

The Latest News

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THE first six chapters of this book, the supplement, and the map, were planned in such a way that they present a complete account of the work of Meher Baba with advanced souls, sadhus, and the poor, up to the closing of the Satara Mast Ashram in mid-July 1947. This final chapter covers the period from mid-July 1947 until 7th March, 1948.

For a consecutive and complete account of the cavalcade of events since July 1947, the reader is referred to the last pages of this chapter, which give a summary of each contact, and of each tour. I propose, in the pages that follow, to be deliberately peripatetic both in time and space, and pick out for detailed description a few samples of Baba's work that are probably of most general interest.

To begin with, a brief note about Châchâ. The valedictory phrases in Chapter Two uttered a premonition of the likelihood of further contacts between Baba and this great seventh plane majzoob, and this has been borne out by events, for Baba went to Ajmer in mid-October and contacted Châchâ in his hovel near the shrine of Khwaja Saheb.

From Ajmer, Baba turned south to Baroda, where took place a contact of such provocative interest that it deserves to be described in detail. To those around Baba it has always been a topic of conjecture as to why one who is spiritually perfect, should pursue with a tireless determination others less advanced than himself. And more still, why, in the course of this work, he should exhibit such a tolerance with the caprices of these wayfarers on the Path. We do, of course, possess Baba's explanation of his patience with these souls, for he has told us that he must pander to their whims in order to get them into the right mood for his work. But what the work itself is we do not know, except that the demonstrable diligence of Baba is, in a sense, a measure of the importance he attaches to his work with these strange people. The following encounter is, therefore, an amusing illustration of how a mast may behave, and of how Baba puts up with this behaviour. Chambu Shah is a fifth plane mast, sometimes salik-like, sometimes majzoob-like. He lives in Motiwada, a part of Baroda city. Baba had contacted him for the first time in September 1947, on an earlier visit to

Baroda, but it was this second visit in October that was so interesting. Chambu Shah is fat, with full cheeks and a cheerful face, and his appearance suggests untidiness rather than dirtiness. He potters in and out of bawdy-houses, where he gossips with *filles de joie*. He is given to salacious banter, but his persiflage, if considered honestly, is a piercing commentary on the tragicomedy of human frailty; and his personal chastity is unchallenged, for he is held in the greatest reverence by those whose avocation reveals to them more, perhaps, of human weakness than any other profession.

At the outset, on 22nd October, Chambu Shah asked Baba for tea and cigarettes, and when these had been procured and given him, he demanded a lungi and a shirt. These too were bought and given to him. Chambu Shah then removed his own clothes, and handing them to Baba, told him to put them on. This Baba did later the same day. Finally Chambu Shah told Baba to come back the next morning at 5.0 a.m.

The next morning, at 5.0 a.m. promptly, Baba and his men arrived at the house. Chambu Shah was then inside the house, and the door was locked, but in reply to some battering on the door, he shouted through the window that Baba should wait on the verandah. And so for the best part of an hour Baba and his men tarried outside the door, until that tireless servant, dawn, swept the ashes of the night from the sky. During this period of waiting Baba's men did not sit in silence or idleness, but persistently reminded Chambu Shah that he had told them to come at five o'clock, and that it was now well past that hour. Finally, the landlord of the house (Chambu Shah lived in this man's house), persuaded Chambu Shah to allow the door to be opened, and Baba entered the room, and sat with the mast for a while.

As soon as this contact was concluded, Chambu Shah told Baba to come back again at 2.0 p.m. And so at 2.0 p.m. Baba came again, and sat with Chambu Shah as before. So far, so good—and so far, nothing perhaps very extraordinary, when we remember that this history concerns the conduct of a God-intoxicated soul.

But now we find a reversal of custom, for it is generally Baba who tirelessly pursues the mast, while the mast strives—as often as not—to evade contact with Baba. Here, however, we find Chambu Shah insisting that Baba should come back to him again and again, for immediately after the contact on the afternoon of 23rd October, Chambu Shah told Baba to come to him again the next morning at 5.0 a.m. Nor was this the last of it, for when Baba went the next morning, he was told to come again at 2.0 p.m. And nor was *this* the last of it, for at 2.0 p.m., after contact, Baba was

instructed to come at five the following morning, and bring with him a *bandi** and a coat. And so a bandi was purchased, and a coat belonging to one of Baba's men was made ready, and Baba presented these clothes to Chambu Shah the next morning. After contact, as the reader will now guess, Baba was told to come back again at 2.0 p.m.!

5.0 a.m. and 2.0 p.m.; 5.0 a.m. and 2.0 p.m.—would these reiterated and unchanging invitations never cease? Baba had seen Chambu Shah first on the afternoon of 22nd October, and for three days he had come faithfully twice each day to Chambu Shah at the times specified. Baidul was therefore ordered to protest to Chambu Shah that the "Saheb" (i.e. Baba) must now leave Baroda; but Chambu Shah, after listening to Baidul's explanation, was obdurate, and insisted that Baba should return to him at 2.0 p.m.

At 2.0 p.m., however—this was now the 25th—the final scene was played, for immediately after this contact Baba directed Eruch to enter Chambu Shah's room, and tell the mast that the work was finished, and that Baba (not, of course, mentioning his name, but referring to him as the Saheb) must now leave Baroda, as he had other work to do. Chambu Shah replied, "Give my greetings to Saheb, tell him the work is finished, and ask him to give my greetings to the ladies". At the same time, he handed Eruch the bandi, shirt, and coat, and several packets of cigarettes and matches that had been given to him by Baba, and unwinding a dirty turban from his head, gave that to Eruch also. In connection with these clothes, he said to Eruch. "Give the turban, the matches, and the cigarettes to Saheb, and return the coat, bandi, and shirt to whomsoever they belong", and finally added, "The whole world is finished".

The instructions concerning the clothes were scrupulously carried out and the bandi and shirt were returned to the shopkeeper from whom they had been purchased. Those interested in such transactions may be amused to learn that half the original cost of these two garments was refunded by the merchant when they were returned to him. In another part of this volume mention has been made of an explanation by Baba that a mast's clothes, and the medley of things he keeps by him, have some inner significance. It is probable, therefore, that these sartorial exchanges between Chambu Shah and Baba had some spiritual meaning of

* *Note for westerners:* A bandi (rhymes with grundy) is a short cotton coat—a hybrid between a waistcoat and a coat.

which we know nothing. The desire of Chambu Shah for repeated contacts with Baba must, unfortunately, remain an enigma to us.

A few weeks after going to Pimpalgaon in September, Baba had explained that he wished to sit in seclusion upon a hill. The pros and cons of various hills were discussed, with the result that a little hill known as Tembi, that stands but the third part of a mile behind Baba's centre at Pimpalgaon, was selected. Its two virtues were, firstly, that it was close to Baba's centre at Pimpalgaon; and secondly, that it was so narrow and so steep that it was seldom visited by strangers or local shepherds.

The summit of Tembi was so small that there was room, and only just room, for a hut ten feet by twelve feet to be set foursquare upon it. Since it was Baba's desire that two huts should be put up, a second was therefore planted upon a shoulder of the same hill, perhaps fifty feet below the summit.

On 5th December, Alî Shah, the great jamali mast, was brought to Pimpalgaon, and at sunset was carried up the hill and made comfortable in the lower hut. About fifteen minutes later, with the western sky a tracery of golden cirrus, and the distant hills as blue as sapphire, Baba made his way up the hill. It was a memorable evening, strange and timeless. For twelve days Baba remained on this hill, and each day from 6.0 a.m. until 9.0 a.m. he sat with Alî Shah in the lower hut. Apart from these three hours with Alî Shah, Baba spent the greater part of the day in the hut upon the summit of the hill.

Early in January 1948, a new phase began. A circular letter was sent to hundreds of Baba's devotees informing them of a programme of work, and inviting them to carry out certain instructions for a period of twenty-five days, from 1st to 25th February. The programme was divided into three parts: the first, work with masts at Pimpalgaon; the second, contact with 4,000 sadhus at Allahabad; and the third, a distribution of grain and cloth to 4,000 poor of Ahmadnagar district.

The first phase began at Pimpalgaon on 18th January, when Alî Shah was brought there and stayed for ten days. Baba sat with him daily for three hours. After Alî Shah left, one or two others were brought for Baba's contact, and these men of secondary importance are described briefly at the end of the chapter.

On 7th February, Baba left Pimpalgaon for Allahabad to complete the second phase of his plan. In the supplement, a brief description is given of the great Kumbh Mela at Allahabad in December 1941, when Baba contacted over 7,000 sadhus. This great fair is held once every twelve years, but at

half-time, that is to say every six years, a fair known as the "Ardha Kumbh Mela" (half Kumbh Mela) takes place. Baba's visit to Allahabad in February 1948 coincided with one of the great days of the Ardha Kumbh Mela—the day known as Amavasia (the day of the new moon)—when the sadhus bathe at the confluence of the two sacred rivers, the Jumna and the Ganges. His visit also took place only three days before the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed in these hallowed waters.

On 9th February, at dawn, Baba and his men went to the fair grounds. Estimates of the multitude varied from a minimum of half a million to a maximum of two million, and it was said that there were about 30,000 sadhus present on that day. This fair is principally a convocation of sadhus of divers sects. The fair ground is dissected into divisions known as *akhadas*. and each akhada is reserved for a different sect of sadhus.

Baba, as usual, did not allow those with him to witness his labour of personal contact, so that a description of the work itself is out of the question. He ordered some of his men to accompany him to the entrance of each akhada, and then entered the akhada, contacted the sadhus therein, and emerged to pass on to the next akhada. In this way, beginning at 7.0 a.m., he contacted 4,000 sadhus by 10.0 a.m., completing the entire work in three hours. After the work was over, he told those with him that, amongst all those he had contacted, there were but seven advanced souls.

Having completed this great work at Allahabad, he entrained for Bombay. On this itinerary to and from Allahabad Baba passed through Bombay both on the way up to Allahabad, and again on the return journey to Pimpalgaon; and on both these occasions he contacted masts in Bombay. Since 1922 Baba has not contacted advanced souls in this great city, and so these two days, 7th February and 11th February 1948, may be engraved in rubrics as dates of importance, particularly perhaps to the many disciples of Baba who live in Bombay. On 7th February, the most interesting contact was with one member of a family—and a large family at that—all of whom, with one exception, are God-intoxicated! This family consists of two brothers and seven sisters who live in a certain house near the shrine of Maqduum Shah, in Mahim (a part of Bombay). One other brother, the eldest of the family, lives apart, and conforms to current conventions of normality. This eldest brother sees to the needs of his nine brothers and sisters, all of whom are masts (and mastanis). The seven mastani sisters are apparently able to prepare meals for themselves and for their two mast brothers, although they never leave the house. All the seven

sisters and the two brothers are *madar-zad* masts, i.e., masts from birth, and they are, therefore, indistinguishable from ordinary mad people. One of these brothers has shut himself in a room which he allows no one to enter, though his sisters put a plate of food outside his door each day. The other, known as Alî Akbar Baba, lives on the verandah. Alî Akbar Baba is about thirty years old, although he looks twice that age. Like most masts, he is utterly insouciant, and utterly filthy, and until some years ago he was so aggressive that he was kept in chains. People bring him sweetmeats, and he throws them in the dirt and then eats them—plastered with dirt. Baba sat with Alî Akbar Baba for about five minutes, and gave him a cigarette. It is said that the father of this strange family was a saint.

The other contact of interest on 7th February was with a high mast in Colaba, near the southern extremity of the island of Bombay. This mast is known as Jâffar Shah Mast, or more commonly, as Pathân Baba*. He speaks mostly in Persian. He is a mast of the fifth plane, whom Baba describes as seventy-five per cent *salik*-like and twenty-five per cent *majzoob*-like. His choice of habitation is an illustration of the preference of masts for an environment that would be repugnant to the average man, for he lives under the tattered remains of a tent immediately behind a public convenience; and this convenience is situated in a municipal park for conservancy carts.

Pathân Baba is an old man, with long white hair and beard, and he has an agreeable personality. Each morning he anoints his hands and feet with butter and flour, and then wraps his hands and feet in pieces of white cloth. It appears that, many years ago, he was a great drinker of raw spirits, which he would consume by the glassful, without, it is said, showing any signs of intoxication. A few weeks before this contact with Baba in Bombay, Baidul had tried to bring Pathân Baba to Pimpalgaon. Pathân Baba, however, refused to come, saying, "I am always near him (Baba), but let him be near me now". Baba sat with Pathân Baba twice on 7th February, and gave him eleven rupees.

The contact on 11th February was undoubtedly the most important of all in Bombay. After a long journey by train, particularly in India, the first desire of the average traveller is to wipe away the dross of nights and days of locomotion by a bath, a meal, and a few hours of rest. With Baba, however, work is ever the first consideration, and as soon as the train

* This mast should not be confused with Pathân Mast of Bombay, contacted by Kaka in 1942, who is mentioned in Chapter Five and in the supplement.

from Allahabad reached Victoria Terminus on the early morning of 11th February, Baba went at once to contact Umar Baba, the spiritual chargeman of Bombay.

Umar Baba is a man of ferocious aspect, a sixth plane mast, in a complete majzoob-like state, and is at times so violent that people fear to come near him. In spite of this, he is very greatly respected throughout Bombay, and very widely known. He is past middle age, has long black hair and a long white beard, and is often to be seen pacing to and fro with a furious look on his face.

Up to a few years ago, the spiritual chargeman of Bombay was Tippu Baba, who died in 1944. In those days Umar Baba was usually to be found near that part of the Bombay docks known colloquially as *Bhau ka Dhakka*. Certainly every Indian, and possibly also many outside India, will remember that in April 1944, Bombay was shaken by a ghastly explosion that destroyed much of Bombay docks, a large section of the adjacent city, and an uncounted number of lives. The two ships whose explosion caused all this devastation lay in a wharf at Bhau ka Dhakka, not far from where Umar Baba used to live. A few days before the explosion, it is said, Umar Baba told a certain tea-shop proprietor, who used often to give him tea, that he should move away from the dock area at once, or he would most certainly be killed. This man followed Umar Baba's advice. Umar Baba also told many others to go away, assuring them that, unless they did so, they would die. On the day before the explosion, Umar Baba left Bhau ka Dhakka, and came to the *Juna Qabristan* (the old graveyard) on Grant Road. After the cataclysm of the explosion, those who had heard and followed Umar Baba's exhortation to move away from the docks began to disseminate his prophetic warning, so that the renown of this great mast was spread far and wide.

Not long after this explosion, Tippu Baba passed away, and was buried in the Juna Qabristan. Umar Baba then went and lived in this Juna Qabristan in the heart of the city, and since the death of Tippu Baba he has been the spiritual chargeman of Bombay. When Baba entered the graveyard early on the morning of 11th February, Umar Baba was still apparently asleep, and his mujawar was manifestly fast asleep by his side. As soon as Baba approached to within a few yards of Umar Baba, the mast arose, and one of Baba's men shook the mujawar by the shoulder, asking him why he slept when his guru was awake. The mujawar got up at once, and was asked to persuade Umar Baba to sit with

Baba for contact. This was done, and Baba sat with Umar Baba for a short while. Baba, who was extremely happy at this successful issue to his work, gave the mujawar an ample reward.

After the turn of the new year, in January 1948, if one entered the store room next to the main hall at Meherabad, one's passage was almost barred by a pile of bundles amassed in the centre of the floor. Each evening too, under the glare of the petromax lamp, one would listen to descriptions by certain of the mandali of villages in Ahmadnagar district that had been visited, and would hear how tickets were being distributed in these villages to thousands of poor. These activities and discussions were the outer and visible signs of a complex plan for the distribution by Baba of cloth and grain to 4,000 poor of Ahmadnagar district, and for the washing of their feet. This was the third and final phase of Baba's plan.

This final phase of the plan demanded much organization, and Baba's men were therefore grateful for the help of several friends who, by reason of their eminence in political life and their vivid interest in social and rural problems, were able to select focal points of economic distress. These friends had also command over bands of social workers in each village. These cheerful and willing workers—many of them mere youngsters—were responsible for the ultimate selection of those who should be called for Baba's contact, and to each one of their choice they gave a numbered ticket with the word "Prasad"* printed upon it. Baba's name was kept a close secret.

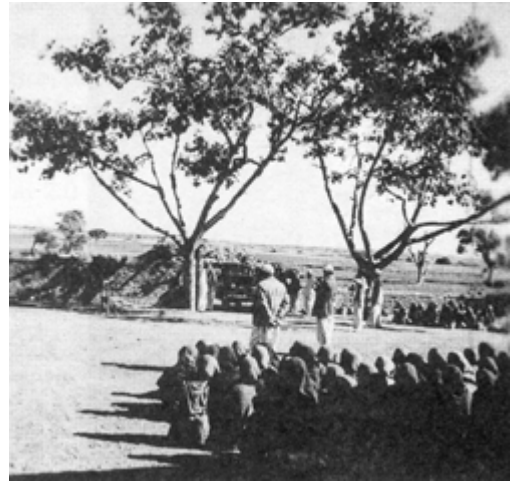
The plan in its entirety was far too intricate to be described in detail, for the 4,000 poor were spread amongst five widely dispersed centres. There was, inevitably, an abundant measure of complex preparation, and much work was done, with much faith and love. Perhaps the best way to convey something of the feeling of this great work of Baba is to try to take the reader in imagination to Kotul, the first place of distribution, on 16th February.

From Pimpalgaon, on clear evenings after rain, there is a confusion of mountains visible against the north-western horizon. One of these is Kalsubai, the highest point of the Western Ghats, and the others are consort peaks that cluster round their queen, as if to pay homage to her. Nestling

** Note for westerners : Prasad is a word that can have such fine nuances of interpretation in the minds of different people that it is difficult to define it to everyone's satisfaction. It is, broadly, something that is given to others by a saintly personality, or something that has been dedicated first to God, and then distributed at large in God's name. In either case, the prasad is a gift that anyone—be he king or beggar—feels it a privilege to receive. The actual material or monetary value of prasad is of no real importance, since the essence of it is that it is a vehicle for a spiritual and unseen gift of grace and weal that goes with it.*



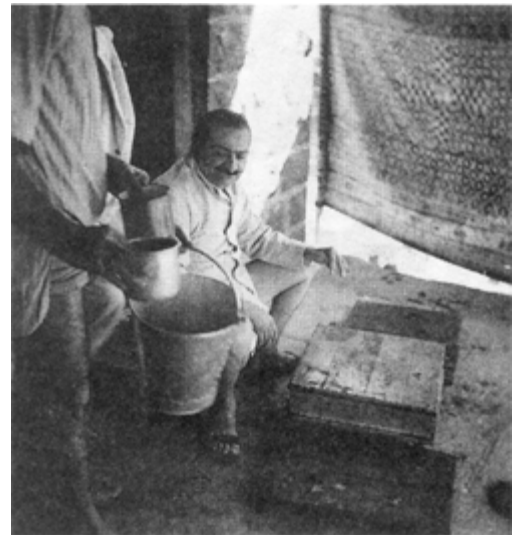
Preperation: the pile of bundles in the store-room at Meherabad. The sacks on the right give an idea of the scale.



A corner of the crowd gathered in the school compound at Parner for the *prasad*. Baba's car enters the gate.



Water being carried for washing the feet. A photo at Kharda on 20th February.



Baba ready to start his work of washing the feet. Note the low stool in front of him on which each man and woman will stand.



Baba at work in Kharda: a woman is standing on the stool while her feet are washed.



Baba at Kharda where over 1,000 people were contacted.



Two of the mandali wiping the feet; during the distribution at Kharda



Two men leaving, clasping the bundles they have just received from Baba.

near the feet of these mountains lies the village of Kotul. It is a savage place, populated by the poorest sort of peasants, who eke out a pittance from the soil. Their main crop is rice, but their economic plight is so desperate that for several months each year they subsist on edible wild roots. Since Baba planned to begin his work early in the morning, those who were to share in

the programme arose at 2.0 a.m., and sped through the cool and fragrant night over eighty miles of abominable roads, and reached Kotul shortly after dawn.

On that auspicious day the centre of interest at Kotul was the Dak Bungalow. Imagine a small, square house surrounded by giant mango trees that gave ample shade. Soon after sunrise, the compound began to echo with the gossip of clusters of poor country folk, who were directed to sit in lines under the great trees, the men in one place and the women in another. This work of managing the crowd was carried out with conspicuous gentleness and efficiency by a band of spruce youngsters clad in white clothes and caps. Not far from the growing lines of men and women, one saw, half veiled in smoke and shadow, great vessels lying over fires, in which water was being warmed for the washing of the feet.

Shortly after 8.0 a.m. Baba arrived, and the day's work began. One by one, these peasants filed into a small bathroom, and were guided to stand on a low wooden stool. As each one paused for a moment on this stool, Baba poured a vessel of water over their feet, pouring the water with one hand, and passing his other hand in one gentle sweep over their feet. The identity of Baba was not revealed, so that no one knew who it was who thus washed their feet in utter humility. As the peasants went out their feet were dried with a towel, and this work was shared by different members of the mandali. As they filed out after having their feet washed and dried, each man or woman was invited to sit in a line and await the distribution of the bundles.

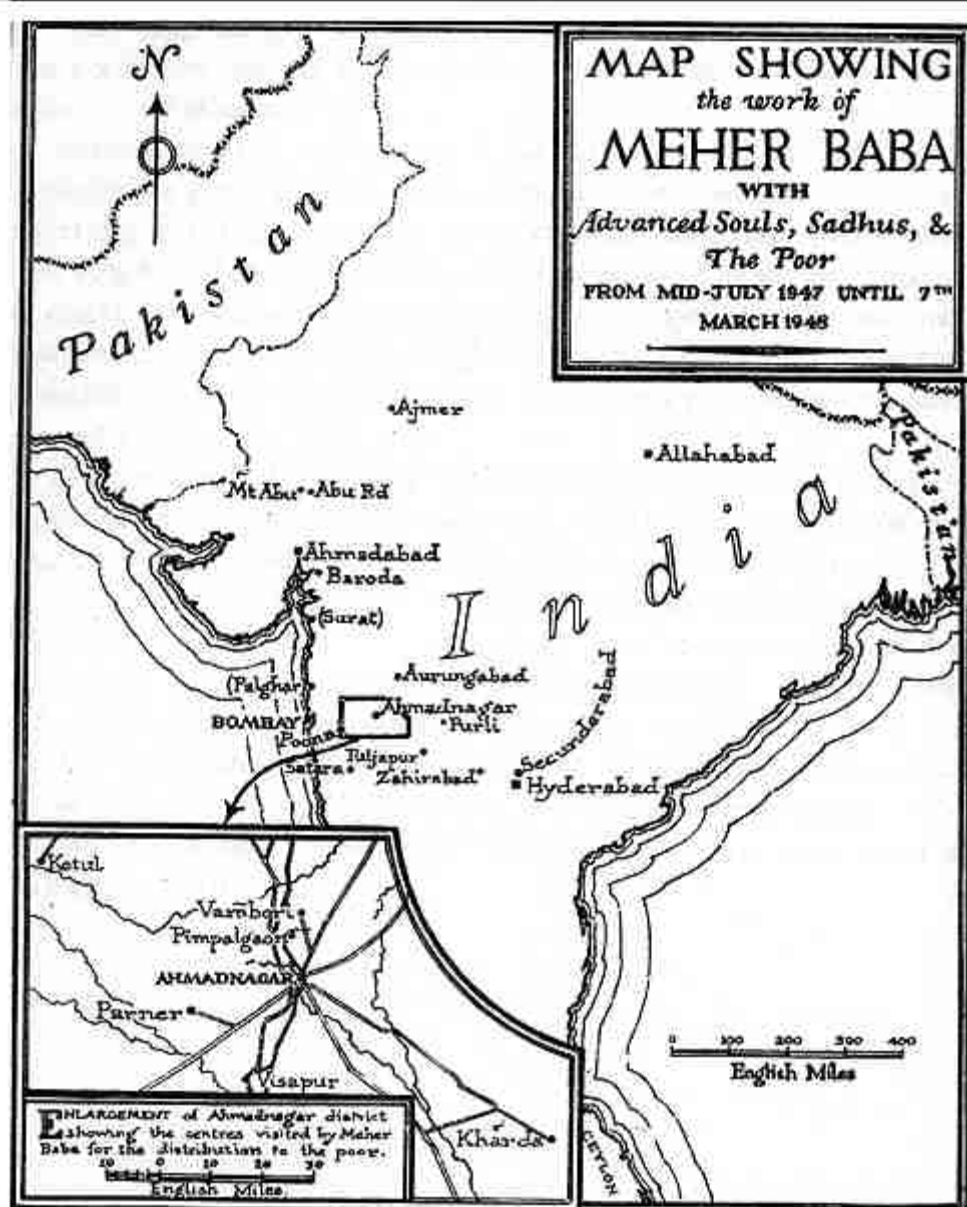
After Baba emerged from the bathroom, he went to the room where the bundles were stacked. The windows of this room were closed by screens of cloth, and the two doors on two adjacent sides of the room were joined one to the other by two curtains of dark blue cloth. These curtains made a narrow passage from door to door. Midway along this passage there was a gap in the continuity of the curtain on one side, so that a small recess was created, where Baba sat upon a mattress placed on the floor. About him on all sides were piles of bundles, each made up of eight pounds of jawar, bound snugly in a length of good white cloth.

This final aspect of Baba's work cannot be described because it was done in complete seclusion, and no one except the peasants themselves was allowed to observe what Baba did. It was to ensure an utter and absolute privacy that the curtains had been erected and the windows blocked up. One only knew that each peasant entered at one door, passed along this narrow corridor, was handed a bundle by Baba, and emerged from the door at the other end.

Standing near this further door as each one emerged, one had leisure to observe the plight of these poor people. I do not think there was one on that day whose garments were not in rags, and their faces were studies in the structure of the human skull. Patient eyes shone from deep sockets, and cheeks were hollowed by months and years of hunger. On that day, over a thousand men and women were blessed by the treasure of Baba's touch, and the burden of their poverty was lightened, if only for a short while, by a little grain and a little cloth.

This memorable day at Kotul was but a fragment of the entire work of distribution to the poor, and for the details of the other places visited by Baba, the reader is referred to the notes at the close of this chapter.

This great work of Baba does not close with the final words of this final chapter. That it is a great work in the literal sense, may be seen by the extensive proportions of this book and its supplement. But the mere words in this book convey nothing more than an occasional hint that the outer and tangible mould of Meher Baba's work with advanced souls, sadhus, and the poor, has an inner substantiality that is immeasurably greater. We may only bear witness to our belief in this, though we may never prove it to a sceptical world.



A map showing the places mentioned in this Summary

The Latest News

The following pages give a complete chronological summary of Meher Baba's work with advanced souls, sadhus, and the poor, from mid-July 1947 until 7th March 1948

<i>Date</i>	<i>Notes</i>
14th July 1947	The Satara Mast Ashram was closed, with the departure of Alî Shah.
(?10th) August 1947	Baba left Satara by car, to contact advanced souls in Hyderabad State. He visited Aurungabad, Purli, Tuljapur, Hyderabad, Secunderabad, and Zahirabad. See the notes that follow, for details.
11th August 1947	Contact with two masts in Aurungabad. In Aurungabad, on 11th August, Baba renewed contact with two very great masts; Mâi Bâp and Captain. The photo of Captain in the supplement was taken on this occasion. If the reader has been so discomfited by the thorny appearance of the supplement that he has, so far, given it a wide berth, I would urge him to turn back to the relevant pages, and read, under Aurungabad, the descriptions of Baba's first contacts with these two great masts. The early contacts with Mâi Bâp were particularly interesting. On this last contact on 11th August 1947, it was learnt that Mâi Bâp's real name is Mâbood Miân, though the name Mâi Bâp is still his most popular sobriquet.
12th August 1947	Contact with an advanced pilgrim in Purli. He is known as Tulsî Mahârâj. He is an old man who has sat in one place for a very long time.
12th August 1947	Contact with four men in Tuljapur. The first of these was an old man known as Bârati Mahârâj, a sincere seeker. The second was Garib Nath Maharaj, an old man said to be ninety-two years of age, the head of an ashram in Tuljapur. It appears that he has dwelt in this ashram ever since childhood. He is a seeker. The other two were of no special merit, and were known as Dandekar Baba—a moderate mast of the eighth type—and Brahmachârî, an old man who lives in a temple.
13th August 1947	Baba reached Hyderabad and contacted six masts there. Five of these contacts were with masts whom he had contacted

first during his stay in Hyderabad in 1945. Of these five old friends, the three most important were Ghulam Hussein, a very high, salik-like mast; Rajiah, a comic mast but a good one, who has a hole in his throat; and Mama Mast, an old man with a bushy white moustache who smokes cigars. The early contacts with these masts are fully described in the supplement under Hyderabad. The other two contacted on this day, whom Baba had originally contacted in 1945 also, were Pinjrâwâlâ Baba and Ashaq Miân. Pinjrâwâlâ Baba, alias Moeînuddîn Baba or Nanne Miân, is a good mast who lives in a kind of cage (*pinjra*). Ashaq Mian is a moderate mast who lives outside a certain mosque. One new soul was contacted on this visit to Hyderabad, a tall man in dirty clothes who wanders about the city and sits, when he feels inclined, under a certain tree. He is known as Murshid, and is a moderate mast.

13th August 1947	Baba visited Secunderabad and contacted one mast there known as Murshid. This same Murshid was also contacted first in 1945. He is a good mast who lives in a milkman's hut. There is a photo of Murshid in the supplement, that was actually taken at the time of this contact on 13th August.
14th August 1947	Baba visited Zahirabad, and contacted a mast there known as Mahbûb Saheb Mast. He is of no particular interest, except that he is said once to have been bitten by a cobra and survived. Since a bite from a cobra is almost invariably fatal, this, if true, is unusual—to say the least.
(? 10th) September 1947	Baba returned to his headquarters at Satara.
27th August 1947	Baba and his party left Satara by car, and returned to Meherabad.
(? 10th) September 1947	Baba and a small group of disciples left Meherabad for Pimpalgaon.
Mid-September 1947	Baba left Pimpalgaon for Surat, where many hundreds came to take his darshan. The description of this programme is outside the scope of this book, and we will, therefore, progress to an account of Baba's contacts with advanced

souls that immediately followed the conclusion of this programme.

20th September 1947 Baba left surat after the conclusion of the programme of darshan, and set forth on a brief tour of Gujerat and Rajputana for contact with advanced souls. He visited the following places—Baroda, Ahmadabad, Abu Road, Mount Abu, Abu Road (second visit), and then returned to Pimpalgaon. See the notes that follow for details of contacts on this tour.

21st September 1947 Baba arrived in in Baroda, where he contacted two masts, and one initiate pilgrim. The most interesting of the two masts was Chambu Shah. In the early pages of this chapter a very detailed description is given of Baba's subsequent contacts, in October, with this great fifth plane mast, only a month after this first contact. He needs, therefore, no further description here.

Saiyid Badruddîn Rafâî Shah, the other mast contacted on this visit, is an old man who for thirty-three years has remained in a room on an upper floor. He takes food only once a day, and at times, when in a majzoob-like state, he eats nothing for several days. He is a sixth plane mast, sometimes majzoob-like and sometimes salik-like, and he is the lineal descendant of a saint of olden times. An amusing peculiarity about him is that he is always fully dressed, and wears his stiff, red fez-cap even when he sleeps. He must be comfortable in spite of that, for he spends most of the day lying down, and sometimes refuses to sit up even for his food.

Bâdâmî Bâpu, sometimes known as Meher, is an initiate pilgrim. He is an old man who used to be in Government service, but he became so enamoured of the spiritual life that he left his job, and dedicated himself to the pursuit of Truth. He has many disciples.

22nd September 1947 Baba arrived in Ahmadabad, where he contacted four men, of whom one had been contacted twice previously in 1941, when Baba visited Ahmadabad in January and July of that year. This latter mast was Habsî Bâdshah, known also as Siddîq Bâdshah. As in 1941, he still lives in the house of

some people who look after him. He is a good mast. The other three were new contacts.

Barâshid Mastân chides people with hard words, and because of this contact with him was not very easy, and not entirely to Baba's satisfaction. He is now an old man, and he lives in the house of a retired railway servant known as Kâsim Master.

Jamâluddîn Baba has sat in a certain lane for five years. He is about fifty years old, and is a moderate mast. Baba gave him one rupee at the time of contact.

Baba Miân is a young man, a sincere seeker.

25th September 1947 After the conclusion of the contacts mentioned above, Baba left Ahmadabad and reached Abu Road on 25th September. Here, after renewing contact with the mast known as Khudâ Bakhsh Baba, whom he had originally contacted in 1941 (see the supplement for an account of this first meeting), Baba went to Mount Abu itself.

One of the reasons for visiting Mount Abu was that Baba might take a few days' rest in this agreeable hill station, after the strenuous days of his visit to Surat. Baba, however, who takes time by the forelock, and to whom contact with advanced souls seems in itself to be a source of great happiness and relaxation—particularly if the contact is satisfactory — spent more time on Mount Abu contacting advanced souls than in resting. His contacts are given below.

27th September 1947 Chawandî Mahârâj is a yogi at Dilwara, on Mount Abu. For twenty years he has remained in a place that is so attractive that one of the mandali with Baba expressed no surprise that Chawandî Mahârâj had remained there for so many years. He sits in front of a small grotto, and on either side are twin brooks of cold, crystal water that spring from mossy crevices in the rocks on each side of the grotto.

Matrâgîrî Mahârâj (Aghôrî Baba), lives at Oria, a little village to the west of Mount Abu, about seven miles away. He is conspicuous for eating anything, clean or dirty, that comes his way, and for this reason he has been given the

	name of Aghôrî (undiscriminating). He has dwelt for about forty years in a cave at Oria, and he is now an old man. He is an advanced yogi.
29th September 1947	<p>Some more contacts on Mount Abu on the last day of Baba's stay there: three souls were contacted, none of them of great interest spiritually. They were:</p> <p>(1) Gôkhale Mahârâj, an old man, a seeker, and a great wanderer, who has seen most of India. He was living in the Elephant Cave at the time of this contact with Baba. He is a fine singer of devotional songs.</p> <p>(2) Khâkî Baba is a sincere sadhu.</p> <p>(3) Brahmachârî Mahârâj is a seeker who lives in a cave near a lake on Mount Abu.</p>
29th September 1947	<p>Baba descended Mount Abu to Abu Road, where he contacted two new souls.</p> <p>Ganêsh Mastân is a middle-aged, moderate mast, who wears a sack, and lives under a certain tree about two miles from Abu Road station.</p> <p>Chhagan Dâs Mahârâj lives at the little village of Rishikesh, about three miles from Abu Road station. He is a jolly old man, a seeker.</p> <p>From Abu Road, Baba returned to his centre at Pimpalgaon.</p>
16th October 1947	Baba left Pimpalgaon and went by car to Bombay. From Bombay, he went by train to Ajmer, and began a tour for the contact of advanced souls. On this tour he visited Ajmer, Baroda, Ahmadabad, Baroda (second visit), and Palghar, and then returned to Pimpalgaon. The contacts in each place are given below. He reached Ajmer on the evening of 17th October.
19th and 20th October 1947	<p>On these two days, Baba contacted a number of masts in Ajmer.</p> <p>Bengâlî Baba is a seeker, an old man who has lived in a cemetery in Ajmer for the last forty years.</p> <p>Bashîr Miân is perhaps about thirty-five years old, and is a moderate mast in a majzoob-like state. If offered money, he</p>

gives it away to others. He is respected, and is fed by those who believe in him.

Yâr Mohammed Khân hails from Peshawar. He is elderly, and wears a garland round his neck—a garland not of flowers—but of old china, pieces of iron, and other metal fragments. He is a good mast of the ittefaqi type.

Chup Shah is a moderate mast who has sat near the shrine of Khwaja Saheb for about ten years.

Kâlî Kamblîwâlâ looks in his mid-forties, and is a seeker who roams about the lanes of Ajmer.

Sardâr Singh is a seeker.

Buddhî Mân is an old, old woman and a good mastani, who sits under a sack awning beneath a certain tree near Ajmer station. Several years ago, she used to be naked, and she still berates those who come near her. Baba was very happy to contact her.

Pathân Malang Baba is an old man who lives in a hut near Ghanta Ghat. He is of no special merit or interest.

Hathî Baba is a moderate mast who for twenty years has sat on a rubbish heap. Baba contacted this mast first in 1941.

Qabristânwâlâ (Qullar Shah). This, of course, is *the* Qabristânwâlâ, alias Socrates, the fifth plane mast, first contacted by Baba in Ajmer at the time of the mast ashram there in February 1939, and on many occasions after that. At this latest contact, he was found in a tiny mosque near his old mausoleum, and it seems that he now generally sleeps in this little mosque. The photo of him in Chapter Four was taken in this mosque at the time of this last contact.

Châchâ needs no introduction, for he is the great seventh plane majzoob of Ajmer. Baba sat with Châchâ for four hours in his hovel near the shrine of Khwaja Moeinuddin Chishti. On this occasion, Châchâ repeatedly asked Baba for water, and two *bhisties* (water-carriers) were engaged to keep up an ample supply there. He also lived up to his nickname by asking frequently for tea, and was also given food three times by Baba.

19th or 20th
October 1947

Eight poor people were contacted by Baba and were given one rupee each

21st October 1947	Baba departed from Ajmer, and reached Baroda the next morning at 4.0 a.m. In Baroda, he contacted three advanced souls and a number of poor; the details of these contacts are given below.
22nd October 1947	Baba renewed two old contacts in Baroda on this day. Firstly, Chambu Shah, whose initial contact with Baba took place on 21st September. These contacts with Chambu Shah during October, beginning on the 22nd and ending on the 25th, were repeated seven times. This plethora of contacts is so fully described in the main part of this chapter that further details would be redundant here. Saiyid Badruddîn Rafâi Shah was also contacted first a month earlier, on 21st September, and a note opposite this date in this summary describes him. At this second contact on 22nd October, Baba gave Badruddîn Baba his own coat, holding the coat for Badruddîn Baba while he slipped it on.
23rd October 1947	Two contacts on this day in Baroda. Chambu Shah was contacted at 5.0 a.m. and 2.0 p.m.; this needs no further comment! Nârayan Mastân is an old man, a seeker, who repeats constantly the words " <i>Sat bolo</i> " (speak the truth).
24th October 1947	Baba still in Baroda; Chambu Shah contacted, as usual, at 5.0 a.m. and 2.0 p.m.
25th October 1947	Baroda; Chambu Shah contacted twice this day, thus at last concluding the contacts with this great mast.
26th October 1947	In the morning, fourteen poor people of Baroda were contacted and given one rupee each by Baba. On the evening of the same day, sixteen more poor people were contacted and given one rupee each.
28th October 1947	Baba left Baroda for Ahmadabad. In Ahmadabad, he contacted four masts, renewing, in one case, an old contact. The latter was Siddîq Bâdshah who had been contacted on 22nd September 1947, and also twice in 1941. See the supplement under Ahmadabad for a brief description of this mast. The other two were new contacts.

Arab Shah is an old man who sits on a kind of platform on the public pavement, near the Parsi Dharmashala. Baba describes this mast as one of the most interesting he has ever seen. For an untold number of years Arab Shah has sat on this platform near the Parsi dharmashala, his entire body covered over with a piece of gunny cloth. No one has ever seen his face, and those who offer him food pass it to him under the mantle of gunny cloth. In addition to this, Arab Shah has always remained in a sitting posture; he remains sitting even when he sleeps; and just as no one has ever seen Arab Shah without his mantle of gunny cloth, so also none has ever seen him in any other position than sitting on this little platform. Baba contacted him by night, and gave him sweetmeats.

Majnûn Shah is an old man who has spent the last thirty years in a shrine.

Bundle Shah* wanders about the city with a bundle under his arm. He mutters to himself and smokes cheap cigars. He is a good mast.

After contacting these four masts, Baba and the men with him spent the night on the station platform. This is perhaps a trivial item, but it illustrates the voluntary hardships that Baba undergoes on these tours.

29th October 1947

Baba rose early and went again to visit Arab Shah on his little platform on the pavement (see note of 28th October above). At this contact, Baba gave Arab Shah some tea.

(? 29th) October 1947

Baba returned to Baroda, where he stayed in the Dak Bungalow. For his work in Baroda on this occasion, see the next item.

30th October 1947

Alî Shah, the mast described in Chapter Two as one of the five favourites, arrived in Baroda from Ahmadnagar. Baba had wired instructions for this fine old jamali mast to be brought to Baroda for special work there. He stayed with Baba in the Baroda Dak Bungalow until 2nd November,

* This mast should not be confused with Bundle Shah of Poona, mentioned in Chapter Five and the Supplement.

when he was sent back to Ahmadnagar. While in Baroda, Baba sat with Alî Shah twice each day for some hours. After leaving Baroda, Baba returned to Pimpalgaon, passing through Palghar on his way, although he contacted no advanced souls in this latter place. He reached Pimpalgaon again on 6th November.

- 5th December 1947 On the evening of this day, Baba walked up the hill known as Tembi, behind his centre at Pimpalgaon, and began an important period of seclusion. Two small huts of cement asbestos sheeting (with tiles on the roofs to make them cooler), had been erected on this hill—one on its summit, and the other on a lower shoulder of the same hill. Next to this lower hut, a tent was also pitched. Alî Shah, the Ahmadnagar mast described fully in Chapter Two, was brought to Baba on this hill, and stayed in the lower of the two huts. Each morning, beginning on 6th December, and ending on 17th December, Baba sat with Alî Shah in the lower hut from 6.0 a.m. to 9.0 a.m.
- 17th December 1947 Baba descended the hill from his seclusion at about 10.0 a.m., and returned to his centre at Pimpalgaon. During the next two days—18th and 19th December—Baba sat with Alî Shah alone in a room for three hours each day. In this way a total of fourteen days of work was completed with Alî Shah—twelve days on the hill, and two days at Pimpalgaon. Alî Shah was then sent back to Meherabad.
- 17th January 1948 On this day, Baba began a partial fast, taking only one meal a day, with tea twice. This fast continued until the morning of 26th February.
- 18th January 1948 Alî Shah was brought to Pimpalgaon again and stayed for ten days, from 18th to 27th January inclusive. Baba sat with this delightful mast alone in a room each day, from 7.0 a.m. to 10.0 a.m. On 27th January Alî Shah was given a bath by Baba, and was sent back to Meherabad on the morning of 28th January. Baba only bathes Alî Shah occasionally, in marked contrast to the prodigious daily baths that the great Chattî Baba used to have.

- 27th January 1948 Two men were brought from Poona for Baba's contact. One was a sanyasi of no particular interest, known as Desai. whose body was in a sorry mess from secondarily infected scabies. He was disinclined to stay, and so was sent back to Poona the next day. The other was a seeker. When he arrived, he was a pathetic sight; a thin, elderly man with a long growth of scanty grey hair on scalp and chin, a starveling expression of resignation on his thin face, and a general out-at-elbow look about him. He was a seeker, genuinely aspiring to things of the spirit, and he was literally indifferent as to whether he ever got food or not. I do not think he spoke one word during his few days at Pimpalgaon, and he would spend most of the day squatting in the sun. If spoken to, he merely smiled. On the day of his arrival at Pimpalgaon he was shaved and bathed by Baba and clad in new shirt and trousers. This so transformed his appearance that he looked an entirely different man. Baba sat with him each morning for about one hour, and for a few minutes each evening, and also fed him each day with his own hands. He was sent back to Poona on 3rd February.
- 30th January 1948 A madman was brought to Pimpalgaon from the streets of Ahmadnagar on the mistaken assumption that he was a mast. He was a quiet, goofy, agreeable young Muslim, whose body was alive with lice. As he sat on a chair under the shade of a tree while Baba shaved his head, various members of the mandali, taking their cues from Baba, asked him his name. At first he simply said that he was the nephew of Mehtâb Khân, but with a little more interrogation averred that his own name was Majîd Khân, and that he hailed from the Punjab. Baba bathed him, clad him in new shirt and trousers, and sent him back to Ahmadnagar the same day.
- 4th February 1948 On this day. Alî Shah was brought to Pimpalgaon, and Baba sat with him from 9.0 a.m. to 10.0 a.m. After contact, he was sent back to Meherabad.

7th February 1948

Baba departed from Pimpalgaon at dawn, and went by car to Bombay. The party reached Bombay in the afternoon, and Baba set out at once to contact masts. In the early pages of this chapter it was made clear that this was the first time that Baba had contacted masts in Bombay since 1922.

The first contacted was Alî Akbar Baba, a mâdar-zâd mast in Mahim. He is one of a large family, all of whom, except the eldest brother, are mâdar-zâd masts. This contact is described in full in the early pages of this chapter.

Pathân Baba was contacted next; he is the fifth plane mast in Colaba, who is fully described in the early pages of this chapter, so that he needs no further comment here.

The third and last mast contacted on this day was Billîwâlâ Baba. He is usually to be found on some waste land near the seashore, behind the church at Mount Mary in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay. His peculiarity is that he is always surrounded by cats—sometimes by a few cats, and sometimes by many. Billîwâlâ* Baba is a middle-aged Muslim with long hair, and is a moderate mast. Baba gave him one rupee at the time of contact. On the evening of this day, having completed these contacts in Bombay, Baba entrained for Allahabad, where he arrived late at night on 8th February.

9th February 1948

This was the great day of Baba's special work in Allahabad. In the early pages of this chapter a brief explanation has been given of the great Ardha Kumbh Mela that was in full swing when Baba reached Allahabad, and that this day, 9th February, being the day of the new moon, was of special significance. At dawn, Baba and his men went to the fair grounds, and at 7-0 a.m. Baba began his work of contacting sadhus. By 10.0 a.m. his work was complete—in these three hours he had contacted 4,000 sadhus. Although none of the mandali with Baba on that day was allowed to see him at work, it was understood that Baba touched the feet of every one of the 4,000 sadhus. This meant, inevitably, a tremendous physical strain.

* *Note for westerners: Billi means a cat, and hence the origin of this man's name.*

After the completion of this mighty work, Baba contacted four masts in Allahabad itself. These were : —

(1) Vishwânâth Baba, a sadhu, who is also a mast. He is elderly, and is noted for aping, with his voice, the sounds made by a *tabla* (drum) and a harmonium. He also sings well. He is a good mast.

(2) Shah Saheb, who looks perhaps fifty years old, roams about carrying a book under his arm, and has a pair of old spectacles perched on his nose. He does not look through the lenses of these spectacles, but peers over the tops of them. He makes gestures, and sometimes shouts out loud. He is a good mast

(3) Qamruddîn Mast hails from Agra, though he has been in Allahabad for many years now. He is naked except for a loin-cloth, and generally has dogs near him. He is a good mast.

(4) Sheikh Mardân came to Allahabad from Madras about eight years ago. He is stark naked, smokes hemp, and has a passion for tea. He is a moderate mast.

Following the contact with these 4,000 sadhus and four masts, Baba left Allahabad on the night of 9th February and arrived in Bombay early on the morning of 11th February.

11th February 1948

On the early morning of this day, Baba contacted four masts in Bombay. The most important was Umar Baba. a high sixth plane mast who is the spiritual chargeman of Bombay. This contact is fully described in the early pages of this chapter. Besides Umar Baba, three other masts of relatively minor interest were contacted. Their names were not recorded. The first was a good mast who has sat next to a fire station in Bhendi Bazar for many years. The second was a moderate mast who lives in a garden at Nagpada. The third was a moderate mast, who sits near a certain petrol pump. After these contacts in Bombay, Baba left for Pimpalgaon by car, arriving there in the middle of the afternoon.

15th February 1948

Baba left Pimpalgaon with his group and came to Ahmadnagar, where he stayed in the house of Rustom Jehangir Irani.

- 16th February 1948 On this day began the final phase of Baba's triple plan. This plan, which has been referred to in the early pages of this chapter, consisted of three parts. During the first period, beginning at Pimpalgaon on 17th January, Baba worked with Alî Shah, and with a seeker from Poona. Notes of these contacts are given in the earlier annotations of this summary. The second phase took place at Allahabad on 9th February, when Baba contacted 4,000 sadhus. The third and final phase was the distribution of grain and cloth to 4,000 poor of Ahmadnagar district, and the notes that immediately follow give a summarised account of the various places visited in the execution of this ultimate phase of the plan. There are two things to be borne in mind about all these places visited by Baba. These are, firstly, that tickets with the word "Prasad" printed on them were distributed several days in advance to the poor in each centre; and secondly that, on the day before Baba's visit, an advance party went to each centre to make everything ready for the work the following day. On 16th February Baba visited Kotul, a village beyond Sangamner, about eighty miles north-west of Ahmadnagar. Here, in the dak bungalow, he washed the feet of over a thousand men and women. He gave a bundle of cloth and grain (one and a half yards of white cloth* and eight pounds of jawar) to 1,010 people; and to thirty-seven people he gave one rupee each, and to two people two rupees each. The bundles were distributed by Baba in complete seclusion. The work began at about 8.0 a.m. and was completed by about 1.0 p.m. when Baba returned to Ahmadnagar. This visit to Kotul is described in greater detail in the early pages of this chapter.
- 18th February 1948 On this day Baba visited Parner, a large village about twenty-five miles west of Ahmadnagar, where he distributed grain and cloth to the poor. This substantial village lies in undulating country, and has a look of ancient greatness about it, as if it were once a place of considerable prosperity and importance. At one side of the village lies the school, consisting

* This cloth was 1 1/2 yards wide and 1 1/2 yards long, and was enough, therefore, to make a shirt.

of two long buildings built of local black stone. Being a school, it had a large compound encompassed by a solid wall, so that there was ample space, both in the school buildings and in the compound, for Baba's work.

On this day at Parner, Baba bathed the feet of more than 600 men and women. He gave a bundle of cloth and grain (one and a half yards of white cloth and eight pounds of jawar) to 606 people. To twenty-nine people he gave one rupee each; and one man was given two rupees. The bundles were distributed by Baba in complete seclusion. While waiting for the washing of feet, one of the crowd—an old man in rags —was overheard to say in English (pointing to Baba at work), "Just like Christ".

20th February 1948

On this day Baba visited Kharda, a remote village about seventy miles south-east of Ahmadnagar. It is a place of historical importance, for a battle was fought there between the forces of the Peshwas and a garrison of troops belonging to the Nizam of Hyderabad.

As in Parner, the bathing and distribution were carried out in the local school. On this day Baba washed the feet of over a thousand men and women. He gave bundles of cloth and grain to 1,010 people, notes of one rupee each to ninety-eight people, and notes of two rupees each to thirteen people. As before, the bundles were distributed by Baba in complete seclusion.

The photos in the earlier pages of this chapter of Baba washing the feet, were taken at Kharda.

22nd February 1948

During the war—the 1939-45 war—there was a military camp at Visapur, which lies by an irrigation lake about twenty-five miles south of Ahmadnagar. After the constitutional changes of 15th August, 1947, that involved such momentous and tragic migrations between India and Pakistan, many thousands of refugees were sheltered in this old camp at Visapur.

On 22nd February, Baba went to the Irrigation Bungalow at Visapur, where arrangements had been made for him to wash the feet of 1,000 refugees and give them each a bundle

of grain and cloth. Now, on all the other occasions, the identity of Baba had been kept a close secret, so that no one knew who washed their feet, and who gave them this prasad. On this occasion at Visapur, however, the news somehow reached the ears of the refugees that their feet were to be washed by the hands of a saint, and they refused to allow this, saying that they should wash *his* feet. As soon as Baba arrived at Visapur on the morning of 22nd February he was apprised of the attitude of the refugees, and he decided to abandon the programme. He gave, however, a contribution to the camp funds.

24th February 1948

On this day, at his centre at Pimpalgaon, Baba washed the feet of 840 men and women from the surrounding villages, and gave to each a bundle of cloth and grain. These bundles were distributed by Baba in strict seclusion.

One of those who came to receive prasad from Baba was a veteran who boasted of being 130 years old. He looked perhaps about eighty years of age, and the strain of his talk and the appearance of his body suggested that his claim was probably exaggerated. He is mentioned here, however, because he gave Baba his blessings! After finishing the distribution, Baba laughingly described how he had received this unexpected benediction, saying that for a long time he had been wanting someone to bless him.

26th February 1948

On the morning of this day, Baba broke the partial fast that he had begun on 17th January.

1st March 1948

During the afternoon of this day, Baba motored to Poona from Ahmadnagar. In Poona he contacted an advanced pilgrim known as Shâstrî Khêr. Shâstrî Khêr lives in the market in Poona City, where he eats the filthy remnants of food that have been thrown away. After contacting him, Baba returned to Ahmadnagar the same night.

7th March 1948

Because of the refusal of the refugees at Visapur to have their feet washed by Baba (see note above), arrangements were made to distribute the remaining bundles of cloth and grain in some other centre. Baba, therefore, decided to distribute

the balance of the bundles in a village known as Vambori, that lies about fifteen miles north of Ahmadnagar. He chose 7th March for this final programme. On this day, Baba washed the feet of nearly 600 men and women. He distributed bundles of cloth and grain to 583 people, gave one rupee each to fifty people, and two rupees each to one or two people. Thus, at Vambori, was concluded Baba's programme of distribution to the poor. This is, therefore, an appropriate place to give a final summary of the total numbers contacted in each of the five centres visited by Baba. In connection with these statistics it should be made clear that one-rupee notes were presented to many people who arrived at the places of distribution without any tickets, but who were so poor that Baba decided to give them one rupee each. The two-rupee notes were given to a few very late comers who, though they had tickets, had arrived too late to receive a bundle, the latter having all been given away to others before they arrived..

Kotul - 16th February

Number of people given bundles	1,010
“ “ “ “ Re. 1 each	37
“ “ “ “ Re. 2 each	2
	1,049

Parner – 18th February

Number of people given bundles	606
“ “ “ “ Re. 1 each	29
“ “ “ “ Re. 2 each	1
	636

Khorda – 20th February

Number of people given bundles	1,010
“ “ “ “ Re. 1 each	98
“ “ “ “ Re. 2 each	13
	1,121

Pimpalgaon – 24th February

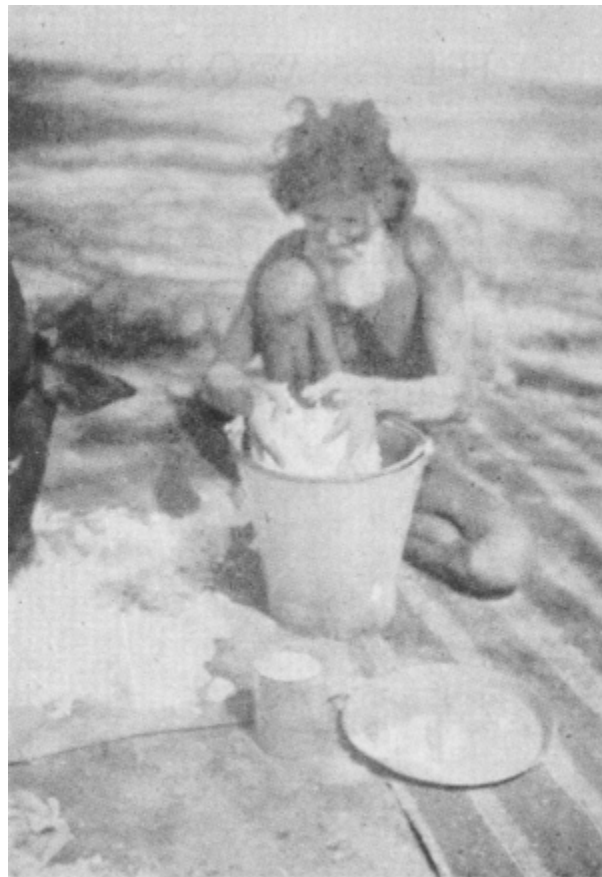
Number of people given bundles	840
	840

Vambori – 7th March

Number of people given bundles	583
“ “ “ “ Re. 1 each	50
“ “ “ “ Re. 2 each	1 (or 2)
	634 (or 635)

The totals, therefore, for all the five places are:-

Number of people given bundles	4,049
“ “ “ “ Re. 1 each	214
“ “ “ “ Re.21 each	17 (or 18)



Maharaj prepares feed for a cow.

THE WORK
of
MEHER BABA
with Advanced Souls, Sadhus,
the Mad and the Poor



15th March to 14th May 1948

ALTHOUGH the final chapter of *The Wayfarers* closed on 7th March 1948, it was made clear in that chapter that the work of Meher Baba with advanced souls, sadhus, and the poor, would continue as a matter of course. While *The Wayfarers* has been in the hands of the printers, new work has been done that could not, therefore, be set into the book itself; and so this pamphlet is a kind of epilogue to the main volume, and a token that much work lies ahead.

The central theme of these few pages is a journey of Meher Baba to the Himalaya. The word Himalaya means "The Abode of Snow"; and from the Indus at one end to the Brahmaputra at the other, this mightiest of the world's mountain ranges sweeps for 1,500 miles. About 500 miles from their northern end lies a massif of snow-covered giants that are supremely sacred to Hindu tradition, and from the melting snows of these summits arises a network of innumerable streams that join to make India's most sacred river, the Ganges.

The true source of the Ganges, or—to give the river her true name—Mother Ganga, lies above Gangotri. Here, from an ice cave 13,800 feet above sea level, this sacred river starts on a course of more than 1,500 miles to the Bay of Bengal, into which it falls by a network of estuaries. From its source in the green ice cavern above Gangotri, until it joins the Alaknanda at Devprayag about 120 miles downstream, the river is known as the Bhagirathi.

About half-way between the source of the Bhagirathi and this confluence at Devprayag lies the village of Uttar Kashi, famous as a centre for spiritual aspirants, yogis, and advanced souls. Uttar Kashi is the focal point of this pamphlet, for it was to this little village that Baba went in April 1948. Uttar Kashi is not high by Himalayan standards, for it lies less than 4,000 feet above sea level; but to get there the traveller must ride or walk along the stony track from Tehri Garhwal, a distance of some forty miles.

Now to walk forty miles in a rather remote Himalayan valley is an entirely different thing from walking the same distance along a straight and level road in open country. To begin with, one must consider the transport of baggage, for no wheeled traffic can move over these rough tracks, and every ounce must be carried on mules, ponies or men. Most travellers, however, find pack animals tiresome and unreliable, and the backbone of Himalayan

transport (except in Tibet, where the yak is used), is the back of the Nepalese or the Dhotiyal porter. These tough little men will carry up to sixty pounds over the roughest sort of country, and I have seen them walk barefoot on hard snow for several hours, without complaint.

It is quite impossible to put the Himalaya down in words; they must be seen to be believed. Whether you view these great giants from afar, when they seem like clouds on a summer's day; or whether, from some turn in the lonely, water-riven valleys at their very feet, you gaze in astonishment at their walls of glittering ice that are measured in tens of thousands of feet—however you see them, they are incredible and indescribable.

That is the romance of the Himalaya; but all Himalayan travel is not so stimulating to the imagination, and there are many valleys in the middle reaches between the great heights and the plains, that are merely hot, oppressive, and dull. The track from Tehri to Uttar Kashi is something between these extremes, and the road is interesting only where a turn in the valley reveals a new vista, or where the path draws close to the roaring waters of the Bhagirathi.

For an account of the aspirants and advanced souls contacted by Baba in Uttar Kashi itself, and for the log of his itinerary, the reader is referred to the summary. Besides this work in the Himalaya, it will be seen that much other work has been done, and that the trek to Uttar Kashi was only a part of an extensive journey that almost touched at the frontier of Eastern Pakistan. Finally, it will be observed that the summary opens with an account of more contacts in Bombay. It is obvious to many that Baba's contacts show phases of "regional concentration" at certain times. By this formidable expression I mean nothing more than this: that, at certain times, Baba goes again and again to a particular city or district and contacts masts and advanced souls there; often the same ones over and over again. Such concentration was obvious in Kashmir in 1943 and 1944, and in Hyderabad in 1945; and since the autumn of 1947 we find Baba focussing his attention on two new centres, namely, Bombay and Gujerat. It is impossible to say whether these phases of regional concentration are the results of convenience or whether, as many feel, they have a much deeper significance, because Baba is entirely reticent about the meaning of this strange work of his. My impression is that his work is either so personal that its nature and meaning are none of our business, or that the ins and outs of it are so intricate and obscure that even a detailed explanation would be quite beyond our grasp. Since, therefore, we cannot see behind the veil, we must rest content with a description of the veil itself—the mere record of the journeys and contacts—and so we shall proceed with the summary.

Summary of Contacts

From 15th March to 14th May 1948

* * = Of special interest

* = Of interest

25th March

Meher Baba in Bombay, where he contacts certain new masts:

Haji Nur Ahmad Baba is an elderly Pathan. Many years ago he was a schoolmaster, and would teach his pupils about the Koran and about Shariat. It seems, however, that one day he became intoxicated with Divine Love, for he left the school and began to wander about stark naked. In those days he was in a suburb of Bombay known as Kurla, and he stayed there or thereabouts for some twelve years.

He now lives near the fire station at Bhendi Bazar in Bombay, in the house of a certain Haji Ghafur, a watch repairer. In 1933 Haji Ghafur took Nur Ahmad with him on a pilgrimage to Mecca; hence the handle, Haji, affixed to both their names. Haji Nur Ahmad Baba is a good mast. He is now in a salik-like state, and is held in high esteem by his fellow Pathans of Bombay.

There is a mast—and a good one—whose name is not recorded, who sits on some steps at the fire station in Bhendi Bazar. This was Baba's second contact with him.

Shah Saheb came originally from Hyderabad (Deccan), although he is said to have been in Bombay for the last forty years. He is tall, and his height is accentuated by a long black *kafni*. He wanders about Bombay, and although not widely known as a spiritual figure, he is in fact an advanced pilgrim.*

There is a ragged, tousle-headed, middle-aged mast near the petrol pump at Bhendi Bazar. He has a passion for chewing *pan*, and his clothes are sodden and stained with the rich brown colour of his spittle. His eyes, however, are bright and clear, as if his mind were lit up by some inner joy. He is a moderate mast.

*For the definition of an advanced pilgrim see Chapter One of *The Wayfarers* (page 38 *et seq.*)

Dhuniwala Baba is a good mast who collects rubbish, which he burns. He then sits before this fire and warms his hands over the flames. He is naked except for a loin-cloth. (A *dhuni* is a sacred fire.)

17th March

Baba still in Bombay, where his contacts continue:

Ahmad Mastan wears a sack round his belly, and his choice of a "home" illustrates how a mast not only does not care where he lives, but also how he is often drawn to place himself in offensive surroundings (see *The Wayfarers*, Chapter One), for Ahmad Mastan lives near a public urinal. He is a good mast.

Saiyid Nur Ali Shah is an old man, and a moderate mast, whose fingers are covered with rings. He wanders about murmuring to himself, and punctuates this perpetual burbling with occasional loud, staccato exclamations.

18th March

Baba still in Bombay, where his contacts continue:

Nuruddin Mast Baba is a good mast, and a very dirty one, who wanders everywhere and sleeps anywhere.

19th March

This was the last day of Baba's contacts in Bombay.

Ali Hussein is a moderate mast. All that is known about him is that he has sat in one place for many, many years.

Ismail Baba Mastan looks in his mid-fifties, and he, like Ali Hussein, sits all day and every day in a particular place.

Allah Dia Baba is a moderate mast whose only raiment is a shred of sackcloth. He roams about abusing people without any obvious provocation, and interrupts his wanderings by squatting a few moments here and there before resuming his walk.

After completing these contacts in Bombay, Baba returned to Ahmadnagar.

25th March

On this day Baba left Ahmadnagar for Bombay. He had with him Gustadji, Baidul, Kaka, Eruch, and Chhagan. The party left Bombay this same evening for Katni, Annupur, and Ambikapur (in the Central Provinces). The purpose of this journey was to visit an intimate disciple who holds an important administrative position in Ambikapur. No contacts were made with advanced souls, and the details of this visit to Ambikapur are therefore irrelevant to the subject of this pamphlet. One may only say that Baba was given an enthusiastic and loving reception. From Ambikapur Baba went south over the forest covered hills to Raigarh, where he entrained for Calcutta.

30th March * On this day Baba arrived in Calcutta. This was the fourth important visit of Baba to this great city at the eastern gate of India. The first important visit was in June 1940, when Karim Baba, the great jalali mast, was contacted; the second was in 1943, at the height of the disastrous famine; and the third was in 1945. Baba has been to Calcutta at other times also, and the word important here refers to his work with advanced souls, the starving, or the poor.

This present visit was interesting in its own way because the very first thing that Baba did in Calcutta was to take a train for Dacca, the capital of Eastern Pakistan. When the train reached Ranaghat, however, which is the frontier station before entering Eastern Pakistan, Baba ordered those with him to get out of the train, and they then took the next train back to Calcutta, reaching there by 7.30 the very same evening. The critic will expostulate, "Why change your mind without rhyme or reason: is this a symptom of infinite power and infinite knowledge?" And, of course, such questions cannot be fairly answered. One can only say that one feels convinced that such sudden changes of plan do have significance, and that, at such times, Baba is working out an intricate plan of his own in which those with him must play their parts blindfolded.

Thus, to the critic, this journey might seem a sterile escapade; but to those who know Baba well, the very pliability of his plans abounds with significance. It is a deep-rooted instinct that insists upon this significance; a conviction from within that overrides the protests of the critical intellect.

31st March Baba still in Calcutta, where he begins to contact advanced souls.

Mastan Shah is a swarthy mast who is naked except for a loin-cloth. He potters about near the General Hospital in Central Avenue, and mumbles to himself. This mast was contacted once before by Baba, and is (probably) the Ali Shah Mastan mentioned in the supplement to *The Wayfarers*, of whom there was then no description. Mastan Shah is a good mast.

Ramdas Baba is a septuagenarian and a moderate mast.

Shamsher Data is another septuagenarian and also a moderate mast.

Sufi Sdheb was first contacted in October 1945 (see *The Wayfarers* supplement). He is a very good mast who lives in a tiny room in Butchers' Lane, near Park Circus.

Rahim Shah is an old man from Kathiawar; he is a moderate mast of no particular interest.

First April

Contacts in Calcutta continue:

The first contact, at 4.0 a.m., was with a moderate mast, name not recorded, who sits outside a certain soda water factory.

Abdurrehman Baba is a moderate mast who keeps cats and dogs.

* * *Shah Jehan* is a very good mast of the fifth plane. He sits in a dark and filthy room that is crammed with musty books and a congeries of junk. He has closed the door with a screen, so that there is very little light indeed; and there are no windows. Shah Jehan is as dirty as his room, and is clad in offensive and tattered clothes. A tale is told of him that he used to sit under a certain dead tree near the Narkuldanga Bridge, and that one day this tree came to life again. It is said also that the police, in the course of a beggar drive, once took Shah Jehan into custody, but that he was released within a few hours in response to the importunate petitions of those who revered him as a great mast. Shah Jehan now lives in this dark little room as the guest of a certain butcher who reveres him.

Haji Saheb Telwala was first contacted in October 1945 and is recorded in the supplement to *The Wayfarers* as Teliwala Mast. He was contacted again on 1st April, and he is a very good mast; one of the best contacted on this visit to Calcutta. He sits near the Narkuldanga Bridge, and, as his name implies, he loves oil (*lei*), drinks it, and smears it over his body and clothes, so that he is almost unbelievably dirty.

* On the evening of this day Baba and his men left Calcutta for Hardwar on the Doon Express. On this journey an "indirect" contact took place that deserves description. The line from Calcutta to Hardwar passes through Benares, and, on Benares station, Baba pointed out a venerable old man in ochre-coloured clothes who was surrounded by three or four younger men dressed in the same kind of clothes. The old man and his companions entered the compartment next to that in which Baba and his men were travelling, and Baba pointed out the old man as "a very good soul."

He then told Eruch to visit the next compartment and ask this man about saints and yogis in Uttar Kashi. Eruch did as he was bid, and was surprised to learn that the old man came from Uttar Kashi itself, and that he was on his way back there. His name, he told Eruch, was Devigiri. The men with him, who were his disciples, addressed him as Devigiri Maharaj, as an indication of the esteem in which they held him.

It will be seen later that Baba contacted Devigiri Maharaj on the last day of his stay at Uttar Kashi. The old man left the train at Ajodhya in response to the invitation of some devotees there, and remained at Ajodhya for a few days. His return to Uttar Kashi was therefore delayed so that he only reached his headquarters there on the day before Baba left to return to Tehri.

3rd April

On this day Baba set foot in Hardwar, the pilgrim city on the banks of the sacred Ganges. This was the last city of any consequence before Baba and his men set out for Uttar Kash, and Chhagan and Kaka were therefore instructed to buy provisions for the mountain trek, while Baba, Baidul, and Eruch set forth in search of masts.

* On the main ghat they found a middle-aged mast known as Hanuman Baba. He has an extraordinary mouth with three (sic) rows of loose and dirty teeth in each jaw; but he is a good mast who loves to give money to children, although no one knows whence he gets the money, because he never begs. Thus, when Baidul tried to give Hanuman Baba one anna, he refused to take it, but gave Baidul one anna instead. After this contact with Hanuman Baba, a seeker* was contacted.

* * While Baba and his two men were roaming the crowded lanes and ghats of the city, they observed an old man in rags sitting upon a wooden platform at the side of the street. Baba gave a sign that they should approach this man, and indicated that he should be asked about masts and advanced souls in Hardwar. After a brief exchange of remarks, Baba and his men went on their way, but soon observed that this old man was following them through the streets. Since the tenacity of his pursuit seemed not to be relaxed, Baba ordered Eruch to go and ask him why he was following them. He replied that he was in search of a Guru, and quoted the words

*For the definition of a seeker see Chapter One of The Wayfaren (page 38 et seq.)

of Kabir that there could be no Realization of the Truth without the help of a Guru. He then went on to say that he was an old man, and that he feared to die without having achieved Realization. Finally, he addressed Baba directly, and said, "I find you to be the right man to guide me." Baba, in reply, told him to love God more and more, so that his love became like that of a fish out of the ocean, whose only desire is to return to the ocean.

This meeting, however, was not the last, for an hour or so later, when Baba was returning through the streets after having contacted the masts described above, he suddenly turned to the subject of this old man and began to praise the measure of his love for God. After some minutes of this discussion, the old man himself was seen across the street, and was called to Baba. Baba ordered three oranges to be bought, and he gave these to the old man with his blessings. The old man, observing that he was to receive *prasad* at Baba's hands, first washed his hands and feet before coming before his chosen Guru. Baba told him to seek God within himself with an ever-increasing love, and said that, if he did so, he would soon see God.

It should perhaps be made clear that Baba's name was never divulged, and that the old man had apparently no external means of knowing who Baba was.

- 4th April On the morning of this day Baba and his men left Hardwar for Rikhikesh (Rishikesh) by bus. As soon as they reached Rikhikesh, nine Nepalese coolies were engaged for the transport of the luggage to Uttar Kashi. While these arrangements were being settled, Baba contacted a certain *Tapowan Swami* at Brahmashram. Tapowan Swami is widely respected in the Rikhikesh valley.
- 5th April Baba and his men set out by bus for Tehri Garhwal. The road climbs over two passes, but to the average passenger the splendour of the scenery is almost neutralized by the execrable state of the road, and by a natural doubt of ever reaching Tehri alive. The nine coolies also set off to Tehri, but they went on foot, for they have a quick way over several passes that enables them to reach Tehri in one day's march from Rikhikesh. On the evening of this day Baba and his men reached Tehri Garhwal.
- 6th April * In the introductory paragraphs of this pamphlet an attempt was made to build up a simple outline of the Himalaya in general, and

of this part of them in particular. Think, then, of this little town of Tehri buried in a hot and steamy valley, with the milky torrent of the Bhagirathi thundering along its centre, swollen by the melting snows from the great heights that lie seventy or eighty miles away. See, in your mind's eye, the terraced fields cut into the mountain sides above you like giants' staircases, interrupted only by irregular patches of forest, by deep-cut gullies, or by outcrops of sheer rock. And as you read the prosy details of place-names and the mileages between them, do not forget the hot stones underfoot, or the desiccation of your mouth and pharynx that the tepid fluid in your water-bottle does little to assuage. And do not forget the blister that stabs your toe with every weary step, or the pitiless sun that beats upon your back. Remember, in short, that the journey from Tehri to Uttar Kashi, though only about forty miles long, is hot, and rough, and steep.

Aware, therefore, of the wearisome march ahead, Baba and his men rested in Tehri on 6th April in order to husband their strength for the coming days. In Tehri itself, however, Baba contacted two masts on this day:

Mast Ahmad Sufi Saheb is a very good mast, sometimes salik-like and sometimes majzoob-like, who sells soap to earn a living. He is much respected in Tehri.

Mast Yogi lives in some mule stables in Tehri, and is heedless of physical needs.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 7th April | At 5.30 a.m. on this day Baba, his five men, and the nine coolies, set out on foot journey to Uttar Kashi. That afternoon they reached the Syansu Forest Bungalow about twelve miles away. |
| 8th April | Left Syansu at 5.0 a.m. for Dharasu, fourteen miles ahead. At Dharasu the party stayed in the Kali Kambliwala Chetty (<i>Dharmashala</i>). |
| 9th April | Left Dharasu for Uttar Kashi, about sixteen miles away—the journey's end. This final day the scenery was impressive and the track full of peasants moving up to the high pastures for the summer with their goats, sheep, cows, dogs, and tents. The path, however, was rough, and Baba's feet, and the feet of those with him, were painfully blistered by the time they reached Uttar Kashi in the late afternoon. |

10th April

At Uttar Kashi they settled in Birla House, a massive *dharmashala* built by the famous philanthropist of that name.

Baba's contacts in Uttar Kashi begin:

Falhari Baba eats only fruit, flowers, and roots, and is naked except for a loin-cloth. He used to live in Gangotri, but now stays on the Mani Karnikan Ghat at Uttar Kashi. He is an initiate pilgrim.

Digambar Avadhut is a sadhu.

Nanga Baba, known also as Kamanandji, is completely naked and has been silent for many years. He stays at Laksheshwar, about three miles from Uttar Kashi, and comes once a day to Uttar Kashi for his food.

These three men were invited to Birla House and were contacted there by Baba.

Ganganand Maharaj is an old man who sits reading something in a very dark room in the Kailas Ashram at Vajali. The local people respect him very highly, and Baba liked him so much that he visited him twice. He is an advanced pilgrim.

Ramji Maharaj is in the Satbela Ashram; he is a seeker.

Chaitangiri Maharaj is an old man, and a seeker.

Nepali Swami Maharaj is an old sadhu and is also a seeker.

Birgiri Maharaj is an aged sadhu who lives in the *math* of Devigiri Maharaj. He is a seeker.

Brahmanandji Maharaj trains children in spirituality. He also supervises the construction and maintenance of buildings for sadhus: he is an intellectual type, and is a sincere seeker.

* * *Niguanandji Brahmachari* is a Bengali and a very good mast. He is about eighty years old, is cadaverous and energetic, and wears very dirty clothes. He lives in a diminutive room in Durga Devi's temple at Uttar Kashi. When Baba came to contact him it was already almost dark, and Niguanandji took Baba with him into his little room in the temple. The mast then lit a match and examined Baba's face by the light of its flame, and, as he gazed at Baba's face, Niguanandji's features filled with joy. Baba was very pleased with his contact with this fine mast.

Rudragiri Mahatma (Naga Panthi) is an old man and seeker, in Vishvanath's temple.

Sibpuriji Naga Panthi was contacted in this same temple of Vishvanath. He, also, is a seeker.

Dandi Swami was also in this temple, the third seeker here.

Maneshanandji Swami is the *mahant* of Uttar Kashi, its official spiritual head.

Mangalgiri Maharaj is said to be 104 years old, and his back is so bent and his body so thin that when he squats his head almost touches his feet. He lives in a dark little room on the Kedar Ghat. He is an initiate pilgrim.*

Pandiram Maharaj is a sadhu.

Dnyani Maharaj is also a sadhu.

Chitambaranandji is a seeker in Koteswar, near Uttar Kashi.

Gangapuriji is a sadhu and a seeker in the Kailas Ashram.

11th April Baba's contacts in Uttar Kashi continue:
Maharaj Juganandji Puri is a seeker of the Udasi type.

Nirgunanandji
Nischchaldasji
Avadhut Naga Panthi
Praginathji
Ramdasji Maharaj

These five men
are seekers

Atmanandji
Govindanandji
Nathji

These were three
sadhus in the
Ramakrishna
Library

Swami Santanandji lives in Joshimath, over the river; he is a seeker.

* *Vishnu Datt Digambar* is about eighty years old, although he looks much younger. He is a very high type; and Baba said of him that he was three in one—a mast, a saint, and a child; and that he was one of the best contacted in Uttar Kashi. He is quite naked and has been silent for many years. He begs for food from five houses only, and accepts only what he needs. He was very happy to contact Baba and made gestures of "flying kisses" towards him. He lives in Tilot village.

Dr. Swareshanandji is a very old man, a Bengali doctor, who lives in Devigiri Maharaj's ashram. He is a seeker.

12th April This was the last day of Baba's contacts in Uttar Kashi.
Nanga Baba Ramanandji has been silent for many years and is quite naked. His hair is blond from the constant application of

*For the definition of an initiate pilgrim see Chapter One of *The Wayfarers* (page 38 *el seq.*)

	<p>ashes. He was called to Birla House for contact with Baba. He is a seeker.</p> <p><i>Shri Shankar Ashramji</i> is a sadhu.</p> <p>* <i>Devigiri Maharaj</i> is an adept pilgrim.* This was the old man who had travelled in the same train as Baba from Benares to Ajodhya (see note of 1st April). He arrived in Uttar Kashi on 12th April and was contacted by Baba in the Vishvanath Temple. It was then learnt that this journey of Devigiri Maharaj to Benares was the first that he had made from Uttar Kashi for many, many years. This contact with Devigiri was the last of all the contacts in Uttar Kashi before Baba and his men departed the next morning on their return march to Tehri. During these three days in Uttar Kashi about twenty-five sadhus were also contacted, but they are not listed in detail here; they were simply sadhus, and were of no particular spiritual interest.</p> <p>At Uttar Kashi Baba bought a fluffy black and brown hill puppy and named her Gol-gol: the rough equivalent in English of this name would be Roly-poly. Baba himself fed and cared for this pup all the way back to Ahmadnagar</p>
13th April	Baba and his men set out from Uttar Kashi on their return march to Tehri. Night halt at Nakori, six miles away.
14th April	Left Nakori for Dharasu; slept at Dharasu that night.
15th April	Left Dharasu for Syansu; slept at Syansu that night.
16th April	Left Syansu for Tehri. The party set out at 4.30 a.m. in the dark, carrying lanterns to light their way. It appears that a road is being built in this valley so that motor transport may eventually get up as far as Uttar Kashi. The men at work on the road toss tons of earth about with the result that the original path, where it passes below the embryonic road, is blocked in several places. The party had to cross two such drifts of steep rubble between Syansu and Tehri; tricky and perilous obstacles in the dark. These piles of rubble were not there on the way up to Uttar Kashi. At Tehri the nine coolies were paid off and dismissed.
17th April	On the morning of this day Baba and his men left by bus for Rikhikesh, and departed thence to Hardwar. They reached Hardwar the same evening and left by the first train for Delhi.

*For the definition of an adept pilgrim see Chapter One of *The Wayfarers* (page 38 *el seq.*)

18th April Left Delhi for Agra, reaching there the same evening.
During the next three days Baba contacted masts and others in Agra:

Gharib Nath is an initiate pilgrim.

Fateh Mohammed is noted down as having been contacted, though there is no record of his characteristics.

Bullah Shah is a good mast.

Mohammed Hussein is a sufi.

Hillan Baba was contacted first in 1944, and is described in the supplement to *The Wayfarers*. He has sat at the side of a certain lane for many years.

* * *Majzoob Baba* is a very good mast who sits opposite the mental hospital. He is dressed in a very dirty *kafni* and mutters constantly to himself. He generally repeats any question put to him, and he calls himself the Emperor of Agra. This suggests, perhaps, that he should inhabit the institution opposite which he sits, but Majzoob Baba is, Baba tells us, a very high mast.

* *Haji Baba* went to Mecca some years ago; hence his title of Haji. He is a good mast who lives in a room in a mosque and constantly gives money away. While Baba and his men were with him, Haji Baba gave five rupees to a girl, telling her to return one *pice* to him. He also gave one rupee to an old woman who asked him for some matches; and she was given a box of matches also, from the shelf in Haji Baba's room. Haji Baba speaks of his room as a tavern, and tells people that he drinks there; but he drinks only the wine of God's Love. After contacting these masts in Agra, Baba and his men left for Ahmadnagar at noon on 21st April, reaching Ahmadnagar on the afternoon of 22nd April.

Besides those listed in this summary, many sadhus and masts of exiguous merit were contacted in the various places visited, but these men were of no special interest and no record was therefore kept of them. At the end of this tour Baba explained that he had planned to contact fifty-six advanced souls, that this had been done, and that he was, therefore, satisfied with the successful conclusion of the tour.

9th May * * *Maharaj*, a mast from Nagpur, is brought to Baba's bungalow in Ahmadnagar by Babadas.

* * Meher Baba has worked conspicuously with God-intoxicated souls since the early part of 1939, so that most of those who live and work with him have had opportunities to observe some, at least, of the characteristics of these eccentric pilgrims. And yet, were you to ask a disciple of Baba why such and such a man was a mast and not a madman, he would probably simply reply; "Because Baba says so." In other words, the average man or the average disciple is not in a position to judge these people because his only measure is to assess them by their external actions. There is, however, one quality in masts—in those, at any rate, who have had much contact with Baba—and this is that, however strangely they may behave, they make one feel unmistakably happy in their company. They do not exhale any of that subtle antipathy that seems to emanate from the insane, but actually kindle a sense of harmony in one's self, a harmony of which one may not be immediately aware, but which becomes eventually a real and obvious thing. Thus, if you were to ask the men at Meherabad whether they liked or disliked Mohammed and Ali Shah, the two masts sharing the life of the *mandali* there, you would find, I believe, that everyone felt spontaneously attracted by them.

If we accept, therefore, that a genuine mast somehow touches the roots of one's being in an agreeable way, we may speculate whether animals, with their sure instinct for friend or foe, do not feel drawn to them too: and the answer is that, in many cases, animals do live in close sympathy with masts, as a study of the supplement to *The Wayfarers* will show. This present example of Maharaj, a mast from Nagpur, is also a vivid instance of a reciprocal attraction between a mast and animals of different kinds, and deserves, therefore, to be described in some detail.

Maharaj was said to be about eighty years old, although he looked perhaps ten years younger than this. He was naked save for a loin-cloth, and had a tousled thatch of black hair and a white beard. If you spoke to him he would look at you and smile in the kindest way for a moment, and then resume his reverie or turn his attention back to his animals. It was said that in Nagpur he had about twenty-five dogs always round him. As soon as he was brought to Ahmadnagar he began to collect various animals—he would go for a walk, and these animals would follow him back to the house—and by the end of the first day there were eight or ten cows and five or six dogs in the bungalow garden.

The untiring occupation of Maharaj was to ply these friends with food, and in order that fodder should be available at all times, the house underwent a sudden yet an unmistakable metamorphosis into a storehouse. The budget for forage and milk for the animals at this time was about fourteen rupees a day.

Maharaj, in order to be near his animals, spent most of the day out of doors under the trees. About him was a confusion of plates, buckets, and earthenware dishes, into which fodder or milk was put several times a day, and there were many saucers slung from convenient branches from which birds might feed themselves. The dogs and cows, when not eating, would lie in an irregular circle about Maharaj, and there was one spirited brown and white bullock that would lick him all over with his tongue. The mast would screw up his eyes when his face was being licked, or would lie supine between the forelegs of the bullock while the front of his body was licked from head to foot. He seemed, indeed, to take pleasure in these abrasive yet loving baths, for while they were in progress he would lie with his eyes closed and his hands behind his head.

Baba said of Maharaj that he was a "freak mast" who would not fit into any of the eight categories described in Chapter One of *The Wayfarers*, but that he was also a high mast, and was entirely cooperative in his work with him. He never washed and never fed himself, so that every morsel of food was fed to him by Baba. The mood of Maharaj seemed to be entirely dependent upon the presence of his animal friends, for when he was in their midst and seeing to their needs, he was lively and gay, and when he was taken into the house away from them, he became bored and withdrawn. He stayed at Ahmadnagar until 14th May, when Babadas took him back to Nagpur.

Meherabad, 1948.

W. D.



A map of the places mentioned in this pamphlet

THE WORK
of
MEHER BABA
with Advanced Souls, Sadhus,
the Mad and the Poor



8th June 1948 to 1st August 1949

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	i
Chapter I. Incidents and Contacts of Tours from Ahmednagar and Pipalgaon	1
Chapter II. Incidents and Contacts of Tours from Mount Abu	17
Chapter III. Contacts during Baba's Seclusion	29
Summary of Contacts	37

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing Page</i>
Chatti Baba in the Bangalore Ashram	8
Mauganj-ka Hafizji	24
Batwa Shah of Benares	25
Keshav in his Urinal Home	34
Keshav by the Roadside	35
Map	37

INTRODUCTION

The fifteen-page booklet that was issued at the same time as *The Wayfarers* gave an account of Meher Baba's work with advanced souls and others up to mid-May 1948. This present small volume takes up the story where that booklet left off, and describes Meher Baba's work with advanced souls, sadhus, the mad, and the poor, up to 1st August 1949.

Although this volume has been built upon a foundation of solid facts laid down almost entirely by Baidul and Eruch, I must also make it clear that Meher Baba himself has checked the three chapters and the summary, and that the occasional notes on the *spiritual* state or stage of masts and others have all been given by Baba himself. In this context I should mention that the terms used to describe the spiritual state or stage of masts and advanced souls are the same as those that have been defined in the first chapter of *The Wayfarers*. Thus if the reader wants to know, for example, what a jalali type of mast is, or what is meant by the term adept pilgrim, he will find these definitions in Chapter One of *The Wayfarers*.

As soon as work was started on this small volume, it became obvious that to present the full story in diary form, so that no details were left out, would be to make an admirable record of Baba's work—but a quite unreadable one. Hence the decision to pick out what seemed to me the more interesting features and to try to present them in a way that would be acceptable to the average reader. In order, however, that this record of Baba's work should also be complete, it was necessary to include a chronological account of every contact—and hence the summary. This summary is not, of course, meant to be read through, although it is hoped that some people may skim over a page here and there if only to find out how many contacts have been deliberately omitted from the main text.

I am grateful to Mr. Bal Nerlekar for sending me the picture of Batwa Shah; to Kazi Muniruddin for the pictures of Keshav; and to Mr. K. N. Nigam for the picture of Mauganj-ka Hafizji.

William Donkin

Meherabad

September 1949

CHAPTER ONE

Incidents And Contacts Of Tours From

Ahmadnagar And Pimpalgaon

June 1948 to February 1949

AT the end of torrid June's first week Baba set out on a short tour of Gujerat, and since we are absolved from any scrupulous attention to method in this main text we may go at once with Baba and his men to Ahmadabad. This city is a pasticcio of a place, a hotch-potch of ancient monuments, rococo villas, cotton mills, and thousands of hutches so squalid that they beggar description.

On the outskirts of Ahmadabad there is a certain temple with an ashram attached to it. Both temple and ashram are well endowed, and there are byres stocked with two hundred cows or more, and kitchens where meals are served free to sadhus, faqirs, and poor people—and, indeed, to saints and sinners of every caste and creed.

Many years ago a stranger calling himself Jagannath set foot in this temple and made it his home. This kind of unchallenged acceptance of a stranger may seem irregular to a Westerner who expects, we may be sure, to poke his nose into references and certificates before food or shelter is given to man or beast. But in the sanctuaries of India there is an unquestioning acceptance of all, whether they pass on within the hour or stay for a lifetime, perhaps because in God's tavern it is seen to be an impertinence to ask particulars of His guests.

And so Jagannath made the temple his home, with no questions asked. As his stay drew itself out from months to years, those who came often to the temple understood that he was something more than just another sadhu—that he was a saint and no less—and so he came to be spoken of as Jagannath Maharaj. We know how St. Francis would let no stain fall upon his simplicity, although he was worshipped by thousands. Jagannath Maharaj, like the holy one of Assisi, shows an unexampled integrity of simple living, notwithstanding

his fame and the fullest opportunities for an easy life. He is over ninety years old, and yet for years his diet has been and still is, but two *bhakris** and one onion a day.

This is astounding when one remembers that although he may have no official position either in the temple or the ashram, he is *de facto* their figurehead, and that every day good cheer is handed out to hundreds of sadhus, faqirs, and the poor. These meals, moreover, are prepared from the choicest materials, garnished to satisfy a gourmet's palate.

When Baba came face to face with Jagannath Maharaj, the latter seemed to know, or feel, Baba's spiritual greatness—although his identity was not divulged—for he garlanded Baba and embraced him with joy, and later gave him three or four yellow shawls and one shawl each to the men with him. Finally, he went himself to the kitchen and brought back a small packet of sweet *puris* and *gulgule*, and handed them to Baba.

This was not, however, the last meeting, for Baba came to him again in November and sat by Jagannath's side while he contacted over a hundred sadhus—a contact worth describing.

To begin with, a word about sadhus. In *The Wayfarers* it has been shown how Baba sometimes contacts sadhus in large numbers. The Western reader should understand that sadhus as a class have a mixed reputation in India, in much the same way and for much the same reasons that the monks and friars of medieval Europe had a similar reputation. Although, ostensibly, every sadhu is presumed to have renounced the world, most Indian householders condemn nine out of ten of them as wasters. There are, indeed, exceptions—jewels of the finest water—but there seems little doubt that the average sadhu is a petty parasite on the body of a country already emaciated by poverty. In any case, whether sadhus as a class are worthy or not, there are times when Baba contacts sadhus *qua* sadhus, without reference to their spiritual or moral merits.

In Ahmadabad on this visit in November, Baba expressed a wish to contact sadhus, and added that he wanted to do this work not only in the ashram of Jagannath Maharaj but also in the presence of this great soul who is, Baba has since told us, an advanced pilgrim, and also 100 per cent, salik-like. Baba and his men, therefore, made their way to the ashram. Jagannath Maharaj, however, demurred at first, but was finally persuaded to allow Baba to do this work in his presence. It should be made clear that the words and manner of Jagannath's reluctance seemed to show that he felt himself unworthy to sit beside Baba, for, although Baba's identity was secret, Jagannath seemed to feel, on this occasion as on the earlier one, that Baba was a great spiritual Being.

As soon as Jagannath fell in with Baba's plan, arrangements were immediately set in hand by the executive head of the ashram. A hall was

* *Note for Westerners:* A coarse and heavy unleavened bread of millet.

opened, and 140 sadhus, the number chosen by Baba, were invited to be ready for Baba's contact. A single chair was placed in the hall upon which Baba asked Jagannath to sit. He complied with some reluctance, and Baba himself sat on the floor by Jagannath's side. Baba's men were not allowed to see the actual contact with these 140 sadhus, so that any description of the work that Baba did is out of the question. Each sadhu, however, was given five rupees at the time of the contact.

So much, then, for these contacts with Jagannath Maharaj, and we shall now turn to an account of one or two of the many other contacts during this visit to Ahmadabad in June.

Mohammed Hussain looks fortyish and spends his life, believe it or not, in a public urinal. The reader from beyond the seas should understand that these little fanes, in which libations are poured out to Vesica and Nephros, are sumptuously ammoniacal. Mohammed Hussain sits, sleeps, and eats in this horrible place—a place where you or I would not for choice pass ten seconds. What, then, must be his inner life to offset such an outer? We are told, also, that he is something of a polyglot for he is reputed to know several languages. He is a moderate mast.

Baitullah Shah is an advanced pilgrim, also 100 per cent, salik-like, who lives in a suburb of Ahmadabad, and he has a woman disciple who wears a gown of patches. He reads the Quran aloud from eleven o'clock on every Thursday night to three o'clock the following afternoon, and during these sixteen hours he neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps. Every time that he prays (presumably five times a day), he continues his orison for two hours or more.

On the evening before this contact with Baitullah Shah, Baba and his men had come out to try to contact him but had found him busy. As they were walking back to the bus stand to return to Ahmadabad, Baba's veteran disciple Gustadji became mistaken, for a few terrifying seconds, for one of Kasim Razvi's Arabs. Those who know his amiable face and figure—the kind of face Rubens would have loved to paint—may wonder how on earth Gustadji could be mistaken, even for a second, for an Arab out for blood. One must remember, however, that this particular time was one when nerves were on edge from the Karakoram to Cape Comorin, for it was the time of those warning sparks that preceded the detonation of the Hyderabad squib.

It was, perhaps, an adventure that bordered upon the ridiculous, but one that might have led to a paroxysm of violence when one remembers that there was an incident about this time in which several people lost their lives, because a stranger took a short cut across a space where some children were playing an informal game of cricket.

Baba and his men, as we have already said, were making their way back to the bus stand. Eruch and Baidul had gone ahead to get seats in the bus, Baba came next, and Gustadji, whose legs do not now carry him as fast as he would like, was fifty yards or so behind Baba. Baba, having seen that the

bus was about to start, turned and clapped his hands at Gustadji, following the clap with a signal that he should come quickly. Gustadji broke into a trot at once, but did so at the very instant that a small boy was coming towards him. This boy was somehow seized with the idea that Gustadji was running at him, and he uttered a yell of terror and turned on his heels and fled in front of Gustadji, screaming as he ran. Bystanders saw, as they thought, an innocent child being chased by a wicked little man in a black cap, and one or two shouted "Chaous" (Arab)—and to shout this word at this time was as much as to shout "murder".

See then, Gustadji, intent only on running, and thus utterly unaware that a score of people were girding up their loins to pounce upon him. Baba, however, the Master of every man and every situation, made a lightning signal to Gustadji to stop still in his tracks, which he did at once. This freezing of Gustadji allowed the onlookers to see not a villain, but a man clearly more incapable of violence to the innocent than the very child who had fled from him. The critical tension having been thus relaxed, Eruch and Baidul dissipated what was left of it by explaining with vigour that Gustadji was neither killer nor Arab, but simply a man running to catch a bus.

The account of this little *contretemps* may seem a divergence from the subject matter of these pages, but I have felt justified in including it because it helps to convey the flavour of these tours with Baba. They are not, as you see, dull and solemn pilgrimages, but are made of the very stuff of life itself. An incident like this shows, what is more, how a Divine Being goes about in secret amongst sinners like you or I, how he does the most ordinary things, and how he plays, on the face of it, the most ordinary parts in the farces and melodramas of our lives. His love for us is indeed more than we can ever understand.

So much, then, for Ahmadabad, and having ticked that city off our list we are now free to make a minor jump to Bombay where Baba made some interesting contacts in early July.

Marhatan Mai is, Baba tells us, a very advanced majzoob-like mastani. She must be well over seventy, and for years has lain under a tree near the Carnac Bunder bridge in Bombay. Her hair is so inspissated with dirt that one of those with Baba, searching his mind for similes to describe how solid it was, compared it to a thatched roof or a basket. Baba went to contact her in the early morning and found her soaked to the skin, for it had rained cats and dogs during the night. She asked for tea, and, when Baba handed it to her, she first poured it into an old tin that looked as if it was the home sweet home of all the germs in the world, and then drank it with relish.

The final contact in Bombay on this occasion—perhaps we should say abortive attempt at contact—was with Ali Asghar, the very advanced majzoob-like mast of the family of masts at Mahim, a suburb of Bombay. This great God-intoxicated soul is described in the last chapter of *The Wayfarers*, where he is wrongly called Ali Akbar.

On the afternoon of 1st July Baba and his men went out to Mahim, but they found Ali Asghar inside his room with the door shut. Baba explained at the outset that he must either contact Ali Asghar or wait until he got his leave to go away. He did in fact come out of his room for a moment, but, as soon as he saw Baba, he turned back again into his room and shut the door. Although request after request was lobbed through the window, Ali Asghar stubbornly refused to allow contact, but he said, after about an hour and a half, that Baba might go away.

Baba and his men therefore left Mahim and made their way back to Ahmadnagar. Before setting out for Ahmadnagar, however, Baba made it clear that he would have to come down to Bombay again to make an ultimate contact with Ali Asghar.

He explained, also, that Ali Asghar would not allow contact at this time because he was subject to phases when jalali characteristics became exacerbated to such an extent that he neither ate nor slept, and was therefore irritable and aggressive.

A few days after his return to Ahmadnagar Baba sent a wire to two of his disciples in Bombay that they should go to Ali Asghar's house and find out from his eldest sister, who looks after him, whether there was any change in his mood. As soon as Ali Asghar was reported to be coming out of his aggressive phase, he was to be asked if he would allow their brother (meaning by this Baba, whose name was kept secret) to contact him. When or if Ali Asghar agreed to allow contact, they were to send a wire to Baba at once.

Just over ten days later Ali Asghar agreed to allow contact, and a wire was sent to Ahmadnagar. Baba sped down to Bombay by car, reaching there in the early afternoon of 12th July. He told those who went with him that the link made on 1st July must not be broken, and that there must be a similarity of "route and routine". He therefore explained that he must reach Ali Asghar's house at the same time that he had reached it on 1st July, and must also not stop anywhere on the way except to pick up his two men in Bombay at a prearranged place in the city.

These directions were followed to the letter, and Baba drew up outside Ali Asghar's house in the early afternoon. Things looked unpromising at first, for they found that Ali Asghar was inside his room with the door shut. You may imagine, then, the anxiety of those of Baba's men who had set up the machinery for this contact. Ali Asghar's sister and Baba's men poured forth every kind of enticement and exhortation, and at the end of half an hour Ali Asghar, to everyone's relief, agreed to see Baba and came out of his room. Baba and he went together into the room, and for five minutes the two sat within. The contact completed, Baba and Ali Asghar came out side by side.

A few seconds later, Ali Asghar turned about and went back into the house. His reason for doing so, however, became apparent within less than a

minute, for he strode out of the door, a pair of scissors gleaming in his hand, and went straight up to a mulberry bush in the garden, from which he snipped off seven small leafy sprigs. He then dissected a slither of bark from the same bush and bound the sprigs into a little bunch, which he gave to Baba. His final touch was to slap Baba on the back, as pal might pal, and say to him gently, "Now you can go."

The men present on that day will perhaps often look back upon the memory of the joy that overflowed from Baba and intoxicated body, mind, and soul of his very earthly companions. Baba was not only supremely happy at this contact, but explained that his work had been accomplished to such perfection that there would be no need for any further meeting.

Now what of these seven sprigs that Ali Asghar gave to Baba? A graceful social gesture, you will say; a trifling courtesy not worth remembering; at the most, perhaps, a token to convey to Baba a sense of the spiritual comradeship of this last contact. But the men who have seen much of Baba's work with the God-intoxicated will tell you, in one way or another, that the funny things that a mast sometimes gives him have a kernel of meaning that is beyond the normal range of insight, a meaning so profound and intimate that it will remain in perpetuity the property of two people only—the giver and the receiver.

If someone dear to you or I were to give us, shall we say, a primrose, we might carry it with us for half a day, and before midnight imprison it for ever, and perhaps forget it for ever, between the leaves of a favourite volume. Our action, as likely as not, would be prompted by little more, and perhaps much less, than an urge to cherish the memory of a romantic experience. This may sound cynical and quite beside the point, but it serves to emphasize that although we may not understand the deep secrets that lie behind the extraordinary destiny of these things that a mast gives to Baba, we may be quite certain that they are not tied up with any milk and water sentiment—and I think no one will be disposed to dispute this when he learns what happened to Ali Asghar's little bunch of twigs.

As soon as Baba left Ali Asghar's house he handed the bunch to Eruch, telling him to keep it, leaf and stem, as he might keep his own life. Thus, the first thing that Eruch did when he reached home in Poona was to stick the seven sprigs into a potful of earth. Within a few days the leaves became dry and brittle, and so the pot was put away in a place where no servant or stranger might damage, or perhaps even throw it away. Two weeks later Baba called Eruch to Pimpalgaon, telling him that he must bring these sprigs with him. As soon as Baba received them he ordered every leaf to be plucked and ground to powder, and he then ate this powder. The seven stems that remained were preserved and are still kept in Baba's room.

In the last chapter of *The Wayfarers* there is an account of how Chambu Shah, the mast of Baroda, gave many of his old clothes to Baba, and of how

Baba put them on his body once. These same old clothes—still unwashed, mark you—are now kept by Baba in a locked tin that stands side by side with other boxes and tins containing gifts from other masts, in his room at Pimpalgaon. When Baba went to Mount Abu in the beginning of March 1949, these boxes and tins went with him and were kept in his room there, and when he returned to Pimpalgaon in May they came back with him, and now stand as before in his room at Pimpalgaon.

In this same context Baba has also told us that he wore Chambu Shah's dirty old clothes for three hours during the first day of his seclusion in the bus cabin at Pimpalgaon—the seclusion that began on the evening of 22nd June and ended on the morning of 1st August 1949.

We shall now invoke the help of the great God Hanuman to bear us in one great leap to the South, so that we may learn something of the highlights of a tour to Southern India in August. First then, to Madras. Kalgiri Pir is a mast who lives in a Parsi's house in Royapuram, a part of Madras. It seems that he makes a practice of giving bread to people, for in 1945 he gave a loaf to Baidul, and at this contact in 1948 he gave two fresh loaves to Baba, wrapping them in a tattered sheet of positively disgusting paper. Baba took these loaves with him and later ate them to the last crumb. This was therefore another example of what Baba does with gifts from masts—with those gifts at least that are edible—and so also was the next contact, which was with Maulvi Saheb, the spiritual chargeman of Madras.

Baba's first contact with Maulvi Saheb was in July 1945, when his work had been spoilt by that most irritating conjugation, Paul Pry and Paul Pry's wife, who had peeped at Baba from door and casement to see what he was doing. This time, however, contact was undisturbed, and Maulvi Saheb gave Baba six mangoes—but, alas, six very sour ones. As they came away from this contact Baba pointed out how, because these were his last contacts with many masts, some of them were giving him little presents. Baba later ate the pulp of these mangoes, sour as they were, and the skins and stones were preserved. A few days later, when the skins had become dry, Baba ate them also, and the six stones were planted by Baba himself in a seed box at Pimpalgaon, after he returned there. For several days Baba watered the seed box himself, and within a few weeks, six mango seedlings pushed up their heads into the air and were transplanted in due course in the garden at Pimpalgaon, where they are flourishing to this day.

In Chapter Two of *The Wayfarers* a short account is given of a sixth-plane mast of Negapatam known as Moti Baba, who was first contacted in 1939. This same Moti Baba now lives in Madras, in a room set aside for his use in the house of a well-to-do Muslim leather merchant. He is well known all over South India, and his room is crowded with those who come to see him out of curiosity or respect. It seems, also, that many of his characteristics

have changed, for whereas ten years ago he used to wander about Negapatam most of the day, he now sits the livelong day in his room. In the old days he used to fidget with *beedies* (country cigarettes), but he now shuffles playing cards in his hands and sometimes plays card games with those who sit with him. Baba's contact with this great mast was entirely satisfactory.

From Madras Baba and his men went south to Trichinopoly and thence to Tiruvalur. This quiet little town is not far from Negapatam, and Baba's plan in coming here was to make a final contact with the great sixth-plane mast, Chatti Baba, who had done so much work with him from 1939 to 1941. This mast is described at some length in Chapter Two of *The Wayfarers*.

Chatti Baba, nomadic by inclination, lives nowhere in particular, but ranges over the deadly horizontal alluvial plain between Tiruvalur and Negapatam. But though he wanders from place to place, the path of his progress is broadcast by gossip, and his whereabouts marked daily, and even hourly, by little flags of loving thoughts in the minds of his own people. This being so, you may safely rely on almost the first stranger to tell you where he may be found.

Although there is a sweetness in seeing the faces of old friends, this final contact held a lingering flavour of melancholy for those who had known Chatti Baba in the old days, for he was now emaciated and looked sad and old, and they felt that he had not long to live. They found him lying in the open, about fifteen paces from the road, with his head on his bundle. Baba contacted him and gave him bananas, and as they came away it seemed that Baba also had been moved by the sight of him, for he spoke much of his love for God and of how he was alone here with no one to care for him regularly.

It is true, to be sure, that masts are quite untouched by bodily hardships, and this makes us want to know why one of the signal features of Baba's work with the God-intoxicated has been to minister to their bodily needs; a question, unfortunately, to which Baba gives us no answer. Those who have helped Baba in this work know how hard it is to make a mast accept services of any kind, and how, in spite of this reluctance, Baba will stint neither time, nor trouble, nor expense, in promoting their physical well-being. If a Perfect Master shows that a faultless patience is indispensable when working with masts, it is hardly surprising that ordinary people, even though they may respect a mast, will seldom go to the trouble and expense of housing and feeding him for long—and this explains, perhaps, why Chatti Baba is not well cared for.

Following this contact with Chatti Baba, Baba went next to Avanashi, where lives a great yogi known as Ilai Swami. Although reported to be eighty years old, Ilai Swami is yet untouched by the moth and rust of time. He is a disturbing man to meet, for his appearance and habits do not conform to *petit bourgeois* ideas of the normal. It appears that he never washes, never touches water, and never even drinks it. He eats food, and, when his meal is



Chatti Baba in the Bangalore Ashram—1940

finished, wipes his hands on his thick black hair. Except for a rag about his loins, he is as naked as nature made him, and his toe and finger nails are two to three inches long, the latter curved in towards the palms. When he sleeps he lies on the bare ground. He never begs, and if people offer him money or even mention it in his presence, he becomes angry. Baba, who assesses men by their inner worth and not their outer appearance, was so gladdened by his contact with this great yogi that he did honour to the occasion by giving a coconut to each of the men with him.

From Avanashi Baba went the same day to Tiruppur, where he contacted Prasananand Swami Guru. This man is perhaps fifty years old and is, Baba tells us, a good yogi. He has a wife and children, but has so ordered his household that his life of spiritual devotion is not disturbed. People in Tiruppur say that, when he performs *puja*, he becomes so transported that he loses physical consciousness. At this particular time he was undergoing a period of forty days' seclusion, silence, and fast on water only, and had made a kind of anchorite's cell for this purpose—out of old tents and goodness knows what else—in one room of his house. He has a boy disciple, and this stripling had been given the privilege of looking after his *guru* during these critical forty days.

Now it fell out that while Baba and his men had been trying to find Prasananand's house, they had asked the way from a comic old brahmin whom Baba's men had disparaged as half crazy. Baba, however, had shown delight at meeting him, and had asked him to scramble into their *jatka**, and so this old man had become part and parcel of Baba's group that arrived in due course at Prasananand's house.

As soon as they reached this house, Baba's men began to spar with the boy disciple to induce him to arrange a contact, and so nobody noticed what this old brahmin was up to. Since he was so obviously weak in the head he had neither been expected nor asked to help, but he nevertheless sneaked up to Prasananand's cell and began scribbling notes and passing them in to him through the door. The burden of these notes, it was found later, was that Prasananand should allow this stranger (Baba) to contact him—stranger, because Baba's identity was secret, as it always is on these tours.

This old brahmin busy with his nefarious traffic in epistles was preserved from exposure by a diversion still more nefarious. Baba and his men were surrounded, as they always are in puny towns like this, by a knot of people jostling one another like pigeons round a man with a bag of corn. One of these pigeons was a poor wight of a youth with a palsied arm, who observed that the top pocket of one of Baba's men (let us call him X), had that smug look of a pocket with money in it. While X was taking an active part in the campaign

* *Note for Westerners:* A *jatka* is a public conveyance drawn by a pony. It is peculiar to South India and is so uncomfortable and minute that it is a standing joke with people from other parts of India.

by which it was hoped to convince the boy disciple that he would have to arrange a contact with Prasananand, this disabled youth edged up to X's side and laid his palsied arm on his shoulder. X felt the arm but thought that the youth had merely propped it on a convenient support. Some moments later, however, hearing a crisp noise over his pocket, X looked down to see this twisted hand in the act of pilfering a ten-rupee note.

This, as you may guess, was the signal for a rumpus, and X, as you may also guess, was angry almost to the point of apoplexy and was itching to lay about the youth or send for the police. Baba, however, brought the whole episode to a sudden halt by insisting that X should do absolutely nothing about the theft. We should mention, by the by, that this money in X's pocket was Baba's, and although we may allow X's indignation to have been the most natural thing in the world, we must also concede that by any standard—but especially because X was Baba's disciple—the decision of what to do with the thief rested with Baba. Baba, as we have seen, forgave the youth on the spot, and his only punishment was to twist his ear with loving gentleness and admonish him never to try to steal again.

One should perhaps curb any tendency to dilate on this trivial drama, for there is a danger of drawing false conclusions or, worse still, of giving birth to a *ridiculus mus*. Let us, however, take the risk, and commit one or two notions to paper, after warning the reader that none of them are based on any statements by Baba.

The most obvious feature of the episode is, incontrovertibly, a practical demonstration in the very difficult art of forgiveness—we *must* learn to forgive people, however much we feel we are in the right. The second feature is bound up with the question of why people do anti-social acts. Psychologists and others are beginning to insist that delinquency is a symptom of a psychic disease that is not necessarily the fault of those who suffer from it, and they say that we should seek to heal delinquents rather than punish them. It seems probable, from the way Baba handled this youth, that his outlook accords, to some extent at least, with that of contemporary psychologists.

The final feature is a spiritual one, and is bound up with the fact that Baba, because he is a Perfect Master, is one with the Divine Ground of all living beings. He therefore knows the *fons et origo* of this young man's palsied arm and the full course of his psychic malady, and he feels his torment as he stands exposed as a thief. But though he feels this torment, he is its master also, and having allowed the youth to suffer this first vicious cut to his self-conceit, he now catches him off his guard and gives him a more than human absolution, and a draught of Divine Love that he will remember for the rest of his days. Baba's mandali are well acquainted with this technique, for it is one that Baba has used on each one of them times out of number.

It is time, however, to return to the subject of Prasananand. Following Baba's absolution of the youth, the thoughts of Baba's men were turned back

to the same subject by the old brahmin clearing his throat and announcing quietly that he—of all people—had arranged with Prasananand that Baba might contact him. Baba therefore went at once into the house, and Prasananand came out of his cell for a few minutes and sat with Baba for contact.

And so, we see, this contact was fixed up by an old man with a crazy brain and a propensity for scribbling, who was given enough time to do his job by a distraction caused by a young man with a palsied arm and a propensity for thieving. We may sniff at the belief that the hand of the Master invisibly guided these events, but agree we must, that there was a neatness in the way these mis-shapen pieces of a jigsaw puzzle fell together to create the symmetry of the final picture.

So much, then, for this tour of South India, and now let us call for the great God Hanuman again to bear us swiftly and surely to quite another part of India, to Junagarh in Saurashtra, where Baba and his men went in November. This city is famous as a place of pilgrimage, principally on account of the famous hill of Datar that rises behind the town. On 4th November, the day following their arrival in Junagarh, Baba and his men climbed the many thousand weary steps that lead to the summit of this hill. Datar is named after Bapuzamil Shah Datar, a God-realized Being of olden times, who took *samadhi* in a cave near the summit of the hill. It is said that Datar disappeared into this cave one day and was never seen again, and the belief arose that he had taken *jivan-samadhi* there. To this day pilgrims come in thousands to the cave and pay homage to the great saint whom they believe to be a living physical, as well as spiritual, presence—albeit unseen to human eye.

Upon this summit of Datar there is also a band of about a score of aspirants who live a life of such exemplary simplicity that Baba was provoked to praise them. The gist of his eulogy was that although he had visited temple, shrine, ashram, and *khanqah* all over India, and in many a foreign country also, he had never yet seen such a triune perfection of spiritual aspiration, selfless work, and mortification of material desires. The diet of these ardent men is even plainer than the unchanging porridge of the poorest Highlander, for it is but *rab* and nothing else—this *rab* being a mawkish pabulum of coarsely ground wheat put in a pot and boiled till it is done.

Baba's purpose in ascending Datar hill was to undergo seclusion, and a fast on water only, for two days. The seclusion and fast were to take place on 4th and 5th November, and Baba explained that he wished, during these two days, to work with Munga Sain Mastan, a mast contacted on the first day in Junagarh. This man is a very good and completely majzoob-like mast, nearing sixty, who speaks to no one and has to be fed by others. He is a wanderer, too, and roams on foot over the roads leading out of Junagarh and is brought back to the city now and again by bus drivers. When the party climbed the hill on the early morning of 4th November, Munga Sain was carried up at

the same time in a sedan chair and, during the seclusion and fast, Baba himself fed Munga Sain and sat with him many times for an hour or more.

Two days after the completion of this fast and seclusion, Baba and his men climbed one of the eminences of the Girnar hills. Girnar is not an isolated

mountain, but a rambling range that lies like a supine giant not many miles from Junagarh city. These sunny hills are hallowed from most ancient times, and Baba explained to those with him that every Avatar born in India had come once in his lifetime to Girnar.

In one part of this same range of Girnar there is a crag from which anyone in the old days could legally throw himself to death. Suicide from this cliff, however, was not prompted by any personal disaster, but was undertaken, it seems, by those who aspired to pass on to a better and higher posthumous existence. These stout-hearted people would be led up the hill to the sound of music and leap to their death at the climax of a most solemn and splendid ceremony. It was the belief, or at least the hope, of those who cast down their bodies from this terrible cliff, that they would go direct to paradise. It was said, moreover, that their bodies were eaten by lions—for the forests of the Girnar hills were and still are the last refuge of the lion in all Asia.

On the summit that Baba and his men climbed on this day there is a cave named after Raja Bharthari (a saintly king of olden times), in which Baba sat for two hours alone.

We shall now leave the arid hills of Girnar behind us and speed up to Delhi, where Baba contacted a mast of great interest. Mastan Amanullah Kabuli is, Baba tells us, that rare type of divine lover—a mixture of jalali and jamali types and one whose spiritual state swings from being majzoob-like at times to being salik-like at others. The contact itself—like all these contacts—was unseen by the men with Baba, but they all took part in the delightful little scene that followed. We must explain, to begin with, that, at the completion of his contact, Baba gave Amanullah ten rupees. This gift was followed by a conversation between Baba and Amanullah, a conversation which I have reconstructed as a dialogue in English, which has been kept as near as possible to what Baba's men now remember of the original. It goes without saying that Baba's remarks were not spoken by himself, and they were in fact indicated by signs to Baidul, who spoke them on Baba's behalf.

Scene: A street in old Delhi. *Time :* Early morning.

Amanullah (addressing Baba and his men): "Where are you going to?"

Baba: "Ajmer."

Amanullah: "I'll come with you."

Baba: "I'll give you another ten rupees and you should buy your own ticket to Ajmer and go there by yourself" (gives him ten rupees more). "Now you must let us go to Ajmer."

Amanullah (points to Baba): "You and the others may go, but this man (points to Baidul) must come to me this evening."

Baba: "For God's sake, allow us all to go."

Amanullah (looks at Baba and designates him also by a gesture): "God is standing just in front of me now, so how can I let Him go?"
Baidul makes a fuss of *Amanullah* and does his best to persuade him to let them all go. After some minutes *Amanullah* gives way.

Amanullah: "All right, you can all go (looks at Baba); but I'll constantly and inwardly send you a love-cable (*prem-ka-tar*) whether you are in the East or the West—such a powerful love-cable that I'll drag you to me."

Baba: "When you drag me, I'll come."

Amanullah (breaking from Urdu into Persian): "*Chashm har su fegandam, dar nazar daram tura.*" (Trans. "Wherever I cast my eyes, I see you only.")

Following this remark in Persian, *Amanullah* adds much else in Persian, all of which *Baidul* now forgets. *Amanullah* then grasps *Baba's* hand for a few moments with much feeling, and it is obvious that he is on the verge of tears. This over, *exeunt omnes*.

The next scene is a short one and takes us, as you may expect, to Ajmer. From Delhi, *Baba* and his men went direct to this pilgrim city where he has reaped such a rich harvest of great masts.

On the second day in Ajmer the great Chacha was contacted. This Chacha is the majzoob who was brought to the Satara Mast Ashram in 1947 and was first contacted by *Baba* in 1939 (see *The Wayfarers*). A majzoob, we should perhaps explain, is one in the final *Fana*, the final Unitive State in which the soul is drowned in God, and enjoys—though does not *use*—Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. A majzoob is therefore utterly unconscious of the gross, subtle, and mental spheres, and is conscious only of Himself as God.

Following this contact *Baba* went down to Baroda, where he contacted our old friend *Chambu Shah*. At this contact, as at many earlier ones, there was a transfer of clothes, and *Chambu Shah* asked *Baba* for two new *lungis* and a new shirt. These were bought and given to him, and he then stripped off his own filthy clothes and gave them to *Baba*, telling him to put them on. This *Baba* did later the same day. These clothes, together with others that *Chambu Shah* gave to *Baba* at some earlier contacts, are now locked in a tin box which, as I have already explained, is kept in *Baba's* room wherever he stays.

Those who dismiss as arrant nonsense the notion that so-called masts are anything more than madmen or eccentrics may look upon *Chambu Shah* with opprobrium, or may condemn him as a hypocritical and possibly lecherous eccentric who trades on the credulity of dupes. Quite apart, for the moment, from any questions of *Baba's* spiritual Perfection, and quite apart from what he tells us about a particular great mast, it is worth recording that most of those who go with *Baba* on these tours can be as cynical as any of your incisive

intellectuals, and as worldly-wise as the most hard-headed Yorkshireman. I know, of course, that those who go with Baba could never really prove to anyone, let alone to a sceptic, that these great masts are spiritually advanced; but could the sceptic himself really prove that he was a human being? It is, as you see, a question of knowing that such and such a thing *is* so; and to expect the intellect to continue to live after cutting it off from these certainties that creep up from the roots of a man's being, is about as sensible as expecting the upper part of an oak to continue to live after felling it level with the ground.

Enough, however, of such fustian, and let us gird up our loins for action and hasten to Morvi, in Saurashtra, where Baba contacted a very great mast indeed, known as Majzoob Ali Shah. This man is, Baba tells us, a majzoob-like mast of the jamali type who makes a show of jalali characteristics. From a little way off, one sees that he is short and fat and has a halo of long, whitish hair and a full beard of much the same colour. But when one comes near him one forgets the shortcomings of his figure and is aware only of his tremendous personality. His bearing is so impressive that one of those with Baba could only describe him as kingly—and kingly, mark you, as in the days of old, the days of such giants as Darius and Alexander. His eyes are immense, or seem to be so, and are so set in contour of bone and flesh that his glance holds one breathless.

It is natural, therefore, that such a man should be far-famed, and people come from every nook and cranny of Saurashtra to see him. Some years ago he used to live in Bhuj, the capital of Cutch, and he is still called Bhujwala Baba by some people. In Bhuj, however, he drew such crowds that he was feared a menace to civic order and was deported from the city. Bhuj perhaps gained civic order, but it indubitably lost a personality.

Like most masts, Majzoob Ali Shah has capricious ways and he lives on a railway siding at Morvi station, surrounded by goods wagons that the authorities seem to consider neither good enough for use nor bad enough for scrap. There is a water tap not far from where he sits, and he loves to open this tap and watch the water gushing out on the ground. Sometimes he just stands like this and looks at the water, and sometimes he lets the water pour over his feet.

Like so many masts, he is as restless as a piece of flotsam in the roaring forties. He gets up, sits down, walks here, walks there, and makes every kind of gesture throughout the livelong day. Despite this eternal restlessness, he never, even for a moment, loses that overpowering kingliness that is the very essence of his personality. This restlessness extends even to his eating, and he takes the different kinds of food that people bring him and mixes them all together with a lot of cold water into one glorious hash. He generally eats a little of this mixture and then hands it out to those near him.

Baba and his men came to this great mast at about eleven o'clock at night. When they approached Majzoob Ali Shah, the latter looked straight

at Baba and exclaimed suddenly, "He is a real faqir, he is a real faqir." This word 'faqir' has a literal meaning of one who is poor, and also of one who has renounced the world; but it has, in addition to these two meanings, a quite definite connotation in Sufi literature and tradition, of one who is spiritually Perfect, i.e., a *Salik-e-Mukammil*—a Perfect Master.

The first thing that Majzoob Ali Shah did was to give Baba and Baidul several small helpings of a hash of food and water. He then began walking to and fro in his usual restless way, and continued to do so for almost two hours. Somewhere about 1.0 a.m. he at last sat down, and told the few remaining strangers to go home. He then addressed Baba and asked him to bring some dates to the value of one *pice*, and give him half of them. Baba and his men, therefore, went out and bought exactly a *pice* worth—some three or four dates. Baba gave half of these to Majzoob Ali Shah and then sat with him for contact.

Following this contact in Morvi, Baba visited one or two other centres in Saurashtra and then proceeded to Ahmadabad, where he contacted over a hundred sadhus in the presence of Jagannath Maharaj. This work has been described in the early pages of this chapter and there is no need to do more than mention it here.

Since nearly all the dates and dull details have been banished to the summary, it will not be clear that this tour in November to Junagarh, Delhi, Ajmer, Baroda, Morvi, Ahmadabad, and to many other places, lasted a full three weeks. Those who have read *The Wayfarers* may remember that in one chapter several pages were devoted to describing the trials and tribulations of past tours with Baba. I will, therefore, do no more in these pages than make a frank understatement, to wit, that to go with Baba on these journeys is no joke.

You may imagine, then, that Baba's men, when they left Ahmadabad for home, were dreaming of four heavenly blessings only, a lavish bath, the touch of spotless linen, the taste of a solid meal, and the bliss of sleep on a clean bed for a thousand years.

Fate, however, had other plans, and the train in which Baba and his men were travelling was held up for twenty-four hours by the historic cyclone that swung in from the green wastes of the Arabian Sea, and charged on to Bombay and on to the hills and estuaries for many miles both north and south of the great city. During most of the hours of waiting by the side of the railway track, Baba and his men whiled away the hours by chatting and playing games with the engine driver of their own train. This man was a Parsi, and he earned the respect of those with Baba by never once asking who Baba was or why he was silent. This historic cyclone was the dramatic final scene of the tour, and Baba then returned to 'Meherazad,' his centre at Pimpalgaon.

Soon after the turn of the new year, Ali Shah, the fifth-plane mast who lives at Meherabad, was called to Pimpalgaon. He remained there for about a

month, and Baba fed him and sat with him every day. I have brought this possibly unexciting detail into the main text in order to fill in an omission in *The Wayfarers*, and also to record a small personal observation. The omission is that Ali Shah is generally known in Meherabad and elsewhere as Bapji, and this name has now almost eclipsed his earlier name of Ali Shah.

The personal observation may be thought unimportant, but it adds weight to the surmise that one of the reasons, if not the chief reason, for Baba's contacts with the God-intoxicated, is to give them work. The observation in question is simply that whenever Bapji returns to Meherabad after a period of contact with Baba, he spends almost the whole day in the privacy of his little room for a week or ten days, and seems to resent any intrusion. If you peep in at him he appears to be making more gestures than usual with his hands, and the impression is that he is concentrating on some kind of special task. After a week or ten days, however, he comes out again from his room and mixes freely with the mandali, as if he now had leisure to do as he pleased.

CHAPTER TWO

Incidents And Contacts Of Tours From

Mount Abu

March to May 1949

ON 1st March 1949, Baba arrived with a small group in Mount Abu. This mountain is a mass of tree-clad rock that towers above the dreary wastes of southern Rajasthan. The landscape on the mountain itself has a majesty in which beauty is ever at war with ugliness—a war in which the tide of battle is so uncertain that one hesitates to lay a bet on the winner. In the ranks of beauty we must admire the powerful sweep of ridge and buttress and the vesture of tree and shrub, and in the ranks of ugliness we are afflicted by the ubiquitous monoliths of weathered syenite so pock-marked with cavities that I, for one, was constantly comparing them to Brobdingagian hunks of Gruyere cheese, or to the carious teeth of giants.

That is, to be sure, a personal estimate, and no one will dispute that it is a place of most ancient historical associations and a magnetic centre that has drawn great spiritual Beings of all ages to live in its caves and temples. It is a place of special sanctity to Jains and Hindus, and it is said of Abu that if you fast there but one day all your sins are forgiven you, and that if you live there but one year you will become the preceptor of all mankind.

In this chapter, no less than in the last, there is free licence to wander at will in time and space, and my aim will, therefore, be to pick out the most arresting features of the work that Baba did during the three months that his headquarters were at Abu.

First, then, work on Mount Abu itself. The most interesting contact here was with a man known as Matragiri Maharaj, a good yogi who lives in a hut at Oria, a village not far from the mountain's highest crest, some four miles from the town of Abu. Baba contacted Matragiri Maharaj twice during this stay at Abu. At the first contact, there was a countryman sitting by the hut who gave his age as somewhere in the forties, and this man said that he remembered quite well having seen Matragiri Maharaj when he (the countryman) was a small boy, and he explained that there had been, as far

as his own memory went, no change in the yogi's physical appearance since then. It is impossible for the casual visitor to estimate Matragiri Maharaj's age by looking at him. He is tall and bony, and naked except for a loincloth, and his hair is black and his skin almost black. His eyes are deep-set and his glance penetrating, though this does not disturb one in the least—it is, one feels, the glance of a saint. The only mark of age is that the skin all over his body is very finely wrinkled, but so finely that the minute corrugations can be seen only when one comes within a few paces of him.

Baba contacted this yogi originally on an earlier visit to Mount Abu in 1947, a contact that is described in the last chapter of *The Wayfarers*. I have thought it worth including an account of these later contacts in this chapter because, in conjunction with the account of the yogi at Avanashi in the last chapter, one is forced to recognize that this quality of agelessness is common to many yogis.

The only other episode at Abu itself that I shall describe here was a contact with an advanced pilgrim known as Haridas Baba Nirvan. This bent old man is naked except for a ragged loincloth, and he sits under the wretched remains of a patched umbrella on a stone platform at the edge of the Nakki Lake. When Baba sat with him for contact, Haridas wept and wept, calling himself Ishwar's dog—a touching phrase to express his worthlessness in the eyes of God. He was so overcome by emotion that it was some fifteen minutes before he would let Baba leave his side.

So much for Abu itself, and now let us turn to some of the incidents of the tours. In his first journey early in March Baba went up to Ajmer, where he contacted Chacha again, and he also gave five rupees each to forty-four widows.

In *The Wayfarers* there are many accounts of such occasional contacts with the poor, but this is, I believe, the first time that he has contacted and given alms to widows. These gifts that Baba gives from time to time to poor people in large numbers are not, we may be sure, ordinary charity. Baba contacts these people behind closed doors, though what he does at the time of contact is not known to us because we are not allowed to see his work. I think, however, that we are justified in the assumption that the gift itself, whether it be money or cloth or grain or anything else, is a kind of catalyst by which Baba is able to bring about a certain spiritual reaction, just as a chemist may use a catalyst to bring about a certain chemical reaction. Baba, we know, often gives charity to individual people, with apparently no other aim than to lessen the burden of their material cares, but these gifts are of quite another kind and involve no *contact*.

Enough, however, of Ajmer, and let us pester the tireless Hanuman again to carry us in an effortless leap from the heights of Abu to the little township of Badnera in the Central Provinces. One night in April, Baba and his men set out from this town for Chandtara, a village some nine miles distant,

in order that Baba might contact a mast known as Badri Baba. When it came to a question of how to cover these nine miles, they had to take a Hobson's choice and charter the only transport available—that infernal and springless chariot, the bullock-cart.

Imagine, then, this loathsome shandrydan plunging through the darkness along an even more loathsome track. Feel, if you dare, not only the eternal vibration but also the unpredictable toss that comes when wheel meets boulder or plunges into a rut a foot deep. See, if you can see anything by this chlorotic moonlight, Baba and his men huddled upon the splintery floorboards, clinging for dear life to one another or to the quaking bulwarks of the cart's sides.

You may suspect all this to be a picturesque exaggeration, but your suspicions will be laid once and for all when I tell you that a bundle of notes to the value of seven hundred rupees, which was wedged firmly and buttoned up in Eruch's pocket, was shaken out of that pocket and lost. One of Eruch's shoes was lost also—though this might, one must concede, have happened under the best conditions. As soon as Eruch became aware of the horrible emptiness of that pocket of his, he told Baba about it, since the money was of course Baba's.

And what was Baba's reply? He told Eruch, if you please, to think about the mast first, saying that the money did not matter now, but that the mast did. Any prolix commentary on this astounding reply would be superfluous, but I would suggest at least that it gives us an idea of the importance that Baba attaches to his work with the God-intoxicated, and that it was, moreover, a very different answer from what you or I would have given under the circumstances.

And so on went the party, lighter by seven hundred rupees and a shoe, but heavier, Baba's remarks notwithstanding, by a load of anxiety and self-reproof that lay like a lump of osmium in Eruch's heart. The party reached the village at about 1.0 a.m. and the first thing they heard was Badri Baba laughing at the top of his voice. This was followed by an interval of silence, and some moments later they heard him cry out, "Baba is hungry, Baba is hungry"—a proclamation that referred to the mast himself, and not to our Baba. It seems that Badri Baba shouts "Baba is hungry" at any time of night or day, even immediately after a full meal, and he has other strange habits also. Thus, if he sleeps or wanders or sits, he does each of these things for two or three days at a stretch. He is, however, a good mast and is very famous in Badnera and the surrounding country.

At this time of night it was only natural that the entire village was asleep, and after a good deal of fuss and the disbursement of one rupee, one of Baba's men got a small brass cupful of goat's milk, a hunk of raw sugar, and a piece of *bhakri*. Baba gave these to Badri Baba and then sat with him for contact. The contact over, Baba and his men set off at about 2.30 a.m. to return to Badnera.

Since the loss of the packet of money had affected the spirits of Baba's companions, Chhagan volunteered to walk in front of the bullock-cart, an electric torch in each hand, so that he might search for the money and the shoe. About two miles from the village he found the shoe, and this gave him confidence that the money would be found also—as found it was, about a mile ahead.

This is, you will agree, an appropriate moment to take our leave of this little band of tired but happy men tossing in darkness back to Badnera in company with their Master, and we may wish them God-speed on their journey and a cup of hot tea at Badnera.

From Badnera they went next to Nagpur, where the use of a car was offered them by one of Baba's disciples. It was the sanguine expectation of those with Baba that this car would carry them swiftly and in comfort to several widely dispersed centres for Baba's work. That this was, however, a vain delusion may be seen by the account of the very first night out.

Before they set forth, some twenty pieces of baggage had to be stowed away into the car, a problem that might have baffled the canniest stevedore, and captain and crew—a complement of six—then forced themselves into the exiguous accommodation that remained. In the late afternoon they set out for Seoni, a town about eighty miles from Nagpur.

Now it so happened that there was a hill called Ramtek by the roadside between Nagpur and Seoni, upon the slopes of which stood a kind of small temple where an old, blind saint was reputed to live. When they reached this hill Baba therefore stopped the car and sent his men up to find out whether this 'saint' would allow Baba to contact him. This was about nine o'clock at night, and, despite shouts and thundering on the door, the old man—whether pusillanimous or obtuse we know not—refused to let them in. Baba's men, therefore, came down the hill again and set off once more for Seoni.

The first impact with misfortune on this night of misfortunes occurred not many miles beyond this luckless hill, when a back tyre burst with a loud report. The offending wheel was removed and the spare fitted, and only after the latter had been screwed well and truly tight was it discovered that this spare was flat also. Out, therefore, came the handpump and Baba's men set to, turn by turn, at the brave task of inflation, a task beside which the moil and toil of Sisyphus would seem but a Saturday afternoon amusement.

Do not, however, conclude that this labour of pumping was the last of their troubles, for it was in fact the first, and there is no doubt, in my mind at least, that our lady Maya was in one of her more vixenish humours that night. She had begun, as we have learnt, by seeing to it that the spare wheel was flat, despite assurances of the car's chauffeur, before the party ever left Nagpur, that everything was shipshape and Bristol fashion. But our lady Maya had done much more than this, for she had made assurance of disaster doubly sure by seeing to it that there was a twist in a gaiter which had been

fitted some time or other inside this spare wheel, a twist that was never noticed in the darkness and was the cause of some six punctures that night. She had, moreover, added a final touch of vixenishness or shrewishness or what you will, by seeing to it that the patches of the puncture repair outfit were old and perished, and thus utterly useless.

Thus, at the first puncture after the fitting of the spare wheel, Baba's men had to wait helpless for an hour or more until a lorry came trundling down this lonely road, from the driver of which they borrowed a few fresh patches. Each time the tyre went flat it was removed and repaired by torchlight with these borrowed patches, but the last time—about 4.0 a.m. now, and still some seven miles from Seoni—the tyre went flat once more, and they found the guts lacerated beyond repair. It was, as a matter of fact, only on this last disembowelling of the tyre that the villain of all these dastardly crimes was discovered—the twisted gaiter.

The car thus hopelessly crippled, the only solution was for one of the party to go into Seoni to fetch a new tyre and tube, and Chhagan therefore set off to cover those seven dreary miles on Shanks's mare. About half an hour after he had left, however, the others recollected to their horror that Chhagan, bemused by fatigue, had gone off without a sou in his pocket. Vishnu therefore set off in his pursuit, taking the necessary money with him, and caught Chhagan up not long after he had reached the town.

Chhagan himself arrived in Seoni shortly before dawn, and stalked into the city only a few minutes after an alarm had been given of a robbery. Police were milling about the streets, and they not unnaturally accosted this lanky and haunted-looking stranger as a suspect. Chhagan was able, however, to satisfy them that his was an entirely innocent fatigue, and was allowed to go about his business. He fell in with Vishnu not long after, and the two of them soon bought the new tyre and tube.

The sight of these two exhausted pilgrims arriving at the car at about nine o'clock that morning with brand new wheelware seems to have made Maya throw up the sponge, for, from that hour onwards, the party was left in peace. The work in Seoni was completed the same day, and Baba proceeded thence on an extensive tour in the same car, dismissing it eventually at Allahabad some days later, whence it was returned to its owner at Nagpur.

It may seem strange that a spiritually Perfect Being should allow himself to get entangled in such an *odtaa* of apparently fatuous disasters, and it is because I have wanted to show how a Perfect Master *does* sometimes get himself involved in such perplexities, that I have included an account of this tiresome night.

Baba has explained many times that resistance of one kind or another is necessary for his work. If we take this as our starting point, it is surely justifiable to surmise that when resistance is not forthcoming of its own accord, a Perfect Master may deliberately invite it by walking with open eyes into

situations that he knows will bring difficulties, and perhaps even disasters, upon him. This, of course, may seem a bright idea in theory, but when we are told about some incident in which a Master allows himself to be humiliated or obstructed to the point, as it might seem to us, of absurdity, we are conscious of cross currents running in our minds that make us wonder what spiritual Perfection means. It would be impossible, for me at least, to define what I really know nothing about, but in this context we can certainly ask ourselves whether, if we accept that Christ was spiritually Perfect, He was any the less Perfect because He deliberately allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross like a common criminal.

It might seem unfair to compare the agony of crucifixion with a night of petty annoyances, but it seems to me that the principle common to both is that a Perfect Master deliberately allows himself to suffer in a way, and at a time, that answers to the needs of his work. The particular reason for enduring a particular difficulty or disaster may be beyond our understanding, but I am certain of one thing at least that all such voluntary sufferings, whether great or small, are borne by these Realized Beings for the salvation of mankind.

Two days after this night of patching and pumping, a contact took place that deserves a short description. Dada Thanthan Pal* lives at Jumunia, a village not far from Jubbulpore. He is reported to be about a hundred and fifty years old and is now so decrepit that he cannot walk. He came originally, so people say, from the distant city of Bareilly. A certain woman died one day in Bareilly, and Dada Thanthan Pal, for some reason or other, kept her body by his side and would allow no one to remove it for cremation. This, as we may well understand, gave offence to the woman's relatives, and the following day an infuriated mob came and took the body away by main force. Following the crisis, Thanthan Pal became so unpopular that he very sensibly left Bareilly, and he came in due course to this little village near Jubbulpore where he now lives in the house of a landowner.

His name is bizarre indeed, and its origin deserves a word or two of explanation. It should be understood, to begin with, that saints and masts are believed to have the power of granting the desires of ordinary mortals. Thus a barren woman desiring a child may visit some saint or other, and a man about to start a new business may beseech him to give the enterprise his blessing. Many people with desires of this kind visit Dada Thanthan Pal, and his riposte to all or most of them is, "I don't take anything from Vishnu and I don't give anything to Mahadev; I just sit in peace and bliss and don't care a rap for anyone or anything." The Hindustani for the last phrase is "*thanthan pal*", and hence this man's name. Baba explains that Dada Thanthan Pal is an adept pilgrim, and that although he is very loving, very lovable, and as mild as a lamb, he radiates such power that when you sit near him you feel as if you were face to face with a tiger.

* Note for Westerners: Thanthan is pronounced to rhyme (very roughly) with the slang word "tum-tum," and Pal to rhyme with the German word "Tal."

Following this contact at Jumunia the party proceeded by car through Mandla to Katni, where a contact took place that demands inclusion in this main text.

Sobha Mast is, Baba tells us, a very advanced mast who is majzoob-like at times and salik-like at others. Like so many great masts he lives in the vilest environment, and yet he is strong and healthy—the very embodiment, it would seem, of happiness and vigour. He is to be found in a yard at the back of a tenth-rate *sarai* (a hospice would be an egregiously euphemistic translation of this word) where several latrines of the worst kind are but a few yards from him. Not only this, but he sits within the crater of a kind of volcano about six feet high; a volcano made up of every conceivable kind of refuse and muck. You will perhaps get an even better idea of what a perfectly splendid place it is if we add that Sobha Mast does not clamber out of this crater even for calls of nature.

Since Sobha Mast is, as Baba tells us, a very advanced mast, and since he is also, as anyone who has seen him will tell us, an almost unbelievably filthy one from the physical point of view, this is an appropriate moment to reproduce a relevant explanation of Baba's, although it is out of its proper context. The explanation that follows arose out of a contact in July 1949 with a Poona mast who lived within the four walls of a public urinal. Baba's exact original words were not put down at the time, but since they were addressed principally to Dr. Ghani, I have (in collaboration with him and of course with Baba), paraphrased some notes that Ghani gave me.

"If I really like anything," Baba said, "I like two things—masts and children. I like masts for their strength and children for their helplessness. The fire of love is very terrible indeed, and masts present a challenge—of this terrible fire of love—to God, the Beloved."

At this point Ghani asked Baba, "Why do so many masts choose dirty and insanitary surroundings, and how is it that their health isn't affected?"

"Masts," replied Baba, dictating on his board, "because of the terrible fire of their love, present a challenge to the Beloved, and this challenge—that the Beloved should manifest Himself—is always accompanied by heroic efforts to achieve total self-elimination or egolessness; efforts that may take many forms. To live in dirty surroundings, such as in or near a latrine or a urinal, is one way of utterly forgetting one's bodily existence. And the beauty of it is that when the body is utterly neglected or forgotten—because the consciousness is aware only of love for the Divine Beloved—it does not deteriorate but takes care of itself automatically. The minds of ordinary people are constantly busy looking after their bodies, but they find that, in spite of taking every kind of precaution and care, deterioration can never be avoided altogether. Kabir said,

"Tan tajye tan rahe, tan rakhe tan jae;

Yehi achamba hamne dekha, mada kalko khae"

Discard the body, it remains;
Preserve the body, it goes;
And so the astounding fact emerges
That the (uncared for) corpse eats up death."

"It is not given to everybody," continued Baba, "To be a lover of God. Such lovers are so consumed in the fire of love that they are not conscious of their stage of spiritual progress and they do not have any thought of union with God. They simply 'enjoy' the torture of love, and long for more and more of it. These lovers don't have any thoughts about their separation from the Beloved, or, as I have already told you, any thoughts of union with Him. They are resigned to the state in which they find themselves, and, when their resignation reaches its climax, it is the Beloved Who seeks Union with them. Hafiz says,

" Firaq-o-wasl che khahi, raza-e-dust talab."
"Separation and union are none of your business—seek
only to resign yourself utterly to the Will of the Beloved."

So much, then, for Sobha Mast, and we must agree that this explanation of Baba's helps us towards understanding this apparent paradox of inner purity and outer filthiness.

Following this and other contacts in Katni, Baba and his party went on by car to Rewah, where another great soul was contacted. Mauganj-ka Hafizji is an adept pilgrim, also 100 per cent, salik-like, who lives normally in Mauganj, a small town about forty miles to the east of Rewah, although he comes now and again to stay in Rewah itself. He is said to be about 125 years old, and he winds a single piece of cloth round his body in spiral fashion, so that it covers him from shoulder to ankle. He is respected by both Hindus and Muslims, and people come even from Allahabad to see him.

From Rewah we shall now proceed to the world-famous city of Benares, where Baba and his men arrived four days after this contact with Mauganj-ka Hafizji. Although Baba has been many times to this pilgrim city that overlooks the wide waters of the Ganges, he has never, I think, made such a memorable contact as on this visit in April 1949.

First of all, however, a word or two about one other contact in this city, if only because the sequel to the meeting was unusual. The man in question is known as Lakaria Baba. He is a tubby fellow, fiftyish to look at, and he wears quite decent clothes and sits in a little stall and gives away bits of wood and string as talismans to people who ask him for such things. The men with Baba were not impressed by Lakaria's appearance—he was, they thought, too well fed and too well dressed. Baba, however, explained that he was an advanced soul, and he told Eruch to write his name and address on a piece of paper and remind him about him as soon as they returned to Abu. Baba reached Abu on 28th April, and Eruch reminded Baba about this man the next day. He was told to write Lakaria Baba's name and address on a fresh slip of paper, and this slip was kept by Baba on the table near his bed.



Mauganj-ka Hafizji

A few days later, on 4th May, Baba picked this paper up from the table and crumpled it into a little ball which he handed to Eruch, telling him to throw it into a well. The fragment of paper was thus tossed into a well at the bottom of a wretched and detestable little lane known as Bhisti Nullah—a lane in which a few of Baba's mandali were staying and which so won their affections that they re-christened it "Beastly Nullah".

So much then, for this sequel to Baba's contact with Lakaria Baba, and now let us turn to the outstanding contact of this visit to Benares. We should mention, to begin with, that on the early morning of this particular day, Baba had said that if he could make a satisfactory contact with an advanced soul of a really high type, he would be able to round off his work and would thus vote the tour a success. You may imagine, therefore, that Baba's men were determined to strive their utmost to contribute to a successful and happy conclusion. And now to the man in question.

Batwa Shah is a famous figure in Benares, where he is known also as Juwa Shah, the word *ju* meaning a louse. This alternative soubriquet has been applied to him because, as you may guess, he is literally swarming with these horrible parasites. It is also said of Batwa Shah that he comes of a good family and that his home is near Ghazipur.

Baba has told us that Batwa Shah is a very great mast indeed, and that he is salik-like at times and majzoob-like at others. You may perhaps be better able to judge how great a mast he is from a remark that Baba made when he was going through the first typescript of this chapter. "When I sat near Batwa Shah," said Baba, "I felt as if I was sitting near Chacha." And Chacha, as you may remember, is a God-realized Being—a majzoob of the seventh plane.

By studying the picture above we may see for ourselves the asthenic figure and pensive eyes of this great mast, though we may or may not guess that his temperament is prone to phases of irritability. We may see also, from the perky whipper-snapper sitting with him, that Batwa Shah is fond of children and that children are also fond of him. The delightful little brat in this picture had, as a matter of fact, just been fed by Batwa Shah—which is perhaps why he is looking at the photographer with a slightly aggressive stare as if to say, "This is *my* place, and not yours; and this is *my* uncle, and not yours."

One of the distinctive features of Batwa Shah is that he carries sheets of paper wherever he goes and, as soon as he sits down anywhere, he pulls out a long and peculiar pencil and covers sheet after sheet with writing. At the bottom left hand corner of the picture the outlines of some sheets of paper are discernible, and we see also that the child has one end of Batwa Shah's long pencil in his mouth, and is holding his fingers to the shaft as if it were a flute. This picture, by the by, was not taken at the time of the contact, but in August 1949, when it was specially commissioned for this volume.

When Baba and his men went to Batwa Shah in the morning, Baidul saw a mosque hard by and thought it a good place for Baba's work of contact. He therefore said to Batwa Shah, "Come with me to that mosque."

"I have forgiven (*sic*) the mosque," retorted Batwa Shah, "So now I won't come there."

The other men with Baba then tried to coax Batwa Shah to go with them to the mosque, or to go somewhere, at least, where Baba might contact him privately—but, alas, without success. That same evening, however, they all came back to him again, and Baba sent Eruch with a "please, please, *please*" that contact should be allowed. To this the reply was, "Come at nine o'clock tonight."

And so at nine o'clock back came Baba and his men for the third time that day. They found Batwa Shah lying on a *charpai* (country bed) at the edge of the road, and Baba sat by Batwa Shah's side on this bed and so contacted him. It happened, also, that Batwa Shah had some food with him, food which had been given him by one of the many people who revere him, and he ate about half of this in Baba's presence and then handed the plate to Baba and told him to eat up what was left. Not long after Baba had complied with this request a woman brought a plate of food and gave it to Batwa Shah. As before, Batwa Shah himself ate about half of what was on the plate and then handed the rest to Baba, telling him to eat it up. During all this time the woman had remained standing near by, and when Baba had almost finished eating—there was only a mouthful or two left—Batwa Shah took the plate away and gave it to the woman, telling her to distribute the food that remained amongst her family.

Thereafter, if you please, Batwa Shah asked Baba to scratch him! Baba at once complied with this request and for about an hour he sat by Batwa Shah's side and scratched him—a delightful scene, one must confess. Finally he said aloud to Baba in English, "Permitted and allowed." This strange and curt remark brought the contact to an end, and Baba came away brimming with an infectious joy that put a new spirit into his tired but faithful companions.

In striving to do justice to this work of Meher Baba with advanced souls and others, I find myself jostled by the horns of a dilemma. When Baba began this great work many years ago there was a morning freshness about it that stimulated his mandali to a vital enthusiasm. But these labours have now gone on for so many years that the men who go with Baba on these tours have begun to show symptoms of a langour of the spirit not unlike the *ennui* that oppresses one on a steamy summer afternoon. One of the results of this is that their descriptions of all except the most exceptional contacts are inclined to be perfunctory or, worse still, to consist of a mere inventory of physical peculiarities. This is not, to be sure, their fault at all, but it has the effect of making the job of putting these events on to paper very difficult indeed. And then, of course, it is clear that no one, except Baba himself, knows the real



Batwa Shah of Benares

meaning of these contacts—the whole thing is a mystery as deep and insoluble as Life itself. This personal jeremiad is only half the dilemma, and the other half is an almost neurotic obsession in my own mind that all this work of Meher Baba with advanced souls, sadhus, and the mad and poor, must be put on record with a faithful attention to detail.

There is, before we close this chapter, still another tour to be dealt with, a tour that was so trying to those who went with Baba (heat, almost no sleep, and hardly any food), that they could describe a little of it beyond their own exhaustion—an exhaustion, alas, which has so infected me that I find myself reluctant to describe more than one contact.

From Benares, then, which is where we left off, Baba went on to Gaya and returned thence to Abu. About a round dozen days later, he set out again on his last tour from Mount Abu, and the details of this journey are listed in the summary. The tour began with a good contact in Palanpur and ended with some first-class work in Hyderabad, but it is to one contact in a village near Yadgiri that I shall confine myself.

Tilgur Swami* is a God-realized Being. If we study the teachings of Meher Baba we find that Realized Beings may be divided, for all practical purposes, into three types: the *Majzoob*; the *Jivanmukta*; and the Perfect Master.

The Majzoob is merged—completely and utterly so—in God. Sufis call this state the final *Fana*, and it is a state in which the soul experiences but does not *use*, Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. This means that although the Majzoob is conscious of Himself as God, he is quite oblivious of the three spheres—gross, subtle and mental.

The state of the Jivanmukta, the second type, will, I believe, be better understood if we first say a word or two about the third type—the Perfect Master.

Meher Baba tells us that the Perfect Master experiences and *uses* Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss, and that he is also conscious of the three spheres—gross, subtle, and mental. We therefore see that he is conscious of Himself as God, and, on top of this, that he is conscious also of the three spheres. Most important of all, he has the authority to use his Infinite powers, and so can help all living things towards their ultimate Goal, and can also make certain souls spiritually perfect. We should mention, by the by, that when Vedantists use the word *Sadguru*, and the Sufis the word *Salik-e-Mukammil*, they mean, or ought to mean, none other than the Perfect Master.

Now to go back to the second type, the Jivanmukta, who is in a position or state—call it what you will—which has been described by Baba as the Divine Junction. Without wishing to be too recondite, I ought to explain that Vedantists refer to this position of the Jivanmukta as *Turya Avastha*, and Sufis as *Fana-ma-al-Baqā*; and the latter, incidentally, when they speak of the Jivanmukta, may use the word *Azad-e-mutlaq*.

* This man was wrongly called Telegu Swami in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*, under "Yadgiri".

The state of consciousness of the Jivanmukta is not easy to put down in so many words. Perhaps, however, the simplest way to start is to say that it varies from time to time and is sometimes a consciousness of Himself as God (exactly like the Majzoob, in fact) and sometimes a consciousness of one or other of the spheres—gross, subtle, or mental (not at all like the Majzoob, in fact). It is also necessary to explain that when the Jivanmukta is conscious of Himself as God, he is *not* conscious of any of the Spheres, and that, *vice versa*, when he is conscious of any particular sphere, he is *not* conscious of Himself as God. Nevertheless, whatever his state of consciousness, i.e., whether of Himself as God or of some sphere or other, he always is, and always will be, One with God. I should mention finally that Meher Baba has told us that the Perfect Master always has "duty" while in the body, but that the Majzoob and the Jivanmukta do not.

This explanation is, I know, the very incarnation of clumsiness could we compare it with Baba's original lucid explanation. One of the things the mandali never cease to wonder at is the clarity and simplicity of Baba's explanations of spiritual gnosis. You may wonder, then, why on earth we do not stick to Baba's original words—and to this I can only reply that Baba generally gives out these explanations at any time or in any place, so that people are rarely ready with paper, pencil, and a knowledge of shorthand, to make notes of his *ipsissima verba*. The inevitable consequence is, therefore, that one has to dredge the muddy tidal creeks of one's own, or someone else's, memory.

Tilgur Swami is, Baba tells us, a Jivanmukta—a God-realized Being in this state of the Divine Junction. He was first contacted in 1945, and a description of this original meeting will be found in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*. At this second contact in May 1949 (as, indeed, at the first), Tilgur Swami embraced Baba with fervour, and those with Baba noticed that Tilgur Swami was now naked. This nakedness was striking because they remembered that he had been fully clothed at the meeting four years earlier. It was natural, therefore, that Baba's men, as they tramped back to Yadgiri, should have begun to discuss this nakedness and that they should have asked Baba for some explanation of it. Baba's reply was simply this: that although a Jivanmukta does not himself change his habits, his habits nevertheless change of their *own* accord.

So much, then, for this contact with Tilgur Swami. For an account of the full itinerary of this tour and of its many contacts turn, if you are hungry for solid facts, to the summary, where brief notes are given in chronological order.

CHAPTER THREE

Contacts During Baba's Seclusion

22nd June to 31st July 194.9

Some things have an unpredictable destiny. About a year ago I was on the top deck of a bus in Bombay and was delighted to observe a beggar cooking his meal in an old steel helmet. Sword to ploughshare; helmet to saucepan—such are the quirks in the destinies of instruments of war.

This might seem an odd beginning to an account of Baba's contacts during his seclusion, but an opening of this kind may be condoned when we find that Baba spent most of his seclusion in a commonplace if unwarlike instrument—in a cabin made from an old bus body. But it was, as we shall see, the body of a very special bus.

Many of those who read this volume will remember how, in the days before the War, Baba used to travel all over India in a private bus. The chassis, with its 29.5 H.P. engine, was a Chevrolet of 1938 vintage, and the body was built in Bombay to a special design and painted in pale and dark blues. In the early years of the War, however, petrol rationing put an end to these great journeys, and the bus was given by Baba to Sarosh, who overhauled her and enlisted her as a public bus in Ahmadnagar.

There came a day, however, when her coachwork became too battered to carry on this drudgery and so the body was taken off and dumped in the garage yard, where its erstwhile brilliant blues became ever more bleached and desquamated by sun and rain.

This season in the junkyard was, however, a preparation for the final epoch, when the body was to be transformed into a cabin that would give shelter to Baba during the seclusion that is the central theme of this chapter. This destiny had been decided upon before Baba left for Mount Abu at the end of February, and the grimy old body had been lifted one day on to a lorry, and carried out to Pimpalgaon.

While Baba was away at Abu this body was set upon four empty forty-gallon oil barrels in a shady nook between two buildings of the mandali's

quarters. The base was filled in with bricks and mortar, and as soon as this solid foundation was complete, a great deal of skilled work began—work that was supervised down to the last detail by that indefatigable taskmaster, Kaka. The long and the short of all these labours was that when Baba returned from Abu at the end of May, he found the battered and depressing relic of three months ago transmuted, by Kaka's alchemy, into the snuggest and gayest little cabin.

It is not my aim to deal with every detail of Baba's seclusion, and my business will be, for the most part, to describe his work with advanced souls, the mad, and the poor. But the account of this work would make little sense if we did not give some idea of the setting in which it took place. Hence these biographical notes on the cabin in which Baba underwent most of his seclusion, and hence also, a few notes in the succeeding paragraphs to chalk out the main features of the seclusion itself.

In short, Baba began his seclusion on 22nd June, and ended it at 7.0 a.m. on 1st August—a period of roughly forty days that was divided into five distinct phases.

During the first phase (of roughly eight days), Baba contacted twenty-one poor, the fifth-plane mast Ali Shah, and seven mad people—contacts that are described in the summary.

The second phase (of nine days) was, there is every reason to believe, the crucial period of the seclusion. Many weeks later Baba spoke of this phase in the following words; "No one," he said, "except myself and God, knows what I went through during those nine days." We cannot, of course, expect to be told what inward suffering Baba endured during that critical epoch, but we may imagine to some degree his physical burden when we learn that he saw no one except Kaka, that his diet was of fluids* only, and that he had quite literally only a few *minutes* sleep each night.

The third phase (of roughly six days) was, in comparison at least with the antecedent phase, a period of partial relaxation. Thus, although remaining in the cabin enclosure, Baba took solid food once each day and, amongst other activities, he worked with Ali Shah.

We come now to the fourth phase (of roughly nine days)—the phase that was spent in Poona and was, one is bound to admit, really no seclusion at all. In this context one remembers a dig that Baba once made at himself; "I am consistent," he said, "in inconsistency." During this phase, however, Baba made many contacts with masts and others and the events and the setting of these nine days are therefore more relevant to this volume than the other phases of his seclusion. There is still, however, the fifth and final phase to be described, and I must first say a word or two about this before returning to discuss the fourth phase in some detail.

* But no milk was taken; the fluids were plain water, honey and water, milkless tea, etc.

The fifth and the last phase (of roughly seven days) was spent in much the same way as the first and third phases. On the evening of 24th July Baba arrived in Pimpalgaon from Poona, and went once more into his cabin enclosure. He remained within this enclosure throughout these seven days, working almost daily with Ali Shah, and he came out finally at seven o'clock on the morning of 1st August.

Those are the bare bones of the seclusion, and we shall now return to the fourth phase because, as I have explained, it concerns us more than the others. This phase at Poona was, we said, really no seclusion at all; which sounds like an allegation that demands substantiation. We might start, I think, by saying that if Baba were enduring seclusion with a view to earning a greater margin of spiritual profit for himself, there would be some excuse for derogating this phase at Poona as a sign—we may as well be blunt—of spinelessness or even wilful dishonesty. But such an indictment becomes invalid from the start because we know that there never has been and never will be any question of the slightest spiritual profit for Baba himself. Because he is spiritually Perfect, he has no personal axe to grind; but he does, nevertheless, have other people's axes to grind, and to carry through this thankless job he has extended his consciousness from the Shoreless Ocean of Infinite Power, Knowledge, and Bliss, to the choking smog of this wretched yet lovable earth of ours.

We would not, if our powers of modelling were limited to building a snowman once in a blue moon, be so presumptuous as to tell Epstein how to pummel his clay into shape; nor would we, if solving a square root makes us feel like tearing our hair out, dare to advise Einstein how to set out equations concerning relativity or astrophysics.

But when it comes to a Great Being who knows, and is one with, the uttermost secrets of the universe; who is the Master of masters and the Genius of geniuses—who is, as the old prayer goes, King of kings, Lord of lords, and the only Ruler of princes—we hide our ears and tail under the cap and gown of an egregious self-complacency, and bray at him how he should or should not do *his* job.

You may suspect all this to be an acute attack of grandiloquence, and it should, therefore, be made clear that the antecedent paragraphs constitute a pijaw—emotional rather than logical—directed *imprimis* from one department of my own mind to another department of it.

Let us turn, however, from argument to fact. Back for a start, to Pimpalgaon. Following a night of drizzle, the dawn of 16th July broke without rain; but it was a grey dawn, nevertheless, with no splendour of sunlight upon the cincture of hills about the house.

At half past seven Baba came out of his cabin enclosure and climbed into the front of the Buick. Kaka, Gustadji, and Ali Shah, all of whom were to go with Baba to Poona, scrambled into the back seat, and the car swung away from the ashram buildings, moving gingerly at first over the mushy

surface of the half-mile drive, but accelerating to a lively pace when the wheels felt the rough touch of the open road.

Once clear of the road that curves round the fringe of Ahmadnagar—a road as ragged and dirty as the cuff of a tramp's coat—the swift and shining shape swung westwards, and responded to a touch that sent the petrol racing through her veins and the wind sizzling past the swivel-panels of her front windows.

This holiday spirit was, you should understand, the spirit not of this journey only, but of all those nine days spent in a hilltop house that overlooks the city in which Baba had been born fifty-five years before. People in Poona call the house in which Baba stayed, "Thube's Bungalow." It stands upon a small hill, and although it commands impressive views it is also, *miserabile dictu*, at the mercy of every wind. The western fringe of the Deccan plateau is a windy part of the world at any time of year, but in July the moist breath of the south-west monsoon sets the telephone lines sighing and sobbing like ghosts accursed, and the trees tossing their heads like maidens distraught.

Although this phase was planned as an intermission for relaxation, and although it was, as we have said, imbued with the holiday spirit, there were snags of one kind or another, and perhaps the chief of these was the ceaseless rattle of door and window that even wedges would not silence.

So much for the house and the weather, and now what of Baba's company? We have mentioned that Kaka, Gustadji, and Ali Shah the fifth-plane mast, came with Baba from Pimpalgaon, and to these three were added another three who normally live in Poona—Jalbhai (Baba's brother), Eruch, and Dr. Ghani—so that Baba had six people with him in the house.

I have taken it for granted that the reader knows that all Baba's men and women mandali were on complete silence throughout July, but since this may not be widely known it is better to make mention of it here. In order, therefore, that there should be a climate of relaxation for Baba, three of his companions (Ghani, Eruch, and Jal) were allowed to break the seal of their silence.

Could we transmute these six companions for a moment into parts of an imaginary house and household, we might start by comparing Eruch and Kaka, with their capacity for hard work, to the foundations, walls, and roof that gave Baba shelter. We might then go a step further and imagine the principal ornaments of the house to be two, Jalbhai and Ghani; the former because of his gift for mimic and his fund of humorous anecdotes, and the latter because of his tongue that is a scimitar damascened with sly humour and a thousand tags from the Persian and Urdu classics. Gustadji, with his friendliness, his complete naturalness, and his habit of nosing about in rubbish heaps, might be compared (may he forgive us for the comparison) to a beloved family pet; and Ali Shah, the last of these six companions, was—his grey beard and nicotine-stained teeth and fingers notwithstanding—the child of the house.

Now this mention of Ali Shah brings us to the paradox of Baba's stay in Poona, for having proclaimed it from the housetops that this phase was one of relaxation, of *reculer pour mieux sauter* during the final phase that still had to be gone through, we must now reshuffle our ideas to accommodate an apparent incompatibility; to wit, that Baba worked every day with Ali Shah, and that the highways and byways of Poona were scoured every day for masts and advanced souls. We find, indeed, that by the time Baba returned to Pimpalgaon on 24th July, nine men of various grades of spiritual merit had been contacted.

One knows, to be sure, that work is the breath of life to men of destiny, and that their impossible demands and impossible hours of work are both a trial and an inspiration to their lieutenants. All this applies to ordinary men of destiny; to men bound by their egos and by the sanskaras of their actions. But the Great Beings who, having won Everlasting Freedom, plunge down again to a voluntary bondage, do so for work and nothing else, and it is thus axiomatic that every single thing they do should be subordinated to the needs of their work.

What, then, of this work with advanced souls in Poona? We are told that Baba cited two contacts as being good; but before we get on to them we must sketch a rapid caricature of Nannubhai, a clownish fellow who was brought for Baba's contact on 19th July.

Nannubhai, had he lived in the days of Joshua, might have saved the breath of the seven priests who blew the ram's horns, and the breath of all the people of Israel who shouted, simply because his normal conversational voice could have knocked the walls of Jericho flat within fifteen minutes; a preposterous exaggeration, of course, but one that may be treated with indulgence when it is made clear that Nannubhai's voice was so loud that only the most extravagant comparison could give an adequate idea of it. And, as if this were not enough, he would mix holy writ, classical poetry, everyday banalities, sheer nonsense, and sheer lewdness, into an inexpressibly delicious *bouillabaisse* that sent everyone—Baba no less than the others—into fits of laughter.

Ghani, at a hint from Baba, tried to stem the tide of Nannubhai's resounding verses by quoting apposite tags from his own memory—as well expect the tide to have obeyed Canute! Ghani having retired hoarse and exhausted, Eruch stepped into the breach with the simpler and handier weapon of the plain question, and he timed each stroke by posing his questions when Nannubhai was compelled to pause for breath. In this way he put Nannubhai through a kind of *viva voce* exam on odd topics, and Nannubhai, as you may guess, gave delightful and unprintable replies to almost every question. I think, however, that we may quote Eruch's last question and Nannubhai's reply to it.

"Who," asked Eruch, "is greater—Allah or Mohammed?"

"Mohammed, of course," came Nannubhai's unhesitating and ear-splitting reply, "for God goes begging to Mohammed with outstretched hands and by remembering Mohammed you will have a daughter by night and a son by day."

At the end of about half an hour of this unprecedented entertainment, Nannubhai agreed to be bathed by Baba. Following the bath, Baba fed him, and he then sat with him for contact in the usual way.

Nannubhai was not, as we have said, much of a mast, though he had what Baba calls *hawa*. He is, by the by, a Bhorī Muslim and looks in the mid-fifties.

So much for this delightful fellow, and now let us turn to the two really good masts.

Keshav was both a public and a revered figure in Poona; the former because he lived in a public urinal, and the latter because he showed those indefinable yet unmistakable stigmata of a God-intoxicated soul. We should again remind the occidental reader that these public urinals are not the aseptic refuges that he is familiar with, but are, to put it a little waggishly, olfactory reminders that micro-organisms, when left to themselves, can have loads of fun with the end-products of human metabolism.

It was said that many of those who revered Keshav had tried to persuade him to come and live in their own houses, but that he had declined all such offers, preferring to pass his days in this horrible place. In the second chapter of this volume and also in the first chapter of *The Wayfarers*, Baba has given us some of the reasons why these God-intoxicated souls are almost always drawn to live in filthy places. The reasons Baba gave were, as we might expect, fundamentally spiritual, and I have neither the intention nor the qualification to add to or subtract from what Baba has told us.

Spiritual explanations, however, are not quite the cup of tea of the average modern Westerner, although he is ready at any time to play fast and loose with specimens of jargon from normal and morbid psychology. One wonders sometimes why this is so, when nearly all the Christian mystics and, above all, our good friend the Bible, have much simpler and sounder words for many of the same things.

I may, in what follows, appear to be skating on the thin ice of doubtful taste, or be interpreted as denigrating the character of the average Westerner by implying that he has an unsavoury mind. Despite these risks, however, I believe such frankness will be welcomed by all except the most prudish.

The point, then, is this; that since bits and pieces of psychological knowledge are to be found in the mental kit of most Westerners, a quite legitimate suspicion may arise that these so-called masts who live in latrines and urinals are nothing more than perverts. Unimpeachable proof that they are not perverts might be difficult to obtain, but perhaps the most convincing reply is that the adult population of India has as sound a knowledge of the



Keshav in his Urinal Home



Keshav by the Roadside

colourful variations of the gonadal impulse as the adult population of any country in the world.

All right, you say, agreed that they are not perverts; but might they not be specimens whose sexuality has reverted to, or has never developed beyond, the infantile level? And you would be thinking, of course, of Freud and all that.

To give a convincing answer to this question is certainly beyond my capacity, because I have neither a special knowledge of psychoanalytic theory on the one hand, nor any direct spiritual knowledge on the other. Nevertheless, even after making due allowances for these limitations, it is my sober conclusion that these masts who gravitate to public conveniences are in a different class altogether from those psychoneurotic patients whose sexuality has been blocked or has reverted to the infantile level; and in a different class also from plain psychotics. This is, no doubt, a slovenly and unsatisfactory answer; but since we can neither prove that masts are spiritually advanced, nor disprove that they are psychotics or psychoneurotics, we may as well temporize with an interim agreement to keep an open mind on the subject. For my own part, in any case, I accept what Baba tells us about these great souls, in the same way as I would accept, for example, what Niels Bohr might tell us about nuclear fission.

Let us return, however, to Keshav and to the account of Baba's contact with him. With a little persuasion he was coaxed out of his urinal into a jeep, and was brought to Baba's bungalow. As soon as he entered the house Baba came to see him, and he was invited to the bathroom to be given a hot bath by Baba—which was where the trouble started. No, he protested, he would *not* let Baba bathe him; nor indeed would he let Baba touch him. "I am like your son," he said, "I won't let you touch my feet."

Three of Baba's men tried to coax him to allow Baba to bathe him, but he began to struggle and to protest that he must leave the house at once. He even called for the jeep to be brought to the door, and Baba therefore sent Eruch to fetch it at once. Eruch complied forthwith, and Keshav was ushered out of the door and helped into the front seat of the jeep.

We come now to another example of Baba's patience with these God-intoxicated souls, for Ghani tells us that Baba and his men stood round the jeep for almost an hour, cajoling and goading Keshav that he should allow Baba to wash his feet. The melody, as we might guess, was one of an unearthly love, but there was also, as those who have witnessed such scenes know, a counterpoint of absurdities that would have ravished the hearts of the most insensitive audience.

Has one not seen our clumsy Mohammed standing on the verandah at Meherabad, grasping Baba's light and vivid hand in his horny and grimy paw, while tears of ecstasy fall like nectar from the brimming cups of his eyes? There is, to begin with, an almost breathless hush, until the silence is

broken, *nolens volens*, by prodigious and shameless sniffs as the tears trickle down inside Mohammed's nose; and, ere another minute has passed—he asks for potatoes for lunch!

One may imagine, perhaps, a scene something like this between Baba and Keshav, the latter drawn to Baba by the magnetism of an indefinable love, and yet indisposed to yield to it. Eventually, however, Keshav said that Baba might pour water on his feet as he sat in the jeep; and behold, from that moment, the incomparable flower a complete capitulation to Baba's will, for no sooner had the water touched his feet than he suffered Baba to do whatever he wished with him. Baba therefore gave him tea, milk, and bread, and Keshav asked for a coat and one rupee. These were sent for from the house, and Baba gave them to him and finally sat with him in the jeep for contact, before sending him back to his evil-smelling urinal near the railway station.

Baba has summarized Keshav's spiritual state in terms of percentages. He was, Baba said, a great mast; 75 per cent, jalali and 25 per cent, jamah; 75 per cent, majzoob-like and 25 per cent, salik-like. In conclusion, we should explain that the photos of Keshav reproduced in this volume were taken several weeks after his contact with Baba, and that Keshav died the day after these photos were taken.

Ram Mast, the last we shall describe in this chapter, was what Baba called a good *dnyani* mast. This is, to be sure, a new definition as far as masts are concerned (for no mention is made of it in *The Wayfarers*), and we must therefore turn to Baba for elucidation.

Baba tells us that as far as the God-intoxicated are concerned, only the Majzoob of the seventh plane can really and truly assert, "I am God." As a general rule, indeed, masts do not feel that they are God, and do not say that they are God—and this applies even to masts of the sixth plane. There are, however, certain masts, who may not necessarily have advanced very far on the Path, but who nevertheless genuinely and truly feel that they *are* God, and thus assert that they *are* God. This is, Baba says, neither illusion nor delusion, and masts of this very rare kind may be distinguished by the name, "Dnyani Masts."

Ram Mast is said to have earned his name because he lives in the Ram Temple in Poona, and Ghani describes him as having a perpetual smile on his face. In contrast to Keshav, Ram Mast did not resist Baba in the least, and Baba bathed him, clad him in new clothes, and gave him sweetmeats. Following the contact Eruch, at a hint from Baba, asked Ram Mast where Ram was.

"Ram," he replied, "is right here, in all of you."

"Have you seen Ishwar (God)?" asked Eruch—again at a hint from Baba.

"I see Ishwar before my eyes now," came the reply, "and Ishwar is everywhere."



A map of Places mentioned in this Summary

Summary of Contacts

From 8th June 1946 to 1st August 1949

As we open this summary we find Baba in his temporary headquarters at Rusi's house in Ahmadnagar. In the first week of June he set out on a short tour of Gujarat, going first to Baroda.

* * *

8th June 1948 In Baroda. Baba renewed two contacts of the previous year; *Chambu Shah* and *Saiyid Badruddin Rafai Shah*. For a description of these great masts see the last chapter of *The Wayfarers*.

* * *

Following these contacts Baba went next to Nadiad.

* * *

9th June 1948 In Nadiad. A contact with *Jankidas Maharaj*, who is the head of an ashram and a seeker widely extolled in Nadiad and the surrounding country. Three sadhus were contacted also, and Baba then went to Ahmadabad.

10th June 1948 In Ahmadabad. *Jagannath Maharaj* was contacted; a description of this contact is given in Chapter One. Baidul tells us that this meeting in June 1948 was not the first, and that the initial contact was on 22nd September 1947, although no mention is made of this in the last chapter of *The Wayfarers*.

Following this meeting with Jagannath Maharaj, Baba contacted others of secondary interest.

Karewala Baba encumbers his limbs with iron rings, and asks for a rupee before he allows anyone to serve or contact him. He is generally surrounded by a group of admirers and devotees, and, although a mast, is but a mediocre one.

Amin Mian lives in a small shrine; as a mast he is so-so.

Majzoob Shah is a nonagenarian who has sat for untold years in one place; he never eats unless fed by others.

Saidan Bapu lives in a mosque which he keeps well swept, and he too eats only when fed by others.

Mohammed Hussain is the mast who lives in a public urinal; for his description see Chapter One.

Awa Mast has to be compelled to eat because, if you merely hand him food, he will give it away to the first comer. He is a good mast.

Nasruddin Bapu has many disciples.

Galliwalla Bapu is a moderate mast who sits in a charcoal shop.

11th June 1948 Baba continues his work in Ahmadabad. *Bailulla Shah*, whom some people call *Singarhwala*, was the first contact; for his description see Chapter One.

Kasim Bapu goes to the mosque every morning at 5.0 a.m. and then returns to his home where he teaches boys. He is a seeker.

Din Mohammed lives in a little shrine and eats only once a day; he is a moderate mast.

* * *

Having completed these contacts in Ahmadabad Baba returned to his temporary headquarters in Rusi's bungalow at Ahmadnagar. Just over two weeks later he set out on tour again and went first to Nasirabad.

* * *

29th June 1948 In Nasirabad. Here Baba contacted *Jhipra Baba*, the "freak" mast who is described at some length in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*.

From Nasirabad Baba went the same day to Jalgaon, where he contacted *Maulana Huzur*, a moderate mast who roams about with a bundle under his arm.

* * *

From Jalgaon he made his way down to Kalyan, the straggling railway junction that lies more or less midway between Bombay and the soaring cliffs of the Western Ghats.

* * *

30th June 1948 In Kalyan. Here Baba contacted a mast who keeps repeating the sound "*karak, karak*", so that we are bound to agree that his nickname, *Karak Mastan*, is well chosen. Baidul says he is a Hindu, although the Muslims of Kalyan claim him as one of their own faith. Barring this repetition of "*karak, karak*", his talk is a jumble that makes no sense at all. He is a moderate mast of the jalali type.

* * *

From Kalyan, Baba went to Bombay.

* * *

1st July 1948 In Bombay. The first contact was with *Ramdas Khatwala Maharaj*, whom Baba describes as a "*Dnyani-Salik*" type. He lives in a tenement in Colaba (a part of Bombay), in which there are many Sindhi refugees. The Western reader perhaps needs to be told that these Sindhi refugees are Hindus from Sind—now a part of Pakistan—and that these Sindhis fled to India after 15th August 1947. Khatwala Maharaj was brought by these particular refugees with them when they came from Pakistan to India.

Marhatan Mai is a very good mastani; she is described in Chapter One.

Ali Asghar, the great mast at Mahim, was the next contact—or, as we said in Chapter One, the next attempt at contact. For details see Chapter One.

* * *

Following this work in Bombay, Baba returned to his temporary headquarters in Ahmadnagar. Just over ten days later he went down to Bombay again by car.

* * *

12th July 1948

Baba reached Bombay in the early afternoon and made his final contact with *Ali Asghar*; for a description of this contact see Chapter One.

On his way back to Ahmadnagar from Bombay, a mast was seen by the wayside near Thana. He was bundled into the car and taken to Thana Dak bungalow, where Baba contacted him. This man is a moderate mast and, although he says he is a farmer, he has never been seen to wield a plough but wanders about on foot in and around Thana.

* * *

Following this contact Baba returned to his temporary headquarters in Rusi's house at Ahmadnagar. Almost a month later he set out on a tour to South India, going first to Madras.

* * *

10th August 1948

In Madras. Baba's first contact was with a mast known as *Kalgiri Pir*, and the description of this contact is to be found in Chapter One. We should, however, mention that this mast is also known as *Vellorewala*, and that in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* (under Madras) *Vellorewala* is wrongly given as an alternative name of *Kali Kambliwala*, whose name stands immediately below that of *Kalgiri Pir*.

Maulvi Saheb is the spiritual chargeman of Madras; for a description of this contact see Chapter One.

Ghafur Saheb is a good mast and an interesting combination of mahbubi and jalali types. He is described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* (under Bangalore) where he was first brought for Baba's contact in 1939.

Then followed two contacts of negligible interest; the first, *Ansari Murshid*; and the second, *Biwi Mastani*—the last contact of the day.

11th August 1948

Baba continues his work in Madras. The first and best contact of this day was with *Moti Baba*, the great sixth-plane mast whom Baba had originally contacted in Negapatam in 1939. For a description of this latest contact see Chapter One. The other contacts of this day were of minor interest, and we may list them shortly.

Kala Mastan has *hawa*.

Ashaq Mian was first contacted in 1945. In those days he kept dogs, but must have got over his doggy phase in the intervening years, for he is now dogless. Waggishness apart, *Ashaq Mian* is a good mast.

Abdul Kadir Adam Pira; no further record.

Maulvi Umal Jahal (Lucknowwala) is an old man who wanders about holding glowing *agarbatties* (joss sticks). He sleeps in a mosque and eats only when given food.

Nur Shah Pathan is to all appearances about eighty years old, and has sat for years on a certain verandah. He is respected as a man of sanctity and is an initiate pilgrim.

12th August 1948

This was the last day of Baba's work in Madras. Two contacts only, neither of much importance. The first was *Pir Mastan (Nagorewala)* who sits under a tree year in and year out; the second was *Abdul Qadir Pasha*, a peripatetic mast who nurses a bundle under his arm.

* * *

From Madras Baba and his men proceeded to Trichinopoly.

* * *

13th August 1948

In Tiruvalur—or, to be more precise, between Tiruvalur and Negapatam. This was the day on which Baba made his final contact with *Chatti Baba*. For a description of this contact see Chapter One.

* * *

From Tiruvalur, Baba and his men went by train and bus to Avanashi.

* * *

15th August 1948

In Avanashi (Avinashi). Here Baba contacted a great yogi known as *Ilai Swami*; a contact that is fully described in Chapter One. From Avanashi the party went the same day to Tiruppur,

where Baba contacted another yogi known as *Prasananand Swamt Guru*, who is also described in Chapter One.

* * *

From Tiruppur, Baba and his men set out for home, but since they had to pass through Madras, Baba took the opportunity of making one further contact there.

* * *

16th August 1948

In Madras. *Rarndas Swami* is a good mast who is said to have come from Allahabad many years ago. He has sat under a certain tree in Madras for thirty years (more or less), and he never begs.

* * *

Following this contact the party returned to Ahmadnagar, where Baba again settled into his temporary headquarters at Rusi's house. In September, Baba left Rusi's house and moved to "Meherazad," his centre at Pimpalgaon, and, in the first week of November, he set out on another tour, going first to Junagarh.

* * *

3rd November 1948

In Junagarh (Junagadh). Baba's first contact was with *Munga Sain Mastan*, whom Baba also took up Datar Hill with him the next day. For his description see Chapter One.

The second contact was with *Jina Sain*. Years ago this man was a cook in the kitchen attached to the group of shrines at the foot of the famous Datar Hill. One day, however, he left this kitchen and began to lead a vagrant existence by day and a static one by night, for he would stand all night long in water. Some years later he went back to the kitchen at Datar; not, however, to stir the pots, but to lie on the floor for many years. It would therefore seem that he was in a majzoob-like state during these years. One day he walked out of this kitchen again and went to a certain tree at the foot of Datar Hill, under which he lies to this day. He is a good mast.

4th November 1948

Baba and his men climbed Datar Hill, and *Munga Sain Mastan* was carried up in a sedan chair. Baba's purpose in ascending this hill was to undergo seclusion, and a fast on water only for two days—4th and 5th November. Thus as soon as Baba reached the top of the hill he began his seclusion and fast, and worked also with Munga Sain Mastan.

5th November 1948

Baba still in seclusion and still working with *Munga Sain Mastan*. On this day also Baba contacted eighteen poor people who were living in the shrine, and gave seven rupees to each one.

6th November 1948

Baba and his men came down to Junagarh again, bringing Munga Sain with them. On this day also Baba contacted *Ghulam*

Nabi Nanga Mast, who sits *in puris natmalibus* in a room. He is a good majzoob-like mast.

7th November 1948

This was the last day in Junagarh. Baba and his men climbed one of the summits of the Girnar Hills, on which there is a cave named after Raja Bharthari. Baba sat alone in this cave for two hours.

* * *

From Junagarh, Baba and his men went to Delhi.

* * *

11th November 1948

In Delhi. Baba's contacts on this first day were of negligible interest and may be dismissed briefly.

Mohammed Hafiz Mastan is an old man who lies night and day under a blanket. He loves *pan*, and if you bring him a fresh *pan* he uncovers his face long enough to let you see him push the folded leaf into his mouth.

Nani Mastani is an old woman who lives on the roadside opposite the Jama Masjid, in the tiniest hut you ever saw. She mumbles to herself when alone, and when confronted by strangers she abuses them. She is a moderate mastani of the jalali type.

Haji Hafiz Salik roams the streets stark naked.

Apa Mastani is a woman in her early fifties who wears men's clothes. She is respected by many women in Delhi.

12th November 1948

Baba still in Delhi. The first contact on this day was with *Mastan Amanullah Kabuli*; for a description of this interesting contact see Chapter One.

The other three contacts of this day were quite unimportant.

Tikar Nath is a sadhu, said to be 105 years old, who lives in the Hindu cremation ground.

Parbat Puri Nath is said to be 115 years old; he is completely naked and lives in an ashram on the river bank. It is said that he underwent austerities in the jungles for sixty years.

Ram Mastan Sadhu wanders about tapping a tin.

13th November 1948

Baba still in Delhi; contacts on this day were frankly dull.

Zuleikha Mastani is an old woman who subsists on tea and *pan* and wanders about the city; she is a moderate mastani.

Nuru Mastan, when he is hungry, stands outside a certain restaurant and gets something to eat from those who respect him and know why he stands there.

Siddhi Mastan is a wanderer.

Bapu Ahmad Mastan is cared for by a restaurant owner.

* * *

From Delhi, Baba and his men went by train to Ajmer.

- 14th November 1948 On this day Baba went from Ajmer to a village known as Bitiani, some five miles beyond Nasirabad. Here Baba contacted *Shaukat Ali Maulana Mastan*, who lives in a room and mumbles to himself. He is a moderate mast.
- 15th November 1948 Still in Ajmer. The only contact of this day—a great contact nevertheless—was with *Chacha*, the God-realized Majzoob. This great soul is fully described in *The Wayfarers*.
* * *
From Ajmer, Baba and his men went to Baroda.
* * *
- 16th November 1948 In Baroda. The only contact here was with the fifth-plane mast, *Chambu Shah*, who lives in the Baroda stews. For a description of this contact see Chapter One. From Baroda the party went on the same day to Cambay (Khambat) where two contacts were made. The first was *Rehman Shah Mastan*, a high mast who circumambulates the fortress walls at Cambay every morning. Baba describes this mast as being 60 per cent, majzoob-like and 40 per cent, salik-like. The second was *Bapu Kharaowala*, who sits in a room in which he keeps many cats and dogs.
* * *
From Cambay, Baba and his men proceeded to Viramgam.
* * *
- 17th November 1948 In Viramgam. There were two contacts here: *Haji Ahmad Mastan* lives near a pond and goes at night into the pond and plays with the water. If people give him clothes he wears them for a time, but he is often found naked. *Haji Karim*, the second contact, has been celibate throughout his seventy years, and has lived for many years in an upper room. He is a seeker.
* * *
From Viramgam, Baba and his men went next to Morvi.
* * *
- 18th November 1948 In Morvi. Here Baba contacted the very great mast known as *Majzoob Ali Shah*. For an account of this contact see Chapter One.
* * *
Thence to Rajkot.
* * *
- 19th November 1948 In Rajkot. On this day Baba contacted 150 poor people who were called to the dak bungalow for this purpose. To seventy-five he gave ten rupees each, and to seventy-five one rupee each.
- 20th November 1948 Still in Rajkot. Two moderate masts contacted; *Neki Mastan* and *Majnun Mastan*, both of whom sit under trees.
* * *
From Rajkot, Baba and his men went next to Ahmadabad.

21st November 1948

In Ahmadabad. Baba's first work was to contact 140 sadhus in *Jagannath Maharaj's* ashram; for an account of this episode see Chapter One. Baba then made the following contacts.

Puran Swami is only remembered as a swami.

Harihar Maharaj is an advanced yogi who stands, like a sleeping bird, on one leg. He apparently stands like this both night and day, and he hides his face by a veil and has a companion who stands by his side ringing a little bell.

Krishnanand Sadhu is a sadhu.

Majnun Mastan is an old man and a good mast who has lived in a certain shrine for some thirty years.

Saiyid Nabi Mastan is a good mast who is well known in Ahmadabad. He used to sit on a certain bridge in the city, but now lives in the shrine of Ganj Ahmad Shah. Baba was pleased with this old man.

* * *

From Ahmadabad, Baba and his men returned to Ahmadnagar via Bombay. This was the time of the great cyclone, and the train in which Baba was travelling was held up at Bulsar and also at Borivli, so that the party arrived in Bombay twenty-four hours behind time. From Bombay, Baba returned to his headquarters at Pimpalgaon.

In January 1949, *Ali Shah (Bapji)* was brought to Pimpalgaon and stayed there for about a month. Baba worked with him every day in the usual way.

Towards the end of February 1949, Baba went with a small group to Mount Abu, arriving there on 1st March. At the end of the first week he set out on a short tour, going first to Ajmer.

* * *

8th March 1948

In Ajmer. On the morning of this day *Chacha*, the seventh-plane Majzoob, was carried in a sedan chair to Taragarh. He remained there for eight hours and Baba sat with him, fed him, and plied him with tea and cigarettes. Baba then said that his work with Chacha was finished and he gave him his own coat, which Chacha put on. Baba also gave him a blanket and a new turban, and Chacha was then carried down the hill again and taken back to his hovel near Khwaja Saheb's shrine.

9th March 1948

Baba still at Taragarh, the ancient fortress that overlooks Ajmer. On this day Baba contacted forty-four widows, giving five rupees to each one. It appears that these widows live at Taragarh and are all Shiah Muslims.

10th March 1948

At 5.0 a.m. Baba and his party came down from Taragarh to Ajmer, and took a train to Kishangarh. They found, however, that the mast whom they had hoped to contact in Kishangarh had died, and they therefore went by bus and train to Sojat. Here Baba contacted a great mast known as *Nuru Baba*, who is described at some length in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* (under Sojat).

* * *

From Sojat, Baba and his men went to Abu Road, the small town that lies at the foot of Mount Abu.

* * *

11th March 1948

In Abu Road. *Khuda Bakhsh*, who was first contacted by Baba in 1941, is described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*. At this latest contact he gave Baba a *lungi*. Baba wore this *lungi* once and later added it to the collection of gifts that other masts have given him from time to time.

* * *

From Abu Road, Baba and his men returned the same evening to his temporary headquarters at Mount Abu. About a week later he set out on another tour, going first to Ahmadabad.

* * *

17th March 1948

In Ahmadabad. Here Baba again contacted *Saiyid Nabi Mastan* and gave him six cigars. For a short description of this mast see the entry of 21st November 1948, in this summary.

* * *

That night Baba and his men slept in Bibi's Rocking Minaret Mosque and set out the next morning for Cambay.

* * *

18th March 1948

In Cambay (Khambhat). Two renewals of old contacts; *Rehman Shah* and *Kharaowala Bapu*; for a brief description of these two masts see the note of 16th November 1948.

* * *

From Cambay, Baba returned to his temporary headquarters at Mount Abu.

* * *

26th March 1948

Baba went to the village of Oria, about four miles from the town of Abu, where he contacted a yogi known as *Matragiri Maharaj*. For a description of this yogi see Chapter Two.

27th March 1948

Baba went by bus down to Abu Road, where he contacted a mast known as *Ganpat*, who lives under a tree on the outskirts of the town. He was taken to a nearby well where Baba bathed him, gave him a new *lungi* and some money, and clothed him in his own silken coat. This mast was first contacted in September 1947 and is described as Ganesh Mastan in the last chapter of *The Wayfarers*. Baba was very happy at this contact and returned to Mount Abu the same afternoon.

29th March 1949

Baba walked out to Dilwara, a village about two miles from Abu town. Here he contacted a very old man known as *Bengali Baba*, who has lived in a cave near Dilwara for some forty years. He is a very good yogi.

* * *

On 11th April, Baba set out on another tour, going via Bombay to Akola.

14th April 1949

* * *

In Akola. Several contacts here, the first being with *Chamna Mai Mastani*. This mastani had originally been contacted in 1944, and there is a short description of her in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*.

Khalil Mastan is a good mast who wanders about Akola.

Puran Lai is apparently seventy years old and is a very good mast. He lives next to a flower stall, the proprietor of which looks after him.

Vishnu Mastan was once a motor driver and is now a mast, though only a moderate one. He is sometimes clothed and sometimes naked, and he is said to have a brother in Akola who is compounder to a general practitioner.

Baldev Baba is a good mast about sixty years old, who is sometimes salik-like and sometimes majzoob-like. He is popular with cotton-figure gamblers and he gave Baba a water-melon and several oranges, telling him to eat them. He said to Baba, "I made Ishwar; now you look after the poor."

From Akola, Baba and his men went the same day to Badnera, where *Kali Kambliwala Baba* was contacted. This man is a good mast who was contacted in 1944; for a brief description of him see the supplement of *The Wayfarers*.

This same night Baba and his men went by bullock-cart to contact *Badri Baba*, a good mast who lives at Chandtara, a village about nine miles from Badnera. This mast was originally contacted by Baba in 1944, and was then living in a village known as Juna which is, Baidul says, about a mile from Chandtara. For a description of this latest contact, see Chapter Two.

* * *

Following this contact with Badri Baba the party returned to Badnera and proceeded thence to Nagpur.

* * *

15th April 1949

In Nagpur. *Amir Hussain* is said to have come recently to Nagpur from Tatanagar; he is a good mast who lives in a police jamadar's house near the Bor Nullah stone quarry.

In Nagpur Baba was lent a car by Jal Kerawala, and the party set out the same evening in this car for Seoni. For an account of the first night of this journey see Chapter Two.

* * *

16th April 1949

In Seoni. *Ghaous Mian* used to be a *jamadar* (a kind of warrant officer) in the Indian Army. He now sits in a mosque and reads the Quran most of the day; he has *hawa*.

* * *

From Seoni, Baba and his men went on by car to Jubbulpore.

* * *

17th April 1949

In Jubbulpore; three contacts here.

Maggu Mian is a very good mast who wanders about with a long bamboo over his shoulder.

Raji Mastani is an elderly and good mastani who keeps old pots and other junk in a basket which she carries about on her head.

Magga Shah is an old man who carries a bundle of rags about with him, and is fond of smoking cigars. He wanders all over the place accompanied by an old woman who sees to his needs. He is, Baba tells us, a very good mast.

* * *

From Jubbulpore, Baba and his men went by car to Mandla, stopping on the way at a village known as Jumunia.

* * *

18th April 1949

In Jumunia. Here Baba contacted *Dada Thanthan Pal*, who is fully described in Chapter Two. Following this contact the party proceeded by car to Mandla, where one contact took place. *Dhani Ram Maharaj* is the mast who was described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* as Lohewala Baba. At this latest contact he asked Baba, "Where were you for so many days?" and added, "I know who you are."

* * *

From Mandla, Baba and his men proceeded by car to Katni.

* * *

19th April 1949

In Katni. *Mehtab Shah* is a lame mast and a moderate one, who lives in a tailor's house. It is said that he used to live in Mandla and that all his family were 'spiritual'. The tailor who looks after Mehtab Shah said that when the latter came first to Katni, he arrived on horseback. At Katni he set this animal free, which then made its way back to Mandla, a distance of about a hundred miles. The tailor also explained—on what evidence we know not—that Mehtab Shah died some years ago in a village called Panagarh, and that he came to life again three months later and returned to his shop.

Sobha Mast is the very advanced mast who lives at the back of a *sarai*. He is described in Chapter Two.

Samdi Mast lives in the shop of the same tailor who keeps Mehtab Shah, described above, in his *house*. Samdi Mast is particularly noticeable because his arms and legs are loaded with goodness knows how many rings and bangles of iron and brass. He is a moderate mast.

Following these contacts in Katni the party proceeded by car the same day to Rewah, where *Mauganj-ka Hafizji* was contacted. For an account of this contact see Chapter Two.

* * *

From Rewah, Baba and his party continued by car to Allahabad.

* * *

20th April 1949

In Allahabad. A few contacts of negligible interest.

Kamal Baba has *hawa*.

Inayat Sain is about sixty years old and is a Sufi who knows Persian. He is nevertheless a Hindu, and refers to himself as *paramhansa*. He is revered by both Hindus and Muslims, and Baba tells us that he is a good salik-like mast.

* * *

From Allahabad the party went by car to Chitrakut, a place famous for saints, so famous in fact that it is referred to in the writings of Tulsidas. It lies about 110 miles west south-west of Allahabad, and the road to it was—to put it mildly—perfectly filthy. When they reached Chitrakut, however, Baba told the men with him that he did not like the atmosphere there. Baba had gone to Chitrakut in order to contact sadhus, but no contacts took place and Baba and his men returned to Allahabad once again. From here the car was sent back to Jal Kerawala at Nagpur, Jal's chauffeur having come to Allahabad by train to pick it up. The remainder of this tour was, therefore, continued by train, and the party proceeded forthwith to Fyzabad.

* * *

21st April 1949

In Fyzabad; two contacts here. *Saheb Ali Shah* is perhaps seventy years old, and is said to have come from Rangoon many years ago. He now lives in a mosque and is a moderate mast.

Haji Abdul Rahim Shah is about ninety years old and he also lives in a mosque. He is much revered in Fyzabad, and Baba explained that he was an adept pilgrim.

From Fyzabad, Baba went on the same day to Ajodhya. The first contact here was with a man known as *Bengali Baba*, also known as *Asiruddin*. He is much revered and is a good yogi.

Following this contact with Bengali Baba, 104 sadhus were contacted; a small item in words, but no mean task in fact.

* * *

From Ajodhya, the party proceeded by train to Gonda.

* * *

22nd April 1949

In Gonda. *Bhartari Mastan* is a moderate mast who wanders about the town.

Nurjehan Mastani is a good mastani who was first contacted by Baba in 1942. In those days she used to live in the house of a certain magdalene, but at this recent contact she was found sitting on a heap of rubbish at a crossroad. In order that Baba might contact her, Baidul tried to persuade her to go with him to the house where she used to live in the old days. She refused at first to accompany Baidul, but he eventually persuaded her to sit in a cycle-rickshaw with him. Her rubbish was piled in the rickshaw also, and she was carried thus to her old room, where she was contacted by Baba.

From Gonda, Baba proceeded the same day to Bahraich. *Lohe Baba*, also known as *Shaikh Ahmad*, is a moderate mast who was first contacted by Baba in 1942. He is described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* as wearing pieces of iron all over his body, and we may now add that he spends most of his time on the railway station and keeps a kind of register in which he writes down the times of arrival and departure of engines and trains. When Baba went to the station, Lohe Baba was invited to come to the waiting room so that Baba might contact him. At that moment, however, there was a train at the platform, a train whose engine had gone down the line for watering. When Lohe Baba was pressed to come quickly to the waiting room he protested that he was busy, and he actually waited until the engine returned from its watering expedition. He then scrutinized it as if he thought himself some kind of locomotive inspector, jotted a few words down in his register, and finally sauntered slowly and disdainfully towards the waiting room for Baba's contact.

Bhagwan Din Mastan (Kacheriwala Baba) was also contacted originally in 1942. He is looked after by a certain woman who is the only person who can handle him. His second name, Kacheriwala Baba, has been given to him because he sits in the precincts of the *Kacheri* (the magistrate's court). It appears that he sometimes enters the court-room itself, and he has been known to abuse the magistrate. On this particular day he was found coming out of the court-room, and he asked Baba for a *dhoti* at the time of contact. He was also given sweetmeats and some money. Kacheriwala Baba is, Baba tells us, a very good mast.

Mastani Mai (Lohewali) is a moderate mastani whom Baba had contacted first in 1942, when she used to sit at the foot of a clock-tower in a public garden. Now, however, she lives in the precincts of the *Kacheri*—a court that must be unique, since it has two God-intoxicated souls within its boundaries.

Gumani Baba is a majzoob-like mast and a good one. At the time of contact Baba gave Gumani Baba some food, but the mast refused to eat it. Baba then declared that there was a burden upon himself—a common reaction when masts are reluctant to conform to his wishes. An hour or two later Baba therefore sent Vishnu and Chhagan to find out whether the food had been eaten or not. They found that Gumani Baba had eaten it all, and so brought this happy news to Baba, who then declared himself satisfied.

* * *

From Bahraich, Baba and his party returned by train to Ajodhya.

* * *

23rd April 1949

In Ajodhya. Three contacts only this time. *Aghor Sadhu* is a moderate mast who sits amidst filth. *Shankarji Sadhu* is a good sadhu who wanders about. *Gafur Pathan* lives in a room attached to a mosque. It is said that he has wandered naked in the jungle for some twenty-five years. He is now about sixty years old and is a moderate mast.

* * *

From Ajodhya, the party proceeded by train to Benares.

* * *

24th April 1949

In Benares. *Rukhi Mastani {Mastani Mai}* is to be found near station. She is naked except for a monstrous accumulation of rags, about a foot thick, that are wound round her stomach only. She is a good mastani.

Shri Vishwanathji Mastan sits under a certain tree and says, "I am God." He is a good mast.

Lakaria Baba was the next contact; for an account of him and of the sequel to this contact, see Chapter Two.

Swami Nishkalanandji is an old man and is a seeker.

Brahmachari Sanyasi is a seeker.

Lalpuriji Mastan is a seeker.

Itwargiri is a seeker and *Kinaram Maharaj* is also a seeker.

The next contact—the last in Benares on this visit—was with the very great mast, *Batwa Shah*. Since Baba's contact with him is fully described in Chapter Two, there is no need to repeat it here. We should, however, mention that his native place is a village known as Pahnia, about six miles from Ghazipur.

* * *

From Benares, the party proceeded to Gaya.

26th April 1949

In Gaya. The contacts in this city were not of much interest and may be listed briefly.

Pannu Mastan is a good mast who lies in gutters.

Sadhu Mastan is a seeker who carries a basket of rubbish on his head.

Sant Langta Baba, *Sant Lai Baba*, and *Sant Wasulia Baba* are all seekers.

Shah Rehmatullah Pir is an old man about seventy years of age, who has many disciples. He came originally from Moradabad and Baba tells us that he is an initiate pilgrim who is 100 per cent. salik-like.

* * *

From Gaya, Baba and his men returned to Mount Abu, reaching there on the evening of 28th April.

* * *

2nd May 1949

Baba walked out to Dilwara, about two miles from Abu town, where he again contacted *Bengali Baba*.

4th May 1949

On this day Baba instructed Eruch to throw the fragment of paper, with *Lakaria Baba's* name and address written on it, into a well. The fragment was therefore thrown into a well at the bottom of Bhisti Nullah in Mount Abu.

6th May 1949

Baba went by car to the village of Oria, about four miles from Abu town, where he again contacted *Matragiri Maharaj*, the yogi described in Chapter Two.

7th May 1949

For the contact of sadhus and others, Baba visited the caves that are to be found on the slopes surrounding the Nakki Lake at Mount Abu. Six sadhus were contacted, of which the best was a man known as *Mauni Baba*.

Haridas Baba Nirvan is an advanced pilgrim who sits under an umbrella near the Nakki Lake. He is described in Chapter Two.

* * *

Baba set out on another tour from Mount Abu, leaving there on 12th May, and going first to Abu Road.

* * *

12th May 1949

In Abu road. Baba contacted *Ganpat* and *Khuda Bakhsh*, both of whom have been described elsewhere.

From Abu Road, he went the same day on to Palanpur, where he contacted *Amir Shah Mastan*. This man is perhaps thirty-five years old and is greatly respected in Palanpur—so much so that an uncle of the Nawab of Palanpur has provided a room for him to live in. Many people come to this room and leave food there, but Amir Shah is so unconscious of his physical environment that

dogs, goats, and cows walk into the room and eat up much of the food without his being aware of it.

When Baba and his men first asked where this mast might be found, they were told that he had died that very day. A few minutes later, however, they passed a sadhu on the road, and Baba instructed one of his men to ask this man about Amir Shah. The sadhu replied that the story of the death of this great mast was sheer nonsense, because he himself had just come from meeting him. Baba therefore went forthwith to Amir Shah Mastan's room, where he contacted him. This man is, Baba tells us, a very good majzoob-like mast.

* * *

From Palanpur, Baba and his party proceeded via Bombay to Gulbarga.

* * *

14th May 1949

In Gulbarga. As soon as Baba reached Gulbarga he went out to a village known as Khandal, in order to meet a great mast known as *Guru Appaswami*. This mast was contacted first in 1945, and there is a description of him in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* (under Gulbarga). Baidul explains that Guru Appaswami now lives in a temple, in a small village known as Khandal-Itga, about one mile beyond Khandal itself. When Baba went to contact Guru Appaswami, the latter was reluctant at first, but was subsequently coaxed to allow Baba to sit with him. Baba gave him sweetmeats, and Guru Appaswami then asked for tea. He drank some of this tea and gave some of it also to Baba. He embraced Baba and was obviously happy at meeting him. Before Baba left he bought a sheet and a small carpet and gave them to Guru Appaswami. From Khandal, Baba and party returned to Gulbarga.

15th May 1949

In Gulbarga. *Lai Mohammed* is also known as *Budhi Man*. He was first contacted by Baba in 1945, and a short description of him is to be found in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*. At this latest contact Baba gave Budhi Man some cigarettes.

From Gulbarga, the party went next to Yadgiri, whence they made their way to the village of Tumkur, in order to contact *Tilgur Swami*. A description of this *Jivanmukta* is to be found in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* and also in Chapter Two of this present volume. We should also again correct a mistake in *The Wayfarers* and mention that this man's name is Tilgur Swami, and that he is also known as *Ishwar Daru Swami*, and not Ishwardas Swami.

* * *

From Yadgiri, the party proceeded to Hyderabad (Deccan).

16th May 1949

In Hyderabad; several contacts in this city in the heart of the Deccan, where Baba had done so much work in 1945.

Dina Shah is an Arab who used, so they tell you, to be in the Nizam's Army. He walks about with three sticks of bamboo, and if he is given money he hands it over to a certain restaurant owner who feeds him. Dina Shah looks as if he were perhaps seventy years old and is a good mast who is salik-like at times, and majzoob-like at others.

Nazar Ali Shah came originally from distant Montgomery, but has now been in Hyderabad for many years. He has a habit of collecting bits of paper and putting them in a sack. He told Baidul that he only collected those scraps that had Urdu writing on them, and that his purpose was to prevent God's name from being trodden underfoot by unwitting pedestrians, Baidul says that this mast was contacted first in 1945, although no reference to him is to be found in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*.

Havaladar Mastan lives in a mosque and is said to have been a *havaladar* (roughly, a sergeant) in the army. If you talk with him he will tell you that he cooks food and gives it away to others.

17th May 1949

Baba continues his work in Hyderabad.

Amir Ahmad Saheb wanders about the city and is very fond of eating *pan*. He is well known in Hyderabad and is respected as a *wali*.

Rajiah Mastan was contacted originally in 1945 and is fully described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers*. At this recent visit to Hyderabad, Rajiah was spotted near a level crossing and was apparently running off to have his lunch. He was persuaded, however, to get into a rickshaw, and was taken to a cemetery near the jail. Baba contacted him in a small room in the cemetery, and, at the time of contact, Rajiah gave Baba a handful of bits of broken china. Rajiah was then taken away in a rickshaw and dropped somewhere in the town. After he had left, Baba ordered one of his men to count these bits of china, and the total was found to be seventy. They were all wrapped in a handkerchief and given to Vishnu, who was told to look after them for the time being; and they were finally brought all the way back to Abu and were added to the collection of gifts that Baba has received from various masts. Baba was very happy at this contact.

Jane Mian Majzoob wanders about the city for much of the day and sometimes sits in a certain mosque. Some years ago he used to live near a certain latrine. He is a moderate mast.

18th May 1949

Kala Khan Majzoob was contacted in an unusual way. Baba and his men were planning to go to some part of the city by bus, and Baba pointed out a moderately well-dressed man to Baidul, and instructed him to ask this man which bus they should take. Baidul therefore accosted the man in question, but he gave no reply and turned his face away. Baidul put the same question to him again, and a passer-by, overhearing the question, explained that this man was a God-intoxicated soul known as *Kala Khan Majzoob*. He was therefore taken to a restaurant known as "Apka," where Baba fed him. Following the contact, Baba explained that *Kala Khan Majzoob* was so completely majzoob-like that he had no body consciousness whatsoever, and that great care had to be taken when feeding him, lest he should choke himself. This man is a good mast and is obviously cared for by someone in Hyderabad, for he has a sound physique and his clothes are clean and good.

Ashaq Mian is a moderate mast who was first contacted in 1945.

Baba's work in Hyderabad continues. On the previous day, and before dawn on this day also, Baba had gone to try to contact Saiyid Moeinuddin, the spiritual chargeman of Hyderabad, whom he had contacted several times in 1945. But this great mast now refused to let Baba contact him and Baba explained that a burden lay upon himself—a burden that could only be removed by achieving a good contact with some other mast. And so the problem of this day was to help Baba find a good mast who would relieve him of this burden. They went first to contact a moderate mast known as *Wali Saheb* and then set out to search for an adept pilgrim known as *Anand Swami*, who was said to live near Kachigoda station in Hyderabad City. Anand Swami was also known to go every morning to a certain roadside tap, where he would fill a small earthenware pot with water—a pot that he would use for his personal ablutions and then throw away. He also washes himself at this tap, using dust for soap, and he plays with the water as he washes.

Now while Baba and his men were on their way to this tap, another great soul known as *Shastri Bua* was observed on the opposite side of the road. Shastri Bua used to live in Secunderabad (about seven miles away) and he was contacted several times in 1945. There is a short description of him in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* and a note to the effect that he is a mast of the sixth plane.

Thus on this auspicious morning, Baba first contacted Shastri Bua in a *sarai* near Anand Swami's tap, and then contacted Anand Swami himself. Following his meetings with these two great souls Baba explained that the burden which had lain upon himself had been lifted and his work completed.

* * *

From Hyderabad, Baba and his men returned via Bombay to Mount Abu, reaching there on the evening of 20th May. Baba and his whole group left Mount Abu finally during the last week of May, and returned to Pimpalgaon. On the way back to Pimpalgaon, however, Baba stayed a day or two in Bombay, where a few contacts were made.

* * *

28th May 1949

In Bombay. *Bora* is an elderly and good mast who lives in Mangalore Street, under an awning made out of old cardboard boxes, bits of brown paper, and old sacks.

The next contact was with a good mast who sits outside the Khojas' cemetery on Sandhurst Road. He is a middle-aged man who sits in ragged and filthy clothes on the pavement. No one knows his name for the simple reason that he speaks *to* no one; but has a well-modelled face and most lustrous eyes—*oculi sunt in amore duces*.

Mungsaji Maharaj is an adept pilgrim who was first contacted by Baba in August 1944 at Dhamangaon. He is described in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* where there is also a picture of him. Mungsaji Maharaj is now living in one room of a flat in Nagin Mahal in Churchgate, one of the principal streets of Bombay.

* * *

From Bombay, Baba returned to his centre at Pimpalgaon.

From 7th June until 17th June *Ali Shah* (the fifth-plane mast who normally lives at Meherabad), was staying at Pimpalgaon, and Baba worked with him every day in the usual way.

On the evening of 22nd June, Baba went into seclusion in his cabin enclosure at Pimpalgaon and came out of seclusion again on the morning of 1st August 1949. During these forty days, Baba did certain work with masts, the poor, and the mad, and we shall now list these contacts under their respective dates.

26th June 1949

Twenty-one poor people were brought to Pimpalgaon in a bus, and were taken one by one into the cabin enclosure, where Baba washed their feet and gave a ten-rupee note to each one. In Jal Kerawala's diary we are told that these poor people seemed to be of all types—Brahmins, Kunbis, Muslims—and also from all walks of life. Though none seemed to be beggars, all showed signs of poverty.

28th June 1949

Ali Shah was brought to Baba's cabin enclosure at Pimpalgaon, where Baba first sat with him and fed him. Following this contact *Ali Shah* was sent back to Meherabad.

29th June 1949

Seven men of different types—only two of them were masts—were brought for Baba's contact in the cabin enclosure at Pimpalgaon. They all had their hair clipped by Baba, and were then bathed, dressed in new clothes, and given a packet of sweetmeats. Jal Kerawala describes these seven men as follows:

Babu is from Bhingar. He had lost his left hand and seemed a sleepy fellow.

Hatti is from Ahmadnagar and introduced himself to Jal as Saiyid Nur Saiyid Amir Tatti Daroga. (Apology to Westerners that this delicious name is impossible to translate!)

Pahlwan roams about Ahmadnagar and was the same Pahlwan who had been brought to the Mahableshwar Ashram in January 1947. He is described in Chapter Four of *The Wayfarers*.

Bhagwan is from Nivapur. He is a fat fellow with a carefree and cheerful face, and is a moderate mast.

Sadba was brought from Pathardi, a village some thirty miles from Ahmadnagar. This man is a moderate mast and was brought by Adi in his own car all the way from Pathardi.

Munshi is an old man from Sarjepura, in Ahmadnagar.

Mhetri is a young but very feeble fellow, who seemed unable to walk properly.

10th July 1949

Ali Shah was brought to Pimpalgaon on this day and he stayed at Pimpalgaon until 1st August, when he was brought back to Meherabad. He also accompanied Baba to Poona (from 16th—24th July) where Baba worked with him in the usual way.

17th July 1949

Baba in Poona. On this day *Keshav* was contacted; for a description of him see Chapter Three.

18th July 1949

Baba still in Poona; two contacts of negligible interest. The first was *Hashim*, a mad Khoja Muslim about fifty years old; and the other, *Allah Bakhsh*, a man of about thirty-five with *hawa*. They were bathed, fed, and clothed, at the time of contact.

19th July 1949

Baba still in Poona. Another mast of the name *Allah Bakhsh* was brought to Baba's bungalow; he had *hawa*. The same evening *Nannubhai* was brought for contact—an amazing fellow who is described in Chapter Three.

The same evening Baba went out for a short car drive, and a sanyasi was observed tramping along the road near Wadia College. Baba ordered the car to be stopped and sent Eruch to ask him who he was. Eruch brought the news that he was a sanyasi who had observed silence for the last seven years, and that he had been travelling throughout India also. Kaka said that he recognized him as the *Mauni Baba* whom Baba had contacted in Hardwar some years ago. He is therefore possibly the Mauni Baba who is mentioned in the supplement of *The Wayfarers* (under Hardwar) as having been contacted in April 1942. He was invited to come into Baba's car and was taken out to the Hindu cremation ground, where Baba contacted him for a few minutes.

20th July 1949

Baba still in Poona; a sadhu was brought for contact. This sadhu was in charge of the temple near the approach to the hill on which stood the house in which Baba was staying.

Later the same day, *Ram Mast*, who is described fully in Chapter Three, was brought for Baba's contact.

* * *

Baba returned to Pimpalgaon from Poona on the evening of 24th July and remained in seclusion in his cabin enclosure until 7.0 a.m. on 1st August. He worked with *Ali Shah* every day during this last part of his seclusion.

Index

- Abkari (Captain), 248
 Abu Road, 183
 Agents, Spiritual, 373-74 .
 Aghori Baba, 358
 Agniwala Baba Mastan,
 189
 Agra, 183-84
 Ahmad Ali, 238
 Ahmadabad, 184
 Ahmadnagar (Ahmed-
 nagar), 184-86
 Ajanta, 186-87
 Ajmer Ashram, 107-12
 Ajodhya, 188-89
 Akola, 189
 Aland, 189
 Ale, 189
 Ali Asghar (Bombay),
 June 8, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement, 4-6
 Ali Shah (Bajji), 79-83;
 147; 184-85; 195; 196;
 248; 296; 300; 324;
 351; 367; June 8, 1948-
 August 1, 1949
 Supplement, 15-16
 Aligarh, 189
 Allahabad, 190-91
 Ambala, 191-92
 Amber, 192-93
 Amboli, 193-94
 Amraoti, 194
 Amritsar, 194-95
 Angiras Rishi hill, 195
 Arjun, 331
 Asat Saheb, 274
 Aurungabad, 196-99
 Azim Khan Baba, 307
 Baba (*mast*), 277
 Baba Hosh Ali Shah, 278
 Babajan, 185-86; 300-01;
 326
 Baba Shahabuddin
 (Bhatwala Baba),
 210-11
 Badnera, 199
 Badri Baba, 199
 Bahraich, 199-200
 Baidul, 160
 BalaSain, 194
 Bandarawala, 200
 Bangalore Ashram,
 101-02; 121-28;
 201-03
 Bansi Baba, 204
 Bareilly, 205-06
 Basim, 206
 Bashir Mastan, 190
 Bashir Mian, 205
 Batala, 206-08
 Batwa Shah of Benares,
 June 8, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement,
 25-26
 Bellary, 208-09
 Benares, 209
 Bengali Baba, 321
 Bhagwan Nath Masi, 325
 Bhai Chawar Mast, 346
 Bharmar, 210
 Bhat, 210-11
 Bhayya Baba, 281
 Bhiku Baba (Bhiku
 Bhagwan), 325
 Bhopal, 211-12
 Bidar, 212-13
 Bilaspur, 214
 Bir, 215
 Bombay, 215-16; March
 15-May 14, 1948
 Supplement, 3-4
 Bombay *mast*, 338
 Brahmachari *mast*, 367
 Brahmanandji *mast*, 307
 Brindaban motf, 217
 Bundle Shah, 326-28
 Burhanpur, 217-19
 Calcutta, 219-23; 1943
 famine in, 221-23
 Cawnpore, 223-24
 Chacha(Nur Ali Shah
 Pathan), 85-93; 147;
 187; 352
 Chaddar Baba, 122-23;
 201
 Chambeli Shah, 225
 Chambu Shah, 379-82
 Chanda, 225
 Chapra, 225
 ChattiBaba, 51-71; 152;
 187; 201; 223; 267;
 315-16; 318; 366;
 June 8, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement, 8
 Chinnaswami, 125; 201; 363
 Chota Mastan, 247
 Chotu Mian, 302
 Choudhari Lath, 274
 Chunu Mian, 249
 Chup Shah, 324
 Cuttack, 225; 227
 Chuttan Shah, 258-59

 DadaMian, 194
 Dagdu Bua (Bhau), 332
 Dahigaon, 227-28
 Dehra Dun, 228-30
 Delhi, 230-33
 Dhondi Bua, 142-43

 Fateh Baba, 239
 Fatruh Mian, 267

 Ghafur Saheb, 201
 Ghulam Hussein, 250
 Goa, 235-37
 Gokhale Baba, 257-58
 Gonda, 238-39
 Gujrat, 239-40
 Guntur, 241
 Guru Appaswamy, 240

Index

- HafizjiNabeena,231
 Hardwar, 242-46
 Harihar Baba, 209
 Himalaya, March 15-May
 14,1948 Supplement,
 1-2
 Hubli, 247
 Hyderabad (Deccan),
 248-55
 Hyderabad (Sind), 255-56

 Inayatullah *mast*, 308
 Ishwar Das Swami, 368-69
 Ismailpur, 257
 ItteShah,210

 Jagannath Maharaj
 (Ahmadabad),
 June 8, 1948-August 1,1949
 Supplement, 1-2
 Jaipur, 258-59
 Jal Tapasvi, 343
 Jamnagar *mast*, 260
 Jampia, 193
 Jara Shah, 205
 Jasgiran, 261
 Jessawala, Eruch, 160
 Jhipra Baba, 315
 Jubblepore Ashram,
 113-19;264-65
 Juma *mast*, 255

Kabir(mast) 143,297
 Kaka, 160
 Kala Sain, 194
 Kambalposh Baba, 232
 Karim Baba, 73-78; 135;
 219
 Kashmir, 269-74
 Kasim Ali Baba, 279
 Keshav of Poona, June 8,
 1948-August 1, 1949
 Supplement, 34-36

 Keshwanandji Maharaj,
 344
 Khanpur, 277
 KhudaBakhsh, 183
 Kilakkai, 279-80
 Kotwala Baba, 293
 Krishna Guard, 348

 Lahore, 284-88
 Lahori Baba, 206-07
 Lal Shaheb, 334
 Lamani Mama, 206
 Lohewala Baba, 225
 Lucknow, 290-91

 Madness, contrast to *mast*
 state, 1-11
 Madras, 292-95
 Madura *mast*, 295
 Mahabaleshwar Ashram,
 137-46; 295-98
 Maharaj of Nagpur, March
 15-May 14, 1948
 Supplement, 13-15
 Mai Bap, 197-98
 MaiSaheb, 360-61
 Majzoob Ali Shah (Morvi),
 June 8, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement,
 14-15
 Makkhiwala Baba, 339
 MalangSain, 191
 Mama *mast*, 25 1
 Mannu Shah, 229
 Maps, of *mast* tours,
 165- 177. *Also see*
 Supplements
Mast, first contacted by
 Meher Baba, 321
 explanation of state, 1-11
 journey of, 6-11
 usefulness of, 13-19
 types of, 28-32; June 8
 1948-August 1,1949
 Supplement, 36
 quotes from, regarding
 Meher Baba, 151-56
 comments on, by Meher
 Baba, June 8,1948-
 August 1,1949
 Supplement, 23-24
Mast tours, 158-64. *Also*
 see Supplements Mastan, 317
 Mastan Amanullah Kabuli,
 JuneS, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement,
 12-13
 Mastan Baba, 214
 Mastan Shah Saheb
 (Punjabi Baba), 224
 Mastani Mai (Abu Road),
 183
 Mastani Mai (Calcutta),
 219
 Mastani Mai (Chalisingaon),
 224
 Mastani Mai (Goa), 237
 Mastani Mai (Jodhpur),
 263
 Mastani Mai (Lahore), 286
 Master, role of, 6-11
 Master Nemraji, 346
 Mauivi Saheb Mastan, 293
 Maulana Shamsuddin
 Ulema, 305
 Mauivi Abdul Wahab
 Mudaris, 198-99; 318
 Meherabad Ashram,
 129-33; 300-04
 Meherban Baba, 299
 Mian Saheb, 186-87
 Moghe Maharaj (Ram
 Bhau),319-20
 Mohammed, 43-50; 154;
 202; 212; 232; 251

Index

- Mohammed (*continued*)
 289; 303; 318; 335-36;
 340
 Mohammed Baba, 227
 Mohammed Mastan
 (Madras), 293
 Moti Baba, 316
 Munshi, 217-18
 Muttra, 307-08

 Nab Saheb, 270
 Nadir Ali Shah (Quetta),
 329
 Nagpur, 309
 Nanga Baba (Ahmad
 Shah), 322
 Nanga Baba (Amber),
 192-93
 Nanga Baba (Jasgiran), 261
 Nanga *mast*, 190
 Nanga Sadhu, 263
 Nanga Shah Mastan, 241
 Nangu Khan Mastan
 Peshawari, 340
 Nannu Mian, 230
 Narain Baba, 208
 NarainBhat, 194
 Nasiban Mastani, 290
 Nasik, 313-14
 Nawab Ali Shah (Guntur),
 241
 Nawab Ali Shah (Lahore),
 287
 Negapatam, 315-16
 Nekishah Baba, 323
 Neqabi Hafizji, 232
 Niguanandji Brahmachari,
 March 15-May 14,
 1948 Supplement, 10
 Nur Ali Shah Pathan, 356.
 See also Chacha
 Nur Shah, 270
 Nuru Baba, 359-60

 Okha, 317

 Pallukollah Baba, 279-80
 Panchgani *mast*, 319
 Pandit Kashkak, 271
 Pathan *mast*, 215
 Peshawar, 322-23
 Phulwala, 124-25; 202;
 208; 303
 PirFazl Shah, 281-82
 Pir Shah Saiyed, 256
 Poona, 326-28

 Qadir, Mian, 310-11
 Quetta, 329-30
 Qutub Shah (Captain), 199

 Rahim Saheb (Rehman
 Saheb), 274
 Rahuri
 Ashram, 95-101
 mast contacts, 330-39
 Rajiah Mastan, 252
 Rajkot, 339
 Ram Baba, 244-45
 Ramchander, 266
 Rawalpindi, 340-42
 Ramshish, 203-04; 299;
 303
 Ranchi Ashram, 135-36;
 340
 Realized Beings, types of,
 June 8, 1948-August 1,
 1949 Supplement, 27-28
 Rikhikesh (Rishikesh),
 342-46
 RukhiMai, 321

 Sabbai Bua, 298-99
 Sain Puda, 341
 Sain Rehman Shah Baba,
 240

 Saiyid Ahmad Ali Shah,
 282
 Saiyid Moeinuddin
 (Maj'zoob Mian),
 253-54
 Saiyid Mustafa, 304
 Saiyid Rehmatullah Baba,
 268
 Sakhi Baba, 200
 Satara Ashram, 147-49;
 351-53
 Seclusion site, April-
 November 1946, 353-55
 Shan Jehan, March 15-May
 14, 1948 Supplement, 6
 Shanta Bai, 215
 Shariat Khan, 126; 203;
 226; 303
 Shah Mastan, 208-09
 Sheikh Malang Baba, 239
 Siddiq Shah Majzoob, 213
 Souls, advanced, types of,
 21-28
 Spiritual agent (Goa),
 '236-37
 Subhan Mattu, 273

 Talli Sain, 365-66
 Teliwala, 315
 Topkhanawala Baba, 192
 Tukdoji Maharaj, 309

 Umar Baba (Bombay), 385
 Underman Mastan, 275 Unti
 Mai, 340
 Upasni Maharaj, 227-28;
 265; 350

 Waliji, 313-14
 Wazir Baba, 313

 Yusuf, 363. *See also*
 Bangalore Ashram