

Those aspirants who get launched on the mast line, find themselves propelled by an irresistible impulsion in the form of a yearning to realize God as the Divine Beloved. The psychic journey of masts is a mysterious flight from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from a sense of isolation and frustration to the experience of fulfillment, through a complete merging in the Divine Beloved. Even in the initial stages, those who are on the path of masts get intoxicated by glimpses of God as the Beloved. As the mast advances on the inner planes he gets more and more God-intoxicated, and his yearning to be united with the Divine Beloved becomes so acute and irresistible that it gradually takes him beyond the domain of the mind.

During the process of transcending the mind, the mental make-up of the mast is subjected to so much disturbance and upheaval, that he is unable to use his mind in the ordinary way. To all appearances he is like a madman. The way in which he sits, talks, or eats, and his general demeanour, are so far removed from what is most current in the world, that common people very often take him to be insane. The mast invites upon himself a tumultuous overturning of the ingredients of his ego-mind. These far-reaching and wide-spreading psychic disturbances upset all his normal expressions; and those who have no direct insight into the working of his mind may mistake him for one who is stark mad.

Compared with the ordinary man of the world, the mast may seem to have less balance of mind ; but it is important to remember that the average man himself has not really any balance of mind. The average man of the world has only *an appearance of balance*, because he can often effect a provisional adjustment between the warring elements in his mind. The adjustment of conflicting tendencies that he succeeds in achieving for some time, is based upon a working compromise between them. This working compromise enables the average man to bring his outward behaviour into conformity with the established conventions of society; and because he fits into the average pattern of responses and reactions, he gives the appearance of balance.

The working balance of compromise that the average man is able strike between the conflicting sanskaric inclinations of his psyche, is dictated by the exigencies of the situation. It is not determined by a careful evaluation of conflicting tendencies. The result is that the balance is only temporary, and is accompanied by a sense of partial frustration. The average mind is like a house that is divided against itself, and has in it a constant sense of insecurity and unsteadiness. The mast is seeking a higher and a more lasting balance of mind, that would be securely based upon true values. He has taken in his own hands the task of intelligent psychic readjustment and new experimentation. This task is very different from the theoretical manipulation of ideas. It involves the courage to face oneself with unfailing honesty of purpose. It involves also the necessary intense ardour for bringing about the practical overhauling of the contents of the mind. The spiritual yearning for lasting Truth brings about in masts a complete unsettlement of the working balance of compromise that is characteristic of the average man of the world.

In order that the mind may arrive at a true balance of understanding, any previous provisional balance of compromise has to be considerably disturbed. This is what happens in the life of masts. A new factor has appeared in their consciousness; it is an agonizing love for God as the Divine Beloved. The unprecedented intensity of this new love throws into the background all the considerations that were previously the guiding factors. Joy in the Divine Beloved is now the overwhelming factor of dynamic and directive value; all other forces recede into the background, and cease to be effective. The role played by this fresh love in helping the mast to arrive at a new balance of understanding is unique but the attainment is effected *gradually* and in stages; and the intervening phase is throughout characterized by unbalanced consciousness of diverse types.

Masts are God-intoxicated souls. The glimpses of divinity that they get are accompanied by a joy that breaks through any type of sordid composure. One state of unbalanced exaltation is replaced by another state of unbalanced exaltation. The divine intoxication of the elixir of the liberating love of God admits of

different degrees. The mast, with a feeling of uncontrollable happiness, plies through the uncharted planes, which open themselves to him, until, finally, he is drowned in the unlimited bliss of an ultimate merging in the Divine Beloved. Only in the end is his lost balance finally reestablished, for not until all obstructive factors in the journey are successfully overcome can the lost balance of consciousness be restored.

In spite of the fact that many masts lose their balance while traversing the path of the inner life, they are often capable of rendering effective service to other aspirants less advanced than themselves. Masts are completely oblivious of worldly considerations and values; but they are very sensitive to the spiritual needs of those who come in touch with them. Masts, because they are consciously stationed on the higher planes, can give to aspirants just that type of occult help that is necessary.

Some masts get stuck on the inner planes. They are overpowered by the onflow of grace and love, and get into a state of divine stupor. They are entirely absorbed in the "beatific vision". Some masts are completely stupefied by the psychic somersault precipitated by an entry into a new plane of consciousness, and cannot find their bearings in the midst of their new environment, new duties, and new powers. Some masts find their insurgent powers uncontrollable, and are faced by new and insurmountable temptations. They can make no further advancement through their own unaided efforts, and have to avoid the possibility of a precipitous fall through *the indiscriminate use of occult powers*. In short, in spite of having attained a high spiritual status, many masts on the inner planes need real guidance and help from a Perfect Master.

The Master has a direct and unerring insight into the exact working of the minds of masts. He knows the true genesis and the nature of the unusual mental state in which the mast has landed himself. He is therefore in a position to understand the condition of masts in terms of their spiritual needs; and he can help them further towards the realization of the goal that they are struggling to achieve in their own way. The Master knows *all* the stages of the journey, with its traps, dangers, and

opportunities for speedy advancement. He gives masts effective guidance and a spiritual push, and he facilitates their onward march on the path, so that they become more and more fit as vehicles for the expression of the Divine Will. They become more efficient agents for the promotion of God's plan on earth.

When masts receive the right sort of help from a Perfect Master, they emerge into a supra-normal state of new integration and harmony. Masts experience greater awakening, greater poise, greater bliss, and a closer contact with the highest Truth. In ordinary madness, the person can, through suitable treatment and healing, only return to the normality of the ordinary functioning of consciousness. But if the divine madness of masts is the recipient of the directive help of the Master, it becomes a spring-board for the emergence of a more stable and a more dynamic equilibrium of consciousness. The mast states have in them an immense potentiality for contacting and releasing divinity, with an ever-increasing thoroughness and fullness, but they need to be delicately handled by one who has attained spiritual perfection.

The Master can, because of his perfect love and universality of appeal, immediately establish understanding with all types of masts. In his capacity as the Divine Beloved, and as the Divine Lover, he enters into the lives of masts as a liberator of fresh energies, and as the giver of a higher and healthier tone of life. He achieves this result by slowly and patiently undoing the sanskaric complexities and tangles accumulated in the ego-mind of masts. Through such consummate working, the Master establishes in masts a poise between the head and the heart, activates new and more powerful centres of control, and releases locked-up funds of spiritual energy. The Master initiates masts into a greater clarity and lucidity of consciousness, into a deeper ecstasy, a purer and more expansive love, and into a truer and stronger creativity of response.

When the Master applies himself to his work in connection with mast states, he finds himself confronted with some problems that are peculiar to them. A mast is very often delicately sensitive to the frailties of those whom he contacts; he is, therefore more exposed to environmental provocations than the average man, who has not developed such super-sensibility. The very love that a mast has for others often impels him to severity of actions, and in the course of time he is likely to get

enmeshed in the self-created habits of severe responses. This explains the states of masts who seem to be cruel to others. Their moral indignation and apparent cruelty ultimately do confer spiritual benefit upon those towards whom they are directed. But the mast himself stands in need of a greater and fuller acquiescence in the Divine Will, of a wider and an outgoing love, of a fuller identification with unevolved souls, and of a deeper understanding and a more complete control over the mind. All this the Master achieves for the mast by taking him beyond the limitations of his own forging.

One of the most difficult things for a mast is to come out of the self-sufficiency of his state. He may be so immersed in bliss that he may experience no need within himself to get linked with anyone. He may have no wants, and need have none. Just as a mast becomes completely indifferent to his own body or to the physical conditions of his life, he can also become indifferent to the physical or spiritual conditions of others. When a mast gets walled-in by his own self-sufficiency and desirelessness, only the Master can draw him out of the isolation of his choice, by awakening within him an expansive love that breaks through all limitations, and prepares him for shouldering the important responsibility of rendering true service to others who are in need of spiritual help.

Because of his being stationed on the inner planes, which are free from the limitations and handicaps of the gross world, a mast can be, and often is, in contact with a far greater number of souls than is possible for an ordinary person. Mast mind is a nucleus of conscious formations, with innumerable and far-reaching links. A mast can therefore be a more effective *agent for spiritual work* than the most able persons of the gross world. The mast mind is also often used directly by the Master as a medium for sending his spiritual help to different parts of the world.

Very often, when the Master is helping a mast, he is also helping the world through him at that very time. When a mast thus surrenders his mind for the work of the Master, he is, in fact, getting closer to the Master as Truth. He is being perfected far more rapidly than would have been the case if he had avoided such surrender. In a thousand ways, the Master makes an irresistible appeal to the inmost being of masts,

and awakens in them the undying spring of creative action. Those who ere derailed from the normal line of life are thus restored to unimpeachable sanity, and to a wholeness of outlook; the Master makes them spiritually perfect in his own image.

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FOREWORD

PART TWO

BY ABDULKARIM RAMJOO ABDULLA

(author of "Sobs and Throbs" 1929; "Meher Baba-His Philosophy and Teachings" 1933)

The Usefulness Of Masts To Humanity

It is as much a privilege, as a pleasure, to pen these few lines by way of introduction to this unique work by my friend and brother disciple, compiled with the characteristic research and perseverance of the West, and with a profound understanding of the dynamics of life as understood in the East.

Whatever I say here is based upon my close and continuous contact with Meher Baba for the last twenty-five years; upon certain points dictated by him for the purpose of this foreword, and upon all that I have imbibed of his teachings from time to time, during my exacting activities and intense industry under his direction, in the diverse spheres of my business social, and family life.

God to man—and man back to God; that is the story, in a nutshell, of all that life has stood for since it started flickering in the depths of the unknown past, with a flare-up of light and love from time to time through perfect manifestations like Jesus the Christ.

In order to appreciate both the short- and long-term aspects of life, within the limited scopes of intellect, logic and reasoning, it is necessary to study, with an open mind, the complexities that ultimately turn into the very simplicities of life as a whole. Facts must be faced unflinchingly, and established conventions must be eschewed in favour of convictions from freedom of thought and mind.

The zero is equal to nothing, and yet the very fact of its non-value makes it the important factor in arriving at valuations. Thus, if the figure one (1) is taken to represent the unity and reality of God, and the cipher zero (0) the unreality of the material universe, we may add as many zeros (material

universes) as we choose to the single figure 1 (God), and so make combinations that have significance, such as ten, a hundred, a lakh, a crore, and so forth. In other words, the cipher zero (or the material universe) in itself, or combined with others like itself, is nothing, and means nothing, but when it has the figure 1 (God) in front of it, the various combinations have distinct values.

In the same manner, therefore, to be spiritually minded and to understand spiritual truths, matter and materialism need not be shunned or surrendered. In fact, for the manifestation of Divinity, materialism is an absolute and unavoidable necessity.

The immortality of men like Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, Christ, and Zoroaster, depended upon the mortal coil they assumed and shed during certain brief periods in the history of mankind. They used matter to express their Divinity, and to carry out their divine missions.

Essentially, spirituality includes materialism, inasmuch as the existence of all matter depends upon the spirit. Shorn of spirit, matter could and would assume its original non-existence of nothing, as nothing. An error that is equally common both in the East and in the West, is that of looking upon mind and matter as divided into two separate, watertight compartments, as a result of which life itself is wrongly taken to be divided into two distinct categories—spiritual and material. Man is as much material because of his body that is evolved purely out of matter, as he is spiritual on account of his mind that is the direct outcome of man's inherent Divinity. The higher aspects of life can be as easily realized amidst the machine-ridden West as amidst the lower animality in man that is found in abundance in the spiritual East.

The simplest way for man to get nearer to God is to get nearer to those who have already achieved the cherished proximity to Divinity, and who have established direct contact with spirituality by transcending the limited scopes of ordinary understanding, reasoning, knowledge and experience, within which man has instinctively trapped himself, and from which he finds it difficult to emerge, because he always insists upon looking *outside*, be it for help and knowledge, or for freedom and peace. It is more important to establish a sympathetic understanding of God-intoxicated souls, than merely to contact them physically. In other words, there is little merit in visiting a mast out of idle curiosity, or in criticising his unconventional habits. The real thing is to serve these God-intoxicated souls with love and humility, and to strive to fathom the intrinsic purity of their inner life. The

approach must be from one's own mind towards the mast's mind, and not from one's outer senses towards his superficial behaviour.

Now the physical body of a man depends upon his subtle body (energy body), his subtle body upon his mind, and his mind, which is the nearest to his soul, is, therefore, the foremost channel through which God pours forth His Divinity. This expression of the Divinity of God through these channels is called *leela*.

The leela of God (Divinity in full play) is primarily concerned with the spread of His purity and love for the benefit of the world as a whole. For the expression and manifestation of His infinite power, bliss, knowledge, light, and love, God needs the purest mental channels. And the purest minds are those of the masts, who, having drowned themselves in their love for God, have gone beyond lust, anger, greed, avarice, and all other weaknesses that invariably stick round the mind of every man, in greater or lesser amounts, and in one shape or another, until man is awakened to his true nature and to his real life.

Once a mind succeeds in directing its energy towards the existence beyond the domain of intellect, and begins to realize and experience the magnitude, the grandeur, and the novelty that are perceived and absorbed by the mind direct, without bringing into use its ordinary faculties, and without having recourse to the senses of the body, the person concerned becomes more and more unconcerned with his bodily requirements and surroundings. All his conscious energy is then naturally used in the course of his all-absorbing inner life, leaving the body and its sustenance to its own subconscious energy, and to the direct support from the very source of all energies—God.

This is amply illustrated by the number of masts who, in spite of exposing themselves to extreme rigours of heat, cold, and rain, and enduring extraordinary physical hardships, still maintain themselves splendidly, so that their bodies can and do withstand all these external abnormalities without illness, and without fatigue.

The goal of the masts being God, they get His direct support even for the maintenance of their physical existence, as long as it is required for their individual spiritual advancement, and for the spiritual advancement of their surroundings. There are some masts whose minds have become so utterly pure that they become, in effect, the minds of God Himself, and through these channels God's Infinity directly, though hiddenly, benefits the world at large, just as God's indirect, hidden influence continu-

ously benefits the whole creation. Such hundred per cent masts or perfect *maizooobs*, although dead to themselves and to the universe, and in spite of their apparently child-like, mad and ghoulisn state, provide a living, direct link between man and God. To serve, to touch, and to hear a perfect majzooob is equal to a direct contact with God Himself.

When the mind is absolutely void of all desires and thoughts, and becomes free from all outside influences and connections, the functions of intellect and reasoning, though *apparently* lost or confused, are in fact transcended, and the unlimited spiritual domain is entered, where mind works directly, without recourse to its ordinary faculties.

Naturally, the words and actions of such transcended souls appear mostly to be void of reasoning and to be inconsistent with intelligence, the more so because their bodies are not under the control of reason, but are kept alive by the Infinite. Their bodies thus endure all kinds of circumstances with complete indifference to their environment, and are uncared for by the masts themselves. Masts are, therefore, not only indifferent to their own physical existence and to the existence of others,. but they also live as if absolutely detached from the world and its activities. It is not difficult to appreciate the inability of these lovers of God and God-merged souls to pay attention to anyone or anything but to their Divine Beloved, if we compare them with ordinary men and women who, when deep in human love. forsake and forget food, sleep, and many other bodily needs.

It will not, however, be equally easy to reconcile the contradiction that these pure souls are invariably found surrounded by dirt and filth, so much so that, in nine cases out of ten, they are dirt and filth personified.

There is a story of a mast who used to offer *namâz* (prayers) without performing the *vazoo* (ablutions). When he persisted in this practice, people began to raise objections, on the grounds of the violation of the laws of *shariat* (the disciplinary side of religion), and finally, they insisted that he should be made to perform the required ablutions. The mast then started to perform the *vazoo*, but could never finish them in time, and thus would miss the congregational prayers. When he was found missing at the end of prayers, people became all the more angry, and began to look for him with a view to bring him to his senses. They found him sitting unconcerned near the water-tank, merrily washing his liver, kidneys, etc., which he used to take out one by one, and replace after a thorough wash. When he saw the people watching him, he got wild and cried out, "Confound your external cleanliness; I cannot achieve it sufficiently with all this dirt and filth inside me, and I say good-bye to your prayers from this day forth."

It is well known that those who practise the science of yoga on a high level can, and do, cleanse the interior of their bodies as part of their regular exercises.

The average man, engrossed in his own pursuits day in and day out, pays attention to the outward cleanliness of his body (which is full of dirt and filth inside), but he takes comparatively negligible notice of the dirt and filth of selfish thoughts surrounding his mind. There can be no two opinions about the original material from which the human body is evolved in the womb, and about the constant care and attention needed thereafter to keep all the openings of the human body neat and clean. Cleanliness again, is commonly cared for as much for show as for itself, and it is also a question intimately connected with the aesthetics of sight. Man is apt to wink at dirt and filth as long as they can be kept out of sight; for "out of sight is out of mind". If left to themselves, children would certainly prefer to remain dirty, rather than transfer their energies from playfulness to cleanliness. If men could be as carefree as children and equally attracted to playing, every man would, like a child, need a nurse to keep him shipshape on the outside.

A mast, whose mind is fully focussed on the inner reality of life, does have much in common with the life of an innocent child, just as in certain respects he bears an apparent resemblance to a madman. If the human mind can so easily identify itself with the human body that is the outcome of matter, there is then no reason why the mind of a mast cannot identify itself with Divinity—as in fact it does, irrespective of the condition of the outer shell of the physical body. With a clean body one may not necessarily have a clean mind, and, antithetically, a spiritually clean mind does not necessarily require a clean body. The fact is that the nature and habits of a man prior to his spiritual awakening do not necessarily change at the time of his inner awakening. Bodily habits, on the other hand, not only continue as a matter of course, but in many cases become intensified in degree, and increased in frequency, on account of the subsequent instinctive repetitions of almost automatic actions on the part of the God-intoxicated souls.

Masts, because their minds are wholly occupied with their inner experiences, are drawn to the line of least resistance in the details of their day-to-day life, and are only amenable to that which requires the least conscious energy. For this very reason, they get easily excited when disturbed from their fixity of purpose or fixity of habits.

Nothing could be more wrong and unjust than to presume that dirt and filth are necessary conditions for a mind to be awakened inwardly, and to remain so. It would not make the slightest spiritual difference to a mast if he could be tactfully persuaded to live in a sumptuous palace, and induced to be helped like a child to remain neat and clean. In fact, taking care of, and, so to say, nursing the bodily existence of such awakened minds out of love for God, provides one of the finest opportunities for man to render service intrinsically and selflessly.

The principal contribution of masts to humanity is their matchless utility for the immediate betterment and the ultimate salvation of the world. This cardinal factor of the continuous and collective influence of all the masts in the world, for the betterment of all beings all over the world, is more positive and more direct than the day-to-day influence of the sun that so very deeply affects our daily life. Compared with the light of love that radiates directly from these children of God, for the good of all life on earth, the light of the sun is a mere indirect reflection of the real light of God, Who is the source of all light and all love in existence. In spite of their repulsive surroundings, and the individual idiosyncrasies that their own physical bodies alone undergo, the masts are, unlike many other beings and things, infinitely useful to their fellow beings.

It is true that every being and thing is of some use, somewhere, sometime, in creation, for the maintenance of creation; yet there are things and beings whose existence is more for the sake of others than for themselves, and more for the general betterment of beings than for their mere maintenance and sustenance. For the stability of a ship a dead ballast is sometimes very necessary; yet a pay-load of corresponding weight, if available, is certainly preferable. There are people who, to a certain extent rightly, consider lunatics to be a burden to themselves, and a burden to their fellow beings. In spite of that, it cannot be denied that these unbalanced minds indirectly provide a means of service of a very high order for others, in the shape of asylums and hospitals that are maintained for such people.

In the case of masts, there is no question of the mind being unbalanced at all. On the contrary, the only balanced mind is that of a perfect majzoob, inasmuch as it completely ceases oscillating and vacillating once for all, in the complete realization of its soul; which, in other words, means the re-attainment of Godhood that was unknowingly lost, for the very purpose of finding it again knowingly.

All philosophy, spirituality, and mysticism might be summed up in what I once heard offhand from Baba, in the early stages of my novitiate:

*"Mind stopped, is God.
Mind working, is man.
Mind slowed down, is mast.
Mind working fast, is mad."*

In the light of my understanding outlined here, the important fact about masts is that, unlike the insane, masts are not only no burden or dead-weight to themselves and to others, but are perfect instruments for the continuous permeation of God's Infinite Love and Blessings to all life all over the earth.

Baba is widely known to have observed silence continuously since 1925 but few know that for more than twenty years he has also stopped using his pen, except for putting his signature whenever necessary, and therefore I feel all the more tempted to end this foreword with extracts from one of his letters to me in his own hand, dated January 1926:

"There are many who are in the way, many who have experience, many who are yogis, but few who are perfect.... Never speak ill of saints. They are the sign of Truth and help to the world.... My salutations to all those who love God, who are saints, yogis, bhaktas, and my namaskar to Sadgurus! All these are Me in different forms."

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CHAPTER ONE

Spiritually Advanced Souls

An Explanatory Chapter

The contents of this chapter are based upon a series of dictations by Meher Baba, of which the majority were given out during December 1946 and January 1947. Each dictation, with its wealth of detail, was spelt out by Meher Baba through the medium of His alphabet board, and my work has been confined to weaving the threads of these original dictations into a formal pattern, in which the mass of detail is presented in the most natural sequence.

Since the dictation of Baba's original material, I have had the privilege of his guidance from time to time, and upon points that were not clear to me in the beginning, Baba has subsequently added much additional information; and finally, he has checked the chapter word by word himself, so that its present shape and contents include his final corrections.

The subject is handicapped in its presentation to the western reader by the sparse vocabulary in English for the different states of spiritual experience, the different types of mast—in fact there is no conventional English word for mast—and the different grades of spiritual aspirant. Nevertheless, in spite of the inevitable use of words from Sufi and Vedantic sources, the exposition that Baba lays before us is, for so vast a theme, basically simple, and easy to follow.

To begin with, he divides all spiritually advanced souls into five basic types.

I. GOD-MERGED.

II. GOD-INTOXICATED.

III. GOD-ABSORBED.

IV. GOD-COMMUNED.

V. GOD-MAD.

I. GOD-MERGED. A God-merged soul is a majoob of the seventh plane, in the state of the final *fanâ*.. He is one who is drowned in God. His

limited "I" is utterly annihilated, and he exists only in Infinite Bliss, Infinite Power, and Infinite Knowledge. He is not conscious of the finite universe, of his physical body, or of the lower six planes; he is simply conscious of himself as God.

II. GOD-INTOXICATED. All masts are God-intoxicated. They are intoxicated by Divine Love. When anyone is intoxicated by alcohol or drugs he enjoys this sensation as long as the intoxicant is in sufficient concentration in his tissues: he feels happy, cares a rap for anyone and anything, and has one dominant sensation of drunkenness, in which time, past, present, or future, have practically no meaning.

But as soon as this ordinary intoxication passes away, the drunkard suffers the reverse of the coin—the "hangover". His intoxication is inescapably temporary, for a limit is set to it by the conditions of the world, the depth of his pocket, and the resilience of his constitution.

Now a mast, who is God-intoxicated, experiences just that same sensation that a drunkard enjoys, and cares for no one and nothing, in proportion to the extent of his intoxication; the difference is that his intoxication is *continual*, that it may *increase* but can *never* decrease, and it has no physical or mental reaction. It is a state of permanent and unalloyed intoxication.

The principal sensation of a mast is this permanent enjoyment of divine intoxication. He may, however, in inverse proportion to the extent of his intoxication, be also vaguely aware of the particular spiritual plane he is on; but he pays little heed to it, in the same way that a drunkard knows, more or less, what goes on around him, also in inverse proportion to the extent of his intoxication, but is not much interested in it, because his dominant sensation is that of the enjoyment of his intoxication. A mast may be on any plane.

III. GOD-ABSORBED. The characteristic of a God-absorbed man is that, whether asleep or awake, and irrespective of his outer behaviour, he is continually, and without effort, absorbed in thinking about God. He is, however, thinking of God without normally being conscious of doing so, in the same way that a man breathes night and day and is unaware of it, unless he gets out of breath by some unusual exertion. Now just as a man becomes conscious of breathing fast and deep when he is unexpectedly compelled to exert himself, so also a God-absorbed man, when he is interrupted in the unconscious absorption of his thoughts about God, becomes for a moment consciously aware of his absorption, because its regular rhythm has been broken. The mind of a God-absorbed man functions in the same way

as that of a normal man, and though he is spiritually advanced, he is not necessarily aware of it himself, except in rare flashes.

The majority of God-absorbed men are on the first three planes, and a few are on the fifth plane; they jump over the fourth plane. When a God-absorbed man reaches the fifth plane he then becomes a mast (i.e., God-intoxicated), and the remainder of his spiritual progress is completed as a mast. Thus, a God-absorbed man is usually on one of the first three planes, and may, in rare cases, be on the fifth plane.

IV. GOD-COMMUNED. This type of aspirant is one who, like the God-absorbed, thinks of God, but does so only by conscious effort. His concentration on God is neither an unconscious nor a perpetual state, but is dependent on an effort of the will, which subjects his communion with God to frequent fluctuations, and tends to make his progress on the path less direct than that of a God-absorbed man. The God-absorbed man flies fast and straight like a swan, but the God-communed flits here and there like a sparrow, and is constantly diverted by irrelevant attractions.

This communion process is especially applicable to *râja yôgis* and *đnyân yôgis* and to those whom Baba calls initiate, advanced, and adept pilgrims, whose characteristics are defined in the later pages of this chapter. The God-communed man, if he stays on that path (as he generally does), *never* advances beyond the sixth plane.

V. GOD-MAD. In the eyes of the average man there may appear to be little difference between an ordinary lunatic and a God-mad man; but from the spiritual aspect there is a wide gulf between them. The mind of an ordinary madman has failed to adapt itself to the problems of the material world, and has fled permanently into the realm of make-believe to escape an intolerable material situation. But a God-mad man, although he has lost the balance of his mind, and the insight into his abnormal state, has not come to this condition by failing to solve his worldly troubles, but has lost his sanity through continually thinking about God. Although he is mad he is impelled by high desires, and in spite of earning no tangible profit from the majority of his delusions, he nevertheless enjoys his state of God-madness.

Baba divides these God-mad men into three sub-types.

(a) Those whose minds become unbalanced by an unceasing reiteration of thoughts about God and the spiritual path. They read, talk, and think about God, at the expense of food and sleep, until their minds break under the strain.

(b) Those whose minds become paralysed by coming into contact with the atmosphere of a highly advanced spiritual being. It is not an uncommon experience that a few who come into contact with Baba himself sometimes exhibit temporary signs of this type of God-madness. They are so uplifted by his contact that for days or weeks their minds are the victims of a state of temporary insanity. In certain rare instances this state of God-madness becomes permanent, particularly in cases where there is an unprepared or accidental contact with the spiritual atmosphere of a higher person. This state of God-madness is called by the Sufis, *hâl-e-dawâm*.

(c) Those who, in Sufi words, are called *uftâda-e-rah*, and in Vedantic language, *yôga bhrashta*. When an aspirant seeks spiritual experiences or undertakes a severe spiritual exercise, he may either outstrip the endurance of his mind, or be suddenly deflected from his purpose by the irruption of a crisis in his physical environment. Either of these things may cause such turmoil in his mind that he becomes God-mad. Such a man is known as *uftada-e-rah* or *yoga bhrashtra*, and has fallen in the path before advancing further than the third plane; but this fall is temporary, and his progress is resumed as soon as he takes a new body.

* * *

We have, so far, considered five types of spiritually advanced souls, and have drawn a distinction between each type, based upon their relationship to God, or upon the method of their approach to God, and we shall now discuss the approximate equivalent terms for certain of these types in the mystical vocabulary of Islam.

To begin with, all those on the spiritual path are termed *rahravân* (singular *rahrav*), and these *rahravân* are dominated either by *jazb**, which means an overpowering quality, or by *sulûk**, which is the conscious, natural quality of being aware of what they are doing, and where they are going on the spiritual path.

A *rahrav* dominated by *jazb* is called a *mast*, and a *rahrav* who treads the path with open eyes is called a *sâlik*. A *mast* and a *salik* on the sixth plane are both in *mârifat*, God-illuminated, God-knowing; but a *mast* and a *salik* when entering the seventh plane are both *majzoobs*. This means that even a *salik*, when he enters the seventh plane, is overpowered. The word

* The meanings of *jazb* and *suluk* given in this paragraph are their spiritual significations as explained by Baba, and not their literal translations.

majzoob means, literally, one who is under *jazb*, and although the *jazb* of all planes, up to and including the sixth plane, is limited, on the seventh plane it is unlimited and Divine. The Sufi term of God-merged is *majzoob Allah*, for a *majzoob* is the only one who is completely overpowered by *jazb*.

When a *rahrav* enters the seventh plane he takes duality into Unity, and when he comes down again he brings Unity into duality. Now, if a *majzoob* of the seventh plane comes down to normal consciousness, he becomes one of three things:

- (1) A *sâlik-e-kâmil* or *jîvanmukta*, who has no circle and no duty, but can make one other soul spiritually like himself.
- (2) A *sâlik-e-akmal*, who establishes himself in the work of God, and has no circle, but has duty. Although he has no circle he can make a few souls spiritually like himself.
- (3) A *sâlik-e-mukammil* or *qutub*, who has duty and a circle, and can make as many souls as he wishes spiritually like himself.

One should not assume that every advanced soul reaches this great goal of becoming merged in God, and to illustrate the utter rarity of God realization, Baba quotes the following line by Hakim Sanai.

دور ما باید که تا یک مرد صاحب دل شود

Baba translates this as follows:

"It needs many cycles for just one advanced soul to be realized."

Bearing in mind, therefore, the extreme rarity of God realization, we then learn from Baba that very few of those who have been God-intoxicated (i.e. *masts*) throughout their line of spiritual progress, come down again after being merged in God, but that the majority of those who began as God-absorbed souls* come down again after being merged in God, and become either *salik-e-kamil*, *salik-e-akmal*, or *salik-e-mukammil*.

For those who are partly overpowered by *jazb*, whom we have referred to earlier as the God-intoxicated, the literal Sufi term is *mast-Allah*, and for practical purposes we may shorten the term to *mast*.

* Remember that a God-absorbed soul advances, as such, as far as the fifth plane, and then becomes a *mast* for the rest of his progress towards God, and that a God-communed soul never advances further than the sixth plane.

The God-absorbed on any plane is a salik, but the consciousness of his whereabouts on the path comes only in flashes. He is not overpowered like a mast, but is engrossed in his absorption in thoughts about God, so that he is not aware of much of what goes on about him. He is rather like a man writing a difficult essay, who is so engrossed in his task that he is only vaguely conscious of his environment.

The equivalent Sufi term for a God-absorbed soul is *mashghul-Allah*. The term for a God-communed soul is *mâ-Allah*, and he is a salik on all planes up to, and including, the sixth plane. Now the *mashghul-Allah* and the *ma-Allah*, since they are both saliks, may for practical purposes be bracketed together and designated *sâlik-like pilgrims*.

A God-mad is literally *divâna-e-Allah*, and for general usage there is the common term *divâna-e-Haq*.

So we may now draw up three columns of parallel terms, the first column showing Baba's five basic types of advanced souls, the second, the literal Sufi equivalent, and the third, the commonly accepted synonym or abbreviation.

ORIGINAL TERM:

1) God-merged 2) God-intoxicated 3) God-absorbed 4) God-communed 5) God-mad

LITERAL SUFI EQUIVALENT:

1) Majoob-Allah 2) Mast-Allah 3) Mashghul-Allah 4) Ma-Allah 5) Divana-e-Allah

SYNONYM OR ABBREVIATION:

1) Majoob 2) Mast (a female mast is generally known as a mastani) 3) & 4) Salik-like-pilgrim 5) Divana-e-Haq

Now the Sufis have a breadth of nomenclature, and an overlapping and interweaving of terms, that one not conversant with their vocabulary may, in his impatience, be tempted to dismiss as irrelevant and confusing. But they will, I think, repay a few minutes of patient study. A *wali*, for example, may be on the fifth, sixth, or seventh plane, and he may be God-merged, God-intoxicated, or God-absorbed. The term *wali* is only applicable to the God-communed in the rare instance when he is on the fifth or the sixth plane.

Now a mast, although he is never truly God-absorbed like a salik-like pilgrim, and never truly God-merged like a majzoob, may take on certain of the characteristics of a salik-like pilgrim or a majzoob; and for these Baba has given the terms salik-like, and majzoob-like mast. In the supplement a number of masts are described as having either of these characteristics, and these two terms are important for this

reason. A salik-like mast, although his salient characteristic is God-intoxication, has the attribute of a salik, that he is conscious to a certain extent of his physical environment, and to a certain extent of the spiritual plane on which he is situated.

A majzoob-like mast—who, incidentally, is a rare type—has the salient characteristic of God-intoxication, and has also the attribute of the true majzoob of the seventh plane that he is to a greater or lesser extent merged in God, according to the degree of his advancement. Concerning this state, Baba quotes Hafiz, who says that if the divine intoxication of such a majzoob-like mast overpowers him, he becomes a real majzoob; but that this is very rare. The exact couplet referred to is the following:—

ہم ترسم کہ حافظ محو گرد و دہ از این شوری کہ در سر دارم شب

Baba translates this in the following way:—

"Hafiz is afraid that he will be drowned in the Divine Ocean, due to this intoxication that is in his head tonight."

A true majzoob—a God-merged soul on the seventh plane—is, as we have already seen, a wali; and also, in the sense that he enjoys the blissful intoxication of a God-united soul, he is also a mast. This is rather like the case of one who, being a Master of Arts, is automatically also a matriculate. A majzoob, however, although he is automatically both a wali and a mast, is never a salik.

Baba summarizes this in Sufi terms by saying that in the *majzoobiat* of the seventh plane *wilâyat* and *masti* are already there, but not *sulûk*. In other words, the state of a majzoob includes the states of a wali and a mast, but not that of a salik.

There are two other terms used to designate two types of God-realized soul, the first a *ghous*, and the second a *qutub*. Now just as there are some masts who have certain qualities of a majzoob or of a salik, so there are a very few masts who have the qualities of a ghous. Such masts are termed ghous-like, and are able to disconnect their limbs from their bodies when in a certain state of consciousness. Baba describes these masts as having a

peculiar light, springing way of walking, rather like that of a deer. Such masts are fond of lonely places, because, with this characteristic of separating the parts of their body, they prefer to remain hidden from the eyes of ordinary men. This type of ghous-like mast is described in Sufi and Vedantic books. For examples, see, in the supplement, Abdul Qâdir Jilânî of Tanjore, Mûnshî of Burhanpur, and Chambêlî Shah of Chapra.

There is only one qutub-like mast, and he is in Rawalpindi, known there as Nangâ Shah Mastân (see supplement).

Now the principal work of Meher Baba has been with God-merged and God-intoxicated souls, with a secondary emphasis on the God-absorbed, God-communed and God-mad. Of the God-merged souls there are but two in India; Chacha of Ajmer, and Baba Shahâbuddin of Bhat (see supplement). Besides these two God-merged souls, there is one seventh plane salik-e-kamil, or jivanmukta, in the state of *tureâ avastha*, a man known as Ishwardâs Swâmî of Yadgiri (see supplement). Each of these three has been contacted by Baba.

If we exclude these three God-realized souls, the most important part of Baba's work has been with masts, and for the practical purpose of helping us to understand these God-intoxicated souls more clearly, Baba has sub-divided them, principally according to their external characteristics, into eight different types.

Types of Mast

There are eight types of mast, of which five have special names. The remaining three, being without any special term to distinguish them, are known by the number that precedes the description of their characteristics.

JALALI

Type one

A fairly common type

A jalâlî mast is *always* hot-tempered, abusive to others, and talks at random. He is restless, and beats those who come near him. He is almost always dressed in rags, and lives in an environment of filth and squalor. By day, he occasionally roams hither and thither, and at night, although he rarely sleeps, he lies down usually in a particular place. When awake, he prefers to recline in a half lying posture, and occasionally rests his head on one hand. He has a habit of constantly moving his fingers and toes to and fro, has a passion for tea, and is moderately fond of tobacco.

He never asks for gifts except tea and tobacco. If given clothes, money and so forth, he at once throws them away; and though he will accept food when hungry, he may throw it away if not hungry. He is happy in crowded streets and bazaars, and sometimes enjoys the company of dogs. The presence of small children annoys him.

Example of a typical jalâli mast: Nangâ Baba of Peshawar (see supplement).

JAMALI

Type two

A fairly common type

A jamâli mast is always mild-tempered, and he never abuses or beats others. He speaks often in riddles, and often at random. At night, he almost always remains in a particular place, and by day rarely moves about, doing so only when absolutely necessary. When a jamâli mast sits down, he prefers to be on something raised from the ground, so that his legs dangle. He typically moves his fingers and hands most of the time, and occasionally makes signs with one or other of his fingers on the ground, on some convenient part of his body such as his thigh, or on any object to hand. He has a passion for tobacco, and is moderately fond of tea. He never asks for anything from anyone except tea and tobacco, but if given anything he keeps it. His favourite environment is a room, and he loves music.

Example of a typical jamâli mast: Alî Shah of Ahmadnagar. See Chapter Two.

MAHBUBI

Type Three

A moderately rare type

A mahbûbi mast invariably wears some article of feminine attire, such as a few bangles, a ring on his finger, earrings, or an old chôli (a kind of bodice). He is not effeminate, and does not wear a sari. which, if we exclude women, is often worn by eunuchs, the disreputable inverters who wander about in groups, and earn a living by singing and dancing. A mahbûbi mast is always cheerful, and though he sometimes talks at random, he never (in contradistinction to a jamâli mast) speaks in riddles. He also never abuses or beats others. At night he lies down in a fixed abode, but by day he is restless, and roams about. When he sits, he does

so in an ordinary comfortable position. He has no typical movements of the hands, fingers, or feet, but occasionally shrugs his shoulders. He loves pân*, and is moderately fond of tea. He may ask for anything from anyone, such as food, clothes, or money, and whatever is given him he either keeps entirely for himself, or returns all or part of it to the giver. He likes to stay on a verandah ; and he is fond of dancing.

Example of a typical mahbûbi mast: Sakhî Baba of Bahraich (see supplement).

ITTEFAQI

Type Four

A moderately rare type

An ittefâqi is a mast who, without any love or longing, becomes suddenly, and accidentally, intoxicated by Divine Love. Most ittefâqi masts wear iron rings on their arms or legs, and are covered with assorted pieces of iron here and there on their bodies. An ittefâqi is sometimes violent, and at other times mild, and though he sleeps and eats in a fairly regular way, his conversation is seldom normal. By day he moves about a little, but from dusk until late at night he roams about constantly. When he sits, he does so in an awkward position. He occasionally makes wide, sweeping movements with his arms, rather like a policeman directing traffic, but in a less purposeful way. His tastes are not excessive for any particular thing, but he is partial to fruits and sweetmeats, and is moderately fond of tea, tobacco and pân. He never asks for anything from anyone, except tea, tobacco or pân, but whatever is given to him he keeps for a short while, and then throws or gives it away. If hungry he will eat food given to him, and he is happy on the outskirts of a city.

The specific characteristic of an ittefâqi that distinguishes him from other types is that he becomes a mast accidentally, and because of this, very few ittefâqi masts show all the traits described above. This is because the dominant mood or behaviour of an ittefâqi at the very moment of becoming intoxicated by Divine Love, colours all his subsequent behaviour as a mast. If, for example, he is angry at that moment, he will, as a mast, have that attribute of the jalâli type, that he will abuse and beat others. A

* Note for Westerners : Pân is a masticatory prepared from divers spices wrapped in the aromatic, glabrous, bright green, cordate leaf of the betel (piper betle). The spices used vary, but always consist of areca-nut parings, slaked lime, and sometimes tobacco. The contents are folded neatly in the leaf, which is often fastened by a single clove used as a pin, and the complete pân is then chewed.

glance at the following examples described in the supplement will make this clearer.

Examples:

Nârâin Baba of Beawar (a hundred per cent typical ittefâqi).

Sabbal Buâ of Mandla (a ninety per cent typical ittefâqi).

Lohewâlâ Baba of Chanda (a seventy-five per cent typical ittefâqi).

MADAR-ZAD

Type Five

A moderately rare type

A mâdar-zâd is one who is born a mast. He appears to be an ordinary madman, is most of the time naked, and commonly roams about in dirty and muddy places. His tastes in food are abnormal, and he will eat even raw flesh. He is a very restless fellow, wanders about by night and by day, and seldom sits down or rests. He has no special gestures of his limbs, and he likes and dislikes everything according to his moods. He asks for anything from anyone, and takes whatever is given him, but throws it away at once, either just as it is, or after destroying it. He will accept food when hungry. As far as his choice of environment and any sort of predilection are concerned, he is so capricious that everything, and nothing, may please or displease him by turns.

Examples of mâdar-zâd masts:

Nangâ Khân Mastân Peshâwari of Rawalpindi—a high mâdar-zâd. Several moderate masts in Panipat (see supplement).

(NO NAME)

Type Six

A very rare type

In contradistinction to the hierarchy of saints, there is no hierarchy of masts, but there is one class that has a fixed number. In this cycle of creation there are five of this type, and at the beginning of each new cycle there are two more. Three of these special masts are in India, one is in Egypt, and one in Arabia. These five masts have the characteristics of all the five preceding types combined, and are the highest of all the eight types. Whenever one of the five dies he is immediately replaced by a successor.

The three in India have been contacted by Baba, and are:—

Bashâr Mastân of Allahabad,
Chup Shah of Pilibhit,
Nûr Shah of Kashmir (Chindlur).

See the supplement for a description of these masts.

(NO NAME)

Type Seven

A rare type

The masts of this type are also few, but are not a fixed number. They have, in exactly equal proportions, the attributes of both jalâli and jamâli types, and although good masts, are not in fact a very high type, for a pure jalâli and a pure jamâli are more advanced. These rare masts should not be confused with those who may be predominantly of one particular type, and have also a few characteristics of one or other different types. The latter are frequently described in the supplement, and are not uncommon.

The only example of this seventh type of mast contacted by Baba, is Makkhiwala Baba of Rajkot (see supplement).

(NO NAME)

Type Eight

The commonest type

This is the commonest and lowest type; he is half mast and half God-mad, and has no particular characteristic by which he may be distinguished. Practically all the masts whom Baba has contacted who are referred to in the supplement and elsewhere as "of no special interest"; "moderate"; "nothing special"; and so forth, are of this type. They constitute about three-quarters of all the masts contacted.

* * *

A person of inquiring mind may wonder whether masts may be found in other parts of the world, and if they are not, then why it is that India alone is gifted with such souls. Baba, in explaining this paradox to his disciples, told them once that India was nearest to the "creation point", and was, therefore, the most significant country in the world in the realm of spirituality. It was for this reason, he explained, that there were very few masts outside India, and none in Europe or the Americas, although there were mystics, saints and God lovers there. He told them, however, that there were a few masts in Arabia, a few in Egypt, a very few in Iran (mostly in Meshed and Tabriz), and a very few in Tibet.

It is, therefore, not surprising that in the western world there are, as far as I am aware, no traditions about these God-intoxicated souls, and that when a Westerner is confronted for the first time by the eccentric characteristics of a mast, his reaction is, quite possibly, one of incredulity and even abhorrence.

Are these ragged and eccentric men and women spiritually advanced, who pass their lives in filth and squalor; who talk nonsense; who often roam about naked; who may abuse others and strike them; who do no worldly work; who smoke, drink tea, and chew pân and tobacco in unnatural quantities; who have, it seems, perverted tastes in anything and everything—are we to believe that these people are closer to God than intelligent, cultured, civilized, normal men and women?

The reply is that they are, and we can, with the help of some notes dictated by Baba, at least try to understand why these God-intoxicated souls are physically dirty, and why they have certain eccentric habits of behaviour. I propose to quote Baba's words almost exactly as they were originally dictated, for they could hardly be more succinct.

"Standards of good and bad are established according to contemporary standards that may vary with time and circumstance. In spirituality, very often what is understood to be good by the masses is, from the spiritual point of view, bad; and what is understood as bad by the masses, is often good from the spiritual point of view. For example, robbery is bad by general standards, but if one robs to help some starving mother who has just given birth to a child, it is good. Also, by general standards, beating others is bad, but if you beat someone with the motive of correcting his life, and do so without malice and without anger, this beating is a blessed virtue.

"From general standards of society, religion, health, morality and so forth, cleanliness of body and mind are indispensable. It is, however, very easy to keep the body clean; but cleanliness of mind is very difficult indeed. The more one gets attached to body cleanliness for merely selfish reasons, the less are the chances of having a clean mind.

"If, however, one is given up wholly to mental cleanliness, which means becoming free from low, selfish, impure desires and thoughts of lust, greed, anger, backbiting, etc., the less is one's mind attached to bodily needs and bodily cleanliness. All this applies to ordinary persons.

"Now of the five types—God-merged, God-intoxicated, God-absorbed, God-communed and God-mad—the God-absorbed and God-communed can more or less keep their bodies clean. Their minds are almost automatically clean due to their being absorbed in God, or in communion with God. But the God-mad, the God-intoxicated and the God-merged all invariably have dirty bodies, live in dirty surroundings, and may have dirty physical habits. A God-mad has a clean, pure mind. A God-intoxicated has a mind, but

no thoughts, for his mind is simply enjoying the intoxicated state. A God-merged has no mind—he is fully merged in God. So in these three cases their mental cleanliness and purity cannot be questioned.

"Now why should their bodies and environments be dirty? You will find that the majority of ordinary mad people have very little consciousness of their bodies. So if an ordinary mind, when mad, does not pay attention to bodily cleanliness, then the three types of God men, who unconsciously or consciously know all the universe to be zero, body to be a shadow, and whose minds are absolutely unattached to the body, cannot be expected to keep their bodies and surroundings clean.

"When the mind does not pay attention to the body, the body, naturally, automatically survives and looks after itself. Now because of a kind of universal working on the gross plane, a sort of automatic attraction takes place, which causes a man who is indifferent to cleanliness to be attracted to place himself in dirty surroundings. He does not purposely choose an unclean place, but tends to gravitate towards it, for he is himself quite indifferent either to cleanliness or to dirt on the physical plane. For those who are God-mad, God-intoxicated, or God-merged, this dirtiness does not affect their health, because the mind is not attached to the body.

"For these souls, good or bad, cleanliness or dirt, a palace or a hut, a spotless avenue or a filthy gutter are all the same, and they are driven into any of these places according to circumstance. It is natural for a mad to have a dirty body, and it is natural for him to be driven to dirty surroundings; but if the devotee of a mad happens to give him comfort and cleanliness, he takes it because it is forced on him—but he is quite indifferent to it.

"In these three types also, greed, anger, avarice and lust do not exist, since the minds of the God-mad and God-intoxicated are always turned towards God, and the God-merged has no mind; their bodily actions are not under their control. They are indifferent to everything, so that their actions are either indifferently controlled, or are controlled by God. Whatever they do, whether it be called good or bad from worldly standards, it has no selfish motive or personal deliberation. So if these persons laugh or cry, seem happy or morose, caress others or beat them, they are not conscious of what they do, or of how they behave. Nevertheless, their doing acts in anger helps those on whom this unconscious anger is spent, because their selfless anger destroys the anger sanskaras of the recipient. In ordinary circumstances, if A gets angry with, and beats B, B's red sanskaras of anger

become attached to A; A loses and B gains. If B also gets angry and beats A, then both are equal. If a mast hits either A or B, their sanskaras of anger are destroyed, but these sanskaras do not recoil on the mast: but if either A or B hits the mast, it is a terrible binding.

"Now why does one mast become a jalâli, another a jamâli, another a mahbûbi, and so forth? Everyone has to pass through innumerable lives. If one man, who in his past life lived in an environment of strife and great activity, becomes in this life a mast, he is of the jalâli type. If another, who led his past life in a quiet village, or was perhaps in a dull and idle environment, becomes in this life a mast, he is of the jamâli type. If in his previous life a man was a bachelor, who may, or may not, have committed the sexual act, and becomes in this life a mast, he is of the mahbûbi type. This is because the sanskaras of love for women were unexpressed in his past life, and in this life they find expression in the wearing of some part of a woman's dress, or in acting in some ways like a woman.

"Tukaram understood this persistence of previous characteristics when he wrote:—

आर्था हाता संत संग । तुका झाला पांडुरंग
त्याचे भजन राहीना । मूळ स्वभाव जाईना

"Which means, "Tukaram used to do bhajan from childhood, and stay in the company of saints. Then he became God, and yet he carried on his bhajans; his original nature persists"

* * *

The foregoing paragraphs give us Baba's explanations of the eccentric behaviour of various types of aspirants, and this is, perhaps, an appropriate place to quote what the great Sufi poet of the thirteenth century, Shams-e-Tabriz, wrote about these God-intoxicated souls. Baba tells us that the following ode refers to masts, and the phrase "The man of God" that is repeated in each line, is a poetical expression that means, in fact, "the mast".

مرد خداست بود بی شراب - مرد خدا سیر بود بی کباب
 مرد خدا والہ و حیران بود - مرد خدا را نبود خورد و خواب
 مرد خدا شاه بود زیر دلّی - مرد خدا گنج بود در خراب
 مرد خدا نیست ز باد و ز خاک - مرد خدا نیست ز بار و ز آب
 مرد خدا بحر بود بیکران - مرد خدا بار و دُر بی حساب
 مرد خدا دارد صد ماه و چرخ - مرد خدا دارد صد آفتاب
 مرد خدا عالم از حق بود ، - مرد خدا نیست فقیہ از کتاب
 مرد خدا زن سوی کفر است دین - مرد خدا را چه خطا و صواب
 مرد خدا گشت سوار از عدم - مرد خدا آمد عالی رکاب
 مرد خدا هست تمان شمس دین - مرد خدا را تو بجوی و بیاب

The following translation of this ode is gleaned from the work of R. A. Nicholson (Cambridge University Press).

*The man of God is drunken without wine,
 The man of God is full without meat.
 The man of God is distraught and bewildered.
 The man of God has no food or sleep.
 The man of God is a king 'neath darvish-cloak.
 The man of God is a treasure in a ruin.
 The man of God is not of air and earth,
 The man of God is not of fire and water.
 The man of God is a boundless sea,
 The man of God rains pearls without a cloud.
 The man of God hath hundred moons and skies
 The man of God hath hundred suns.
 The man of God is made wise by the Truth,
 The man of God is not learned from book.*

*The man of God is beyond infidelity and religion;
To the man of God right and wrong are alike.
The man of God has ridden away from Not-being,
The man of God is gloriously attended.
The man of God is concealed, Shamsi Din;
The man of God do thou seek and find!*

Before we progress to the discussion of other types of souls, there are two points worth recording. The first is, does a mast always remain a mast? The answer that Baba gives us is that a mast does remain a mast, though he may at times become majzoob-like and at times salik-like, and if he comes in contact with a spiritual Master—which does not always happen—he is helped and advanced.

The second point is that certain masts and certain salik-like pilgrims are known as spiritual chargemen, and those who scan the accounts of various masts and salik-like pilgrims in the supplement will find many referred to in this way. Such a man sees to the spiritual and material welfare of the place of which he is the spiritual chargeman. The spiritual chargeman in a small place is a mast, but in a large place he is a salik-like pilgrim, and in some centres of peculiar importance the chargemanship is in the hands of both a mast and a salik-like pilgrim. This system whereby a mast or a salik-like pilgrim is often the spiritual chargeman of a particular city or district is peculiar to India, and in other countries there are spiritual agents. These agents, since they are not entirely relevant to the subject of the present chapter, are described in the additional supplement, at the end of the main supplement.

So much then for masts, and it is my earnest hope that the foregoing pages will help to explain why these lovers of God do not conform to conventional standards. Those of Baba's disciples who know Sufi and Vedantic literature, say that his explanation in this chapter of the different types of mast is something quite new, that has, as far as they know, never been revealed before by an authoritative spiritual teacher. As such, therefore, it does two things; it helps us to read with sympathy and understanding much that follows in this volume; and secondly, by its new approach, it has something of the freshness of a Himalayan dawn that lights up the summits of a new revelation.

Before closing this chapter, I propose to take the opportunity of introducing some new terms that may be easier to understand, if I describe

the history of their origin. These terms were born at the time when the prodigious numbers of Baba's contacts with souls of all types were being sorted into their present form, that now constitutes the supplement at the back of this volume. It has already been made clear that the greater part of Baba's work has been with God-intoxicated souls, but in the course of his work he has contacted many thousands of other types of aspirant.

Of these, by far the greatest number were ordinary faqirs or sadhus, and this class of aspirant is so well known that no additional explanation was thought necessary. But there have been other types of souls, to a greater or lesser degree advanced on the path, who were either God-absorbed or God-communed, i.e. were salik-like pilgrims. Now it was felt that these terms, God-absorbed and God-communed, and the Sufi equivalent, salik-like pilgrim, although they classified the manner of an aspirant's approach to God, were in some ways not suitable for use in the supplement, because they gave no idea of the stage of development of the aspirant on the spiritual path.

It was therefore thought better to create, under Baba's guidance, some quite new terms that did not take into account the distinctions between God-absorbed and God-communed (though these distinctions are none the less real for all that). These new terms provide a yardstick against which the spiritual advancement of salik-like pilgrims may be precisely classified, and they are important because they are so frequently used in the supplement at the end of this volume.

In ascending order of spiritual progress, the terms used are :—

- (1) Hawâ
- (2) Seeker
- (3) Initiate pilgrim
- (4) Advanced pilgrim
- (5) Adept pilgrim

The reader should remember that these five terms are applicable only to the God-absorbed and the God-communed, whom we have classified earlier in this chapter under the collective term, salik-like pilgrims.

Hawa

This is the lowest state. A man with hawa is in a condition of permanent relationship to the spiritual path; he is not on the path, but is not far from it.

(2) SEEKER

This is an intermediate state. The seeker is still not on the path, but he is closer to it than a man with hawa. He is like a man who is searching for the beginning of a footpath, wandering here and there earnestly determined to find it.

(3) INITIATE PILGRIM

He is a man on the first plane, between the first plane and the second, or on the second plane.

(4) ADVANCED PILGRIM

He is a man on the third plane, between the third plane and the fourth, or on the fourth plane.

(5) ADEPT PILGRIM

He is a man on the fifth plane, between the fifth plane and the sixth, or on the sixth plane.

* * *

We began this chapter by describing advanced souls according to their relationship to, or their ways of approach to God, and having divided them into five types, we then discussed a few relevant Sufi terms, and finally expanded the subject in a detailed way that gave the strongest emphasis to a classification and a description of God-intoxicated souls.

I believe that the various classifications that Baba has given us and, particularly, his justification of the strange ways of masts, may help to neutralize the toxins of doubt and scepticism in the minds of those who persevere with the later pages of this book. In the case of established devotees of Baba, I hope that this chapter may make the rest of the book mean more to them, for, though none of us can fathom the ultimate spiritual depths of Baba's immortal work with God-intoxicated souls, we can, at least, plunge a little below the surface, and try to sense something of its momentous significance.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Five Favourites

An Explanation

The five masts described in this chapter may appear to have been given a greater emphasis than they deserve, and I feel that a few words of explanation may help to disarm this cogent objection.

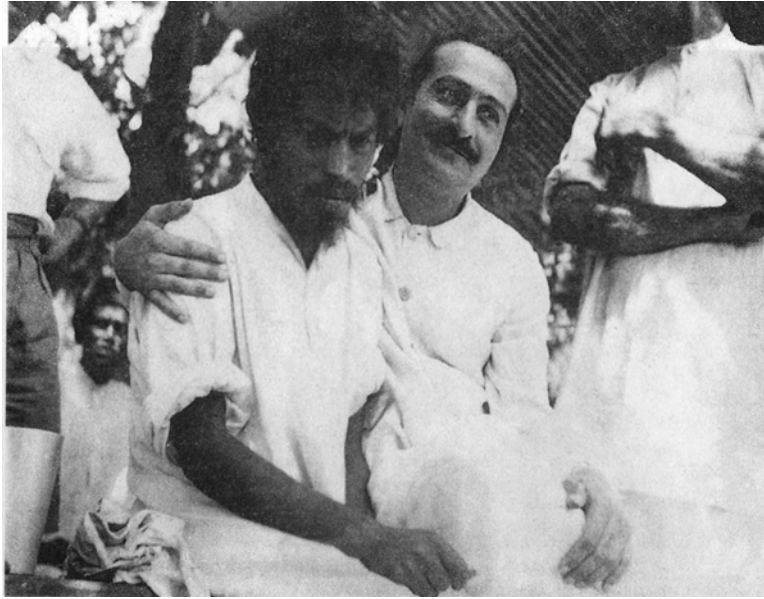
Those who take the trouble to extract the vitamins from the solid fare of the supplement, may be surprised to find hidden away there, accounts of many masts and saints whose spiritual development is far greater than that of several described in this chapter. Why then, have so many of these other great souls been dismissed cursorily in the supplement, while, in this chapter a mere handful have been given a disproportionate prominence?

The answer is twofold. In the first place, these five masts have, more than any others, lived with Meher Baba and worked with him, often for long periods, and as this volume is primarily devoted to a description of Meher Baba's work with masts, they deserve, for this reason alone, the attention they here receive. In the second place, the contacts with several highly advanced masts, who are often described with brevity and dryness in the supplement, have generally been so fleeting that there has been almost nothing to record about their connections with Baba. Such masts have been met for a few hours at the most, and the men with Baba have had little opportunity to delve into anything beyond the most conspicuous features of their spiritual and personal history.

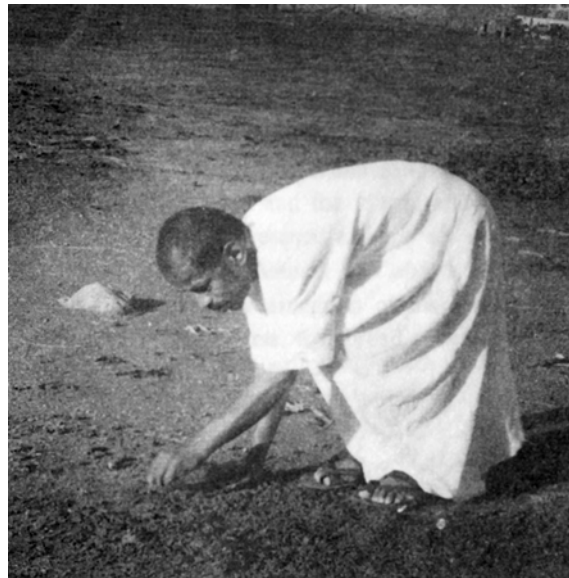
The pity is that a mast either cannot or will not tell us of his spiritual experiences, and so the following pages inevitably give emphasis to the physical appearances and physical behaviour of these masts, while that which makes them worth describing, to wit, their spiritual status, may be dismissed in a few words; this, though I regret it as much as any, cannot be remedied until we ourselves develop sufficiently to experience directly that which we must now take on faith.

There is, also, a quite irrational unevenness in the number of pages

devoted to each mast, for Chattî Baba is given more attention than the others, while Châchâ who is the higher and rarer type, is described much more briefly. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, if we exclude Mohammed, Chattî Baba had by far the longest contact with Baba than any others; secondly, the behaviour and characteristics of some masts provide more to write about; and thirdly, the human factor of the writer's prejudices has provoked him to pay more attention to those he knew best, or liked best.



Baba with Mohammed, Rahuri Ashram



Mohammed looking for "deesh". Note the loose ground in front of his feet which has been dug up in search of "deesh".



Mohammed as he is today (August 1947)

Mohammed

Like a problem child, who needs the counsel of a psychiatrist to steer him to the highway of normal development, Mohammed was a problem mast, entangled in the brambles of the spiritual path; and it was Baba who came to his rescue.

Mohammed is a mast of exceptional characteristics, and as such, we must turn to Baba if we are to understand something of his spiritual background. Baba has explained that the case of Mohammed is different from that of other masts. Saints, walis, pilgrims initiate, advanced, or adept, in fact those on the spiritual path who are not masts, may progress from one plane to another, and may also pass through a state between one plane and the next. Thus, such souls may be on, or between, any plane from one to seven. Now a mast normally progresses only on the planes, and never passes through the state of being between one plane and another, until, having reached the sixth plane, he may enter a state between the sixth plane and the seventh before becoming merged in God (as in the case of Pallâkollah Baba of Kilakkarai, Nangâ Baba of Jasgiran, and Mâster Nemrâjâ of Rohri; (see supplement).

Mohammed, however, by an extraordinary set of circumstances, was an exception, and when brought to Rahuri¹ in 1936 he was not only a mast, but was also between the third plane and the fourth. Normally, as already explained, only saints, advanced pilgrims and so forth, pass through this stage of being between the third plane and the fourth, and in this condition they become dazed. This stage represents a kind of *muqâm-e-hairat* of this section of the path. Thus, Mohammed was and is a mast in all essential particulars, with this remarkable exception of his having got between one plane and another. This, of course, is a broad generalization, and Baba, in this context, quotes the lines of Hafiz:—

ہزار نکتہ بار کتر ز نو اینجاست

"In the Path there are thousands of subtleties more fine than the hair of the head."

¹Map Reference D/8.

As a result of Baba's contact, Mohammed never entered the fourth plane, but jumped to a state between the fourth plane and the fifth, and then entered the fifth plane. He is now, Baba explains, on the fifth plane, and will not progress further in this life. These are the bare bones of Mohammed's spiritual history, and we will now turn to his outer life with Baba.

In the first place, no mast has had such prolonged contact with Baba, for it is now eleven years since Mohammed was brought to the Rahuri Ashram in August, 1936, and no mast, despite the hundreds whom Baba has contacted, has proved quite so exacting. For some spiritual reasons of his own, Baba insists that the slightest whim of a mast should be fulfilled, and of all the masts Mohammed seems to have exhibited the most bizarre and capricious vagaries that put the patience of those charged with his care to the greatest possible test.

Mohammed is by birth a Hindu, a potter by caste, born in Ratnagiri, and his real name is said to be Tukârâm Chawân. He seems to have had a wife and two children in Ratnagiri¹ and when he became a mast, he left his home and his job as a potter, and went to Bombay². It was in Bombay that he came to be called Mohammed, by Muslims who held him in respect, and this name has stuck to him ever since.

He probably spent several years wandering about Bombay, and those who specialized in gambling on the day-to-day fluctuations of cotton prices used to hang around Mohammed, hoping that he would give them tips from time to time. In this way, anyone who is peculiar, and especially one who is thought to be spiritually advanced, is pestered by petty speculators, who interpret the merest gesture or fortuitous remark as a tip that may win a fortune. Mohammed was much vexed by such people. and now that his consciousness is better attuned to the things of this world, he sometimes talks of his early Bombay days, and of how these cotton figure gamblers would ply him with tea and food. Pleader was the first to discover Mohammed in Bombay, and he brought him to the Rahuri Ashram in August 1936. Baba's routine there was the usual one of shaving, bathing, feeding, and sitting with the inmates, and Mohammed was treated in the same manner, but at once was given conspicuous priority. Mohammed took full advantage of Baba's instructions that the inmates should be given all they asked for, and his daily intake at that time consisted of twelve bananas, four pounds of boiled beetroot, four

¹ Not shown on map, but is on the west coast of India, about 130 miles south of Bombay.

² Map Reference C/8.

ounces of pistachio, two large plates of rice and dal*, six raw onions, twelve chapattis†, twelve full plates of cooked vegetables, six cups of tea in the morning, and six cups in the afternoon!

He used to sit most of the day next to the door of the ashram, and would roundly abuse and spit on anyone who came near him, he would repeatedly call Baidul to bring another blanket for him, although he obviously had no physical need of any more coverings. This grotesque behaviour went on throughout the Rahuri phase, and continued unabated when the ashram moved to Meherabad the following April. He then began to dig holes in the ground with his hands, and would frequently order Baidul to pull down the ashram, and when he was told that this could not be done, would burst into tears. At four in the morning, when the ashram staff was struggling with the lighting of fires to make tea, Mohammed would shout impatiently for someone to help him at the toilet. He would stand from six in the morning until eight o'clock cleaning his teeth, would call petulantly for a full bucket of water with which to clean his mouth, and when this was brought would have it sent away, only to shout for it again after a few minutes. Later in the morning, when Baba used to call him for a bath, it would generally take three men one hour to beguile him to the bathroom.

Perhaps the most familiar attitude of Mohammed, even today, when his behaviour compared with that of the early years is as different as chalk from cheese, is one of bending down or squatting and gazing at the ground, and picking at something there with his fingers. He often does this for hours at a stretch, and at such times, if asked what he is doing, he replies, "Deesh (drishta) pâhato". This means, roughly. "I am looking at something I want".

He always refers to Baba as "Dada"; and in the early years, when looking for "deesh" he used to grumble, "Dada has made me such, what can I do?". At other times he would explain that he was not seeing the "deesh" of his own volition, but that the divine force behind him made him do it. As a result of this perpetual picking at the ground, Mohammed's fingers and thumbs have a rough and horny skin, and his nails are worn almost to the quick, and are thick and broken.

Those familiar with the history of Baba's life, will recall that in the summer of 1937, he went for several months to Cannes with a large group of eastern

* Note for westerners: Dal is a spiced preparation of split pulse usually eaten with rice.

† A chapatti is a thin flat cake of unleavened bread, made from coarsely ground wheat; it is the bread of India, and is a wholesome and nourishing article of diet.

and western disciples. Shortly after Baba arrived in Cannes, he cabled instructions for Mohammed to be brought there. The reader may by now have gathered how tiresome Mohammed could be, and he will thus be able to visualize how difficult it must have been to steer him successfully through the routine of getting his passport. This meant a personal appearance before an august official, and those carrying out this work were in an agony of suspense lest their wayward Mohammed should suddenly abuse and spit on the official. All, however, went well, the formalities were completed, and Mohammed was prepared for the voyage, and was told that he was going to France to see his "Dada".

On the appointed day Mohammed, booted and spurred for the occasion, was led by Baidul up the slope of the ship's gangplank, and was taken at once to his cabin. Some rumour of his queerness reached the ears of the ship's surgeon, who arrived at the cabin, and demanded that Mohammed should be accommodated in the ship's hospital. Adi, who was in charge of the party, managed to convince the surgeon that he would answer for Mohammed's behaviour, and he was finally allowed to stay in his cabin.

Baidul, whose job was to care for Mohammed, now found himself tied to him for 24 hours of the day. When Mohammed's meal was brought to the cabin, he would not only refuse to eat it, but with totalitarian arrogance he would order it to be sent away at once. Then about half an hour later, when Baidul's food was brought in, Mohammed would insist on eating this, and poor Baidul would be left hungry. When Mohammed was taken on deck, he would make himself conspicuous by bending down and picking at "deesh", would collect old matches and cigarette ends that littered the deck, and when Baidul attempted to drag him away, Mohammed would break into a torrent of vituperation.

At Marseilles, when the passengers were lined up to pass the scrutiny of the authorities. Mohammed again drew all eyes towards himself by collecting "deesh " in the shape of fag ends, matches, and scraps of dirty paper that littered the disembarkation shed, and when dragged away by Baidul he burst into a volley of abuse and flung away the handful of rubbishy bits and pieces he had collected, with such force and fury that they fell foursquare on the person of some innocuous other passenger.

As soon as Mohammed arrived in Cannes, Baba began his usual daily routine of bathing and feeding him. He was lodged in a room over the garage, and one small room was adapted to make a bathroom after the Indian style. The chief difficulty of these baths was to get Mohammed clothed

thereafter, for he would stand naked, trying to make up his mind to allow his vest to be put on. He seemed like an over-cautious child on the edge of a swimming bath, hesitating to plunge into the cold and uninviting water. He would tell Baba to put his vest on, and when it was held over him, and was about to be drawn over his head, he would suddenly shout like a frightened child, "No, no," and push it away. Eventually, to the relief of all, he would have the vest on, and would then suddenly demand to have it removed again. This sort of thing went on every day, and it would often take one hour to dress Mohammed in the simplest clothes. The same process recurred when it was a matter of putting on his sandals, Pathan chappals, with an adjustable strap behind the heel. They must be tightened, loosened, tightened, loosened, taken off and cleaned, put on again, cleaned, tightened, loosened, and so on and so forth, literally, in the mental sense, ad nauseam, and potentially, one feared, ad infinitum. These examples of his conduct are not exaggerated, and they illustrate the importance Baba attaches to doing everything that a master asks; their foibles must be gratified, and their slightest wish must not be gainsaid.

We shall draw a veil over Mohammed's behaviour on the return voyage to India, for his conduct would have tried the patience of Job, and, indeed, it almost exhausted the reserves of those charged with his care on board.

After returning to India in November 1937, until the autumn of 1940, Mohammed's history is closely linked with that of Baba, for during these years he was with Baba almost everywhere he went.

I have tried to describe the sort of trying behaviour that typified Mohammed's early years with Baba, and I now find it impossible to do justice to the gradual transition from this early phase to his present co-operative and friendly attitude, both to other people, and to the world in general. The external aspect of this transition has been like the spectrum, where one colour blends imperceptibly into the next, without any precise lines of demarcation.

Until October 1940, Mohammed nestled close under Baba's wing, and from that time forth it seemed as if the work of attending to his spiritual nurture was more or less complete, for at the end of October Mohammed was sent to Bombay, where he stayed for some months with Ali Akbar. From Bombay, he was later sent down the coast to Ratnagiri, his old home, but in January 1942 was brought back again to Meherabad, and is now a permanent resident there.

No one would maintain that the Mohammed of today is normal, but there is, nevertheless, a radical change in his behaviour. In the old days, his explosive and irritable temperament gave one a feeling that he was wrestling

with some inner problem, and that when you tore him away from his preoccupation with this problem, he became so confused that he burst into an uncontrollable tantrum. From an indifferent observer's point of view, the mitigating feature of Mohammed's early years was his love for Baba, or "Dada" as he used to call him. However contumacious and difficult he may have been towards everyone else, he seemed really to adore Baba, and to long for his daily visits. Every day when Baba came, it was as if a brilliant flame were kindled in the depths of Mohammed's being, that for a moment lit up the dark and tangled ways, and slowly these fleeting moments of inner radiance have grown more and more sustained, so that Mohammed today is, for the most part, a harmonious and agreeable inmate of the ashram. He now radiates something unusual and charming, he has a perspicacity that misses little of what goes on in the ashram, and he adopts a kind of avuncular interest in everyone's welfare.

In his odd way, he tries to express his recognition of Baba's spiritual greatness, and the following are some of his statements about Baba, whom, as I have already explained, he always refers to as "Dada".

"Dada is God."

"Dada is Master."

"Everything depends on Dada's will."

"Because Dada is there the world is there."

"Dada is the Master of Mercy."

Even today, despite this great change in character, Mohammed still has the clumsiest control of his body. When he walks, he leans forward, arms dangling at his sides, and stumbles along with his toes turned slightly inwards, and looks as if he might topple over any moment, like a child learning to walk. Perhaps through constant standing hour by hour looking at "deesh", the arches of his feet have dropped. His hands are spatulate, with fingers and nails worn and cracked by endless picking for "deesh".

His voice has somehow caught the habit of a defective gramophone record, for he repeats almost every phrase several times over. This repetition is particularly manifest when he says something rather clever, and as if pleased with his smartness, he recites one phrase ten or twelve times in a loud, sing-song tone. He also gets puzzled by difficult consonants, and rounds off the sharp corners of tricky words, rather as a child does. He doesn't exactly stutter, but like a self-starter that must be pushed eight or ten times on a cold morning, Mohammed gives several kicks to the first syllable of a sentence, and then finishes the rest of it without hesitation, but with the childish

simplification of consonants that I have already described. Thus, when he says in his own language, Marathi, "*Dada Dev ahe*" (Dada is God), he says it something like this: "*Da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da Dev ahe*", and then repeats the same phrase many, many times, with the same clumsy start.

His mood nowadays is usually good. but like many of us who are not at our brightest in the morning, Mohammed has a scowl on his face for the first hour or two after rising. If you talk to him then, he either takes no notice or tells you to shut up, but with nothing like the force and wealth of epithet of his early years.

He has a habit, at times, of draping his blanket over himself, and standing for two or three hours at a stretch, his body bent forward to a right angle or more. Sometimes, with the blanket thrown over himself in the same way, he squats on his heels and bends his body forward, so that his elbows rest on the ground, and his head nestles, one supposes, between his elbows. (A supposition, because he is under the blanket.) It is the oddest sight to see this queer shape draped in a brown homespun blanket, a motionless figure that suggests an eccentric article of furniture, rather than a concealed and static human form.

At such times, if Mohammed is asked what he is doing, he either abuses the inquisitive questioner, or explains that it is his habit to stand or squat in this way, and he ends the matter by exclaiming, "You wouldn't understand."

When engrossed in "deesh", Mohammed takes little notice of what goes on around him, but he now spends the greater part of the day standing or sitting on the back verandah at Meherabad, whence he keeps an eye on all who come and go. If a baby buffalo escapes from its pen, he shouts to a farm hand to have it caught; if something is left in the open when a shower of rain comes pelting down, he calls someone to bring it under shelter. Those who pass to and fro about their business he orders about in a friendly and cheerful way, and when the gong for meals is sounded, he tells laggards to go for their food. He knows all the men in the ashram, all the regular farm hands and servants, and all the animals by their names, and he takes a vivid and critical interest in everything that goes on.

Despite this capacity for acute observation, he still lacks a sense of judgement. As an example of this, we may cite the following. He remembers quite well his visit to France in 1937, and for the past two or three years he has got it into his head that he must go to France again. Whenever Baba comes, he begs him to take him to France. As a result of various discussions with Baba and Pendu, Mohammed has now come to believe that

a sum of 71 lakhs* of rupees has been put aside for his expenses, and that a specially chartered ship is being made ready for the voyage. At the time of writing (September 1947), Mohammed's plans are to leave for France in "Dissimla"—which is his way of pronouncing the word December. He is rather worried as to whether he will get rice there, for he has been told how the economy of Europe has been upset by the war, and when "Dissimla" comes he will be given some other reason why it will not be possible for him to go to France just yet. About a year ago he was avidly keen to be off, and every day made anxious inquiries about the progress of negotiations for passports and tickets. Now, however, this passion for foreign travel seems to be gently waning, and perhaps by the end of the year he will not greatly care if he is told that his voyage is again postponed. A few years ago, he had an idea that he wanted to marry a fat wife, and have children, but this early ambition has now been supplanted by his desire to revisit the fair land of France.

This deception may sound pathetic and unfair, but if Mohammed is told squarely that such and such a thing is impossible, he becomes morose and miserable, and sometimes bursts into tears. Like the vain hopes that encourage a man along the road from cradle to grave, Mohammed too appears to be sustained by these simple dreams; they may seem puerile to us, but perhaps serve him in the same way that our ambitions do; they give him something to look forward to.

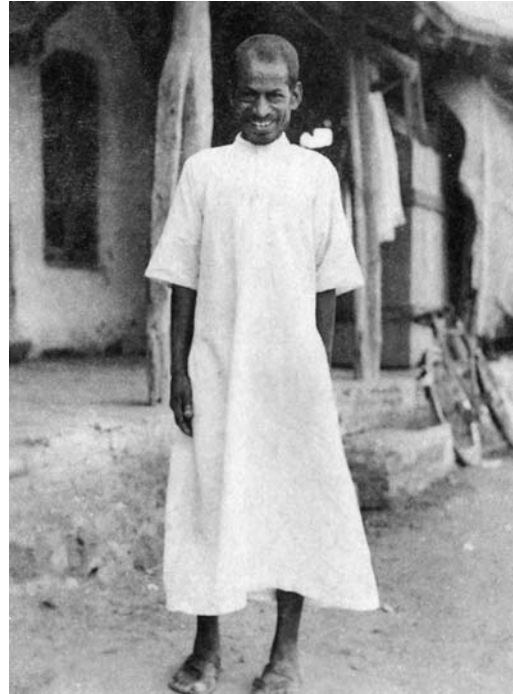
Whatever may be one's intellectual estimate of this strange blend of child, man, and saint, Mohammed somehow commands one's affection. In short, despite his impossible behaviour, one loves him, and through the chinks in his distorted personality one discerns, now and again, a beauty of soul that makes the shortcomings of his character unimportant. In this way, of course, he is much the same as any mast, for either by an irony of the love of God, or for some specific divine purpose, the spiritual state of these God-intoxicated souls is veiled from our eyes by the dense folds of a cloak of eccentricity,†

* Note for westerners: A lakh is 100,000, and a rupee is about 1s. 6d or 30 cents.

† For dates of various episodes in Mohammed's life with Baba, see the supplement under Rahuri.



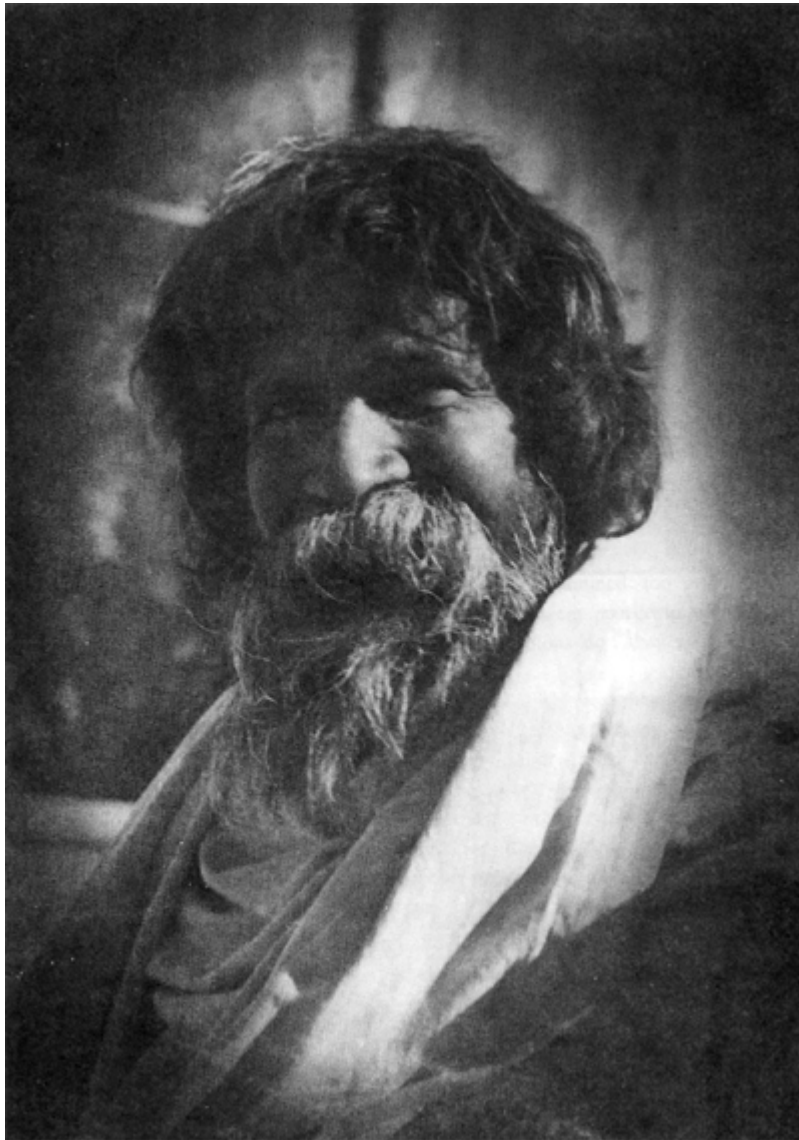
Mohammed at Rahuri, 1936



Mohammed at Meherabad, 1947

A contrast: Two pictures that epitomize the change in Mohammed

Chatti Baba



Chatti Baba at Bangalore, 1940

In this story of Chattî Baba, I have taken the chance of fulfilling two tasks; the first, to describe how Chattî Baba was discovered, and the second, to recount at least some of the episodes of his life with Meher Baba.

Before Baba himself goes out to contact masts, one or more of his men, usually Baidul, Kaka, or Eruch, are sent as envoys to reconnoitre a certain district, and to select suitable masts for Baba's work. These expeditions of inquiry are no picnic, and because it would be impossible to describe every one of them, I venture to hope that the account of this particular one—which, eventually with Baba's help, ended in bringing Chattî Baba back to the Bangalore ashram—will serve to show the extent of the labours of pre-contacting almost every mast listed in the supplement at the end of this book. It shows the double travail; first, that of the reconnaissance party, and finally, that of Baba and a few chosen men. Also, I hope it shows the kind of trophy that such labours sometimes win, for a prize such as Chattî Baba was surely worth the efforts made to get him.

One day in Bangalore¹ in November 1939, Baba sent for Kaka and Eruch, and explained that he wanted them to help him gather together a nucleus of advanced masts, and it was to fall to their lot to set out on an immediate expedition in search of such souls. He reminded them that the work at Rahuri² had been for the most part with mad people, but that as a model of genuine mast, they had the example of Mohammed's presence amongst them, and he asked them to remember how Mohammed behaved, and that in spite of his exacting behaviour, there were a number of points of distinction between him and an ordinary madman. He also made it clear that, in their search, the corner-stone of their judgement was finally to rest upon an intuitive reaction. "You leave that to me", he said.

Another thing he told them was how to approach a mast, and how to coax him to come away with them. They should, first of all, observe how the local people demonstrated their reverence, and then bear themselves in the same way; they must avoid any action that might upset him, and should

¹ Map Reference E/11.

² Map Reference D/8.

ask any steward or disciple about the fads and fancies of the mast, and particularly about any special thing that he was known to enjoy. They should then go and buy something for him, sweetmeats, tea, cigarettes, or whatever might please him, and offer them to him; and finally, with all the arts they knew, they should set out to coax the mast to come away with them. There was, however, one injunction, and that was that they were to tell no one, not even the mast himself, that Meher Baba had sent them, nor that it was to Meher Baba that they were to bring him.

Baba then selected certain places in Southern India, and told them to search these cities, and return to Bangalore precisely and without fail on the eleventh day, bringing with them a few first-rate masts. Finally, throughout these ten days, they were to have only one solid meal a day after sunset, but might take tea twice during the daytime. And so Kaka and Eruch set out, and one imagines them to have had no conception of the spite of fortune that was to dog their footsteps during these ten days.

There was little of import in their journey until they reached Trichinopoly¹, where their adventures became rich both in hardships, and in the contact of interesting and important spiritual personalities.

To begin with, it was pouring with rain and, to add to their trials, the language there was unknown to them, and their Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, and English, were apparently useless. By a stroke of fortune, while they were struggling to penetrate the understanding of a group of sympathetic, but uncomprehending, listeners on the station soon after their arrival, a man elbowed his way forward, and introduced himself in Urdu. He was a Muslim of Negapatam², a tonga owner, by name Sardar Saheb, and he offered not only to satisfy their inquiries, but also to be their guide. He told Eruch and Kaka that it had been his hobby for years to meet saints and spiritually interesting men of that part of India, and Kaka and Eruch, therefore, after a little hesitation, accepted his offer and placed themselves at his disposal.

Sardar Saheb had come to Trichinopoly to collect the car of a landlord of Negapatam, that had, it seems, been under repair, and he planned that they should return together to Negapatam in this car, and meet a notable mast there, by name Moti Baba.

Sardar Saheb was enthusiastic for an immediate start, and our two men found it hard to persuade him to allow them first to search Trichinopoly

¹ Map Reference E/12.

² Map Reference F/12.

itself for the type of mast or saint they needed. They succeeded, however, in postponing their departure by a few hours, and plodded through the slushy lanes of the Mohammedan quarter of Trichinopoly, in search of a mast called Yusuf. After a protracted search they failed to find him, so returned to the station to meet Sardar Saheb.

The three doughty souls then set out by car to Negapatam. It had been raining cats and dogs for several days, and the straight road, and the flat fields that lay on either side, were almost entirely submerged under melancholy wind-wrinkled sheets of water. At twilight, about twenty miles from Trichinopoly, the remaining eyots of land had become entirely shrouded by a waste of waters, and at some sodden wayside village, two farmers were seen wading towards them, calling aloud, and gesticulating. After much persuasion, they made it clear to Sardar Saheb that it would be suicidal to proceed further that evening by car, and in the face of the persistent obsecrations of these prudent peasants it was agreed to turn back, since there seemed no prospect of success if they pursued their trans-aqueous course to Negapatam.

And so they splashed their way to a neighbouring station, and leaving the car in charge of a responsible individual, they boarded a train, that was, in fact, the last to pass, before the rising waters washed away the line. They reached Negapatam in their wet, clinging clothes late the same night.

The next day they devoted to two meetings with Moti Baba—who is a high mast of the sixth plane—and although they failed to persuade him to come with them, their experiences were odd.

During their first encounter in the morning nothing memorable came to pass, and they left with a promise to come back the same evening. At sunset, when they reached the house, they joined a group of disciples and visitors who were awaiting Moti Baba's return, and after some time his shuffling footsteps were heard approaching, and a hush fell on the gathering. This little old man with bright eyes then stepped up onto the verandah, and at once peeled off his wet outer clothes. These were composed of seven coats and seven pairs of trousers, which he removed in two pieces en bloc, one of seven coats each within the other, and the other of seven pairs of trousers invaginated into each other in the same way.

He then reclined, covered only by the indefinite folds of an assortment of undergarments, and was silent for a time, while he enjoyed several country cigarettes. Thereafter, he ordered one of his attendants to prepare and bring food. This was placed before them by a man, previously a leper,

who had begged Moti Baba to heal him. He had been told to stay as an attendant, and rub the dust from Moti Baba's feet every day over the leprous patches, and he was now apparently cured, and had devoted his life to the service of the man by whose grace he had been healed.

After the meal, Kaka and Eruch, at a moment that seemed propitious, repeated their plea of the morning that Moti Baba should come away for a few days with them. He replied in a strange way. He pointed to his feet, indicating the mud and filth upon them, and told them, with a sigh, how tired he was, since he had but now returned from a visit to the man who had sent them, and that there was, therefore, no need for him to go with them.

Some time later, apparently without rhyme or reason, he lit three matches in succession, and gave them to Kaka, who, acting on the principle that whatever a saint gives to one should be kept, placed the cinders in his pocket. It was then nearly midnight, and suddenly Moti Baba asked Baba's men to prepare tea for him. The ex-leper, after a hectic search in the city, produced two large beakers, one of tea, and the other of coffee. Moti Baba then invited the three of them to sleep on the floor beside him, but because of the plans that lay ahead they declined, and set out for the station. Kaka still feels that they should not have refused this invitation, for he thinks it possible that they might have undergone some memorable spiritual experience. But such a chance, once rejected, is not offered a second time.

From Negapatam, the party set out early the next day to meet Chattî Baba. They were told that he was usually to be found on the highway near Negapatam, and as he was held in great esteem throughout the countryside, our three men did not experience much difficulty in running him to earth.

This lovable old man of fresh and simple mien was dressed only in a lungi*, and carried a small pitcher and a bundle of rags. The country words for these are chatti and mutha, and for this reason he was known locally as Chattî Baba or Mutha Baba.

Remembering Baba's words, the three first paused at a little distance, and observed how the country people greeted him. Chattî Baba was then making his way slowly along the margin of a busy highway, and almost all the peasants who passed threw themselves full length before him. Chattî Baba would take a pinch of dust from the ground and offer it to each one.

* Note for westerners: A lungi is a loin-cloth, fastened at the waist, that reaches to the mid-calf or ankle. It is commonly worn in Southern India.

and they would rub this dust upon their foreheads or sprinkle it over their hair. Chattî Baba said finally to each one, laughingly, "*Po, anna, po*" (Go brother, go) and each lithe and swarthy peasant, rising to his feet with much reverence, would then dismiss himself and go about his business.

Kaka, Eruch and Sardar Saheb then approached Chattî Baba and laid themselves before him as they had seen the peasants do. To each of them Chattî Baba gave a pinch of dust, which they rubbed on their foreheads, and they then set about inviting him to come with them to Bangalore. Sardar Saheb, as interpreter, offered the suggestion in his most telling manner, but, to their mortification, Chattî Baba rejoined in a melancholy way that he had much work here amongst his children, and could not come now, though he might do so after a few days.

The three then repaired in a mood of disappointment to Negapatam, and having visited another mast at Nagore¹, with fingernails the length of cigarettes, they prepared to return to Trichinopoly.

The railroad from Negapatam to Trichinopoly passes through the ancient city of Tanjore², and on the *cis*- and *trans*-Tanjorean sections of the line, the floods had bitten out and swallowed large sections of the permanent way. Trains were running to the margin of the first breach, which was teeming with stranded passengers. Eruch, Kaka and Sardar Saheb decided that, rather than join these crowds for an uncertain period waiting for the line to be repaired—uncertain because of the relentless and desolating rainfall that still continued—they would wade across the inundated tract. They therefore slipped off their trousers and shoes, and turning amphibious pilgrims, waded across six miles of submersed countryside to relatively dry land. Here, they fortunately found refuge in a bus that carried them to Tanjore, where they at once resumed their search for masts.

There was a mast here by name Abdul Qâdir Jilânî, who had the reputation of having ghous-like qualities, and as time was running short, they decided to visit him in the dead hours before dawn. They found him resting on the porch of a butcher's house, his usual habitation, and as soon as Eruch and Kaka came before him, he raised upturned hands to his beard in a gesture of reverence, and exclaimed in a gentle voice, full of feeling, "Meher Baba, Meher Baba". They offered him their respects, but unhappily failed in persuading him to accompany them, although he, like Chattî Baba, gave his word that he would come later for a few days.

¹ Map Reference F/12.

² Map Reference E/12.

And so, in a mood dimmed by the melancholy of this third failure to persuade a mast to join them, they set about preparing to return to Trichinopoly.

Again the line was breached, and the intervening expanse flooded, and neither buses nor trains were able to run. They succeeded, however, in getting a lift in the inspection bogie of a ballast train to the margin of the first breach. Here, there was another teeming multitude of stranded passengers, amongst whom disease was already taking its toll. There was no fresh water, and the stocks of food from the adjacent villages had already been exhausted, except for green plantains that were baked or fried, and had become the only source of nourishment.

For thirty-six hours our three men shared the plight of this crowd, and then concluded that it would be better to risk making their own way across the inundated tract. They therefore again stripped off their nether garments, and taking two coolies to carry their bedding-rolls, set out to wade across sixteen miles of flooded country. They followed the course of the disrupted railway, over fallen bridges and the disorderly rubble of crumbled culverts, clinging here and there to the lines dangling in mid-air. The rain had at last stopped, and the water had subsided sufficiently to make their passage possible—although it was still up to their knees—and late in the afternoon they staggered into a drenched and miserable station at the other extremity of the breach. Here Eruch discovered the station master to be an old school friend, who recognized the muddy, wet and weary Eruch from a little distance. It so happened that the station master's house was set upon a piece of high ground, and was the only building there that had not been flooded. The station master shouted across a stretch of mud and water that separated his house from the station, where Eruch, Kaka and Sardar Saheb were standing, that he would prepare tea, and would call them across when it was ready.

After an interval, presumably sufficient for the brewing of tea, he beckoned to them to join him, but advised them to make their passage through the water that lay between, and not across a ridge of mud that was above the water, and seemed, therefore, to offer the better route. One of the three, however, ignoring this warning, made his way through the mud, and found his legs sinking deeper and deeper into an all-consuming quagmire. After a breath-taking struggle he pulled his legs out, and throwing dignity to the winds, he then lay on his stomach on the surface of the mud, and propelled himself horizontally to safety. He reached the station master's hut

not only covered in mud from head to foot, like a buffalo emerging from a village pond, but also in a mood of the most profound disgust. He found that the tea, which had been prepared by the station master under great difficulties, was proffered in an old tin used normally for certain intimate cleansing purposes, for the very good reason that every other utensil had been swept from his isolated kitchen by the flood.

This precious beverage, offered him in such a vessel, became then the straw that broke the back of his restraint, and he directed a tirade of invective at this unspeakable tin of tea, for the sake of which he had straddled across a span of purgatorial slime, and only narrowly escaped being consumed by it.

Fortunately, maya, in her dual forms of good and evil, eventually passes away, and later the same evening they commandeered a bullock cart, which bore them to the blessed refuge of Trichinopoly. Here they left Sardar Saheb, their indefatigable companion and guide throughout the trying days and nights since they had first left Trichinopoly, and having made a flying but barren diversion to Rameshwaram¹, they returned, empty in heart and hand, to Bangalore.

In view of the devastation from the floods, it would have needed a superhuman ability on the part of Eruch and Kaka to have brought even one mast with them across the hazards that had lain across their path from Negapatam. Considering the hardships they underwent—for one should not forget that they were to eat solid food only after sunset—it was possibly, indeed, a real blessing that they had had no masts with them to add to their burdens, for at the best of times the unpredictable foibles of a mast call for heroic patience.

Baba then, in view of the failure of Kaka and Eruch to succeed in their mission, set out from Bangalore at the head of a group of disciples, to contact those masts whom Kaka and Eruch had seen, and, if possible, to bring one or more back with them to the ashram.

Baba, Kaka, Eruch, Jal Kerawala, and Gustadji, passing through Trichinopoly, where Yusuf was contacted, repaired without eventful incident to Negapatam. The last stage was by taxi, for although the floods had subsided, the railway was still under repair. The contact with Moti Baba was established with little obstacle; Baba washed his feet, fed him, and sat in

¹ Not on map, but is near the tip of the narrow peninsular leading to Adam's Bridge, and is about thirty miles east of Kilakkarai, whose Map Reference is E/13. Rameshwaram is one of the great places of Hindu pilgrimage.

silence with him for a short while in a hotel, where the necessary preparations had been made.

The grand old Chattî Baba was not, however, to be so easily enticed into the net of the Divine Master, and it was only by the patience and insistence of those sent in search of him that he was finally brought into the presence of Baba. Saints of titanic stature seldom pay heed to the blandishments and invitations of ordinary folk, and they do not normally leave their environment at the request of anyone. It is only the pull of a greater spiritual force that sometimes compels them to forsake what may have been their routine and abode of many years. This tug-of-war between two great spiritual forces was in bold relief in the case of Chattî Baba, and was a feature of the relationship between him and Baba throughout their two years of intimacy.

Three of Baba's disciples set out in two taxis to the usual sector of the highway where Chattî Baba was known to be found, about five miles from the city of Negapatam. He at first utterly declined their invitations to sit in one of the cars, and walked miserably ahead of them, carrying his bundle and his chatti, until, by reason of fatigue, he sat down by the roadside. They then again entreated him with all their gentleness and charm to come with them, even just for a little while, and he finally agreed, and sitting in one of the taxis, was brought to the hotel, and at once given food.

In Negapatam itself, he seems to have acquiesced in all that Baba asked of him, and he agreed to go to Bangalore. The party thereupon set out in two cars to Tanjore, where they arrived at sundown, and settled themselves for the night in a dharmashala.* During the night Chattî Baba was restless, and at 2 a.m. he told them that he was hungry. Kaka prepared a meal for him, then and there, at Baba's behest, with supplies and impedimenta they had with them. After the meal Chattî Baba, having expressed a desire to go for a walk, set out in the obscure light before dawn with Jal Kerawala as companion. About four hours later the two had not returned, but Jal sent back a desperate note to Baba by a messenger that Chattî Baba was ceaselessly wandering about the city lanes, and would not turn his steps towards the dharmashala. Kaka thereupon went by taxi to the place whence Jal had sent his urgent note, and he also tried, and failed, to coax Chattî Baba to rejoin the party. The two of them then followed the old man for miles, away beyond the sabulous and rammish purlieus of the city, into the

* Note for westerners: A dharmashala is a free hospice for travellers. It is usually founded and supported by the charity of a philanthropist.

first fresh strips of countryside. Here, at last, Chattî Baba sat down by the roadside, through sheer exhaustion, and for some reasons of his own gave Jal ten annas, telling him that these were his wages for having come so far with him. Kaka, by now dusty, weary, and desperate, told Chattî Baba that he would either take him back to his home, or to Bangalore, but would not, under any circumstances, leave him here by a strange wayside. This ultimatum fortunately broke the spell of his contumacy, and Chattî Baba was brought into one of the cars, and carried back at last to the shaded courts of the dharmashala.

During these hours of waiting, Baba had seized the opportunity to contact Abdul Qadir Jilani, the sixth plane ghous-like mast in Tanjore, and then came back to await the return of the truant Chattî Baba.

As soon as Chattî Baba was brought back to the dharmashala Baba gave him a bath with about fifty buckets of water, and thereafter fed him. One of the striking features of Chattî Baba's sojourn with Baba was this daily bathing with torrents of water, and the precedent was initiated in the dharmashala at Tanjore.

From Tanjore, the party went to Trichinopoly, where they picked up Yusuf, and then set out for Bangalore. They settled in a small, third class compartment, and at one station, oblivious to railway bye-laws, Chattî Baba was given a lavish bath in the compartment.

There is a refreshing incident related about Chattî Baba at a certain station where the party had some hours to while away. Baba was apparently busy in the town searching for masts, and those with Chattî Baba decided to enjoy a substantial meal. In Indian fashion, as soon as the food was brought from the refreshment room, the group settled on the platform, and thinking it would be appropriate that Chattî Baba should serve food to each one, the mandali placed the dishes and plates in front of him.

Now there is a sour juice loved greatly by southern Indians, spiced particularly with tamarind and all manner of fiery condiments, that is known as rasam, and Chattî Baba, like a true son of South India, loved rasam from the depth of his heart. As the dishes of rice, dal, vegetables, puris, and so forth were arranged before him, he scrutinized each in turn, and discovered that one brass vessel was brimful of rasam. Before serving the party, he took up this vessel in one hand, and chortling at those sitting about him, he transferred the vessel round his portly body, and placed it on the ground behind his back. Having served himself and the mandali with

the dishes that remained, he then took up the vessel of rasam from behind his back, and laughing again, threw back his head, held the vessel over his mouth, and poured its entire contents down his throat. That done, he laughed for the third time, a laugh pregnant with satisfaction at the rasam itself, and at his successful ruse, and then set to with the others for the rest of the meal, which, if we exclude the rasam, was equably divided amongst all.

This sense of fun, or if you prefer it, this childlike trait of selfishness, coupled with his occasional flashes of anger, gave a tang and savour to the sweetness of his nature, that made him at once both formidable and lovable.

When the party returned to Bangalore, Chattî Baba was at once lodged in the special mast ashram, and a routine of regular bathing and feeding was set in motion. Each bath was a prodigious performance, for which about fifty buckets of water were used. The bathing was after the Indian fashion, in which the bather squats in a small room, the floor of which is drained by its slope, and by an outlet at its most dependent point. The bather decants water in a small vessel from a bucket at his side, soaps himself, and finally, by douching water over his body with the small vessel, washes away all vestiges of soap. This time-honoured and effective system is always used when masts are bathed by Baba, the only difference being that for a mast such as Chattî Baba there is no semblance of privacy. He is soaped and rinsed by Baba, and is surrounded by those who bring the water, hand the soap, and hold the towel and the dry clothes: in other words, Baba actually bathes the mast, and others dry him and dress him. Apart from the poorly lit and domestic atmosphere of the bathroom, the concentrated vivacity of the scene suggests the progress of a surgical operation; the patient, because he is a mast, anaesthetised to any sense of impropriety, and the assistants too busy in their immediate tasks to take more than a technical and impersonal interest in what is going on.

When called to be bathed, it was usual for Chattî Baba to demur, saying that he was not well, and at times he would mildly abuse those sent to summon him from his room. But if Baba himself went to call him he at once smiled and laughed in the attractive manner of a child, and after a little hesitant humming and hawing, he would follow Baba meekly to the bathroom.

At first, in Bangalore, it seemed as if the presence of Baba, his men, and the other masts, upset Chattî Baba, and he used to edge along a slit between the back of one of the huts and the garden wall, a damp, crepuscular



Chatti Baba makes signs in the ground with the index finger of his left hand. This is a typical gesture of a Jamali type of mast.

alley, rank with a braiding of weeds. He would sit alone in this alley murmuring, laughing, and making signs on the ground apparently happy in his seclusion, and free to do as he wished, away from the others.

Baba, who is minutely attentive to the whims of his masts, seeing the discomfort that Chattî Baba endured to achieve seclusion, arranged a hut for him, in which he could remain alone. A monumental bed was placed in this hut, upon which he was invited to rest or sleep, should he so desire. Chattî Baba, however, who was no voluptuary, and whose mattress had hitherto been the unyielding earth, would not dispose himself upon this bed until repeatedly invited and encouraged by Baba, and eventually, after using it in deference to Baba's pleas for a few days, he reverted to squatting and sleeping on the ground, and to sitting alone in the alley behind the hut.

The area of the garden reserved for the mast ashram was bounded by a fence of *tattya**, and its dimensions cannot have been more than thirty yards square. In order, therefore, that the masts should have no feeling of boredom or confinement, Baba was constantly attentive to their wishes, and did all he could to keep them amused. A tea shop was designed and executed with elaborate carelessness, to conform to the preference of masts for derelict houses of refreshment. It was built of *tattya*, and furnished with two or three claudicating tables, and three or four old benches. Tea, pan, tobacco, cigarettes, and *beedies*†, were at all times available free on demand to any of the masts. A lead from the nearest circuit supplied electric light, and a hand-painted notice upon an old board nailed over the front, advertised the establishment as "The Mast Hotel". The atmosphere was genuinely suggestive of the meaner sort of restaurant to be found by the score in the poorer parts of the teeming cities of India. This special mast ashram, of which Chattî Baba was the dominant figure, eventually housed six or seven masts, mostly from Southern India, and has been described in another part of this volume. The various masts, with their individual characteristics, each contributed to the gaiety and vivid atmosphere of the institution, and they would forgather at any hour of the day or night in the "mast hotel", and demand tea, cigarettes, pan, or whatever took their fancy.

Before the " hotel " was opened, Chattî Baba kept himself mostly to himself,

* Note for westerners: Tattya is a matting or screening, woven from strips of sliced bamboo; it is used for matting, screening, making walls, baskets, etc.

† A beedie is a country cigarette made from a piece of tobacco leaf, folded and rolled. It is a cheap smoke, a strong one, and a popular one in India.

and passed the greater part of the day in the solitude of the dank passage way. When, however, the " hotel" grew to be the social centre of the ashram, Chattî Baba used to stand before it, sometimes for hours, obviously vastly amused by the conduct of his fellow masts.

Some two weeks after Chattî Baba was brought to Bangalore, a singer was sent for from Ahmadnagar. At appointed hours, Baba would gather all the masts into his own room, and a special couch was provided for Chattî Baba. For the first three or four days Chattî Baba attended these informal concerts, and as song followed song, tears of ecstasy would well over the rims of his eyelids, and course down his cheeks. After these first three or four days he ceased to join these concerts, and it seemed as if the pain of the joy of listening was too much, so that he preferred to remain outside.

Baba has never, as far as I know, explained why, when he sits with a mast, he insists upon the rigid exclusion of anyone else. It is, however, possible, from an experience related by Eruch during this period of Chattî Baba's stay at Bangalore that there is a tangible, physical danger in interrupting him at such a time. Baba had several times tried to persuade Chattî Baba to sit alone with him in his room, and after many refusals Chattî Baba one day agreed.

The two were closeted in silence in Baba's room for about two hours, and at the end of that period, Eruch, hearing Baba's movements to open the door, got up and released the clasp from the outside. Chattî Baba then emerged, and brushed past him on his way to his own room. As he went past, Eruch tells how he felt a palpable and excruciating shock pass through his body, similar, he says, to an electric shock. There are many traditions in India about the danger of interrupting saints in a transcendental state of consciousness, and perhaps this experience was a sip of the dregs of the power that had been at its highest potential while the two had been in conference.

At the beginning of April 1940, Baba and his group moved lock, stock and barrel to Meherabad. Baba, with the lion's share of those who had been with him in Bangalore, travelled by car along a devious and fascinating route, over mountain and valley, touching here and there at coastal centres such as Karwar and Goa¹ and reached Meherabad at the beginning of May.

Chattî Baba, with his fellow masts, was sent by train to Ahmadnagar and was already installed in a special room on the hill when Baba arrived. The daily bathing routine was at once resumed, and every day 150 to 200

¹ Map Reference" C/10 (Goa is shown as Panjim on the map).

buckets of water were used for each bath. As before, Chattî Baba must always be coaxed to the bathroom, but once there would sit gurgling, sighing and laughing gently, as bucket after bucket of water was tossed over him.

An idiosyncrasy of Chattî Baba was a distaste for having his hair dried. He had an impressive head of tousled black hair flecked with grey, thickly matted, and long enough to reach over his ears. Every day, usually following his bath, he would sit in any place where loose earth was to be found, and raising cupped hands laden with soil, would release it over his head. It affected one strangely to see this old man toss handful after handful of soil over his bowed head, and watch the crumbling fragments of earth tumble over his shoulders to the ground. It seemed as if he must be suffering in a way that we might never fathom, and that this apparently childish play soothed and gave him comfort. In view of this habit, Baba had instructed Krishna, who was his personal attendant, to put fifteen baskets of earth in Chattî Baba's room every day.

Prior to his spiritual awakening, Chattî Baba had apparently been a station master, and the memories of his earlier profession would be revived from time to time in disjointed ways. He used, for example, to tap out morse messages with the hook that held his window, and at irregular hours of night or day he would shout orders in English or Tamil to imaginary railway subordinates, as if he were digging some rusty relics out of the depths of his memory. At other times, he would call out "*Allah hu Akbar, Allah hu Akbar*" (God is most great. God is most great).

He used to say that Baba was his elder brother, and he one day told Krishna that Baba was a great and rich man, and that there was no one like him in the whole world.

The period at Meherabad in 1940 was the black hour of the devastating and terrible occasions in Europe, when France fell.

I do not want to suggest that the incident I am about to describe proves that Baba, in his work with masts, influences the current of world events; but I believe it shows, at least, that great saints are in harmony with humanity, and suffer with them in their hours of agony and trial. Baba has said clearly that in his contacts with masts, they help him and he helps them, they love him and he loves them, and he agrees that the speculations of his disciples about the significance of his work are correct up to a certain point; but beyond this he does not extend his explanation. What each mast does for Baba is a private matter between Baba and the mast that does not concern us. He has said that his work is similar to that of the Meherabad school

in the mid-twenties, but that the masts, because of their advanced state, know what they are doing for him, and are, therefore, of greater help to him.

For several weeks in Meherabad, Chattî Baba had repeatedly told Krishna that the people of Europe were undergoing great sorrow and suffering, but that they would survive to enjoy happy days again. Chattî Baba, though literate, never, as far as anyone knew, read a newspaper, and he was apparently quite out of touch with current events of any sort, but in spite of this he seemed aware of the terrible things that were then going on in Europe. He said, one day, while pouring earth over his head, that there would be much anguish and privation, and that many would die of starvation, but that Baba would finally assuage the suffering of the world.

On the night of 9th June, 1940, Chattî Baba became suddenly violent, noisy, and abusive, and emerged in a state of disorder and frenzy from his little room. He went directly to Baba's room, and declared that his house had now been utterly destroyed, and that he had come for shelter to Baba. If that remark were literal it made no sense at all, since his little room was as it always had been, small and bare, but neat and whole, a place where he was usually happy to sit alone for hours. Baba at once gave orders for the two to be left alone together, and Chattî Baba for some hours was heard chattering and expostulating with Baba. Eventually he became quiet, and spent the rest of the night alone with Baba.

The following morning he was quieter, and repaired to his own little chamber, and Baba then explained that Chattî Baba, who had a spiritual connection with France, had been overwrought with despair because of the cataclysm that was overwhelming France during these few fateful days. The reader will perhaps need reminding that the collapse of the French Armies began about 5th June, and that the Germans entered Paris eight days later, on 13th June.

In July 1941, Chattî Baba accompanied Baba and his group to Ranchi¹, and the history of Chattî Baba's connection with Baba from this time until his final return to Negapatam, is one of living with Baba in various cities of India and Ceylon. The journey between each place was usually an apprehensive event, for Chattî Baba almost always made one or more attempts at evading the party, and was especially difficult to settle in any room prepared for him.

At Ranchi, the party arrived at the house with bag and baggage, and everyone began at once settling themselves. In the midst of this confusion

¹ Map Reference H/6.

Chattî Baba behaved like a child unwilling to go to bed, weeping a little, turning about, wandering hither and thither, deaf to the pleas of those sent to coax him into a simple little room that Baba had selected for him. This went on for two hours, until, apparently tired of further resistance, he at last reluctantly, and a little sullenly, like an unruly child, allowed himself to be shown to his room.

In Ranchi the usual routine was continued, but in spite of the efforts of Baba to make Chattî Baba feel at home, he seemed restless, and declared that great troubles lay upon him. Baba, who is all too rarely communicative about his masts, told the mandali one day in Ranchi that there was no equal to Chattî Baba in the whole world, and that he was inestimable for the help he gave him in his work.

The moods of this great man were extraordinary, and would fluctuate from a sunny expansiveness to a truculent attitude, without apparently much provocation. He was like a child, quick to change for a very little thing, but he had a bewitching enchantment about him that made him loved by all. The other important masts have all had their charm, and some sort of disposition that made them attractive, but there has been no one who has so unanimously commanded the affection of others. In this way Chattî Baba was unique, and today, years after he has been separated from Baba, the mandali, and Baba himself, often recall with delight his little ways, and especially the lightness and captivating spell of his laugh. Baba has since explained that Chattî Baba was a perfect jamali mast, with a few traits of a jalali, and was a very high mast of the sixth plane.

From Ranchi, then, since Chattî Baba was manifestly ill at ease there, one would have thought him happy to return to Meherabad, since, from his remarks, it seemed as if the place itself made him unhappy. This, however, was not so, as the description of the difficulties in getting him back to Meherabad will show. This mood of misery must, therefore, have been related to his spiritual work, work that was obviously associated with his contact with Baba. On the return journey to Meherabad, there was little difficulty in taking Chattî Baba and his fellow masts of the Ranchi ashram to the railway station, although this entailed a bus journey of some sixty miles. The station itself was unimportant, and lay on the main line between Calcutta and Bombay. The combined operations of finding accommodation in the dark, and of loading the personnel and the *disjecta membra* of luggage, had to be completed within twenty minutes, the scheduled halt of the train. To make confusion worse confounded, the incalculable

Chattî Baba refused to board the train, and sat on the platform, his back to the train, obstinate and tearful, his sheet thrown over his head. Various members of the mandali tried, and tried again, separately and in unison, to bring Chattî Baba to the compartment, but every plea was met by a more set refusal. At the end of twenty minutes, which, to us, had seemed but a pause between two breaths, the guard's whistle rang in our ears, and his green light waved to and fro in the crowded darkness at the tail of the platform. The train, with creeping and majestic acceleration, began to move out of the station, and at a lightning conference, Baidul, Kotwal, and I, decided to leave our baggage with the rest of the party, and remain with Chattî Baba. When our gaze turned from the dwindling crimson disc of the train's rear lamp to poor Chattî Baba, we found him still hunched on the platform, his sheet thrown over his head. He was weeping unaffectedly like a child, who can only express his misery and despair in this way. One felt as if a stone lay somewhere between one's heart and the pit of one's stomach, for the sight of this veteran come to such a pass moved all three of us to an acute sense of his misery.

Baidul and Kaka, who have probably done more mast work than any others, believe that they are only able to bring masts with them if Baba gives them the "key". This key they hold to be a sort of unseen compulsion that obliges the mast to come with them, even against his inclinations. Perhaps the key was not then with us, or the lock for the time being out of order, for we had to resort to despicable devices to bring Chattî Baba with us. I nevertheless believe that, in spite of Chattî Baba's anxiety to evade us, we were justified in our persistence, because it would have been feeble and unkind to have left this dear old man on a railway platform, at least 900 miles from his home.

The following day, after having sat in the same position on the platform throughout the night, he again refused to board the next train, and we only succeeded in getting him into a compartment by persuading a policeman to chivy him into it, not by physical unkindness, but by the liberal use of the customary constable's bluster. This, however, was far from the end of the episode, for we had unhappily chosen one of those drowsy trains that meander across the endless Indian landscape, and stop at every station for anything from fifteen minutes to two hours. Throughout that day, at every station, and from time to time when the train was moving more than usually slowly, Chattî Baba pushed his way to one or other of the doors, and tried to get out. Baidul sat guard at one door, and I at the other, and we had to face not only the resentment of Chattî Baba, but also the disapproval of other

passengers, who thought our restrictions on Chattî Baba a breach of his rights of liberty.

This tedious journey lasted three days, though on each successive day Chattî Baba became a little easier to manage, and was occasionally in a happy mood. Our moods responded more or less to his, and we felt gay and thankful when he was happy, in spite of the filth and fatigue of our bodies. Poor Kotwal developed acute dysentery on the second day, and because of our preoccupation with Chattî Baba we were not able to offer him either much sympathy, or much help. In spite of this, he bore the pain and weakness with a stoical patience. The tattered party, faces grimy with sweat, dust, and unshaven stubble, reached the haven of Meherabad on the fourth day, and Chattî Baha, like all these masts who seem indifferent to sleep and food, was by far the freshest of all.

For the next three months Chattî Baba stayed at Meherabad, and daily baths were carried out with greater quantities of water than ever. It was at this period that he began to pour earth over his head before being bathed, and it was always difficult to persuade him to come to the bathroom; but once there, he would sit chuckling and gurgling happily while bucket after bucket of water was poured over him, for during this period he was bathed with about 200 buckets of water every day! At this period also, he developed a voracious and insatiable appetite, and however much food was given him—and this was no mean quantity in those plentiful days before ration cards—he repeatedly asked for more, and repeatedly complained that he was not getting enough to eat.

At the beginning of November 1940, Baba set out on a series of journeys, going first to Ceylon, and thence to various cities in India. In order to spare the reader the indigestible fare of place-names and dates, these are not given in much detail in this chapter; but in the small map of India in the right lower corner of the large map at the end of the book, the reader may acquaint himself with the sequence and dates of the various places of stay. On all these journeys Chattî Baba accompanied Baba and his party, up till the time that he returned to Negapatam in September 1941.

In Ceylon, the group stayed first for a few days in the shady pleasure of a coconut plantation, and Chattî Baba, who used ordinarily to be bathed every day by Baba, said that, as Baba had brought much trouble upon him, he would now bathe Baba. And so for about a week, Chattî Baba actually bathed Baba every day with ten or twelve buckets of water.

A short while later, the whole group moved to a house on the mountain

slopes of a tea estate in the hills round Kandy¹, and for some strange reason, Chattî Baba's mood now became quixotic and labile. One afternoon, without any apparent provocation, he flew into a rage such as no one had ever seen before, broke every pane of glass in his room, threw everything out of it, and began beating the ground with a broom. Baba was sent for, but Chattî Baba locked himself in his room and shouted out that he was feeling unwell, telling Baba to go away.

But, like a passing thunder-shower, his mood soon cleared to his usual sunny joviality, and in the evening, when Baba brought him his supper, the door was thrown wide open, and Chattî Baba laughed in his gentle way.

Perhaps, like his strange, critical explosion in Meherabad at the time of the crumbling of France, Chattî Baba was again feeling the pulse of the suffering world, for he would often cry out, "Save them; Oh save them".

Another time, he said, "I am very poor, whatever I have is with my big brother". This remark was taken as referring to Baba, whom he always spoke of as his big brother.

From this time forth, although he was docile and accommodating most of the time, and followed Baba wherever he was taken without much resistance, he seems occasionally to have felt that the time for his release was drawing closer. In Calicut², he used often to say, "I won't stay, I must go. I am almost drowned, I must go". And then these moods would pass, and he would be as charming and loving as ever, and seemingly happy to carry on.

On the journey from Calicut to Jaipur³, the party had to change trains at Madras, and Chattî Baba had a further transient attack of non-cooperation, and took it into his head to sit on the platform close to the engine, whence no one could dislodge him. The engine driver and his fireman, intrigued at the sight of so many of the mandali doing their best to get Chattî Baba onto the train, climbed down from their cab, and came and added their persuasion. This seemed to turn the scales of Chattî Baba's mood and he was coaxed, with their help, into a compartment.

In the house at Jaipur, Chattî Baba used to sit all night long, naked to the waist, in the open courtyard under the brilliant stars of the bitter January nights. Those of us sleeping upstairs under the warmth of three or four blankets would hear him laughing, engaging in occasional soliloquies, and often muttering loudly "*Thanda hai*."

¹ Not on large map ; an agreeable hill town in the centre of Ceylon.

² Map Reference D/12.

³ Map Reference D/5.

thanda hai" (It's cold, it's cold). Although he had a room of his own, and as much bedding as he could possibly need, he preferred to sit night after night in the bitter January weather, naked to the waist. Like most masts, he slept very little, and his body was capable of withstanding all sorts of physical hardships and neglect, and yet remained in a robust and vigorous condition.

One day in Jaipur he spoke again of Baba (whom, as I have already mentioned, he usually called his big brother), and said, "My big brother still has a lot of work to do in the world, but I haven't the strength to do such work myself".

In Quetta¹, where the weather was still colder, he used to pour icy water on his bedding, and sit on it. One day, there was such a monstrous hail-storm that the hail-stones took three or four days to melt, and on the night following the storm, Chattî Baba sat stripped to the waist on the hail, from four until seven in the morning. That same day he said, "There will be so great a calamity in the world that no one can imagine it; even brother will kill brother, and there will be great tribulation. Then all the world will think of my big brother (Baba); at that time he will draw aside the veil, and all will pay obeisance to him." He often used to cry aloud "*Allah hu Akbar, Allah hu Akbar*," and one day, when Baba was away for a few days, he made a plaintive utterance that perhaps indicated how he shared in some way Baba's spiritual burden, for he said, "Baba is coming back, and then there will be more trouble for me".

When the time came to leave Quetta, Baba and the major part of the group went by bus, and Chattî Baba was sent with the rest of the group by train. At Laksar, a junction, he became recalcitrant, and reverted to his old habit of refusing to board the train. One of the party found two policemen, and slipping four annas quietly into their hands, asked them to brow-beat Chattî Baba, and by threats and invective get him into a compartment. Chattî Baba complied with their orders, and although it seemed impossible that he could have seen the tip given so unostentatiously to the policemen, he rebuked the constables, saying, " Oh you fellows, for the sake of four annas you give me trouble".

In the next phase, at Dehra Dun², it seemed as if he and Baba were doing some strange, inner work, for during a period of twenty-one days Baba fasted, and during the fast he continued to bathe Chattî Baba each day.

¹ Map Reference A/3.

² Map Reference E/3.

Baba also gave orders for the windows in Chattî Baba's room to be pasted over with paper, and for two days Chattî Baba also refused food, saying, "He (Baba) doesn't eat, so I won't". He also exclaimed one day, "Now the way is blocked, I can't go".

A month or so later in Ajmer¹, the next port of call, Krishna—whose special job was to look after Chattî Baba, and whose work there was made exceptionally difficult by very bad quarters and a very trying climate—became one day so exasperated that he felt like leaving. Chattî Baba then chided him gently, and said, "You want to leave, don't you, but what's the good of it; all the world is in Baba's power, so where will you go to? Serve him now, he is the Ocean, because, one day, when lots of people throng to see him, you may never get the opportunity of meeting him; so take your chance now."

From these days onwards Chattî Baba seemed to feel more than ever the call to go back to his home environment, for both in Ajmer, and a few weeks later in Meherabad, he repeatedly expressed a desire to leave.

The climax, however, was postponed, until Baba and his group were at Panchgani² in September 1941, and it was here that some inner crisis brought about a break in the intimate contact between Baba and Chattî Baba. One day Chattî Baba was very angry indeed, and walked away towards the bare hill tops that surrounded the house. He exclaimed to those who pursued him that he must now go away.

After much persuasion he agreed to remain another week, but on the evening of the eighth day he walked away three miles along the road that leads down the long hill to Wai³. Some of the mandali followed him in a taxi, and decoyed him into it by promising him to take him at once to Negapatam. They drove him first down to Wai, and then up the long hill road back to Panchgani. Baba, who was then in seclusion, came out to see him, but Chattî Baba refused to get out of the car, wept aloud, and told Baba he was very, very tired, and that it was time for him to go. Baba then gave him food in the car, feeding him with his own hands, while Baidul and Krishna hastily packed their bedding-rolls to go at once to Negapatam.

And so, at last, after nearly two years of intimate contact, came the parting of the ways, and as the mantle of dust raised by the vanishing car sank by the roadside, a grey veil of melancholy closed about the hearts of those watching Chattî Baba's departure, for this old man, whom all had come

¹ Map Reference D/5.

² Map Reference C/9.

³ Map Reference C/9.

to love so dearly, had left them. They felt, as Baba most have felt infinitely more deeply than they, that someone irreplaceable had gone out of their lives*.

*Note: For dates and other details of Chattî Baba's life with Baba, and also of three contacts in Negapatam since he left Panchgani. see the supplement under Negapatam.



Karim Baba on the Calcutta pavement after his return from Meherabad, August, 1940. Note the long-finger nail showing on the one exposed finger, the skeins of wire round his neck, and the pieces of old rag and wire round his ankles.

Karim Baba

*" In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes."*

William Blake (1757 to 1827)

The memory of this great majzoob-like, jalali mast of the sixth plane will, perhaps, never leave the minds of those who saw him, for the face and eyes of Karîm Baba radiated such a plenitude of fire and glory that, in his presence, even a phlegmatic man felt deeply stirred. This is not a picturesque exaggeration, and, amongst the mandali, Karîm Baba was named "the tiger man", because he really possessed the power of provoking a mood of admiration mixed with fear; and it is a pity that his portrait does not bring out this quality. Karîm Baba jerked his head at the moment of exposure, and despite attempts at touching up, the final reproduction does not reveal the immeasurable splendour of his glance—although, perhaps, no photograph could really do justice to this startling quality of his.

Karîm Baba had all the attributes of a complete jalali mast, and he had also a few traits of an ittefâqi, such as chain-smoking, and wearing pieces of iron here and there on his body. Baba first contacted him in June 1940, in Calcutta¹. He sat on the pavement with his back against a wall, was clad in the filthiest of clothes, and was surrounded by old tins, rags, and a medley of debris. Entwined about his throat were tangled skeins of fine, steel wire, and about his ankles, toes, and wrists, were tag ends of old rags. His finger nails were long, and his hair and beard were thick, black, dirty, and matted. Despite these strange and sordid accessories, and the filth of his body, his superb face, and his eyes that shone like burnished swords, made one forget everything else. At that time, it was said that Karîm Baba had been sitting on this section of pavement for six years, and had remained there, exposed to sun, rain, and wind, throughout that time. On this occasion Baba fed him, gave him cigarettes, and contacted him four or five times, and he also explained that Karîm Baba was the spiritual chargeman of Calcutta.

Early in July of the same year, Baba and his group moved for three

¹ Map Reference I/7.

weeks to Ranchi¹ on the granite plateau of central Bihar, about 200 miles north-west of Calcutta.

At Ranchi, a small mast ashram was established, which is described elsewhere in this volume, and a day or two after Baba and his party had settled into their quarters, Kaka was despatched to Calcutta, with instructions to bring Karîm Baba back to Ranchi.

Kaka, who had accompanied Baba a few weeks previously to Calcutta, when Karîm Baba had been contacted for the first time, knew only too well the magnitude of his task, and had no illusions about the intractable nature of the man whom he had to beguile into forsaking an environment, and a manner of life, tenaciously clung to for the past six years.

Both Kaka and Baidul, who have done more mast work for Baba than any others, believe that they can only succeed in securing such a great mast because Baba gives them, for the time being, a key with which to achieve their object. It is as if they became, temporarily, a plenipotentiary bearing credentials from their master, and through them the mast feels the coercion of a spiritual force that draws him, often against his will, to Baba.

As soon as Kaka reached Calcutta, he left his bags at a hotel, and set about his task. Except for a brief laugh, Karîm Baba made no response to Kaka's first attempt to cozen him into coming away with him, and Kaka, therefore, went off for a while, and purchased a new *kafni** and lungi. He had already spun the main threads of his web by enlisting the help of two Muslims from an adjacent restaurant, and had arranged for a victoria cab to be standing in the street close by. These victorias are relics of the days before taxis were known, and in Bombay and Calcutta they serve as substitutes for tongas, jatkas, ekkas, and all the odd kinds of horse-drawn public conveyance that one finds in the rest of India.

When Kaka returned with the kafni and lungi, he first set out to persuade Karîm Baba to stand up and have his filthy old clothes replaced by the new ones. To Kaka's astonished satisfaction, Karîm Baba at once stood up, and without uttering a word, allowed himself to be reclad in the open street.

Now Karîm Baba was a renowned figure in Calcutta, and though he was perhaps not known to the small coterie of rich, whose horizon is bounded by their office, club, and house, he was greatly esteemed by the poor and middle-class masses of Calcutta. It was natural, therefore, that Kaka's

¹ Map Reference H/6.

* Note for westerners: A kafni is a long tunic reaching almost to the ankles. See the picture of Mohammed in this chapter; he is wearing a kaftni.

activities should attract attention, and by the time Karîm Baba stood on the pavement, resplendent and regal in new kafni and lungi, there was a crowd of perhaps a hundred people watching the proceedings. Kaka, already sufficiently uncertain of the fickle temper of Karîm Baba, now began to hope, very earnestly indeed, that this crowd would remain in a good mood. Such masts are held in very great respect, and are believed to hold the material and spiritual welfare of a place in their grasp, and the inhabitants are inclined to view their removal as a threat to the prosperity of their home town. Fortunately, however, the crowd remained in a mood of inquisitiveness and astonishment only, for they could hardly believe their eyes that Karîm Baba, who had sat on that one stretch of pavement for six years, was now being taken away by an utter stranger.

The next step was to encroach sufficiently upon the consciousness of Karîm Baba to persuade him to sit in the victoria. At first, he sat only on the step of the carriage, his feet resting on the ground, but little by little he was beguiled into drawing his bulky body into the cab itself, though, even then, he remained squatting on the floor, refusing to sit properly on the shiny black cushions beside Kaka. For practical purposes this was good enough for Kaka, and with this priceless treasure at his feet, and the two Muslim assistants in the cab beside him, he ordered the coachman to hasten to the station.

At the station, Kaka was able to find a small third class compartment suited to his needs, and after sending one of his Muslim assistants to settle the hotel bill and bring his bags and bedding, he dismissed his two helpers, and settled into the carriage with Karîm Baba. Up till this time, Karîm Baba had complied with all Kaka's wishes, and had not, so far, uttered a single word. A few moments before the train was due to leave, Karîm Baba suddenly made a terse utterance, saying only, "*Tikat nikal gaya aur gari chut gai*" (the ticket is taken and the train has started). Kaka felt these words to have had a double significance, and that though the outer and apparent reference was to the journey that was about to start, the inner and real meaning was that he (Karîm Baba), must now go to Baba, who would give him a spiritual "push."

Not long after the train started, Karîm Baba became very restless, and once or twice began to lift one leg out of the window, as if he wished to leave the compartment. He said nothing, remaining silent, as was his wont and Kaka was puzzled by this abrupt change in his behaviour. The incident that followed, which I propose to relate as it occurred, may possibly

upset the fastidious reader, but is so singular that the picture of Karîm Baba would be incomplete if it were omitted.

Kaka, at first puzzled by this fidgety behaviour of Karîm Baba, suddenly suspected that he might want to go to the toilet, and so took him there. Karîm Baba at once eased himself, and then picked out three or four coins of one and two annas, and an odd copper piece, from his ordure, washed them thoroughly under the tap, tossed them in his mouth, and swallowed them. It was found later that Karîm Baba would scrutinize his stool each day, and that at intervals of three or four days he would pass a few coins in this way, and would repeat this extraordinary manoeuvre of washing and swallowing them.

To those who have heard tales of anguished mothers rushing their children to hospital when they swallow sixpenny bits, this addiction to a regular diet of coins—a kind of cyclic numismophagy, where the same coins were used over and over again—may come as a revelation of the impunity with which a mast may defy the conventions of health and hygiene. One, therefore, who finds such behaviour incompatible with his ideas of how a spiritually advanced man ought to behave, should again read Baba's explanation, in Chapter One, of the indifference of these God-intoxicated souls to dirt, and to the things of the world in general.

In these days, when the teachings of Freud and other depth psychologists have become sufficiently widely known, a man of intelligence will not deny that, although he may present a prim facade to the world, and even to his own conscious mind, he is, whether he likes it or not, impelled eventually by shamefully primitive urges. The average man tries to veil his basic impulses from his conscious mind and from the world; but a mast, the well-springs of whose being are intoxicated by Divine Love, who cares for no one and nothing, and who knows the world to be a passing dream, makes no bones about concealing his actions. The average man dresses decently, and pretends to forget that his mind is seething with primitive urges, and that his body has functions that are humiliating—and what he calls euphemistically self-respect is, for the most part, merely vanity. A mast is utterly without vanity, and like a child, he allows his body to function in its own way, remaining himself consummately indifferent to it. Nor is he an eccentric exhibitionist, for his behaviour bears no relationship to the presence or absence of an audience. There are, it must be admitted, many corrupt adventurers in India who copy some outer characteristic of a saint or mast, with a view to commanding the respect or reverence of the masses, but the

width and depth of the Pacific separates these contemptible *Tartuffes* from the real masts and saints whose ways they ape.

In connection with this strange habit of Karîm Baba, we might appropriately remember the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye".

Writing as a westerner, I recall how the grotesque appearance and behaviour of many masts made it necessary to jettison a lot of junk in the way of old conceptions, and so, perhaps, the foregoing notes, which may have seemed a digression, may help to curb the antipathy of those to whom a mast is something new and strange.

So much then, for this unusual habit of Karîm Baba. Without further difficulty Kaka and he arrived at Ranchi, and all those who saw this "tiger man" on that day for the first time, were moved to congratulate Kaka on his achievement. Each one also perceived a measure of the tensile strength of the invisible cable that had drawn so great a mast inevitably to Baba's feet.

Baba now had with him two masts of the sixth plane; firstly, our greatly beloved Chattî Baba, and now this formidable addition of Karîm Baba. Thus, in Ranchi, and for a few weeks afterwards in Meherabad, some earlier words of Baba's were fulfilled, for he had once told his mandali that he would, one day, have two sixth plane saints living with him*.

In Ranchi, Karîm Baba was lodged in a special little room, and Baba would go several times each day to feed him, and sit alone with him. Karîm Baba was usually silent, but from time to time he would utter some short phrase with the sudden vigour of a lid blowing off a boiling kettle. In spite of the rarity of the spoken word, he used often to laugh and sing when Baba sat with him, and one would sometimes wake up at an odd, unknown hour in the dead of night, and hear him singing sweetly and gently to himself. It moved one strangely to hear so sweet a voice when one knew his external aspect to be so formidable, and one felt it to be a revelation of the radiance of his inner nature.

Unlike almost every other mast who has been brought to Baba, Karîm Baba was never bathed, although Baba fed him, and sat with him several times each day.

* There were, of course, two sixth plane masts in the Bangalore and Meherabad mast ashrams, viz. Chattî Baba and Phulwala (see Chapter Four), but Phulwala was not comparable with Karîm Baba. It was in Ranchi itself that Baba actually drew attention to his earlier words in this respect, which had been originally spoken (or rather dictated), to Pleader.

At the end of July, Baba and his party, after a brief visit to Calcutta, returned to Meherabad, and Karîm Baba was brought with the other inmates of the small mast ashram in Ranchi, and installed on the hill at Meherabad.

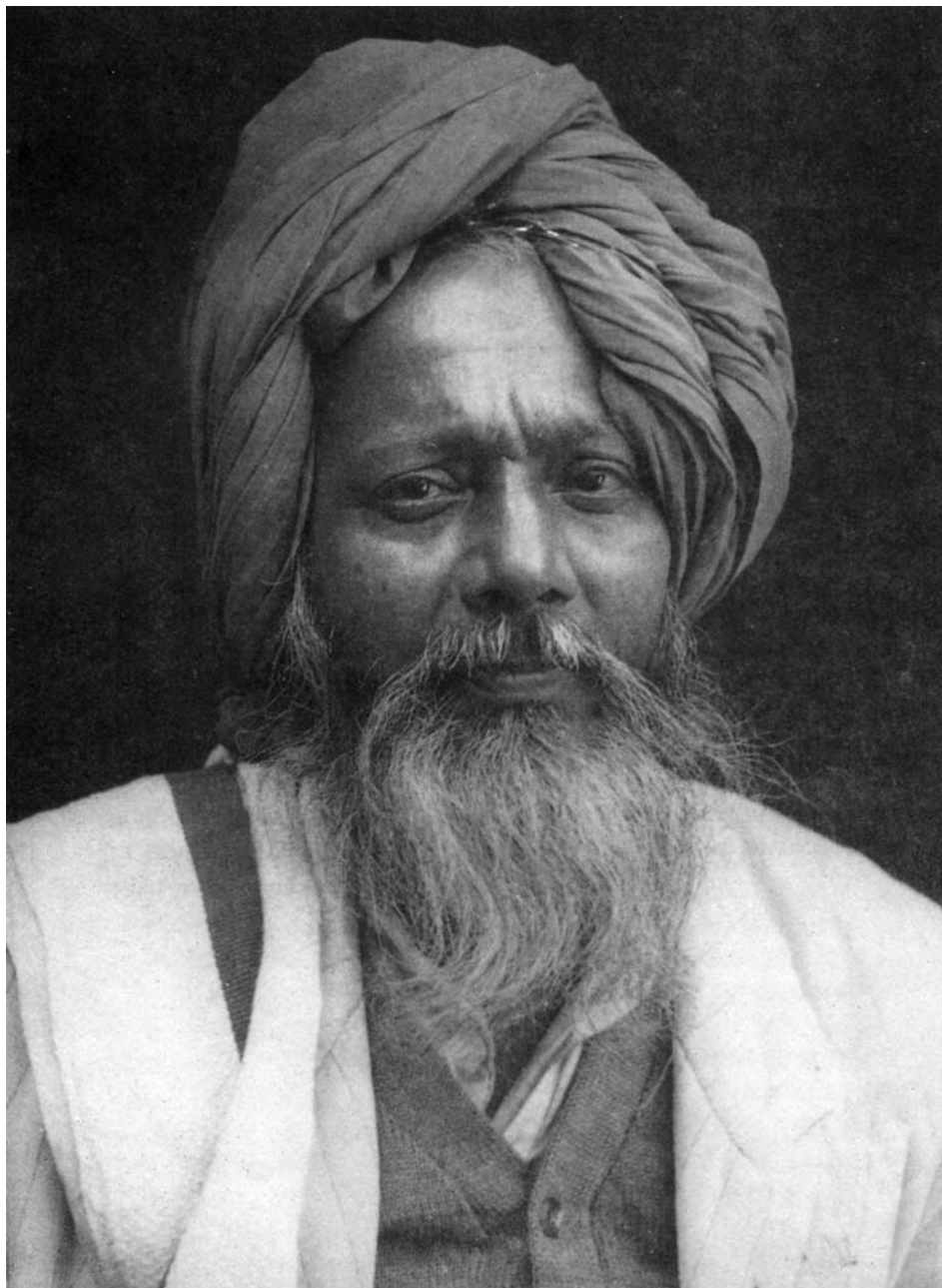
While in Ranchi, Baba wired to Pendu at Meherabad that he should erect a special cage for Karîm Baba, in the old hospital building on the hill; strong pieces of bamboo were used to make a lattice screen, through which food, water, and other essentials, could be easily passed to Karîm Baba. When he was brought to Meherabad, Karîm Baba was made comfortable in this cage. Baba occupied an adjacent room, and would go and sit with him many times each day, and attend personally to his needs.

After about two weeks, Baba explained that his work with Karîm Baba was over, and Kaka was called to take him back to Calcutta. He seemed strangely reluctant to go, and as the train drew closer and closer to Calcutta, Karîm Baba became progressively more restless and irritable, and twice gave Kaka a prodigious slap. In Calcutta, he was taken back to his stretch of pavement, and Kaka arranged for him to be regularly cared for. There was a doctor's dispensary close by, and the doctor agreed to feed him regularly twice a day, and was given sufficient money for this purpose. The photo of Karîm Baba was taken at this time, and it is because this portrait was taken after Karîm Baba's contact with Baba, that he is seen to be wearing so clean a kafni.

Thus ends the history of Baba's contacts with this diamond soul from the dirty Calcutta pavement, for since 1940, although Baba has been twice to Calcutta, both for feeding the poor and for the contact of advanced souls, he has never again met Karîm Baba.*

* Note: Those who wish to learn the exact dates of Baba's work with Karîm Baba, should refer to the supplement under Calcutta.

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Ali Shah at Mahabaleshwar, January 1947

Ali Shah

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

St. Matthew XVIII

Ali Shah at Mahabaleshwar, January 1947

This delightful fifth plane mast is interesting, not only because of his many contacts with Baba, but also because he is a perfect example of the jamali type of mast. Despite his passion for cigarettes, his blandness, his docility, and his superficially doll-like appearance, he possesses an utterly disarming and childlike quality of simplicity. This simplicity is no factitious pose, but is an intrinsic quality in him to which Baba has so often drawn our attention, that it is, perhaps, an outer measure of the stature of his inner grace.

Alî Shah came to Ahmadnagar¹ about 25 years ago, in the company of another mast, each carrying a small pitcher in their hands. On the day of their arrival they settled in the Sarjapura Dharmashala, and after a few days the other mast departed, and has never been seen since in Ahmadnagar. Alî Shah, who during these first few days had sat in a corner, now came and occupied a space in the centre of the dharmashala. After some months people began to respect him, and those who felt inclined would sing before him, while others of a more homely nature would see to his material needs.

In later years, Alî Shah became the especial pet of motor-bus drivers, since, when the running of public buses began to be a profitable line of business in Ahmadnagar, the terminus of many of the various services was a dusty, open space near the dharmashala where Alî Shah lived. The bus drivers and conductors in India are generally a rough crowd, for the exigencies of their service are such that they must sleep one night in one village, and the next night in another. Their conventions are not often those of a respectable householder, and their *métier* is, therefore, held in disrepute. But, if their morals are doubtful, their hearts are good, and many of the most boorish ruffians have a tender streak for saintly personalities. It was by such men that Alî Shah was particularly held in reverence,

¹ Map Reference D/8.

and in this context one recalls how the publicans and sinners consorted with Christ, but the priests plotted to have Him crucified.

I find myself at a loss to do full justice to Alî Shah, because, like the stories of all placid people, there is so little to tell. He loves, best of all, to be in a room, to sit on a chair if he can, and to smoke, smoke, and smoke, all day long. His gestures are perfectly those of a jamali mast; he makes odd signs in the air, on the ground, or on his thigh, as if he were writing something in imaginary letters, but in an indistinct and abbreviated way. He mumbles a little to himself, and if asked a question he first pauses for a few seconds, as if considering his reply, and then, to your chagrin, he repeats your question word for word, as if it were merely rhetorical, not needing an answer. His voice is gentle, soft, and kind, and he breaks into a quiet smile as he speaks, though the purport of his words is lost to ordinary mortals. His favourite phrase is to repeat mutations of the moods and tenses of the verb *bolna* (to speak), and runs something like this: "*Bolta tha, bolneko laga, bold wuh ke....*" This might mean anything, but its approximate translation is, "He was speaking, he began to speak, he actually spoke.... "

I remember him once standing in front of Baba in Mahabaleshwar, and saying, "*Bolenge, bolenge, lekin kab bolenge malum nahin*" (he will speak, he will speak, but when he will speak I don't know). Perhaps these words referred to the breaking of Baba's silence, but like the *obiter dicta* of most masts, they might be interpreted in almost any way.

In view of Baba's reticence about the precise work that he does with masts, it is, naturally, out of the question to speculate about the reasons why Baba has so often called Alî Shah to him, but he obviously finds him useful, since, between the first contact in 1943 and the end of July 1947, he has called Alî Shah on twenty different occasions.

I can recall once remarking to Baba how tired he looked after emerging from a session with Alî Shah, and Baba then explained that he had to work extra hard with him because of his sleepy and sluggish temperament. On the credit side, however, Alî Shah's perennial mansuetude is probably a help, for he is easily pleased, and Baba has often explained that, in order to achieve the purposes of his work, he has first to get his mast into the best possible mood.

Alî Shah gives the impression of being useful to Baba as a first line reserve mast when there is urgent spiritual work to be done. He lives in Ahmadnagar, where so many of Baba's disciples also live, and so is easy to get at; he is never difficult, and never refuses to come to Baba; and as long

as he gets a quiet room and plenty of cigarettes, he seems content to be anywhere.

Perhaps the most interesting occasion of all the twenty contacts was the period of Baba's seclusion on Angiras Rishi Hill¹, a forest-clad mountain in one of the wildest parts of the Central Provinces, about a hundred miles south of Raipur. Imagine a verdant forest cloaking the harsh contours of a broken mountainous tract, and in the curving vales, brooks and rivulets babbling over the stones to join the sacred Mahanadi, whose source lies only a few miles away.

In the days of old, it is said, four great rishis passed their lives in these lonely forests, and in the scattered hamlets that lie between the hills, the tales of these great saints are still handed down from one generation to another. The four rishis were known as Angiras Rishi, Shringi Rishi, Muchkunda Rishi, and Kunmag Rishi.

Jal Kerawala, to whom Baba had entrusted the selection and preparation of a suitable place for his seclusion, chose the hill connected with Angiras Rishi. He gave orders for a hut to be built on its summit, had the rough track to the foot of the hill made passable for cars, arranged for men to bring water, milk, and vegetables, up the hill, and, in short, saw to all the details of making Baba's seclusion smooth and easy.

Baba and his men came to this wild hilltop on the last day of October 1945, and for four days Baba spent most of the day sitting alone with Alî Shah, in a hut which had been prepared for the mast on the lower slopes of the hill. Thereafter, Alî Shah was sent back to Ahmadnagar, and for the final week Baba continued his silent work alone, in his special hut on the summit of the hill.

On one of these latter days Baba emerged, after having sat for many hours in complete seclusion, his face more drawn and weary than Adi ever remembered having seen it, and said that a gigantic disaster would overwhelm the world that would wipe out three-quarters of mankind. Adi was deeply stirred, not only by the anguish on Baba's face, but also because he spontaneously dictated these words immediately on emerging from his seclusion, as if the work done during that seclusion had been specifically related to the world passion of which he spoke.

Another unusual period of seclusion that Alî Shah shared with Baba. was on one of the great fortresses seized by Shivaji from the Moghuls. As the traveller from the south approaches to within forty miles of Poona, the

¹ Map Reference F/8.

road rises to a small pass, and then swings 800 feet down to the arable, dark brown fields on either bank of the Nira river. From this pass, the northern horizon is broken by the long, irregular crests of Purandhar and Wazirgarh, twin fortresses, of which Purandhar is the higher, its summit lying 4,500 feet above sea level.

In March 1947, Baba declared that he wished to go into seclusion in a place connected with Shivaji, and for various practical reasons, Purandhar¹ was chosen as the most suitable. Alî Shah was brought from Ahmadnagar, and was with Baba there for eight days. This was in mid-April, when the sun, by inveterate observance, burns in an azure sky from sunrise until sunset; but through some whim of the gods, a ferocious cyclone surged in from the Arabian Sea, and struck the west coast of India with an unusual violence. The fortress of Purandhar was caught in the skirts of this storm, its summit was lost in mists, and its couloirs scoured by torrents of muddy water.

After eight days on this gale swept hill, Baba moved south to Satara² for five days, taking Alî Shah with him, and one day, for several hours, Baba sat alone within the walls of the ruined fortress of Ajinkya Tara, that rises steeply behind the town. Satara, like Purandhar, has many links with the life of Shivaji, and only eight miles away, Swami Ram Das, a Sadguru, and the spiritual mentor of Shivaji, took samadhi on the hill fortress of Sajangarh.

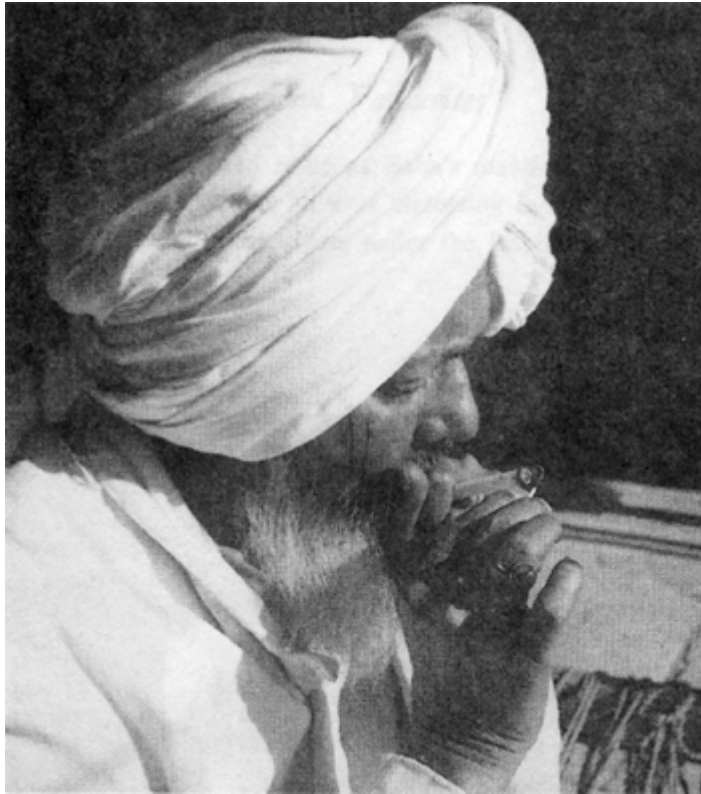
These, then, are but two of the score of contacts between Alî Shah and Baba, and those with a predilection for dates should refer to the supplement under Ahmadnagar for a list of all the different contacts.

At the time of writing (September 1947), Alî Shah, on instructions from Baba, is settled at Meherabad, and there is no doubt that in recent months he has become progressively more normal in behaviour. He still combines the moods and tenses of the verb bolna in the oddest ways, but he now quite often speaks sanely and clearly, asks pertinent questions, gives clear answers, and makes shrewd comments on people and things. He has a special room of his own, and despite his manifest change in behaviour, he is generally so quiet that one barely realizes his presence. In this, he is, of course, a striking contrast to Mohammed, whose absurd yet discerning banter, from the first light of dawn until the sun sinks beyond the western hills, is a constant advertisement that he, Mohammed, is very much alive.

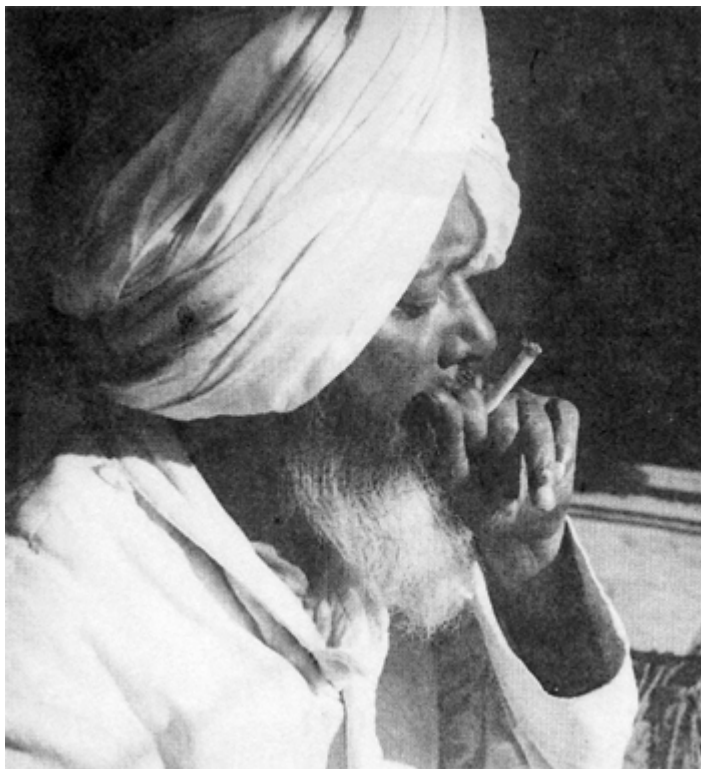
And so these two great masts, with whom Baba has done so much work,

1 Map Reference C/9.

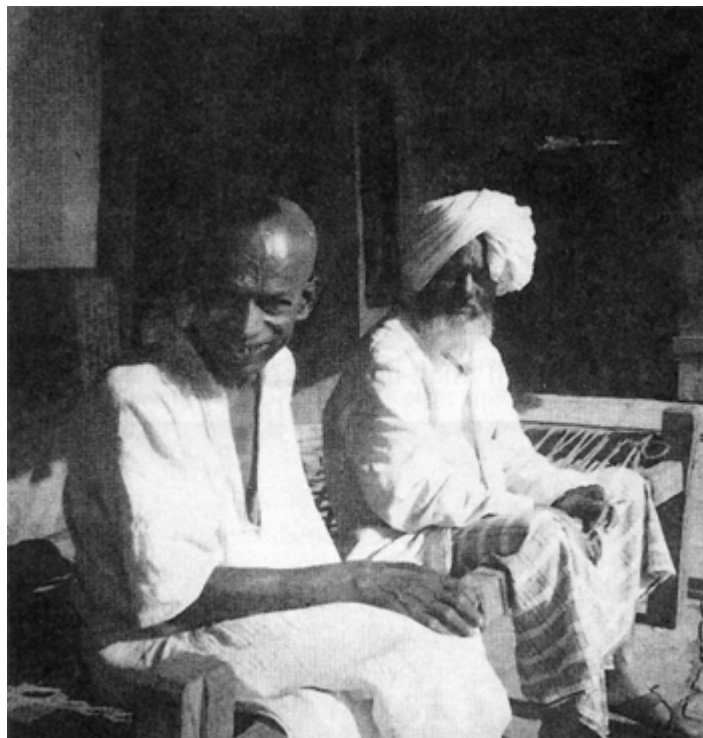
2 Map Reference C/9.



Ali Shah lights a new cigarette



He enjoys the first puff



Two favourites at Meherabad, Mohammed amused at being photographed, and Ali Shah scowls quizzically at Mohammed. Note the inevitable cigarette in Ali Shah's hand. September 1947

and who have, perhaps, shared some of Baba's manifold burdens, are now together at Meherabad, and take an ever increasing interest in its daily life, and in those who live and work there, under the inspiration of Baba's love and guidance.