

**82 Family Letters**  
**To the Western family and Followers of**  
**Meher Baba**

**Written by Mani**

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# 82 Family Letters

To the Western Family of Lovers and Followers of

## Meher Baba

Written by Mani



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Family  
Letters

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82  
Family  
Letters

To the Western Family  
of Lovers and Followers of  
**Meher Baba**

Written by MANI (Manija Sheriar Irani)  
from December 1956 to August 1969

Sheriar Press  
North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina





# Dedication

*to the Creator of all things created:  
Avatar Meher Baba,  
God-Man, Beloved, Father, Mother,  
Brother, Friend,  
whose love for his worldwide family  
has made these letters possible.*



# Foreword/

by Elizabeth C. Patterson

Meher Baba's initial visit from India to the West was in 1931. I first met Him in November of that year at Harmon-on-the-Hudson, New York. It was there that the first American disciples were drawn to Him. Since that period Meher Baba lovingly kept in touch with His disciples and followers, both in the U.S.A. and in England, through correspondence.

In the early days, letters came through one of the close Indian disciples who was known as Chanji. These letters brought us news of Meher Baba and of His work and world travels; they gave direct messages from Him to us, and on occasion they told us Baba's plans for His return visits to the West. Our anticipation of Meher Baba's return cannot be described. One thing that all those who met Him had in common was their longing to see Him again.

Later on letters came from another of Meher Baba's disciples, Adi K. Irani, His long time secretary. Every letter that came to us in the West was under Baba's express direction. Each of these letters was touched by His Hand and each one brought with it Baba's loving warmth, and was personal to the recipient.

By 1956 the Meher Baba groups had grown and spread throughout the U.S.A. and Europe. A great many people met Meher Baba during His six visits to the United States which included stays at Meher Spiritual Center in South Carolina in 1952, 1956 and 1958. Baba then called all those who loved Him, His family. The men and women disciples who lived with Him throughout the years, were called the resident mandali. His sister Mani was one of them and in 1956 Baba directed her to be His scribe to the West. The eighty-two Family Letters began at that time.

These unique and loving letters by Mani continued over a span of thirteen years until 1969, and reached His family in the United States, England, Europe, Australia, and later encircling other parts of the world.

Mani would send these letters to us (Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli and Kitty Davy) at Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Immediately photocopies were made and dispatched to all the Meher Baba group-heads in the various cities of the U.S.A. The group heads knew all the individuals who attended their group meetings or who in their area were otherwise drawn to Meher Baba. With remarkable speed, the group-heads and their helpers distributed the Family Letters. Thus the individual felt always in personal contact with Meher Baba.

The letters to His Family were not only approved by Meher Baba, they were written at His wish; and often Baba would remind Mani that it was time for another letter. Every letter was read out to Baba. At times He directed some portion of it to be deleted, and often He had some message or information added to the letter. And so these letters were, in effect, from Baba.

Interest was keen that Meher Baba would return or that we would be called to be with Him in India. 1962 was the year when all who loved and obeyed Him were called for the great East-West Darshan in Poona, India. 7000 came from many parts of the world to receive Meher Baba's blessing, and to share His close companionship. This time was unforgettable and the contact remains ever fresh.

The last Family Letter was received from Mani in September 1969. It described the Last Great Darshan that took place after Meher Baba dropped His Body on January 31, 1969.

This collection of eighty-two Family Letters to the Western family of lovers and followers of Meher Baba, the Compassionate Father, are unique treasures not only for the period of thirteen years that they encompassed, but because they remain as guideposts to those who will come to know, love and follow Meher Baba and His message of Love and Truth.

*"I am the Divine Beloved worthy of being loved because I am Love."*

-Meher Baba

# Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b> .....	v
<b>Foreward</b> .....	vii

<b>one</b> / <i>5th December, 1956</i> .....	1
<b>two</b> / <i>18th December, 1956</i> .....	4
<b>three</b> / <i>25th December, 1956</i> .....	7
<b>four</b> / <i>8th January, 1957</i> .....	9
<b>five</b> / <i>23rd January, 1957</i> .....	11
<b>six 1</b> / <i>9th February, 1957</i> .....	13
<b>six 2</b> / <i>20th February, 1957</i> .....	15
<b>seven</b> / <i>7th March, 1957</i> .....	17
<b>eight</b> / <i>11th April, 1957</i> .....	19
<b>nine</b> / <i>18th June, 1957</i> .....	21
<b>ten</b> / <i>28th June, 1957</i> .....	22
<b>eleven</b> / <i>8th September, 1957</i> .....	24
<b>twelve</b> / <i>21st September, 1957</i> .....	26
<b>thirteen</b> / <i>6th October, 1957</i> .....	27
<b>fourteen</b> / <i>1st December, 1957</i> .....	29
<b>fifteen</b> / <i>5th January, 1958</i> .....	31
<b>sixteen</b> / <i>4th February, 1958</i> .....	32
<b>seventeen</b> / <i>18th February, 1958</i> ...	34
<b>eighteen</b> / <i>4th March, 1958</i> .....	35
<b>nineteen</b> / <i>13th April, 1958</i> .....	37
<b>twenty</b> / <i>16th June, 1958</i> .....	39
<b>twenty-one</b> / <i>19th July, 1958</i> .....	40
<b>twenty-two</b> / <i>25th August, 1958</i> ...	42
<b>twenty-three</b> / <i>16th October, 1958</i> ..	43
<b>twenty-four</b> / <i>1st December, 1958</i> ..	45
<b>twenty-five</b> / <i>11th January, 1959</i> ...	47

<b>twenty-six/</b> 23rd February, 1959 . . .	48
<b>twenty-seven/</b> 9th April, 1959 . . . . .	50
<b>twenty-eight/</b> 13th June, 1959. . . . .	52
<b>twenty-nine/</b> 24th August, 1959. . . . .	55
<b>thirty/</b> 16th October, 1959. . . . .	58
<b>thirty-one/</b> 15th December, 1959. . . . .	61
<b>thirty-two/</b> 5th January, 1960. . . . .	65
<b>thirty-three/</b> 12th March, 1960 . . . . .	69
<b>thirty-four/</b> 29th April, 1960. . . . .	73
<b>thirty-five/</b> 10th July, 1960 . . . . .	77
<b>thirty-six/</b> 15th September, 1960 . . . . .	81
<b>thirty-seven/</b> 10th November, 1960. . . . .	85
<b>thirty-eight/</b> 1st January, 1961. . . . .	88
<b>thirty-nine/</b> 9th March, 1961. . . . .	92
<b>forty/</b> April-May, 1961. . . . .	97
<b>forty-one/</b> 11th July, 1961. . . . .	102
<b>forty-two/</b> 14th September, 1961. . . . .	108
<b>forty-three/</b> 15th November, 1961. . . . .	113
<b>forty-four/</b> 14th January, 1962. . . . .	117
<b>forty-five/</b> 15th March, 1962. . . . .	122
<b>forty-six/</b> 10th May, 1962. . . . .	128
<b>forty-seven/</b> 22nd June, 1962. . . . .	133
<b>forty-eight/</b> 16th August, 1962. . . . .	137
<b>forty-nine/</b> 20th September, 1962. . . . .	142
<b>fifty/</b> 5th December, 1962. . . . .	147
<b>fifty-one/</b> 15th February, 1963. . . . .	150
<b>fifty-two/</b> 13th April, 1963. . . . .	156
<b>fifty-three/</b> 12th June, 1963. . . . .	162
<b>fifty-four/</b> 9th August, 1963. . . . .	168
<b>fifty-five/</b> 26th Sept.-3rd Oct., 1963. . . . .	173

<b>fifty-six/</b> 10th December, 1963. . . . .	178
<b>fifty-seven/</b> 7th February, 1964 . . . . .	183
<b>fifty-eight/</b> 22nd April, 1964 . . . . .	188
<b>fifty-nine/</b> 17th June, 1964 . . . . .	194
<b>sixty/</b> 20th August, 1964 . . . . .	199
<b>sixty-one/</b> 24th October, 1964. . . . .	204
<b>sixty-two/</b> 29th January, 1965. . . . .	209
<b>sixty-three/</b> 14th-21st April, 1965. . . . .	216
<b>sixty-four/</b> 15th June, 1965. . . . .	221
<b>sixty-five/</b> 3rd August, 1965 . . . . .	227
<b>sixty-six/</b> 8th September, 1965. . . . .	233
<b>sixty-seven/</b> 22nd November, 1965. . . . .	237
<b>sixty-eight/</b> 16th February, 1966 . . . . .	247
<b>sixty-nine/</b> 10th June, 1966 . . . . .	253
<b>seventy/</b> 10th September, 1966 . . . . .	259
<b>seventy-one/</b> 14th December, 1966 . . . . .	265
<b>seventy-two/</b> 8th February, 1967. . . . .	272
<b>seventy-three/</b> 1st June, 1967 . . . . .	277
<b>seventy-four/</b> 1st September, 1967. . . . .	283
<b>seventy-five/</b> 7th October, 1967. . . . .	291
<b>seventy-six/</b> 25th January, 1968 . . . . .	300
<b>seventy-seven/</b> 12th May, 1968 . . . . .	312
<b>seventy-eight/</b> 9th September, 1968 . . . . .	321
<b>seventy-nine/</b> 1st November, 1968 . . . . .	328
<b>eighty/</b> 26th January, 1969 . . . . .	334
<b>eighty-one/</b> 14th March, 1969. . . . .	342
<b>eighty-two/</b> 26th August, 1969. . . . .	353

<b>Life Sketch of Meher Baba . . . . .</b>	365
<b>More about Meher Baba . . . . .</b>	366



*one/*

Satara, India  
5th December 1956.

Dear Family:

The first impact on the minds of Baba-lovers as they read the following news, or have already heard of it, must naturally be the recollection of Baba's recent words given in "The Circular Message from Baba, in His Seclusion" circulated in July 1956, to all concerned in the U.S.A. referring to the personal tragedy that was to occur again. To those at Grafton, Baba said, as recently as three days before the accident, that the month or so before the termination of His Seclusion on the 15th February 1957 would hold greater and concentrated suffering for Himself in which a number of His close ones would also share.

In the course of His present seclusion, Baba has traveled for His work over 10,000 miles (in India) by car, driven by Eruch who has proved himself to be an excellent and careful driver. Baba's recent mast tour to the north of India was another trip of particular significance in connection with His seclusion, from which He returned to Satara on the 23rd of November. On Sunday, the 2nd of December, Baba went to Poona for a day accompanied by Eruch, Pendu, Vishnu and Dr. Nilkanth (better known as Nilu). At around 4.45 of the same evening, while returning to Satara, the accident occurred — about 12 miles outside Satara. The car was running normally and at moderate speed, when it seemed suddenly and inexplicably to go completely out of control and dashed against a stone culvert, landing eventually in the ditch on the other side of it. Baba and the men were heavily injured, the most serious being Nilu. The road was deserted of traffic and pedestrians, until three minutes later a man going to Poona sighted the wreckage and lifted Baba (and Vishnu who was the least one hurt of the occupants) into his car, retracing his journey to leave them at Grafton. A truck not long after picked up the remaining ones and brought them to Rosewood, the mandali's place. They were badly injured and immediately hospitalized, except Nilu who died without regaining consciousness. The condition of the others is not serious.

In the auto accident of 1952 in the U.S.A., Baba sustained injuries to His face and leg and arm. This time too, Baba received similar facial injuries, though not as severe as that previous time. As all concerned will be anxious to know the details of Baba's injuries, I cannot do better then give the following extracts from a hurried report by Dr. Donkin, giving us a general idea of their extent and location:

1) Minor abrasions and subcutaneous contusions of forehead, nose and cheeks, all healing well.

2) A tear of the upper and lower surface of the tongue, sutured a few hours after the accident. Cuts under the chin, sutured at the same time. Wounds are clean, normal after-injury swelling already subsiding, and the pain diminishing daily, thus allowing the intake of fluids and liquid food with less discomfort. The function of the mouth and tongue are affected only temporarily and expected very soon to be perfectly normal.

3) Surgical attention is now concentrated on the treatment of the hip injury. The top end of the thigh bone (the femoral head) fits into the cup-shaped depression in the pelvis, known as the acetabulum. The upper rim of the acetabulum has been fractured, the broken chip of bone being slightly displaced. Although this

is very painful, there is most fortunately no fracture of the parts of the upper end of the thigh bone (e.g. the femoral neck) so often sustained in motor crashes.

A plaster cast or some type of immobilization is essential and the complete healing of the fracture will take the usual length of time. Every effort will continue to be made to give freedom from pain and to restore the hip to ultimate normality."

Baba is at Grafton, under the loving care of the two ashram doctors; of Mehera and the other women and men mandali.

On reading 'The Circular Message from Baba, in His Seclusion', someone asked Baba why these things should be and why could He not avert it. Baba's reply was: "What the Divine Will has decreed must and will happen, and if I am the Divine Personification you believe me to be then the last thing I would do is to avert or avoid it." To the query in our minds as to why Baba should personally go through such suffering, comes the answer in His previous words, "People suffer for their Karma. A few suffer for others. Perfect Masters suffer for the Universe."\* For those of us who can grasp even a mite of the significance of these words comes the assurance not only of His greatness that He manifests through 'littleness', but of the 'littleness' He assumes in His greatness — and most of all of His eternal love for us all whom He knows and experiences as His divided selves in ignorance.

Those who were present at Poona in November, 1955, soon after Nozer's death cannot help recalling Baba's remark that in about a year's time five more dear ones (in the East and West) would leave their bodies and that two of them would be very close ones. After this accident Baba said, "Nilu was particularly fortunate to have breathed his last in my physical proximity, and it is as he would have wanted it." According to Baba's wishes much loved, gentle Nilu was taken to Meherabad for cremation and his ashes will grace the beloved place where he spent many years with the Beloved.

Baba's silence is rarely felt in His abstention from vocal speech which He has observed these last 31 years, but the deep silence in His suffering is a profoundly felt experience. The morning after the accident, in the midst of tremendous pain He was undergoing from His injuries, Baba said something that revealed a fresh glimpse of the depth of His compassion. He said (with gestures of course), purely from the point of man's suffering and irrespective of political or world situations: "The Hungarians suffered much in their recent struggle. Many were lying wounded and helpless on the roads, away from their loved ones and from care or relief from pain; at least I am lying on a bed, with the care of good doctors and the love of all my lovers present and absent." A few days before He said, "Nobody suffers in vain, for true freedom is spiritual freedom and suffering is a ladder towards it. Men unknowingly suffer for God, and God\*\* knowingly suffers for man." We cannot need a better explanation of why the Avatar allows suffering to His human body that He assumes, from time to time, for our truth-blinded sakes. He loves us as He ought to be loved by us — our only question is are we worthy of it? —and may our only prayer be that we too may love Him as He ought to be loved.

Baba wishes all concerned to be informed of the accident, and expressly wishes me to say that this does not in any way affect the Congregation of Easterners and Westerners to be held in India in November 1957; that it will not affect the coming Sahavas, but on the contrary will help towards it. Baba wishes all concerned

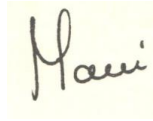
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\* Meher Baba further clarified: "Ordinary man suffers for himself, Perfect Master suffers for humanity, whereas the Avatar suffers for one and all beings and things."

\*\*God as the God-Man.



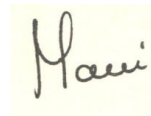
in the West and East to renew their efforts with greater strength towards their coming next year, as this congregation has to take place and must take place. Baba's Love to all His lovers.



P.S. Baba did not wish the news of the accident to be sent by cable, and the above circular is being sent by letter to all concerned as soon as it was possible to do so.

6th December 1956

When I informed Baba the news was typed and ready to be sent to the West, He gave this personal message for you all: "Do not worry; be happy. All will be well. Faithfully carry out the instructions given by me."



Please note: Those of you who have not yet written the direct letter to Baba and therefore will no doubt soon do so, must not in that letter refer to His accident or injuries.

Also, please inform all concerned that I will not be able to write personal letters for some time. Letters received by me cannot be replied to. Nor should anyone expect reply to cables. If short cable answer is required (in which I could not give details anyway) kindly note carefully that it must be sent with "Reply Paid" form.

*two/*

POONA, INDIA  
18th December 1956

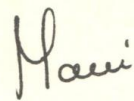
Dear Family:

Today's letter cannot be as comforting as we would like it to be, for the crucial week Baba told us about has certainly begun. From the 16th Baba has been feeling and looking weaker in health, and the pains have arisen with renewed intensity. Due to His leg being in traction, the attached weights tend to drag Baba towards the foot of the bed, and when He is even slightly shifted up again (as has to be done), He gets bad pains. But Dr. Donkin is working hard on fixing a special kind of bed (on which we hope to be allowed by the doctors to shift Baba in a few days), which will give Him much more comfort. Also there is an abrasion on the back (due to the previous plaster cast and usual bed sores) which is well-nigh impossible to treat as the pain in the leg becomes excruciating when He is moved at all. Another specially painful bother is the 'pressure point' of the coccyx due to His invariable position on the back. Then too He is having occasional fever and rigor — but everything possible is being done, and I hope to write better news next week. I feel sure I will be able to do so, this week being the most difficult as He has told us. So we are holding our breath, resigned to His will (but dreading these five more all the same). On the 15th evening, Baba explained that the last 75 days of His seclusion (beginning from the day of the accident), He had to work out thru physical suffering and the main pattern of its intensity resembled a hill — the first 3 weeks being in the ascending (hence this last week being the apex), the next three weeks will be of slow gradual descending; and after that the last 44 days will be of gradual improvement, with only the normal pain and discomfort expected in one with His injuries. As all this has to do with His seclusion, it will be over when He merges from it on 15th February and He will be free from this apparent helplessness.

After sending off my letter to you all on the 5th, Baba gave a special message which He wishes to be circulated to all those who love Him, in the East and West. I have already sent it to Adi (for India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Ceylon, Aden, Africa, Iran), adding in it bits of the medical report from the letter sent to you on the 5th. Enclosed is a copy of this Circular which Baba wishes you to send to each and all concerned in the U.S.A., regardless of my letter of 5th, from which some bits are repeated. I am also sending it to England, Europe and Australia as usual.

Hope to be writing again shortly, giving the interesting experiences I have made notes of but which have not been put down in letter form as yet.

As ever with much love to you each from us all.



## SPECIAL CIRCULAR REGARDING MEHER BABA IN INDIA

Satara, 17th December, 1956

For His spiritual work, time and again Baba has observed seclusion, during which He does not give darshan or interviews and when His numerous devotees are not allowed to see Him. But this seclusion of one year beginning from February 15th, 1955, is, He told us, of momentous significance having far-reaching results of spiritual importance. It has been interspersed with periods of utter retirement, severe fasts, and intermittent travelling to various places in India for His work with the masters and saints. He decided to break the seclusion in the middle of the year to visit the U.S.A., England and Australia; which He did in July 1956, resuming it on His return to India in the middle of August. Later He told us that during the last part of this seclusion He would be in complete retirement, as was essential for His work. Little did we realize how literally He meant that, till the car accident occurred (on 2nd December, at about 5.15 p.m.), involving Baba and some of His close disciples. Baba, whom we know by nature to be infinitely active and restless, is now confined to a bed, lying on His back in one position all the time and virtually unable to move. Combined with His long-standing vocal silence, His retirement could not be more absolute, more imaginably complete.

It was a week after the accident in Satara, and only after the pains became too severe and other complications set in, that Baba at last agreed to our ashram doctor's pleas to go to Poona where better medical facilities are available. Here the plaster cast (that Baba had around pelvis and entire right leg) was removed and His leg put in traction, with weights attached to stretch the muscles. As far as the fracture is concerned it is progressing satisfactorily, but the pain varies in intensity, becoming excruciating at the least movement on His part. When the pain in the hip is relieved, some other form of physical pain or suffering arises; just as though our Beloved were clearly telling us that He has to suffer in this way just now, and we cannot take away what He has taken on.

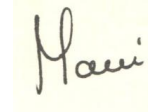
This is as far as the medical report goes; and light on the inner facts has been thrown now and then by Baba's personal remarks at unexpected moments. The other day He traced with His finger a little circle on the spot of the fracture, and then making a wide circle in the air gestured to say: 'The suffering of the whole universe is concentrated in this little spot. This is a tangible expression of the universal suffering I bear.' In spite of Baba's physical agony He says: 'I am happy. It is as I wanted it.' One can well understand this, for how often have we witnessed Baba neglect and sacrifice His physical health and comforts for His work. At another time He said: 'It is as if the mental suffering of the universe wants to crush me. But the Infinite Bliss I experience and the love I have for all sustains me; and the love of all my lovers supports me in the burden I carry. The week ahead will be the climax of my suffering; but it is necessary and must be, and this critical period too will be tided over with the love of all who love me.'

Baba's special message for all those who love Him is: "In this apparent helplessness I declare anew that everything except God is illusion and that the only way to be united with this Self of all selves is love, sacrifice and unreserved and honest resignation to the Beloved's will. I am the Self in all. I am the Ultimate Goal. So love me with all your honesty and being. After my seclusion is over (on 15th February), I will be free from this helplessness. I will give my sahas, darshan and my blessings to all.

"On the 15th of February, I will fast for 24 hours along with all my lovers; and regardless of the restrictions imposed on my physical activities due to the injuries, I will feed and bow down to 700 poor people on that day.

"My Love to you all."

In Baba

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maui". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a rectangular yellow background.

P.S. Please note correction in the time of accident (given incorrectly in the last circular). The accident occurred at about 5:15 p.m. on the 2nd of December, at a place about 14 miles from Satara known as Udtara.

*three/*

POONA, INDIA, 25th December 1956

Dear Family,

BABA'S LOVE TO ALL.

Baba is looking and feeling better — such a lovely Xmas gift for us all. He has been moved to the new bed since three days and it gives Him much more comfort. Don (Dr. Donkin) brought in a very good doctor (of the military Orthopaedic Hospital), a most capable and nice man whom Baba likes very much. He had more X-rays taken, and had the traction removed, putting Baba's leg in a splint of some kind. Two days later he had that removed also, and Baba's leg is now free from encumbrances, which gives Him much relief. Since yesterday morning the pain in the leg has diminished considerably, though there are still the other usual pains and discomforts such as an occasional low fever, and the doctor had Baba propped up in a semi-reclining position which He can manage for a few minutes at a time. The crucial week was over on 22nd midnight and our sigh of relief and thanks must have mingled with yours. The doctor has promised to have Baba begin to walk on crutches in six or seven weeks time, and exercises in bed will be begun quite some time before that. I shall be better able to tell you about that in next week's letter.

And now to some of the experiences and incidents of interest I promised and which you dear ones will want to share.

On our way to Poona from Satara (in the car following Baba's ambulance), we passed by the spot of the accident — it was incredible to visualize such a bad accident at such a place! It is as if Baba meant us to clearly understand it was all for His work and reasons, for there seemed to be no outward excuse whatever for the accident. The road was good, the 'ditch' not more than a foot deep of sloping ground, the stone culverts were very low, the car had been in good order, the driver was our experienced and cautious Eruch, the speed under 40 miles an hour, the road was clear with no obstruction of any kind (pedestrians, animals, hens or other such constant life on Indian roads); there was no puncture or skidding and it happened, as Vishnu and Eruch said, in the twinkling of an eye. Eruch later said that the driving wheel seemed suddenly and inexplicably to stop coordinating and the car swerved straight towards the culvert and that is all he remembers till they came to.

By the way, it happened just opposite the grounds under the mango trees where Baba and a number of close disciples (some of them called expressly from Bombay, Poona, Ahmednagar etc., for the occasion) had played cricket a short time before Baba left for the West in July '56. This was most unexpected as Baba was in seclusion, but it was His express wish; and the day and time and spot were chosen accordingly. Meherji tells us the game was played unusually seriously (for a game with Baba) leaving the players with stiff and aching muscles for days. There were 10 players on each side, and Baba (the 11th) played on both sides — the score was equal. After that, every time Baba passed the spot He would point it out and ask the others if they remembered how they had played cricket there. That again happened on the 2nd of December as they were returning from Poona, and it was the last thing they were talking about before the accident occurred.

Now a little experience of mine which occurred before we knew Baba was hurt, and which in a way ties up with Vishnu's wonderful one he told us later. We were expecting Baba's car to return to Grafton, Satara, at about five o'clock that evening, but it was nearer to quarter to six when it came. I was with Peter my dog, by Sheba's stable, when the car came in, a strange one, but we thought the other had

broken down perhaps, and this one had to be hired. As I was hurrying towards the house, the driver of the car, a curly headed boy got down, and as I looked up at him I stopped in my tracks struck by the strangest feeling. I have often jokingly deplored the fact that I am not psychic in any way, or imaginative in that sense, but as I looked at the boy my thought was 'why, he looks like an angel'. And he did. I had the impression somehow of wings and a halo, yet could not now for the life of me describe what the boy actually looked like. I also vaguely missed the absence of Eruch in place of this driver. Then we heard Vishnu's voice calling out for Goher, and then Mehera and the others rushed out, and then. . . . . !

Now Vishnu's experience. He had face injuries and a broken rib, and was the least hurt of the lot. He says the whole thing happened in the flash of an eye, and when he came to, he found himself the only one in the back of the car. He got down and went to the front to see how Baba was and saw Him reclining in the front seat, with blood on His clothes and face. Vishnu told us, 'through it I saw Baba and never in my life have I seen such utter radiance and lustre as was on Baba's face then! He was like a King, a victorious King who had won a great battle. Lord Krishna must have looked like that in His chariot on the victorious battle field. The radiance was blinding. I could see nothing else, not the car nor the surroundings, only Baba's Face in glorious triumph.' After some moments (or eternity) of that, he came to earth and asked Baba if He was much hurt. Baba nodded, pointing to His mouth and leg, but gestured to Vishnu to first see how the others were (the three had been thrown out). Nilu was unconscious, Pendu in agony, and Eruch managed with super-human effort to stand up and lean against the car and talk to Baba. Then the car (with my 'angel') came along, and brought Baba and Vishnu to Grafton. Soon after, an open truck going by brought the others to Rosewood. Before they were taken to hospital Baba's permission was obtained about their being allowed to drink water etc., as on that day the men were on a complete fast ...

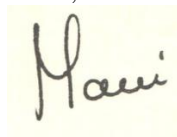
During the drive to Satara, Baba had changed places with Nilu and only about 15 minutes before the accident Baba changed places again, sitting once more in His original seat by Eruch. We remember Nilu remarking more than once, that when it was his turn to die he would want it to be instantaneous and Baba would tease him about it but smilingly nod. So it was as Nilu wanted it, and in the company of his Beloved.

Some days before the accident, Baba smilingly told the mandali, 'We may all die in a few days'. Then turning to Nilu, He said 'Don't worry about anything. Keep thinking of me constantly. I am the only One that exists, the only One that matters.'

Bhau came from Satara this Sunday and said the first improvement in Pendu is noticeable, and now there is every hope the improvement will continue quicker. Eruch is progressing well but not yet discharged from hospital.

With most loving thoughts for this Xmas and the coming year and LOVE to you each as ever.

Till next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Maui".

*four/*

Poona, India  
8th January 1957

Dearest Family,

It is two weeks since the Xmas letter, but I expect it to be more newsy because of that, though not any simpler. If our BABA were an 'ordinary' patient then the report could be simple, but His physical condition having to do with His universal working, then just an outward observation or statement is so inadequate to say the least. All the same when everything concerning Baba means so much to us who love Him, even these outward details are satisfying.

Baba likes Dr. Chatterji (the orthopedic surgeon) very much, who now promises to have Him begin to walk on crutches within three weeks time. This is as Baba wanted it, for there is the big program on 15th February, when He will bow down to and feed 700 poor people. This will most probably be held in Pimpalgaon, where we expect to be moving some time during the first part of February. The crutches and wheel chair that Baba used after the 1952 accident have been brought from Meherabad, and they stand outside His room looking to my imagination like willing and obedient soldiers waiting for the call to service. Occasional X-rays prove that Baba's fracture is progressing very satisfactorily — by the way, recent good ones showed there is also a slight fracture of the femoral head — and healing well. Since a few days a young man from the physic-therapeutic dept. comes daily to give Baba leg and back massage, and leg exercises to tone up the muscles and limber the knee and hip joints. He has a firm but gentle touch, and Baba likes him. When he massages Baba's feet one can't help wishing he knew how fortunate he is! We sometimes wonder at the number of people, 'strangers' as they might be called, coming in contact with Baba during such phases of His working; of course they are meant to have this contact, and fortunate whether they know it or not.

The exercises are essential to prevent formation of adhesions in the joint, though they leave Baba in almost continuous pain, slight at times and bad at others. Although Baba naturally looks weak and wan of face, on the whole, there is undoubted daily improvement towards recovery. It is lovely to see Him sitting up in bed (with supports), and He is such a good 'patient' when asked to do His daily leg exercises. The bed has all sorts of pulleys and gadgets, and there is a definite twinkle in Baba's eyes as He manipulates them and helps Himself up partly when His back needs attending to.

So, in short, as far as Baba's physical suffering goes, there are 'good' days and 'bad' days, and accordingly for us sunny and cloudy days. But the silver edge is always there, a promise of eternal sunshine to come when we shall see our Beloved walking around as before. Yesterday He said, 'I have to get well soon, for there is a great amount of active work to be done in the near future'.

There is a little by-road next to us and beyond is a Mohammedan saint's tomb, near which the goats graze and the little goatlings romp and skip about; and we can't resist the temptation of catching one or the other and bringing

it to Baba for His touch. It watches with big unblinking eyes while Beloved caresses it. The lucky kids, but they are not the only ones. When there are so many wishing to come and see Baba particularly at this time, and so very few allowed to, there is the little old gardener of this house who gets an unusual share. He asked me for a picture of Baba, and when he was given one, he removed his sandals (an Indian custom denoting reverence) bowed down to the picture, and raising his tear-filled eyes held it to his heart. Since then he finds some excuse or the other to potter outside Baba's room and peeks over the ledge, and the lowly gardener and the divine Gardener exchange a salute every morning.

The area where our house is now, in Poona, happens to be an old 'haunt' of Baba's and we can see in the distance the hill where the Zoroastrian 'tower of silence' stands (where Baba used to visit for long hours in those early days after Babajan's divine kiss.) So that little stray details, that seem to be strewn along by coincidence, seem in retrospect to fall somehow into the pattern of a larger whole.

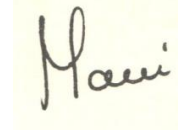
Baba being able to sit up in bed, even if it's for a few minutes only, is the first bright step towards recovery; and Baba is now able to take more solid food, though He is not taking half the amount of nourishment one of us would have done.

Regarding the others, Pendu is progressing definitely, though slowly, and still has much pain. Today Eruch was discharged from hospital but it will take some time for him to be his old, active self. Vishnu seems to be suffering from the reaction of it all, and though he does not speak of it seems far from his old, bright self. But all goes according to His Will from which He does not spare His own dear Self.

Saint Gadge Maharaj and the mast Ali Shah (known as Bapji) whom I reported in one of the letters as being critically ill, have both passed away — the saint Gadge Maharaj on the 21st of December, and Bapji on the 27th — the beloved mast's remains now rest in Meherabad where he has been with Baba for years.

With BABA'S LOVE to you each

lovingly



**CORRECTION:** In my previous Family Letter. The 'cricket match' played with the disciples on the spot near the accident in Satara was not 'just before leaving for the West in July.' The occasion referred to had taken place some months before this seclusion began and not at the actual time I mentioned. Although there was a gathering of some of the disciples before Baba left for the West, the cricket match was not played at that time. My loving apologies for this misinterpretation and misstatement.

**Note:** Since yesterday, those letters direct to Baba received, after the accident, have begun to be read out to Baba. Later on will send a list of the names of all received.



*five/*

Poona, India  
23rd Jan. 1957

Dear Family:

Am sitting down to this family letter with a curious expectant feeling of what's going to come out on the paper, for we're all feeling rather lightheaded since the evening of the 20th when Baba, the Beloved, was able to leave the bed for a few minutes on to His wonderful new wheelchair, a gift from Don (Dr. Donkin). Xrays taken on the 19th show most satisfactory progress in the bone union, and on that memorable 20th evening Col. Chatterji came and decided that Baba was ready to sit up in the wheelchair. Baba was lifted into the chair and wheeled about the house — His happy smile was outdone only by our overjoyed grins. Actual weight-bearing on the hurt leg cannot be tried, the Col. said, before the twelve weeks from the date of injury; but when Baba is helped into the chair, He supports Himself on the good leg. Crutches cannot be used for quite some time yet, but in the meantime Baba is happy to be in the chair in which He is allowed to sit up for as long as the leg does not give pain. We expect and hope He will be able to sit up for longer periods as each day goes by ...

At this moment of writing Mehera has wheeled Him out on to the verandah, and I wish one of us could have sketched our Beloved as He is sitting out here, His drawn face radiating Love, watching the sparrows having their bath and the marigolds nodding happily. Some school girls hurrying past have stopped by the gate, bowing down to Him, and Baba smiling at them with hand raised in blessing. An umbrella has been put up to shade Him from the sun, an aeroplane is droning above the clouds, and a little robin is pouring forth more song than would seem could possibly be contained in its little powder-puff body. As Baba sat out yesterday morning, a most unusual gust of wind blew up, throwing the screens and cane, chairs and papers in chaos - - perhaps the wind too had come to pay its homage, sweeping down to His feet where our hearts lay.

Baba still has pain, of course, which comes on sometimes for longer periods and sometimes for shorter, but not so intense as before; and as the doctors say, it is better that He should have the pains now than have the stiffness which would give Him much more pain later on when walking. Mr. Nair still comes daily to give the massage and we can feel him being drawn to Baba more each day, and his face lights up as he invariably gets from Baba a loving pat before leaving.

We shall not be going back to Satara. Please note that henceforth letters etc., should NOT be sent to Grafton, Satara, but should be addressed: C/o Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar (Deccan) India. For Cables: Meherbaba, Kings Road, Ahmednagar.

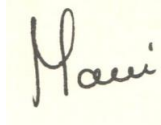
On the 27th, Rano and Naja will leave for Satara to pack up our entire household and personal belongings at Grafton. Baba and we will be leaving for Pippalgaon on the 12th of February, leaving Poona where our stay was made so comfortable by the devoted Jessawala family and the others. In a few days Pendu and Eruch are arriving in Poona; and Pendu, whose quick progress these days is heartening will then proceed to Ahmednagar. The civil surgeon of Satara, Dr. Abadee who deeply respects and loves Baba and has been wonderful to Pendu, feels Pendu can be discharged from hospital in a few days.

Baba's wheelchair is a lovely folding portable one, and indispensable as the old heavy wooden one would be too cumbersome for the travels that Baba intends to make in the near future for the Darshan programmes — He is already expert at maneuvering it and manages the turns and twists with such ease and grace.

So, things are moving up and I shall be writing once more only before leaving for Pippalgaon on 12th February. On the 15th, Beloved Baba will touch the feet of 700 poor people from several villages, giving to each His prasad of sweets and a piece of material. Later He has the Darshan programmes for March, visiting Sakori at dear Godavri Mai's invitation, and Poona for the many who are longing to see Him there. But Baba's main purpose in going to Poona is to keep His promise to Santji Vaswani (lovingly known as Dada) whom He refers to as "My Beloved Child", saying when He begins to walk He will come to Dada and embrace him. This high saint has a big following, and has established the St. Mira school which embraces all religions and thoughts as all come from and lead to the One and Only GOD. His beautiful letters to Baba radiate the love that is his entire being and after the accident he had his followers come to a non-stop 'jap' (form of continual prayer) for Baba's speedy recovery.

BABA'S LOVE TO YOU EACH DEAR ONE OF HIS FAMILY, HE SAYS:  
'DO NOT WORRY. BE HAPPY IN MY LOVE AND KEEP IT ALWAYS WITH YOU. YOUR LOVE MAKES ME HAPPY. TRY YOUR BEST TO COME TO INDIA THIS NOVEMBER.'

With fond love from us each,



P.S.

24th Jan.

Last evening when the pain was bad, Baba said, "The accident has been a blessing for the universe and a curse for Baba." But this morning the pain is practically nil and He has been up in the chair for over two hours.

*six/1* \*

Poona, India,  
9th February, 1957

Dearest Family:

As I went into Baba's room this morning and saw Him sitting up, with the first faint rays of the sun stealing in over His bed, I felt like echoing the words of a letter to Baba from someone in Scotland:

'To the Royal Highness, King of Kings, all Honour and Glory, I salute'.

Baba has just gone out in the car for His morning drive, which the doctors have advised in preparation for the long trip to Pippalgaon on the 12th February. His chair is wheeled to the car, and supporting on the sound leg He is able to slip on to the seat. In spite of the pain that usually follows this extra movement of the leg, Baba enjoys the outing in the fresh air — accompanied by Meherji and Eruch who is here since a few days.

There is little to report specifically regarding Baba's physical condition since the last letter, as progress is necessarily gradual and it is now mainly a matter of time. He is able to sit outside on the wheel chair for nearly two hours, but the 'bad' days and the 'good' days still continue as before. The other day Mr. Nair spoke the thought of us all when he said to Baba, 'I am looking forward to the day when all your pain will vanish.' And when Baba smiled and said, 'That day I will embrace you,' he quickly replied, 'Then I hope it will be very soon.'

The next Xrays will be taken some time in the first week of March, after which we expect the doctors to allow weight bearing on the hurt leg. Col. Chatterji and the Major ('Uncle Sour' who takes the Xrays) paid an informal call this week to see Baba; Dr. Donkin has certainly brought some wonderful people to Baba and it is hardly surprising that Baba likes them all so very much.

On the 3rd Feb., Pendu was able to be brought by ambulance to Poona for a few hours' check up at the good military hospital here, and stopped for a while at Silver Oaks (the house that Baba and we all have been staying since coming here from Satara). A glance was enough to show how much Pendu has gone through, and he broke down when he saw the loved familiar faces of some of the mandali from Bombay and Poona. Baba came out in the wheel chair to greet him, and there is little need for me to say what it must have meant to Pendu! Baba talked lovingly with him, joked with him, told him how they would be both walking together, gave him the strength and courage as only our Beloved can do; and Pendu said, 'you, Baba suffer it all in supreme silence'. Pendu looked a changed man as he left, wearing a happy smile; and even when he was back in the ambulance kept lifting himself to greet Baba once more with joined hands. He will stay sometime in Ahmednagar, with the Satha family who are devoted to Baba. Eruch spends several hours daily with Baba, and is the rock of strength and patience as

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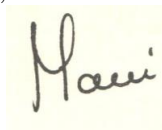
\* This sixth letter was lost in transit from India. Hence the letters 6/1 and 6/2.

always ... The others of the mandali are at Satara packing to leave for Pippalgaon in a day or two. In Ahmednagar preparations are going ahead to collect the 700 poor people whom Baba will bless with His prasad of food and love.

We have begun packing for 12th Feb. and with the little time at our disposal it seems somehow endless. I expect the next letter from Pippalgaon will be newsier and I should like to end this one with the news from a letter of a devotee, recd. by Adi from Dehra Dun. He says 'My three year old daughter Mithilesh expired on 3rd Jan., in my lap with the sweet sound of BABA on her lips. She always remembered and worshipped Baba, standing before His picture.' About this little Baba-lover, Beloved said: 'She is the most fortunate of fortunates as are all who die taking My Name.'

With BABA'S LOVE to you each and all dear ones of His Family.

Lovingly,



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THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER RECEIVED BY ELINORKIT\* FROM MANI, DATED 10th FEBRUARY, 1957:

Marion has sent the U.S.A. names for November trip to India, which we received yesterday and will be able to bring it to Baba's notice when He asks for it some time when we get to Pippalgaon — according to His wish. Am sending her cable today about this.

According to the Gujerati calendar it is Baba's Birthday today although now (and in the future) we are celebrating it on the 25th Feb., as He wishes it done.

Received by sea-post the Myrtle Beach paper telling about the wonderful hospital campaign! — makes one sigh for the many inadequate and poorly equipped hospitals in India; the one in Satara where Pendu was taken after the accident, didn't even have a wheel chair or a good bed; and obviously it is something converted into a hospital, for the rooms like the private one Pendu was in, are more like stalls with no windows only a small one near the ceiling. So you can imagine how happy Pendu must be to be out of it and in the atmosphere of a home and family.

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\* Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli, Kitty Davy

*six/2*

Meherazad,  
Pippalgaon (India)

20th February, 1957

Dear Family,

We're back at good old Pippalgaon, in 'Meherazad' where the peace and stillness is a tangible presence, particularly in the evenings when the sun sets in a motley of pinks. The familiar garden bespeaks the loving care Kaka has given it in our long absences; and as of old the wind plays its raucous whispering among the trees, broken by the distant cooing of the doves, the morning song of birds, and the barking of the dogs. But it all cannot be the same while we miss the beloved familiar sight of Baba striding back and forth to the mandali's as He used to, or go with us for quick morning walks to the lake accompanied by His dog Bhooti which He brought as a pup during one of His treks in the Himalayas and which is Kaka's faithful companion and 'guardian' of Meherazad. But Baba does go over to the mandali's nearly every morning, though it is in the wheelchair. As we wheel Baba to the gate, from where the mandali take over, He stops by a flower bush or a tree and remarks how well it has grown.

To go back to our leaving Poona on 12th morning. Baba travelled in Meherji's car with Don and Meherji, while we followed in Adi's. The journey was accomplished in about 3 hours, and in spite of some bad stretches of road Baba withstood it very well except that He was naturally very tired at the end of it. On the 14th evening Baba remarked about the fast that would be shared by His lovers in various parts of the world, and seemed anxious about certain ones (particularly in the West where it must be so cold at this time) and how they would fare during this strict fast, while we were anxious about Baba, knowing how tiring it would be for Him with the programme for the Poor in addition. Beloved got up early that morning to be on time for the programme and not to keep the 'prasadees' waiting. The mandali had arranged it all beautifully, and Baba sat in the wheelchair in Kaka's room while the poor filed in singly to receive the blessing of the Avatar's prasad. He could not bow down as He usually would do, but He touched the feet of each one and then touched His Hand to His forehead. As usual, more people came and there were 800 instead of the estimated 700. The mast 'Bara-coaty' — named because of the 12 coats or garments he wears always — also arrived and Baba was pleased. They came from several villages, and some who came from afar were here the night before. Early in the morning we saw groups of these people walking in from all directions, and it was unusual, somehow there seemed more women than men, young ones with chubby babes in their arms, others so old they were nearly bent double. There could be heard a lot of happy chattering as they left, carrying their precious bundle of prasad. The programme was over within two hours, and as we saw Beloved return in the wheelchair,

looking happy but tired, it seemed as though He might be saying the words of a letter sent to Baba from a child in California, 'All this is because I love you so much all the time.'

Speaking for ourselves, we did not fare as well with the fast as we would have wished; had splitting headaches and thought the long hours would never end — it made us ashamed when we thought of the number of such fasts Baba has observed in this Seclusion! Our new extra help and the garden boys also fasted with us. Many, many in India and Pakistan participated. At times whole villages and towns (as in Arangaon, Hamirpur etc..) and groups in several parts of India had Poor Feeding programmes as well.

Now we await March, when more Xrays will be taken, and hope they will determine Baba's weight-bearing at an early date. The pain in the leg continues, more at times and less at others; and so while time seems so very short, the days seem long until March. The facial injuries have healed completely, and the only reminder is a little scar under the chin that scarcely shows.

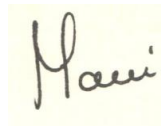
Bhooti (the Tibetan mastiff mentioned before) has had pups, and the one that is a 'spitting image' of its handsome mama, Baba has named Plato and has given it to Mehera. This lucky fellow is brought over every morning and plays with Beloved on His bed.

Several deeply loving cables to Baba were received on the 15th when he emerged from His long Seclusion. They were read to Baba, and He sends His LOVE as ever to you each.

I also wish to add a line here acknowledging with love the many dear letters received and I am sure the writers will understand and forgive my not being able always to reply to them separately; and of course the main purpose — which is to give Baba's news — is served through these Family Letters written with Baba's permission for His Lovers in the West.

Baba's Birthday will be celebrated on Febr. 25th, as He now wishes It to be held only according to the Western Calendar. It is after many years that we shall be celebrating it in Pippalgaon once again. With Birthday Greetings to all who are reborn in His Love

and with much love from the Eastern  
branch of His Family,



*seven/*

Meherazad,  
Pippalgaon (India)

7th March, 1957

Dearest Family:

On this still, soft afternoon, a spotted lizard is sunning itself while the iridescent sunbird is probing into the generous heart of the yellow 'tikoma' for honey. Baba is resting after an unusually active morning, having done an 'extra round' of walking with the help of crutches and support of the mandali. The Xrays were taken the beginning of the month and Don showed them to Dr. Chatterji who seemed well satisfied with the results, saying Baba could begin to walk with the aid of crutches, but to proceed slowly. On the 4th afternoon, under Don's guidance and supervision Baba tried the first few steps. Although these were slow and halty (as of a baby attempting his first steps) and brought on the reactionary pain, we were thrilled that the next onward phase had begun! The next day the pace and rounds (round the room) were increased — a number of minutes twice daily — and regardless of the pain that naturally follows, Baba seems eager to do more. We laughingly remarked that whereas with others a doctor usually has trouble in hastening the pace of self-effort, Baba needs constantly to be reminded to go slower. The doctors have advised Him not to put complete weight on the injured leg, till the end of March. All the same, He will give mass Darshan at Sakori on the 18th, and at Poona on the 23rd, as promised. Already in three days Baba's walking has considerably improved, and by the time this reaches you we feel sure His steps will be firmer and steadier and perhaps the pain will come on with less intensity as the muscles get stronger.

Seeing His present physical 'helplessness' one is made to realize all the more consciously how, when the Divine comes to our human level, He plays the game to perfection; not helping Himself from the boundless Strength that is His, but helping us through our innumerable weaknesses and inadequate love. Baba has said, 'I am not limited by this form. I use it like a garment to make myself visible to you; and I communicate with you through words best fitted to your understanding. If I used the language of my own consciousness you would not know what I was talking about. Don't try to understand Me. My depth is unfathomable. Just love Me. I eternally enjoy the Christ state of consciousness and when I speak I shall manifest my true Self; besides giving a general push to the whole world, I shall lead all those who come to Me towards Light and Truth.'

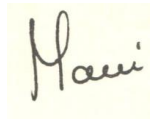
This brings to mind the words of Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters of our present Avatar's time. When we were in Poona last month, Baba told Mehera and myself one morning to visit the tomb of Babajan and place on it a 'sheet' of flowers. The tomb graces the shady 'neem' tree under which Babajan used to sit throughout all weathers, situated at the section where three busy roads meet. Later a shelter was built for her; and many devotees would gather there, particularly in

the evenings, and this would often hold up traffic. Whenever Baba refers to her, He invariably uses the words 'Incomparable; matchless!' and once said, 'She came all the way from Baluchistan to settle in Poona for my destined meeting with her.' After we had paid our respects, Mehera and I stopped for a while at the Jessawalas and Eruch's little aunt told us of her first visit to Babajan years ago. Babajan asked her where she had come from, and at the reply 'From Meher Baba' she exclaimed, 'From my Beloved Meher! My Son! Some day the whole world will call out, 'Meher, Meher!'; all the trees will cry out 'Meher', all the birds will sing 'Meher'!

The Birthday of 'Beloved Meher' was celebrated on a wide scale in India and Pakistan. We in the ashram observed this happy occasion in a simpler manner than usual. Baba told us to repeat God's Name seven times at the stroke of five (the hour of His Birth on earth). We were up and ready long before that, garlanded the rooms and drew 'rangooli' (chalk patterns) on the floor, according to the Indian custom on festive occasions. Beloved was sitting up in bed, looking radiant in light blue jacket and flower garland, with the birthday cake and candles; and the many cards and greetings by cable sent from lovers round the globe, beside Him on a little table. At five o'clock we repeated God's Name seven times and sang our Birthday Greetings, and Mehera wished Him a Happy Birthday from all His dear ones in the East and West.

Baba sends His LOVE to you each.

With fond love from the ashramites



P.S.

8th March: Don is amazed at the progress Baba has already made, for now Baba walks with only the aid of crutches and His steps are longer as He strides around quite fast. He rests every little while though, for it leaves Him exhausted and the pain comes on.



*eight/*

Pippelgaon, Meherazad (India)

11th April, 1957

Dearest Family,

Once again Meherazad calling. Since the last family letter, the bare Champa tree has blossomed and is full of white scented clumps of flowers like separate bouquets on each branch. It seems to signify the progress our Beloved Baba has made in walking, and showing how the Avatar too lets Himself be bound by 'time' when He works on earth for His many selves in ignorance. Baba can now walk with only the aid of sticks, though He mostly uses crutches still (they are elbow-length crutches that Dr. Donkin got in Geneva in 1952), while the wheel chair is seldom used. He also practices going up and down some steps, and when He walks it amazes us to see Him doing it with scarcely a limp, in spite of the physical strain it involves which leaves Him exhausted after every trial. But it is obvious Baba has to remain outwardly inactive for longer, as the pain continues and has not diminished. Because of this the doctors have found it advisable to reduce the walking and weight-bearing considerably, till further X-rays have been taken and further investigations prove that all is satisfactory. For this check up we will be going to Poona for a week (on about the 18th of this month) where Col. Chatterjee and his staff can personally attend to Baba.

Baba has just returned from the morning visit to the mandali's quarters. He stops to give a nod and smile in response to some working boy's salutation, or to look up at a tree or flowering bush, then forward again—slowly and firmly, looking so frail and strong at the same time.

The darshan at Sakori on the 18th went off beautifully, and Baba was still looking radiant when He stepped out of the car on His return the same evening. Some days before that the pain was unusually more, and He did not feel up to the tiring journey, but more than that He did not wish to disappoint dear Godavari Mai who had so devotedly made all the arrangements (although she had anxiously asked beforehand that Baba should postpone coming if it would tax His health in any way). At the time of departure however, Baba was looking bright and in the pink, quite different from the day before; and although we've witnessed this happen on many darshan occasions we still keep on being surprised! The Poona darshan was more strenuous, being tremendous beyond the expectation of those who made the arrangements. It took place at the St. Mira School, established and run by the saint 'Dada' Vaswani (T.L. Vaswani). In fact the time and place was fixed by Baba in order to keep His promised date with Dada, whom He refers to as 'My Beloved Child', and I would have loved to have been present when they embraced. The attendance was stupendous, as many Baba-lovers took the opportunity of seeing Baba after the long seclusion and came from all parts of India, some making the journey of over 900 miles. Then there were those residing in Poona and the followers of the Saint himself. Baba gave prasad to thousands and His arm was still aching for a time afterwards. The hours fixed were insufficient for the thousands wanting darshan, and it looked at one time as though all bounds

would be broken and the Beloved would be literally 'mobbed' by His lovers. But Baba kept smiling and assuring the mandali, while giving the prasad and greetings with His usual speed for an unbroken stretch of hours. This wasn't a 'crowd' in the ordinary sense, for few had come from curiosity or mild interest. Baba has said before 'I am not here for just crowds. I am here for the individuals dispersed among the crowds who silently adore Me'. Just as He had said as Lord Krishna:

' ... but most of all I love  
Those happy ones to whom 'tis life to live  
In single fervid faith and love unseeing,  
Drinking the blessed Amrit of my Being'.

It is already very hot here, but this is usual for mid April. It is more trying for darling Baba, who has to lie in bed for many hours. We are hoping He will agree to move for a time to some other place where it is cooler, as May and June are the apex of the hot weather here.

As you know, the Sahavas date has been postponed to January 1958 — from 26th Jan. to 26th Feb. — and thus the East and West will spend together His Birthday with Him in India. Details regarding the Sahavas will be sent to you by Energy (Marion Florsheim) who is in charge of all correspondence and matters concerning it. As has been repeated before, Baba personally and lovingly invites all those who love Baba and genuinely wish to be with Him for a month, who are willing to be obedient to His wishes and can manage the financial aspect. The first wish Baba wants all to abide by is, that none should bring presents for Baba or any of Baba's people (neither the women nor the men mandali). Also in the interim, none should send presents by post .....

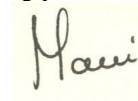
I would like to repeat here the address for cables to Baba: Meherbaba, Ahmednagar (India). For cables addresses to me, just: Mani, Meherbaba, Ahmednagar, (India).

Baba's Message to His followers:

DO NOT WORRY. LOVE ME MORE AND MORE. HOLD ON TO MY DAAMAN.  
WHATEVER THE TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES YOU MAY BE PASSING  
THROUGH, YOU ARE SHARING IN MY UNIVERSAL WORKING AND ARE  
FORTUNATE TO DO SO. THE TIME IS NOT FAR WHEN I WILL REVEAL  
MYSELF AND YOU WILL SEE ME AS I AM. MY LOVE TO YOU EACH'.

With fond love from the Eastern branch,

lovingly,



*nine/*

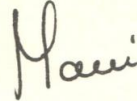
18th June, 1957

Dear Family,

"Calling once again from Pippalgaon. The Poor Children's Programme on the 9th went off very well, and as always on such occasions Baba looked wonderfully radiant. Though as usual we girls were not present at the actual programme, we could see from early morning the stream of Baba-devotees going by our cottage towards the mandali's quarters, while the line of vehicles outside the driveway kept growing rapidly. Then came the buses full of the children — bright eyes and happy smiles barely showing above the bus windows and their united cries of 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai' was music. Baba returned at noon, leaning on the arms of Eruch and Meherji and followed by a large number of the others, who had come for the occasions from Poona and other parts of India. Visible from a distance was the single flower garland round His neck; and not so visible the dust of 200 pairs of little feet, on His dear forehead. (Baba bowed down to each child.)

On the 10th, we started early in the morning, for Pippalgaon, so as to avoid the midday heat, and got here in good time after a fairly comfortable journey. The first two days the difference in temperature was markedly felt, but after a couple of showers it is definitely cooler. Soon the monsoon should begin in earnest, and it is lovely to be back in dear old Pippalgaon .... A noticeably happy difference from our last stay in Pippalgaon is the absence of the wheel-chair and crutches when Baba goes over to the mandali.

With His Love to you each and all of His dear Family,



IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR EACH AND ALL CONCERNED IN THE U.S.A.:-

" BABA WISHES ALL TO OBSERVE COMPLETE SILENCE FROM MIDNIGHT OF THE 9th TO MIDNIGHT OF THE 10th OF JULY. ALSO DURING THAT TIME ALL SHOULD FAST COMPLETELY EXCEPT THAT DRINKING WATER IS ALLOWED FREELY AS OFTEN AS LIKED, AND TEA OR COFFEE ONCE DURING THE 24 HOURS (WITH OR WITHOUT MILK AS DESIRED.) NO PARTICULAR AMOUNT HAS BEEN SPECIFIED, BUT THE BEVERAGE SHOULD BE TAKEN ONLY THAT ONCE."

Copy of cable received by Elizabeth & Kitty:-

AHMEDNAGAR (INDIA) JUNE 17, 1957

BE HAPPY MY VERY DEAR NORINA HAS COME  
TO LIVE WITH ME FOREVER. LOVE

-BABA-

*ten/*

Pippalgaon \* 28th, June 1957

Dear Family,

"It was a special Sunday yesterday, full in every sense. The program was to begin from 8 o'clock in the morning with the arrival of the Baba-group from Poona consisting mainly of the 'bhajan-mandali' who hold a meeting every Sunday (in Poona) and express their devotion in songs. 'Bhajans' have been sung in India throughout ages in praise of Avatars, Masters and Saints, but this was unique for they were sung to the living Avatar. Then in the afternoon Baba was to visit Meherabad where He would give darshan to all (from several villages as it turned out), the program ending with the feeding of all the Arangaon villagers. Here our morning began earlier than usual and the mandali had food and tea ready for the bhajan group, but hour after hour dragged by and they did not arrive — and at 2 o'clock Baba left for Meherabad as planned. There were all sorts of conjectures amongst us as to what could have happened, and we learned later that they did not arrive at Ahmednagar till after 1 o'clock and so went straight to Meherabad to be in time to participate in the afternoon's program. Theirs was a 'pilgrimage' in the true sense and as such it could not be easy. They had started from Poona in a hired bus at 3 o'clock in the morning but their sardine-packed vehicle broke down on the way and this kept on repeatedly so that at 8 o'clock when they were supposed to sing bhajans to their Beloved Baba, they found themselves far from their destination. Baba heard them after all for they sang bhajans by the roadside — but we didn't hear them sing until 5 o'clock in the evening after Baba's return from Meherabad.

The program was held in the 'sitting-room', with the tin roof and crude flooring, unfurnished except for a chair for Baba and a bench and strip of carpet for the mandali to sit on, where Baba spends most of the mornings and afternoons with them. The origin of this sitting-room is delightful — it is one of the roomy garages where Elizabeth used to park the car in the old days, which was later used as a stable for Sheba and now where Baba holds meetings every day ...

Our participation in this bhajan program was as usual from a cloistered distance, so what I give here can only be a 'behind-stage' view ... We sat outside by the window, in the little shady lane under the goldmohr tree, where the ground was covered with the red petals that showered during the night. And, oh, how we enjoyed the music, these Baba-bhajans led by a young student with an extremely good voice (he sings over the radio sometimes) and a girl whose voice has a most unusually melodious quality — sung to the accompaniment of the harmonium, drum and soft sound of bells. These songs have been composed by them and printed in book form, in Hindi, of course. We find ourselves repeating the lines of the first song, "He has come, He has come, He has come again — with His magic flute to win our hearts with His divine music, to light the world aflame with His Love. He has come again...." They also had put to song Baba's words from "Meher Baba's Call" and other messages; and one student's song that went

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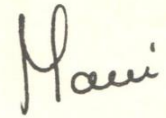
\* Pimpalgaon – Malvi

straight home was "We are mad about Meher." As we watched the bit of blue sky thru the feathery branches, we saw the little sun-birds hopping from branch to swaying branch, it seemed they too were saying the same thing.

The rhythm of bhajans is usually gay, yet has a haunting depth to it. But, of course, it wasn't all serious routine in the sense of a program; it never is with Baba in the midst. In between songs we would hear sudden bursts of merry laughter from the assembly as Eruch would interpret something lively and amusing conveyed by Baba thru gestures; and sometimes Baba would stop a song to alter a certain word or the subtle inflection of a certain tune, or would explain the spiritual significance of some line. There were flashes of light now and then and we gathered someone's camera was busy taking pictures. We could imagine how Beloved Baba looked, smiling and tapping the chair lightly in rhythm of the tune; in the old days there was always the inevitable alphabet board to tap on. The program ended with an "arti" —exquisitely composed and sung and when we returned to our quarters at about 7:30 it was as though we were walking on air ...

Baba walked out with the help of sticks to the bus just before they left, to give His final blessing of Love; and by the light of the kerosene lamps we could see Him returning from the gate, with radiant features and the garland of white and red flowers.

With Baba's Love to His lovers, always

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed on a white background.

*eleven/*

PIPPALGAON (INDIA) 8th Sept. 1957

Dear Family,

The intended two days in Poona stretched to nearly two weeks and we returned on Saturday evening. Baba had three deep X-ray sittings (the doctors do not advise more of it for the present), but it is too early yet to judge its efficacy for the pain — in fact after the first couple of sittings there has been increased pain as expected (because of greater blood circulation to that part.) The stereoscopic X-rays were shown to eminent surgeons in Bombay, one of whom also did a personal examination — stating definitely there is NO dislocation; also these latest X-rays seem to show more favourably than expected a couple of other points we were anxious about. So that, although there undoubtedly is osteoarthritis causing this pain, it seems overshadowed by the relief of knowing it is not the other, which would have meant an operation as early as possible — and our hearts sing in gratitude for the "meher" of our Beloved Meher. The bone union is firm, but the pain does not allow Him to walk for more than a short distance (though with the aid of sticks).

This is as far as we can outwardly see and through it all Baba seems to sit back serenely, that as we hear Him in His Silence we may see Him through the veil of outward suffering. And the glimpse is sometimes startling — one feels through this present "physical helplessness" of Baba more than ever an immeasurable strength that I think sometimes one could almost touch! At times, when suddenly called into Baba's presence one feels like a person squinting his eyes on coming out from a dark room into the bright light of sun.

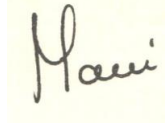
Today many close ones are also here with Baba, from Bombay, Poona, etc., (about 40 men), for a "half-term" meeting of the 75 days that I wrote to you last about). Baba reminded all again of what He had said on 1st August, and how His lovers can help Him and should try 100% and there were also the Impersonal Prayers read by Kaikobad. Baba told the Mandali the other day, "There is no compromise — either you please yourself, or you please Me in the littlest thing". And so His lovers try on, Baba guiding our efforts, wanting not 99% but a 100%, giving the strength that He knows we are capable of in His love if we tried one-pointedly.

We also had a reminder from another quarter, and I must tell you of this delightful incident. When in Poona, as usual Baba contacted some Masts. One day Jal brought a new one that he had seen in the bazaar, a Christian named John. Baba explained he is not on the Path yet, has "hava" (a breath) of the Path. He speaks the most fluent English, using words I'd have to look up in the dictionary, has a somewhat courtly manner, a beard, a rather dazed look in his eyes, and old clothes that he wears with an air! When asked he will say his name is John, then wanders off into vague talk interspersed with words as "could be James", "confused", "renouncing" and so forth.

Well, as we were leaving Poona we stopped a little distance away from Babajan's tomb, as Baba told us to hurriedly pay our respects while He would be in the car. As we returned, we saw John standing by the open door looking at Baba. Baba told me to give him a rupee and as I was doing so he startled me with a question in his clear voice, "Have you helped Him somewhat?" I managed to reply, "We hope so John, we hope so!" Then as the car was moving he released a stream of gentle words that made sentences but little sense to me, and when Baba asked what he had said, I was able to repeat the only joint sentence I'd caught, "I shall let Him know when it is positively verified."

Baba wishes you to let us know as soon as possible the number of people attending the Sahavas, men and women; and the total amount now possible, Then, by the end of this month, Baba can definitely decide and arrangements can begin from 1st October in full swing. So, we must definitely know before the end of this month. He wishes you to acknowledge this letter by cable.

With fondest love to you each



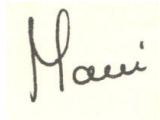
Note: The last paragraph refers to the group in Australia to which this Family Letter was first sent. (K.L.D.)

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EXCERPTS FROM LETTER RECEIVED BY ELIZABETH AND KITTY, SEPTEMBER 17th, 1957 AND DATED 12th September, 1957.

..... Many close ones in East and West are going thru some big difficulty. The most recent one is our dear Dr. Ben Hayman, who as you must know had a car collision this Sunday (Sept. 1st.) suffering from fractured ribs and astrogalus of left foot, and this Friday the foot was operated on. Baba sent him a beautiful cable and I hope to be writing also. This incident clarified something that's been puzzling lately — since a few days before Ben's accident Baba kept asking if there had been a letter, or cable from Ben. As dear Ben does not write often, that puzzled me. He asked almost every day (up to the time his cable arrived), and on the Saturday said, "Tomorrow remind me definitely about Ben". When asked what I was to remind about, He said, "Never mind, just remind me". And so we are sometimes afforded the littlest glimpse of His unfathomable ways ...

..... The little hill of direct letters to Beloved Baba was bigger than the Himalayas in all the love it brought from His lovers. Reading them to Baba was not always easy for the moisture in my eyes. Our sharing anew His love reflected from His many hearts was a profound happiness — the Love that is the oldest of the Old and ever the Newest of the New ...



*twelve/*

Pippalgaon, 21st September, 1957

Dear Family,

Last Sunday (15th) Baba drove to the Ahmednagar leper colony and bowed down to 101 lepers, giving them prasad of sweets and a rupee each. Baba looked so compassionate as He told us that two of them were mere children. Now tomorrow, Baba will hold another similar program here, but instead of lepers it will be for 101 poor children from Pippalgaon village. This afternoon large quantities of the "laddoos" (an Indian sweet-meat) made by a disciple living in Ahmednagar, have come for the children's program tomorrow, in separate little baskets for each so it can be shared with the families at home ... Once again next week it will be 101 old people from the village coming to receive His prasad and Blessing.

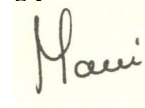
The pain in darling Baba's leg is not any better — we realize nothing can help until He wishes it. In October we may go to Bombay for a few weeks for treatment by an Indian "vaid" (who treats bone injuries etc., by massage and manipulation; has treated many cases successfully and is confident he can cure Baba's pain in a few weeks, if Baba comes to Bombay so he can personally attend Him daily — as he cannot come to Ahmednagar leaving his clinic and patients for more than a few days). So now let us see — I don't mean what the man can do, but what our Beloved Baba will work out through him. It is always fascinating to watch even though we can have such a sadly limited glimpse of His working.

An interesting article we came across recently said, how if Christ were here today, He would be as dearly human as He was then and would make use of the television, radio and other modern instruments to gather His flock scattered over the world. We thought of it this morning as our modern Avatar received a salutation from one of His lovers, who is an officer in the Air-Force, a salutation from the skies we are now familiar with on clear mornings. Hearing the drone of a plane we drop whatever we're doing and rush out to wave, knowing it will be M. Sakhre circling Meherazad, coming lower each time till he can be clearly seen leaning over and waving, giving a military salute as he flies over Baba's quarters. Sometimes Beloved Baba also stands amidst the mandali with His stick raised in acknowledgement. After the seven circles of homage the plane heads towards Poona again, crossing very low over Baba's Hill southwards. He and his lovely wife are devoted to Baba.

Not yet October, but it is already warm, and we are hoping for more rain. However, it cannot seem warm to the same extent, for the countryside is not of summer. The dark earth of the fields is furrowed by bright green ridges of the infant crops, looking particularly lovely at sunrise. The hills are soothingly green too; and the sheep grazing on Baba's Hill make a fascinating picture, wending their way homeward as the sun sets behind the mesh of clouds bathed in orange splendour.

With BABA'S LOVE to each  
of His dear Family,

lovingly





# *thirteen/*

Pippalgaon, 6th October, 1957

Dear Ones,

Your cable in reply to His sent on 30th, has made Baba extremely happy. He knows how unquestioningly willing you all are to carry out whatever He wishes and decides and is happy with your deep love.

There have been a number of Sahavas meetings to discuss various angles and factors, including mainly the estimation of costs and appointing of duties to those chiefly responsible (one of the major ones, Pendu, was there with crutches). Thousand and one items were discussed, and Baba seemed more than ever His dear self as beloved Master. He allowed their calculations at minimum limit (with prices having gone up higher now) and I wondered amusedly if they would manage to scrape through smoothly in the estimated amount, but, of course, it is always possible with Baba at the helm. He has told them to manage within the amount available obtaining the best results as He desires.

He said, "The work I do, to fulfill all that is ordained, releases a tremendous force that stamps my Advent. When the Infinite and Changeless works through the finite and changing, the channels are necessarily varied and unlimited. The opposing forces created are tremendous, but also serve my work. In spite of the "dark cloud" facing Me, I do my work ceaselessly. Part of my work by June 1958 is to give my Sahavas to hundreds of my followers. Do not try to understand the method of my working. Do not worry or question — just obey. The pain I have in the hip-joint is one of the many distractions I have to reckon with while doing my work. For unquestioning obedience and 100% willingness to happily carry out my instructions and abide by my decision, help in my work. Do not worry about their seeming contradictory or oscillating. I know what has to be done, I know how it is to be done. It is for you to do what I say. Do not be concerned with anything else."

The main points emerging from the big meeting on the 29th, are as follows:

Baba says there can be no Sahavas after 15th June 1958.

Baba must give Sahavas to East and West.

Therefore Sahavas positive in 1958.

Baba prefers East-West combined Sahavas in India. Such a Sahavas can only be held in February 1958.

But with present pain (which restricts His physical movements to the minimum limit as now) such Sahavas is not possible.

Therefore trying two sources of treatment (Bombay and if necessary also Calcutta). Results expected by November end.

Baba will accordingly give His definite decision by November end, as follows:

If pain relieved, Baba will give combined East-West Sahavas in India in February (for 12 days as mentioned before).

If pain remains as now, Baba will divide East and West Sahavas (as the combined Sahavas under the circumstances would be a great strain). He will therefore divide it by giving Sahavas to Easterners only, in February, 1958.

And, the Western Sahavas He will give in Myrtle Beach in May 1958 (to Baba-lovers only; those on the list as coming to India and those longing to come but could not for financial, or other reasons). He will permit no publicity, no "open-day" darshan, etc.

This means that even though the pain may not subside, and as He must give the Sahavas, He will give the East Sahavas in India and the West Sahavas in Myrtle Beach and Australia. 14 days in Myrtle Beach and 6 days in Australia (for the Australian lovers).

Baba will not visit England and Europe. Therefore in the event of the Sahavas being held in Myrtle Beach, Baba wishes those coming for the Sahavas from England and Europe to come to Myrtle Beach instead.

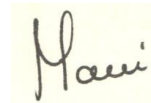
Therefore, (if charter-plane, booking, leave from jobs, etc., is possible your end) Baba will give final decision by end of November (or sooner if possible).

At this last meeting Baba asked those responsible for arrangements (in case at November end the East and West combined Sahavas is decided), if they would be able to manage in the time limit of 2½ months at their disposal. They answered in the affirmative, and are making tentative plans and arrangements in readiness to commence as soon as Baba gives the word November end.

We are leaving for Bombay on the 8th, for the first treatment. Baba-lovers Arnavaz and Nariman Dadachanji have placed their flat and services at His disposal in a touchingly devoted letter just received. As it will be terribly hot in Bombay in October, they are installing an air-conditioner in Beloved's room. The treatment by Dr. Bachubhai will commence from 10th October. We expect to return to Pippalgaon beginning of November; and if the treatment has not been successful, Baba will leave in mid November for Calcutta, for treatment by an American trained (caucasian) chiropractor, Dr. M. Alexander, who has practised (reportedly very successfully) in India for 20 years.

Please continue addressing your letters and cables to the present address, c/o Adi K. Irani.

Baba's eternal Love to you each of His Family



We have received an air-mailed copy of "LISTEN, Humanity" and Baba is extremely pleased with it. (We all agree it's beautiful inside and out). Baba wishes it spread as widely as possible before the coming Sahavas.

# *fourteen/*

PIPPALGOAN, INDIA, December 1st, 1957

Dear ones of His Family,

On 27th Nov., Baba held a meeting with His mandali from Meherabad and Meherazad, to give His final decision regarding the East & West Sahavas, He has to give before July 1958. He wished the cables to be sent off first thing on the morning of the 28th (to the U.S.A., England, Europe & Australia), as follows:

I HAVE DECIDED AS GOD IN MY DIVINE KNOWLEDGE AND AS HUMAN PATIENT THROUGH DR. KENMORE'S KNOWLEDGE THAT COMBINED WEST EAST SAHAVAS IN INDIA IS ABSOLUTELY INADVISABLE STOP WILL DEFINITELY GIVE SAHAVAS TO MY WESTERN LOVERS IN MYRTLE BEACH FOR FIFTEEN DAYS MAY 1958 AND FIVE\* DAYS AUSTRALIA STOP SPEEDILY INFORM ALL STOP MANI WRITING DETAILS SHORTLY MY ETERNAL LOVE TO YOU EACH

BABA

Baba wants me to report the main points discussed at the meeting during which Dr. Harry Kenmore was also present. Baba said:

"I am very pleased with Harry, both with his love for Me and his skill as a doctor. He knows his job 100%, and he has helped in My work by helping My body to the extent he has. He has done his best with satisfactory results. But the condition in the hip-joint is very bad, and he knows as I have said all along that I will not be able to walk about again as before. He says, and I know, that if he had come some months before I would be walking about normally now. But that was not ordained. My accident is no "accident", and it all comes to one thing: What I wanted has happened, and what I want will happen. The continuous pain was a distraction to My work, hence the coming of Harry Kenmore who has helped greatly. He has adjusted My body to structural balance and I am now able to stand erect in good posture for the first time since the accident. To hold this structural balance, he has advised great care for about a year and utmost precautions while giving darshan and Sahavas. There should be no strain to My body and I must avoid fatigue and refrain from movements causing exertion such as handing prasad to large numbers as I do during darshans, or being garlanded and embraced by them. I have agreed to follow this during the darshans I will give in Poona & Bombay in December and thereafter.

"I tell Harry that as long as he is here and attending to Me I will do what he says, and in his absence will try to carry out his instructions. But I cannot promise to carry them out fully because I have work to do. He has satisfactorily attended to his business and I have to attend to Mine. I have taken on this body for humanity's sake, and during the year I have to use My body for the work I have to do in My love for humanity. Therefore I must not take care of it to the extent of letting it interfere in My work. On the other hand I must take enough care so that it stands up to the strain of work that lies ahead of Me.

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(\*Please read FIVE instead of SIX — it was a misinterpretation on my part - Mani)

"I have decided not to give the combined East-West Sahavas for two reasons. Firstly, handicapped as I am physically, it would be a great strain and fatigue to Me. Secondly, if I give it in spite of that, I would not be able to give fully to My lovers what I wish My Sahavas should give, and they would not be able to receive all I would want them to have. Hence I have decided to give the Sahavas separately, to the Easterners in India and to the Westerners in Myrtle Beach and Australia. I will give the Eastern Sahavas in February, and I shall ask that the physical expression of their love (garlanding, embracing etc.) be modified in keeping with Harry's advice and instructions. The number of Eastern Sahavasis has been restricted to 1,400 (i.e. two groups of 700 each).

"I will definitely give My Sahavas to My Western lovers in May 1958, for 15 days in Myrtle Beach and 5 days in Australia. I want no publicity of any kind, no 'open day' programme, no 'visitors' in that sense. The Sahavas will be for those who desired to come to India for My Sahavas (those who intended to and those who could not make it) and also for others who love Me, are willing to obey Me and wish to attend the Sahavas.

"After July 15, there will be no more Sahavas, congregation, mass darshans, etc. I have to do all that before July 15, unmindful of My physical condition and outward circumstances."

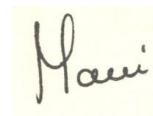
Baba wishes me to add this message from Him to His Western lovers:

"I am happy with your love and know your unquestioning and willing acceptance of My wishes. I know what is best and My decision is for the best. I love you as God alone can love, and will definitely give you My Sahavas in May 1958.\* This Sahavas will give you what I want you to have 100% to My satisfaction. You will then understand fully what I mean by this. Hold on to My daaman, love Me more and more, and you will receive fully what I shall give. My love to you each."

After Dr. Kenmore's departure from Meherazad on the 4th, Baba will give His darshan in Poona on Dec. 8th (and later in the month in Bombay). Therefore later Baba will let me have more details about His coming (and the general points regarding the arrangements for Myrtle Beach and Australia) to be conveyed to you.

With Baba Christmas Greetings and dearest love from

all of His Meherazad family,



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\* It may possibly be June beg. for Australia.

# *fifteen/*

India, January 5, 1958.

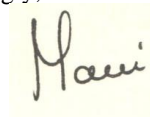
Dear Family,

Back in Pippalgaon and the good old routine after a very happy week in Bombay at the dear Dadachanji's, full of festive occasions: their wedding anniversary, dear Mehera's birthday, Christmas and the Darshan. The day before Christmas Baba said "Tomorrow is my Birthday", and early that Christmas morn we sang to Him "Happy Birthday to You"; and one of the household miracles was the handsomely decorated and lighted Christmas tree that we trimmed from a bougenvilia bush. There was a very lovely party for Mehera's birthday, attended by the intimate ones of the Baba-group. The Darshan on the 22nd was arranged on the same lines as the Poona one, and went off most beautifully. In the morning was the Darshan programme, thousands filing by Baba to receive the blessings of His Presence; and the evening was like a sahas, a gathering lesser in number and closer in love, sitting around Baba for over three hours, drinking in the close proximity of their Beloved. There was qavali singing of mystical songs, and now and then Baba would ask the singer to pause while He explained the deeper meaning of some of the lines. Occasionally a serious explanation would be followed by the spontaneous sound of delighted laughter from the hundreds around Him, as Baba would end with a subtle and unexpected note of raillery, in the way that only Baba can do. On this He said, "Long, long ago I lost my self and became God, but I thank God I didn't lose my sense of humour." As the time neared for the evening's programme to end, Baba explained about the four main kinds of obedience, everybody listening with rapt attention. Then, with a click of His fingers (and a mischievous glint in His eyes) He said, "Now let me test your obedience. In five minutes I want this hall to be absolutely empty." And empty it was! (though with everybody simultaneously struggling to their feet, specially the portlier ones, and scrambling for the door almost caused a jam) ...

On the 1st of January, Baba held a meeting with the Meherabad and Meherazad mandali for the forthcoming India sahas, giving instructions for the thousand and one details the arrangements involve. It hurts to see our impatient Patient One sitting for hours in the chair; yet being constantly busy (and keeping the others all the time on their toes). Soon there will be a meeting to discuss points regarding the May sahas, and I will be writing about that later. Baba tells us of the two unique Sahavas, and tells us of the Cloud, and it doesn't need much imagination on our parts to foresee what a memorable year 1958 will be for His children all over the world. A Happy New Year to us all — may we grow bigger so we can receive more of Him, and may our love grow and ever grow so we can give more of ourselves to Him.

Baba has lovingly received all the Christmas cards and cables from His lovers everywhere. It is not possible to acknowledge them separately — as a secretary who's had to do the filing I can only describe the size of the combined lot as a regular little hill, though only Baba can judge the size of the Love therein conveyed to Him. Baba sends His deep love to you each and all,

lovingly,



# sixteen/

Meherazad, 4th Feb., '58.

Dear Family,

Though our ten days visit at the Dadachanjis this time was a very quiet one compared to the last, it was just as full. Baba's decision of going to Bombay for a week was quite sudden, and He sent word there before-hand that none should come to see Him except the very few He named. Every action and decision of Baba covers a working we cannot see, and while conjecturing on the hidden import beneath these outward actions I can only as usual report on the 'covering'. One of the things remaining vividly with us is "The Ten Commandments" that Baba wanted His group to see, and what was more significant saw it Himself, although He has not been to a picture for a very long time. He went with the mandali, but stayed only up to the part when Moses sees God on Mount Sinai. Baba liked the picture very much, said it was very well played and done, and that it had much to give to those who could receive it. He told us that Ramases in his next incarnation entered the spiritual path, and that the old king received mukti because he took Moses' name when dying. Baba then smilingly recalled Cecil B. de Mille's meeting with Him in 1932, saying that he was a very nice man.

Once more we witnessed a miracle of Baba's love, as we often have with those who come within its radiance; not the miracle that affords escape from pain, difficulty, sorrow — but the miracle that makes one accept these as also a precious gift from Him; that changes one's life because it has changed one's heart. As an invalid of years wrote not long ago to Baba, "Suffering was such a blank dreary thing; but now since I know you it has assumed a great meaning." We all feel one of the reasons Baba went to Bombay at this time was for Dina Talati, one of the early Baba-lovers, a Parsi widow living in Bombay with her two daughters, and whose husband was also one of the close disciples. Her children have loved Baba 'from the cradle', and her only son, Curshet, had been for over a year in England where he procured a job. While we were in Bombay, news came that he died of heart-failure, and later we heard that during the last minutes Baba's name was continuously on his lips. Baba sent for Dina, and embraced her, while we stood around in the glow of Baba's love reflected in her serene face. Baba said "Be happy; Curshet is not dead, he lives in Me." — and she said "He is so fortunate Baba." I'm unable to put the moments of that morning on paper, but they remain close with us. Next day Baba went personally in the car and brought her again to Arnavaz's home. As she sat before Him, He asked her to cry. After a while she said "It is not for Curshet that I cry, it is for your love Baba — because your love is so great, because I can never be grateful enough for all that you shower on me, because I do not love you as you ought to be loved." Later when we were saying to one another "How wonderful Dina was! How wonderfully the girls took it!", we were in reality saying "How wonderful is Baba's love!!" May His glory be praised in all hearts, everlastingly ...

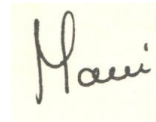
There was no darshan this time, but two of His not-so-little creatures received a surprise 'prasad' from Baba. There are two circuses running in Bombay, and of a morning, pedestrians on the pavement find ambling beside them an elephant or two taken out by their mahouts. One morning, as Baba was out for a drive with the boys, He saw a couple of elephants going by and while passing a little coconut shop, waving their trunks wistfully towards the coveted fruit. Baba was very amused and had one of the mandali buy two coconuts and give to each elephant. He told us how skilfully they broke the coconuts and drank the water with obvious relish.

I'm fully aware that I haven't mentioned anything about Baba's health, but this 'hedging' is because I don't know what I can say that won't be just words. These days it seems not so much the physical suffering as the inner pressure of work one can see Him bearing. We can feel the Cloud He tells us of, till it is almost a tangible thing in Baba's presence. Thinking of the suffering God takes on for man one thinks of the words of Chatti Baba, one of the five favourite Masts who was with Baba in His Meherabad seclusion in 1940. He said to the effect that all suffering borne by Baba is out of His compassion and love for humanity. The suffering yet to come for the world will be so great that it would not sustain it and so Baba takes one end of the yoke on His own shoulder ...

How fortunate and grateful we are to be permitted to walk beside Him in this Divine labour of Love, and our only prayer can be that we may love Him as He should be loved.

Baba has gone to Meherabad this morning to see how the preparations are going for the fast-approaching Sahavas this month. With His Love to you each,

lovingly,



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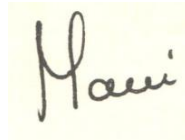
Excerpts from Mani's letter, dated February 5, 1958, received by Elikit on February 13, 1958:

Am rushing off the Family letter and as soon as I finish a few things to attend to for Ramju and Adi, will write you the remaining details re May Sahavas. In the meantime, there are a few important points that need not wait!

As we said in cable to Energy (19th January, in reply to hers), "Only for those whom full Sahavas impossible, minimum one week permissible." So this covers those who wish to attend the Sahavas but could not manage the two weeks stay. It also means that none who cannot stay at least a week should attend. Am sure this will be made clear in the Sahavas letter for information at all concerned, as also the following point.

Baba emphasizes that this Sahavas is to be a Sahavas in the complete sense, of the Beloved and His lovers. There should be no publicity, no reporters or television, even no tape-recording; that films and pictures may be taken but only by the lovers (no professionals called in) no 'artists' doing pictures of Him, no 'visits' or interested ones coming for a meeting or interview during Sahavas."

Remaining points will come in next letter soon.



# *seventeen/*

Pippalgaon, India  
February 18, 1958

Dear Ones,

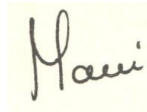
The India Sahavas has begun. Each morning when the sun has arisen not far above the hill next to Baba's, we stand by the gate and wave at the sparkling green car streaking across the countryside, carrying the Beloved to the hundreds of His lovers awaiting His arrival at Meherabad. Each evening He returns, looking beautiful in the pink coat and the single plain garland of roses in deeper pink; and though physically tired out after the long full day, we can still feel the radiance of the Sahavas — like the over-flow of a fountain even after it's turned off.

It is "spring" for His eastern lovers, a feast for their Baba-hungry hearts. It is spring too for Meherabad (the place He has blessed with His name and activities of years), which is like a tree that has blossomed in glorious profusion after a long sleep of winter; looking like a veritable town of temporary structures for housing and feeding nearly 800, buzzing with His life from early dawn to late at night. Although we only get glimpses from the short account each evening, it is as though we are participating not in love alone but in person. Baba said "Sahavas is the intimacy of give and take of love", and it is indeed a Sahavas in its true sense. Eruch's description raises a familiar picture in our minds when he tells us "Baba has once again turned the faucet on full" — for how often have we seen these precious tears overflow from a lover's heart in Baba's presence, when He 'lifts the divine curtain' just the littlest bit.

Even if words were at all adequate to put down the many touching and personal 'incidents' during these days of Sahavas, it would take many pages. But notes are being taken by some of the mandali, and later on an account should appear in the Awakener. In the mean-time all that our hearts can say are the words of Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati (from his letter received just before the Sahavas): "Salutations to Babaji, our Beloved, Rasul, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mazda, the Avatar of the Highest Splendour of Divinity — Hail Meher Ram!"

There will be two Sahavas groups (arranged mainly according to language facility) — the Hindi and Marathi group first, the Telegu and Gujerati next — over 1,500 in all; each group having five days Sahavas. On the 20th all of the first group will have left, and the second group arrive on the 21st. This gives an interval of rest for Baba, and the usual 'spring-cleaning' by the Meherabad mandali to prepare for the next group. During this interval Baba has promised to take us 'girls' to see Meherabad and all the arrangements made for the Sahavas. A number of 'volunteers' from different places came days beforehand, to help Pendu in the tremendous preparations that had to be made .... After the Sahavas we will probably be packing for Mahabaleshwar, as Baba wishes a complete change before the May Sahavas, and also the summer here would be very difficult for Him. We expect to be leaving by about mid March, returning to Pippalgaon beginning May for Baba's Western Sahavas. The next news for the dear Family will probably be coming from Mahabaleshwar ...

Deeply loving acknowledgement of individual letters received and much love from us all to the ever dear Family.



P.S. One devotee, named Ramdas, journeyed for the Sahavas on foot; walking from his destination of Hamirpur — a town in North India, which is over 1,000 miles from Meherabad. It took him about 40 days.



# *eighteen/*

4th March 1958

Dear Family,

Another attempt to write a little more of the Meherabad Sahavas, which was beautiful and wonder-full throughout, to the full satisfaction of the Beloved, the lovers, and the workers. The second group being bigger than the first, there were nearly 900 men and women in Meherabad during the latter week. Baba embraced each one on arrival and at parting, and gave unstintingly of His beloved Self during the entire period. Despite the inevitable strain of His body, He looked so radiant and well that nobody could believe how unwell He had been before the Sahavas!

We visited Meherabad during the 'interval' between groups, and were awe-struck by the stupendous arrangements: the Hall, dormitories, bathrooms, dining rooms, dispensary, and above all the electricity installed specially for the occasion. An item of special interest to us women was the kitchen with its huge fireplaces and the cooking-pots that were big enough to accommodate a youngster easily. The dormitories (separate for the men and the women) were what I can only call "stadium-size" — square tents to hold hundreds of beds in rows: accommodating Baba-lovers of varied religions, colour and profession — judges, lawyers, professors, doctors, governors, yogis, pundits, artists, poets, singers, clerks, and many others; and just mothers, fathers, youngsters, grandpops and grandmas — all having the one absolute supreme object in common: BABA.

I daren't go into more details — to hope to put the Sahavas in a letter would be like trying to depict the ocean on a postage stamp. But I cannot resist telling you of the unique parting scene at which we were present; of the train incident unprecedented in the history of Meherabad, and (as the Railway officials remarked) in the history of India. Meherabad is about 6 miles from the railway station (of Ahmednagar) and the railway track runs between upper and lower Meherabad, not many yards away from Baba's "dhuni". Instead of the lovers having to go to the station to catch their trains, it was made possible (by the help of a high official connected with Railways, who loves Baba) for a train, made up only and entirely of compartments to carry the Sahavasis to their various destinations, to stop on the track at Meherabad. This was done at the leaving of both the groups.\* (see P.S. page 2)

On the 26th afternoon we 'girls' drove up the Hill with Baba, and some time later after the train had chugged to a stop Baba had the car driven down the Hill to stop near the fully packed train. Immediately there rose tremendous cheers of "BABA! BABA! Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!!" from every compartment, and when it was obvious they were all intending to leave the train to surge towards Baba's car He waved a hand and gestured they should not come down. There were streamers of little Baba-flags (of seven colours) round the engine, and a big one hoisted in front. Outside some of the compartments were pasted pictures of Baba, and there were also banners with the words

"Avatar Meher Baba  
Is the Soul of souls,  
The Beloved of the gods,  
The Life of His lovers  
& the Slave of His dear ones."

Time stood still during those memorable minutes as we watched Baba's Love reflecting from these hundreds of lovers as from one heart, all eyes focussed on the window of the car that framed our Beloved's radiant smiling face, hundreds

of lips crying out His beloved Name; till we could not see them clearly for our tears ....

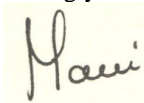
Baba acknowledged the salute of the engine driver and gestured that he should start the train. After a very long piercing whistle the "Baba-train" moved forward, and as the long line of packed compartments filed past Beloved's car, the air thundered with reverberating cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai". Many were standing on the running boards, the rest leaning way out of the windows till we thought some would surely fall out; some hands folded reverently, hundreds of others waving ecstatically. Baba acknowledged their love with joined hands, or waved and gestured "I am happy; take Me with you." When the train was out of sight Baba turned to us and said "They take with them a spark of Me — and will spread My Love everywhere" ...

A professional documentary film has been taken of the Sahavas (the last 3 days with the latter group) by someone in the film industry who met Baba in Bombay last December, and since being with Him these few days has begun to love Him. It will be shown in cinemas in India to the general public, and he has promised to give Adi a copy. We're hoping this will somehow be ready before Beloved's May-June Sahavas, so it can be shared by you all...

I will not go into details about the Birthday, except to say it was after twenty years that His Birthday was celebrated in Meherabad with a large congregation of His lovers. Always on such occasions, according to the Indian traditional custom of 'puja', the lovers have washed Baba's feet. All were delightfully surprised therefore when Baba announced He would wash His own feet on this Birthday occasion (for all His lovers) — and did!

All the beautiful Birthday cables and cards and poems and letters from you were received by Baba with deep love, We are leaving for Mahabaleshwar on the 20th, stopping for 3 days in Poona (at Ganeshkhind cottage, where Baba will bless with His presence the marriage of two of His devotee children — cousins of Eruch), We will be returning to Pippalgaon first week of May, for Beloved's Western Sahavas. For the preparation of this Sahavas Baba wishes His lovers to work in loving unity, and sends His Love to you each,

lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Meher'.

P.S.

- \* Perhaps this is the first step to Meherabad station that Baba told about when He first settled there with His handful of followers — adding how Meherabad would in future become a large place of universal importance, Someone foretold this before Baba did however — the Saint Hazrat Shah, whose tomb is in Meherabad not far from the 'dhuni' there, He lived in Ahmednagar, and instructed his followers to bury him, at his death, at that spot in what is now Meherabad. When his followers remonstrated over his choice of this lonely barren spot, where anybody would seldom come to pay respects, the Saint replied "You are wrong; this place will blossom into one of the biggest places of unique importance and thousands will visit it."... "So it is ordained, and so it shall be .....

# nineteen/

Mahabaleshwar - 13th April, 1958

Dear Family,

We read the other day a schoolboy's definition of Robin Hood: "It is a word like boyhood or girlhood, and means to feel like a robin and hop around." Well, Mahabaleshwar is just the place to spend one's robinhood in, as we have in the past. As we drove up the ghats we were excitedly pointing to the various familiar landmarks; the road that led to Baba's cave (where He was in seclusion), the many paths tramped by Baba and us on the long happy walks leading to 'points' that afford beautiful views of mountains and valleys, etc. But we were not too excited to notice the marked drop in temperature as we climbed up to this house called Shapoor Hall. It is perched up on one of the highest hill points; below us is a sea of treetops, with an occasional red roof and chimney peeping out, banked in the distance by mountains; (straight opposite the verandah where Baba sits on the mornings is Pratapgadh, the hill and fort of the great Shivaji); and the sweet clear strains of birdsong float up while we're still abed in the mornings, to accelerate with renewed vigour in the evenings till long after sunset. But there the feeling of familiarity ends — for it is so unlike our previous visits which were highlighted by hikes with Baba and sometimes picnics, and Baba's tireless work with masts who were brought by Baidul from different places and housed near the mandali's quarters. It is here therefore that we are made more painfully aware of our Beloved's physical confinement — in the chair most of the day, except to walk with support the few steps to the car for an occasional drive. And it is for this therefore that we couldn't have had a more suitable house (arranged by K. Satarawala, a Baba-lover resident here), for though it's big and drafty it has a wonderful panoramic view from both the verandahs (we can watch the lovely sunset, and the sunrise\*) — i.e. on the days that it is not cloudy with cold winds blowing, when windows have to be kept shut. Fortunately such days have not been too many, for they aggravate the pain in Baba's hip. But perhaps that has little to do with it — for although the suffering He has assumed is 'human', it comes of the Godhood which is beyond our understanding. As Baba says in the message: "My suffering is daily becoming more intense, and my health is daily getting worse; but my physical body continues to bear the burden of it all. Despite it all I will hold the Sahavas."

A similar circular was sent out to all concerned before the Meherabad sahavas, asking them to come with the longing for His close companionship and not with the desire to seek explanations, discourses, or private interviews... Although Baba did give these, they were when He felt like. He does not wish to be 'bound', either to give or not to give discourses, etc...

As the Sahavas is for His lovers, Baba knows the love that is bringing you (often against financial and other odds) to the place where He will hold it. And He wishes you to keep in mind and consciously remember the stipulation of "obedience". Also if it is to be a Sahavas in its complete sense as He wants it, there must be the absolute Baba-atmosphere maintained throughout, even during the hours of absence from Baba. To help you in this therefore, Baba says that although all Saints are His beloved children, none should discuss about saints during the period of Sahavas. It goes without saying that Baba may of course, if He so wishes, talk about them to you.

Baba also wants you to remember His wish that all cooperate lovingly in the Sahavas arrangements. I know you equally appreciate the difficulty of the task given to Elizabeth re accommodation at the Centre which is naturally very limited. Therefore

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\* by the lake.

none who is asked to put up at the Motor Courts should feel 'less favoured' in any way — to do so is to fall short of understanding the true significance of the Sahavas. For, its whole and sole object is the Beloved's company and presence; and whether one sleeps at the Centre or at Motor Courts, all will as much have Baba's presence during the hours He is there in the daytime till He retires to His house in the evening.

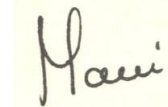
To those of His lovers who, for one reason or another, are unable to attend the Sahavas, Baba says "Be happy. I am always with you and you will receive of the Sahavas even though absent physically."

To the Sahavasis He sends the message enclosed with this.

And to one and all, He sends His LOVE.

From the hearts of the Eastern members of the Family sharing in your happiness, comes much love, "Jai Baba!", and the mystic poet's words "Let the churches seek their heaven, and have it; mine is at my Beloved's feet."

Lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the signature line of the letter.

REQUEST: Please do not send presents for us. We shall always (as now) ask you to send us by sea any article we require that is not possible to obtain here....

End of the month we shall be leaving for Poona and will possibly stay once again at Guruprasad the few days before Baba leaves for Bombay to catch the plane on 15th midnight (or rather 10 minutes after midnight, which makes it the 16th). So this old reporter 'takes your leave', and except for urgent letters, will not be writing till after His return from the Sahavas....

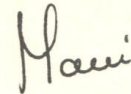
*twenty/*

Pippalgaon  
Ahmednagar, India.  
16th June 1958.

Dear Ones,

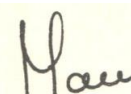
For once the Family letter is not to send you news of Beloved but to acknowledge with full heart the receiving of it, personally from Him and through your loving letters the sharing of His Western Sahavas which He said was 100% to His satisfaction. To us it seemed, as Baba talked of you all, that He not only brought the love of you each in His heart (as He said in the cable sent you on arrival) but brought you each personally here with Him. He told us of your great love and obedience and of your devoted care; of the beautiful arrangements at the Centre and the loving co-operation of all who helped to make it so; of the happy children's day and of the unforgettable performance by the dancers; and of how even the alligators shared by inspiring the men to put up the sidesplitting presentation that He and the mandali so enjoyed. And He spoke of the lovers who could not attend, but had shared nevertheless. We were so happy to know from your letters how well Baba was looking — one said 'He was looking just about like a thousand million suns.' He brought that radiance with Him, looking wonderfully well, walking with greater ease of movement and much less support as was apparent when He smilingly walked down from the plane at Bombay and across the distance to the airport that was packed sardine fashion with His lovers welcoming Him with cries of 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai.' Baba stayed for a day at the Dadachanji's and about 4 days at the Ganeshkind cottage in Poona, returning to Pippalgaon on the 14th. The dear Jessawala family were hoping Baba would stay there longer, till the much delayed monsoon breaks thus making it cooler in Ahmednagar. But Baba said despite the heat He would come to Pippalgaon, for He has much work to wind up before July 10th (to 'roll up the carpet' as He put it), in completion of His Sahavas work in the East and the West. Baba has started the special work from today and has told Eruch and some of us that we will be kept specially busy. Baba sends His Love to you each and says 'The only place that can hold Me is the heart. Keep Me close with you – I am always there.'

With much love from us all



P.S. Please remember that any cable to Baba requiring a reply MUST be accompanied by a "Reply-paid" form. (NOT sending a check for it later) — otherwise the reply cannot be sent by cable.

Lovingly



# *twenty-one/*

Meherazad (Pippalgaon), India

, 19th July, 1958.

Dear Family,

After the rapid pace of the last few weeks, during which Baba (despite His health) kept Himself and His near ones unceasingly busy, the 14th of July marked a startling halt to outward activities. It was as though Baba had actually drawn a dividing line, marking the beginning of the New Chapter. As Author, He alone knows the contents — we just follow the lines and cues He gives us in His grace ... Baba said these 4½ months from 14th July will be the most intense phase of His inner working — accelerating after the 21st — and its universal effect will be tremendous. He again repeated "The time is very near."

Our Beloved does not call this phase a Seclusion, but what's in a name ... His followers have been told not to cable or write to Him or Eruch. We have been told not to refer any letters to Him, not to ask any questions; and none is allowed to come to Meherabad or Meherazad. There are not more than a handful mandali remaining here with Baba, and the absence of Eruch is markedly felt — He and Kaikobad are staying in Meherabad with the other mandali, under special orders from Baba. Among other orders, the Meherabad mandali are not allowed to visit Meherazad, and vice versa.

Now for some events before the 14th margin — the highlight being the 10th July gathering in Meherabad, consisting of a selected number of Baba-lovers (mostly men) invited from various parts. Beginning with some 75, the number grew till it reached over 200. Among the very few women invited, were the Maharani of Baroda and the Rani of Kurundwad ... Baba greeted the group in Meherabad on 9th afternoon, when He also gave darshan to His Arangaon villagers. That evening the Baba-gathering saw the lovely films of His 1956 Sahavas in the U.S.A. and the one taken in Andhra during His mass darshan.

At the hour of midnight Baba's "dhuni" was lit, in accordance with His wish. And almost immediately after, the rains came! — breaking the long dry spell that threatened famine in Ahmednagar district; reviving the farmers' hopes and gladdening the heart of the scorched countryside.\* When Baba left for Meherabad on the wet chilly morning of the 10th, the trees and garden were looking so much fresher, and the birds were loudly telling everyone about it — perhaps they were also proclaiming the fact that He was looking specially beautiful that special morning.

As Baba entered the packed meeting hall at Meherabad, two of His lovers were allowed to garland Him — He took off the garlands and placed them on the little table by His side. Not unnaturally, all found themselves edging closer, to be nearer as possible to the Beloved. At Baba's gesture Eruch called out that they should not crowd, adding "The Spaceless One wants some space!"

Drinking in every moment of His beloved company, they sat before Him — while he talked with them, joked with them, discoursed with them — in the way only BABA can do. One of the delightful moments, recorded in Feram's notes, tells us the following. The sky being overcast, it was rather dark inside the hall, and Baba had the verandah curtains rolled up to admit more light — explaining that in the dark He could not catch those who might be dozing! And so later when it drew darker and lights had to be brought in, there was a spontaneous burst of laughter from all. ..

Baba told them to sing bhajans and perform His arti, as this was their last chance; adding "But only up to 9 o'clock. After 9, no bowing down, no garlanding, no embracing, no photos. The main thing

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\* It poured too bountifully in other parts, and among other things disconnected rail service to Bombay — so that some members of His gathering returning after the 10th, found them-selves stranded for a while in Poona.

I give today is my Universal Message,

which I want you to listen carefully and take in with all your heart." When the bhajans began Baba took both the garlands from beside Him and garlanded Himself.

Before the Message was read out, Baba had Dr. Donkin recite the Parvardigar Prayer in English — this was followed by translations in Telegu, Hindi and Marathi, etc. Baba asked the group to forget everything during its recitation, except the words and BABA. After the Prayer of Repentance, Baba said that as the Ancient One He had the divine authority to forgive anyone anything ...

Then came the moment when His timeless Universal Message was read out by Eruch, (followed by the various translations). Later Eruch read out Baba's last Discourse: "God Alone Is."\*

When someone asked if, apart from Baba-lovers the Message could be given out to all — irrespective of whether they knew and loved Baba or not, Baba said Yes. It was universal, and was for all.\*\*

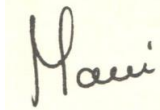
At a quarter to 11, Baba declared it was 11 o'clock "Baba time", and left for Meherazad.

I feel the letter wouldn't be complete without a few lines about the 'mast' Nilkanth-wala from Rishikesh. He has been here for some days, the same mast that was with Baba in Satara. He's also called "Powder-wala" because of his partiality for talcum powder, that he happily rubs over himself including the top of his head. This high mast (Baba tells us he is of the sixth plane) refused to come a few months ago when Baba asked Shatrugun to bring him. But this time it was quite different. As soon as Shatrugun approached him and before he had said a word, the mast got up and announced "Let's go. I'm ready." The other day we had a glimpse of him from afar — a barely clad dignified figure of a man with a handsome bushy beard, reclining on his simple couch and giving the impression of a king in disguise. Taciturn to a point of silence, he has seldom been known to talk more than in monosyllables. But since this 10th of July he has burst into a volley of speech, often talking non-stop! Every morning we hear him discoursing with Baidul in a clear ringing voice that carries across the garden to our cottage. However, for all its clarity the mandali can understand little of what the mast says, as he speaks in over 3 languages at a time, including some English. But what is clearly understood, repeated and forcefully conveyed, is the portent that one half of the world will be destroyed. Baba works with Nilkanth-wala in the mornings for an hour or two, and said He hoped the mast would be willing to stay on for a few weeks.

On 10th July we planted a white Champa — it's about 3 feet high and fragrantly in flower. Somehow it seems the prettiest plant in the garden.

With our love to you each,

lovingly



P.S. Please note that I am not allowed to write, except the Family-letter and when very necessary for some work, until August end — with the possibility of the order being extended to November. So I include here my most loving acknowledgement of letters and messages received with love.

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\* Both the Message and Discourse is being sent with this to Elikit, to have copies made and sent to you each.

\*\* It has already appeared in several vernacular papers .....



*twenty-two/*

India, 25th August, 1958.

Dear Family,

Have been sitting at the typewriter for the last quarter hour, doodling all over the blotter, wondering how to begin this and just what to say. Over a month has gone by since the last letter, but there seems little to report in the way of news. The outer circle of activities appears to be almost at a standstill, while inwardly there seems to be constantly a sense of tension, anticipation and urgency. If a simile can express it, I can only say it is like sitting quietly on a volcano. The 40 days, marking the end of the first phase of Baba's 4½ months' work are over — completed as He told us, 100% to His satisfaction. Baba's orders concerning the Seclusion continue to be strictly observed, and the outward daily routine goes on with little change or variation. The insight into His present working is gleaned at rare moments from Baba's remarks, as for instance (over a domestic problem one morning): "Why do you worry over a trivial thing like that, when the whole world is at stake!" Once He said "The universe will be shaken — and the brunt of the impact will fall on Me." Or again, "During these three months, Maya will do her best to hinder, will make things extremely difficult. But God will prevail and all will end well, as ordained. There will be a world of difference in the world." Whereas a more frequent reminder is, "Help in my work by obeying Me implicitly; and when you are in my presence, I want you to be unperturbed, cheerful and never out of mood for any reason."

At this time of year (following a good rainfall) the countryside is like a lady all dressed up for the ball in her best green gown. The garden is at its rosiest too, and it seems a tourist season for birds. One yellow-breasted little fellow with iridescent wings (called the 'sun-bird'), comes to the window on a morning and draws a lot of attention when Beloved is at breakfast. 'Tap tap tap' goes his long thin beak on the window pane, and Baba and we look round to see him fluttering like a butterfly, fascinated by his own pretty image in the glass. Baba obviously likes the visit of this charming "window-crasher" ...

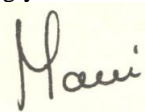
Baba's order of my not writing letters (with the exception of the family — one when He gives permission, or when necessary for work) is extended to November end — so once again I acknowledge here with much love, letters received from a number of you. With Beloved keeping all happily busy, any vision I had of having too much time on hand (resulting from the above order) vanished soon after it arose. But it's like anything else one would like to have more of, to find one can really do with very little of it — and I laughingly said to Baba that He was like the landlady who said "Now just let me know what else you want and I'll show you how to do without it."

Spring-cleaning through the cupboard of papers and books, I came across an old typed copy of some mystical sayings that had been read to Baba years ago and He had asked me to keep — and the first lines are:

"But now see what it is to adore God: ... it is simply to follow Him and to love Him, not indeed for our profit, honour, or blessedness, or any other thing which He might grant us, but simply for Himself and His eternal honour."

With much love to you each of His dear family,

lovingly,



# *twenty-three/*

16th October 1958.

Dearest Family,

I have received Beloved's permission to write the over-due family letter, together with instructions that I must not write about His health, and must not mention any aspect of His present work, etc. So I can't help feeling something like the girl in that delightful old American rhyme:

"Mama mama, may I swim?"  
"Yes my darling daughter.  
Hang your clothes on the hickory limb,  
But don't go near the water."

Still, I can manage to find quite enough else to talk about, as Baba must know I would.

To begin with, the 16th of October is a very special date in our memory. Nine years ago today began the NEW LIFE of "renunciation and hopelessness" when Baba and a few of His men and women disciples (called, at Baba's wish, "Companions" of Baba)\* left Meherazad and Meherabad on that memorable morning, amidst rain and thunder, expecting 'never to return'. It starts a host of nostalgic reminiscences of those days when the discipline and privations were extreme, as was that feeling of 'freedom' and inner satisfaction. Of the seemingly non-stop walking by day, and of nights spent in a disused barn or schoolhouse or stable, or again (as so often) under the trees in a mango orchard with far from sufficient covering to ward off the bitter cold and heavy dew. (we four women had a small caravan for our sleeping accommodation).

When on 12th December (1949) after a substantial halt at Benares, we started from Sarnath on foot, the Avatar and His Companions (Baba and the men in long white robes), now accompanied by a fine white horse, a bullock cart, our little oxen-driven caravan, 2 cows and calf, two donkeys, and a camel cart, made a unique and breathtakingly picturesque procession. So, it is of little surprise that near whatever village we stopped for the night, practically the entire population would materialize within the hour and surround us with excited queries and wondrous admiration. But our dusty worn out party could hardly appreciate the enthusiasm of this friendly crowd, and longed only for a quiet meal, rest and privacy. Understandably so, for on the morrow we would have to be up long before the sun, to start with the dawn on our long tramp ....

Baba would usually walk ahead with Eruch, we women a little distance behind, with the rest of the procession following last. Baba never appeared to be walking fast, just to be walking on air with that strong graceful stride, while our pace was too obviously hurried! And as the miles would vanish, miles of often beautiful countryside, we lesser companions would not unnaturally find our thoughts dwelling

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\* BABA, the supreme Master then as always, assumed the role of "Companion" for this phase of working. As He said, "I am on your level, for the purpose of the New Life undertaken."

Note: A few comments on our four-footed companions. 1) The horse was not ridden, only led; and later during the tour, was harnessed to a tonga. 2) When tired, the calf would be carried on the shoulders of Dr. Donkin or Nilu. 3) The donkeys! We women were in charge of walking them ahead of us for those miles, and they were as exasperating as they were entertaining. 4) The camel (named Bhol Ram) was an absolute pet and had a magnificent Persian bell round his neck.

more on food than nature's beauty. And nearing a village, Baba would sometimes send Eruch off to beg for some food\*— he would soon return with coarse native bread, usually hot from the fire, and some spiced vegetable or lentils, which Baba would divide amongst us and which tasted incredibly delicious! On one such occasion, Eruch told Baba how the woman he had approached said she didn't have anything to eat in the house, nor to cook with. When he assured her it was alright and was about to move on to the next hut, she begged him not to go away. Then she rushed to the neighbour's, borrowed some flour, etc., quickly cooked the bread and vegetable and gave it to Eruch. We think of this impoverished illiterate and fortunate woman who filled the begging bowl of the Avatar's disciple (and whose food the Avatar ate); and then we think of the educated well-off man in Benares who was approached for "bhiksha" by Kaka and Nilu and who turned them off with a scolding (though one must admit they looked far from starved), saying they should be utterly ashamed to beg and should look for some job! And I wonder if that poor man will ever realize his lost opportunity of lifetimes, one that might never again knock on his door ... And lastly I recall Baba's words at the beginning of the New Life "When we start on this life of "fakiri", we will meet both with ridicule and respect but we must be indifferent to both."

But the New Life is an inexhaustible subject and I've reminisced too much as it is, for a letter ....

18th Oct. '58

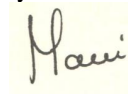
To get back to the present. Another date of special significance was 6th September. You see, the different Indian calendars vary yearly according to each other and according to the English calendar. And thus, after very many years, the birthdays of both Lord Krishna and Zoroaster coincided on the same day, the 6th of September 1958. Our garden's bountiful jas-mine and balsam made a beautiful garland for Baba on that morning of His double-birthday.

The Mast (Nilkanthwala) is a permitted subject, so I'd like to devote a para to him. One of his unforgettable remarks was: "Man-made world will end; and God-made world will live (come to life)." Another was, "The earth will split, and men will become helpless and shelterless like beasts roaming on a plateau. A very big cloud will appear. There will be great changes, and rites, rituals and religious ceremonies will be eliminated." Fluent in India's ancient language, he recited to Baba the Sanskrit verses that had been recited by Ravana in praise of Shankara. Whenever Baba visited him, the mast would offer Him a seat and at times would say "We play with You, we speak with You, we take food with You, and we make jokes with You, in our ignorance." On 3rd August Baba sent the mast (with Baidul) back to Rishikesh. At parting he caressed Baba's face in a very loving manner. He told Baba "Please, surely call me in the coming life. I will also definitely come then at your call." And then again "Please release me from this body." His last look at Baba was most touching ....

And now to the inevitable weather. The 'elephant rain' (fierce showers) came in time to save the final crops. This is the time of year when we have gorgeous sunsets. The marigolds are the biggest our garden has yet grown, and we have never seen so many pretty butterflies about as there are this year (nor incidentally have we had quite so many mosquitoes)...

Till the next family-letter when Beloved allows,

and with much love to you each, as always



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\*As in the past by Buddha and His disciples, through this period of our life of renunciation and poverty we only partook of food that was offered us in "Bhiksha" (i.e. alms. The mandali had to go out to the village to beg for flour, grain, etc. which Kaka would cook for us). And while in Dehra Dun, Benares, etc., occasionally Baba (with begging bowl and a couple of the mandali) has walked to the home of one or other of His followers to accept 'bhiksha'. But that's another chapter .....

P.S. Please note the restriction regarding my writing letters will continue.

# *twenty-four/*

1st December 1958

Dearest Family,

Another morning o'er Meherazad — there's a fresh breeze gently playing castanets in the treetops, a pair of doves are sunbathing in a grotesquely relaxed attitude, and the harsh cawing of the crows only tends to heighten the sweetness of the robin's song heard in the intervals. The sun is shining in a very blue sky dotted with thick rain-filled clouds, and everybody is very busy with her or his various chores that must be completed by a certain hour. Outwardly it might be just like many another morning, except for the fact that for the first time since 14th July Baba stepped outside the boundary of Meherazad; and once again we stood at the gate waving as the car took Him for a visit to Meherabad.

At last the little calendar on the office window says DECEMBER 1 — a significant date to many round the globe who love and obey Him — and somehow one feels like going round saying "Happy New Year." A day we have been daily looking forward to, not knowing exactly what we were waiting for except that it would be the termination of a unique period of Baba's spiritual work, the universal significance of which we would come to realize afterwards. But longing for it most in the thought that the end of the great seclusion would ease the strain visibly imposed on the physical. For although we could never hope to see into the inner divine aspect of His working, we were too well aware of its natural reaction on the outer Human — yet even so never fully realizing the extent of His self-imposed burden. As Baba once casually remarked: "You have no idea what I am bearing — but I have the biggest of hearts, I am the Ocean."

Although Beloved has allowed the family-letter, He does not wish me to give details of the 4½ months, and He wants me to say that later on an account of the Seclusion will be sent to all His lovers.

Invariably after a particular period of work or seclusion, Baba has moved from the scene of the work —if even for a few days, usually saying it was for a 'change and rest'. And so again it is this time, after this severe period of seclusion, and on 15th December we expect to leave with Baba for Poona, returning to Meherazad after one month.\*

The response to the October Circular from the East and West has been an avalanche of devoted replies — and it took the mandali many hours of many mornings to read out to Baba the thousands of letters from the East. This again brings to mind the August circular ... and how in His love and compassion He warns and prepares us, alerts us that we are not "caught napping" when the time comes ... And then I hear the words of Jigar (poet-mystic) that Beloved quoted to us three consecutive evenings in Satara after the Seclusion there:

Understand well,  
this love is not easy.  
It is as an Ocean of fire  
and you have to drown in it."

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\* Please Note: Our address will continue to be c/o Adi K. Irani.

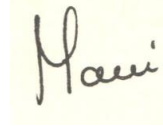
For Cables: Name of person, plus "care Meherbaba, Ahmednagar, India."

Thus He tells us He is to be loved and found, in the deeps of the heart — not by scanning the surface with the mind. "Do not try to understand Me. My depth is unfathomable. Just love Me." And so He has said in a previous Avataric form,

"Not comprehending Me in my true Self.  
Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,  
Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,  
I am not seen by all; I am not known —  
Unborn and changeless — to the idle world.  
But I Arjuna! know all things which were,  
And all which are, and all which are to be,  
Albeit not one among them knoweth Me!"

With loving Christmas Greetings from us all,

and Love to you each from BABA out of Seclusion,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hau", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed on the page below the text "and Love to you each from BABA out of Seclusion,".

*twenty-five/*

11th January 1959

Dear Family,

We're once again at Guruprasad, the place often graced with the Beloved's presence, and once again offered with love by the Rani for His stay in Poona. It seems odd that we should feel so at home in this palatial house with its spacious rooms, high ceilings in white and gold, its marble statues and fountain — but perhaps that is because of the singularly light and bright atmosphere of this house where we continue to live our simple ashram life with astonishing ease. Once again there was kavvali singing and arti in the big drawing room where a restricted number of Baba-lovers gathered at the feet of their Master. Very many more who were not allowed to seek His darshan till after 15th January, will be able to do so on the 17th — the day fixed by Baba to give His Poona lovers the longed-for opportunity of seeing Him before our leaving for Pippalgaon on the 19th.

Soon our one month in Poona, for the intended change and rest after His long Seclusion, will be over. Though undoubtedly there was the 'change', there has been little evidence of the 'rest' darling Baba talked of having, with some matter or another constantly cropping up and needing His attention and guidance. As He said the other day, with a tired sigh but not quite without a twinkle in His eye "The poor Avatar can never have a holiday."

I know you are anxious to know about Baba's health, and I'm equally aware that I'm hedging — but even if I attempted any more to tackle this subject, there's little I could report either way. There are times when He appears to walk unusually well (though always with some support), and times when the pain is unusually bad. Perhaps it will be possible to gather more from the Seclusion account which is expected to be given out later on. Mentioning the Seclusion reminds me: A few days ago when someone came asking to see Baba, the message brought in was "When will Baba really come out of seclusion?" Baba smiled and replied "I am really the only One who is not in seclusion. It is the rest of humanity that is in seclusion — and I have come to make it emerge into eternal freedom."

As we gather from reports coming in to Adi from various Meher-Centres in India as well as Pakistan, here too it has been possible to spread His beloved Name and universal message more than ever during these months. Some Baba-lovers spent their leave in extensive tours, and with the help and efforts of the Baba-groups were able to talk about Baba to thousands — in colleges and schools, town-halls and villages; the talk usually being followed by a showing of the films taken at Andhra and Myrtle Beach.

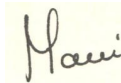
The 24th and 25th were celebrated en famille in happy occasion of Mehera's birthday and one of our Beloved's ancient birthdays. All the love that poured in from His Western family through Christmas greetings in the beautiful cards and cables, as well as that which was sent in silence, was received — and Baba sends His eternal love to you each.

A Happy BABA-Year to us all, and may we have His grace to love Him more. I remember Baba saying once that it is not so difficult to receive His grace, as to recognize it in the form in which it comes disguised. This little prayer we read in a book

"My soul is like a rusty lock,  
Oil it with Thy grace.  
And rub it, rub it, rub it, Lord  
Until I see Thy Face."

May His love teach us to accept the "rub" with the oil —

With much love —



# *twenty-six/*

23rd February 1959

Dear Family,

It is a clear still morning in Meherazad. The trees are full of birdsong, as our winter visitors are cascading their joy in rapturous outbursts of a farewell symphony. Mingled with these notes and other less musical but familiar noises of our household routine, we hear these mornings the more alien sounds of varied traffic along the unpaved bit of private road that approaches the gate to Meherazad. Now a bullock-cart or a tonga, now a taxi or car, bicycle or bus — bringing men, women and children of diverse religions and creeds, from a few miles away in Ahmednagar to many hundreds of miles from all parts of India and with one object in view: to offer Baba their homage and love, and to receive His embrace. It is getting to be a very familiar sight to see groups of people resting under the shade of the mango tree near by, and to hear the sound of many voices, occasional laughter or a baby crying. Some make the pilgrimage on foot, as did a family of four women and a man, walking the 60 miles distance from their home town, halting and camping on the way. All this is in response to Beloved's recent Circular for the East, which permits anyone to see Him, wherever He may be, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the morning, with the strict injunction that it should be (to put it in His own words) "not more than a couple of minutes, which is all that is necessary to meet and greet me with love and to receive my embrace of all-embracing Love."

At Baba's wish, His Birthday is not being observed at Meherazad this year — not even in the simplest form, so that our just wishing Him a Happy Birthday would constitute 'celebrating' it. On the other hand, it is being celebrated everywhere else; in many parts of India on a tremendous scale, with weeks of preparation by different Baba Centres. In the vast state of Andhra in the south, where books of and about Baba are placed (with the government's official sanction) in public libraries, schools and colleges, at least one Baba Centre will be celebrating His Birthday for eleven days — the programme including a drama of Baba's life, and feeding of the poor on the 25th. In Hamirpur district in the north, they hold a yearly Pilgrimage commemorating the day Baba set foot on their land, when towns and villages converge at places hallowed by Baba's visit (adding the festive touch of holding a regular fair as is done in India on great auspicious occasions honouring a beloved (One). Here there will be all night "repetition" of Baba's Name — until 5 a.m. on the 25th, the hour of His Birth — by the thousands of Baba followers. And so on, in other parts — central, north, east and west; in places where there were but a few Baba-lovers and where now His Message of Love is spreading rapidly "like a fire," as Baba Himself said, adding "The time has come, and it has to be. It will keep growing, spreading all over, and nothing can or will stop it."

I expect most of you know of dear Ivy's flying visit to India, during her tour of the middle-east with Mr. Duce — coming with Beloved's permission, for just a glimpse of Him. It coincided with the darshan day on the 17th at Guruprasad, which she describes in her lovely account, sent (or being sent) to all groups. It was so good to see her again, and somehow it seemed a little of you each had come. There was a similar brief visit permitted, this time to a Baba-lover from France — Philippe Dupuis. He saw Baba in Meherabad, that morning being an 'Arangaon Day', when the whole village poured out to receive Baba's embrace. One thinks of Arangaon as "Baba's Village", near which He first settled with His few disciples, establishing Meherabad. Many of the villagers, now men and women, were children then, and grew up in Baba's love and care. Their children in turn are devoted to Baba, and on our visits to Meherabad it's delightful to see the beaming though often unwashed faces of these youngsters as they run along Baba's car shouting "Baba, Baba", and trying to touch His hand which He puts up against the window ....

Then there is Francis Brabazon — a Baba-lover from Australia, though his can hardly be called a brief visit, Baba having called him for special work and for an indefinite period. He stays with the mandali and like one of them, and his indifference to the many inconveniences is a perpetual source of wonder to us. He is working at the moment on completing "Stay With God", a work of incredible beauty composed in blank verse, being published in Australia this year at Baba's wish. Baba has had it read out to Him, and said that the unique fact of this epic of the living Avatar being written during His lifetime, and being heard by Him in physical Form, will have a great bearing and significance for posterity. Among the things He said in praise of it was, "My love will touch the heart of all who read it, as no book has ever done." Francis is now in Bombay for Baba's Birthday celebration there, attending a Press conference today. We feel sure it will be as successful as the one in Poona, where he was given a big reception by the Meher Centre on his arrival from Colombo ...

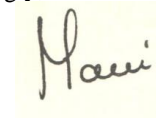
Recently Beloved has been walking more than usual, despite the pain; and instead of using the support of sticks, walks along pushing the little baby carriage, which enables smoother unhalting steps. Sometimes we see Him stop, admiringly pointing out to the mandali a particular cactus or flowering bush. In the evening Baba loves to look at the view from His window — the line of sheep homeward bound, moving along the gentle slope of the hill in the peace of the waning day, with sometimes the pale outline of the full moon showing overhead ... The afternoons are already a reminder that the summer is fast approaching, and soon we will be packing to leave with Baba on the 7th — a week's holiday for us at the home of Arnavaz and Nariman in Bombay, and then to Poona for 3 months, spending the summer once again at Guruprasad, which the dear Rani has offered for Baba's use whenever and for as long as He would like ... The next family-letter will probably be late again, and so I'm glad this one has turned out to be quite long and newsy.

I must include one more item, which highlighted two mornings in Meherazad. A young Kawwali singer, who participates in the programs at the Meher Centre in Ahmednagar, came twice to Meherazad to sing for Baba. Baba liked the songs and the quality of the voice very much, as also the accompanists' playing of the drum, and has called them once again. Some of the unforgettable lines of a song said:

I have no words with which to tell  
What I have found having found YOU.  
I have found my goal, I have found my self –  
Verily, in the form of a Man, I have found GOD!

With BABA's Love to each of you His dear ones for the coming Baba-Year and for all time in timelessness,

Lovingly,



The following from Baba, has been rushed today to the different Centres in India and Pakistan, for the Birthday celebration. It was not possible to send it to the West in time to reach all concerned, and Baba wishes me therefore to put it in the family letter:

"Every second in Eternity every one of us is the same One  
Indivisible God Who has no second ever not even on the 25th."

— MEHER BABA.

All Birthday greetings to Beloved received with Love.



# *twenty-seven/*

Poona, 9th April, 1959

Dear Family,

On the morning of 7th March we waved a fond au revoir to Meherazad. It was an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar, being Maha Shivratri (the great night of worship of the Lord Shiva), and a national holiday. In Poona we stopped at Guruprasad for lunch (brought over by Eruch's adoring family) — but before taking any food or rest, Baba went with the mandali to the house of Gadekar, a very dear Baba-lover who was seriously ill, and embraced him. Gadekar was one of the early disciples whose 'life itself has been a message of Baba's love to others' and whose constant cry during his illness was "Baba" — much loved by all, the Poona Baba-group would help him through the long nights of pain by singing to him the Baba-bhajans his heart rejoiced in. It is not for me to record this precious meeting at which I was not present, but the love and happiness that showed on Beloved's face on return spoke so much. When a few days later we received news of Gadekar's demise, Baba told us only He knew how fortunate Gadekar was, who also with his last breath had called out Baba's Name and had come to Him for ever ...

Our week's stay in Bombay at the Dadachanji's home as usual was a full one in more than one sense — for the great love with which we are looked after makes it more than a holiday. I'm afraid though that the word 'holiday' couldn't apply to darling Baba during this visit, when He gave so unceasingly and unstintingly of Himself to the thousands who came to seek His darshan during the stipulated time of 8 to 12 every morning, and who each received Baba's embrace. By 9 the lobby and stairs would be packed full, with the queue trailing outside along the road past our window from which we could glimpse the file of well-dressed people of varied religions and from varied walks of life — most of them holding flowers in their hands and many bringing their children along. Quite a lot of them had not seen Baba before, but once having done so were reluctant to take their leave, and would come again and again, bringing friends and relatives whom they wanted to share in this treasure they had found. Usually at 12 Baba would leave the darshan room, looking radiant but tired and with the back of His soft sadra and pink coat drenched with perspiration (despite the air-conditioner). Often, even after this, He would go back to embrace a pleading late-comer—none went empty who came seeking His love.

As though the morning program was not strenuous enough, Baba took on several afternoon ones instead of taking the rest His body obviously needed. One afternoon there was Kavvali singing at Sunderabai Hall which accommodated hundreds of His lovers and gave them an opportunity of his beloved sahasas for a number of hours. The 13th afternoon program was indeed an unusual one — a visit to St. Joseph's High School at Wadala, in response to a personal invitation from its principal, Father R ... , and as the result of years of selfless service and labour of love on the part of a Baba-lover who is the lady doctor in charge of its charitable and school dispensary. Each of the 1400 students walked past Baba receiving His prasada and embrace. Asked to say something to the boys, Eruch took the mike and 'introduced' Baba in words of dynamic simplicity which not only reached the boys it was intended for but touched all present. As unfortunately it was not taken down, I can only give you the gist of some of it. He explained to them that the name, Meher Baba, literally meant Compassionate Father — but that He was even more, being on all levels with all. "So you can take Him as your friend or your brother, your mother or your father, or even as your God — or all of these, for He is any and all that you take Him to be." He then recalled how exciting it can be as a schoolboy to know some distinguished visitor was coming to visit the school, and inevitably wondering what he or she would talk about. "Now here is a Visitor who does not talk! He has come to give you not words, but love. He has come not to lecture you but to bless you; not to teach you but to awaken you. He does not shake hands with you, but embraces you as the compassionate father He is. You will some day come to realize the significance of what you have truly received this day ... "

Straight from there Baba drove to the Industrial Home for the Blind, in response to the request of the honorary secretary who loves Baba. These talented young men of diverse religions, showed Baba how they could weave cloth, make baskets and chairs, etc., expressing themselves most however in their orchestral music, while He looked on with an infinitely tender smile. Then each one offered Baba a small rose, and one of the mandali (describing the scent later) said that as Baba embraced these blind men, each face was startlingly transformed as though a light had been switched on inside of him... One chap asked Baba why he was so unfortunate as to be blind, and Baba said he wasn't unfortunate — it was just that he did not know his good fortune. He said "All are blind, even those you think can see are blind, for they see what is not real. You do not see the real either, but you are fortunate in the one sense that you do not perceive the false either — it is only your desire to do so that binds you. Therefore do not ask for physical eyesight, but ask that you be given the true Sight which will make you see the only thing worth seeing, the only thing which Is. Take my name all the time, think of Me constantly — I give my love and blessings to you all.... "

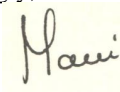
Again Guruprasad has been rejuvenated with the life giving waters of Beloved's presence which the fortunate ones come to drink of at this given opportunity for the East. Our Poona stay began with the same daily rush of darshan seekers — including not only the Baba-lovers and the many 'new' ones of Poona, but groups of up to 70 from different parts of India and often from distances of 3 to 4 days' journey by train. The Calcutta party was headed by a High Court judge and his family who had not met Baba before and who are forming a Baba-Centre there. Their parting message said "though we are going away from Poona, we are leaving the best part of ourselves at your feet" ... Sundays are more of a Sahavas, gathered around Beloved listening to the haunting rendering by His devoted young bhajan group — Baba looking as the Sun in His pink coat, with no trace of the tiredness that we know He must feel after the unbroken program of the morning which stretches sometimes into the afternoons as well ... But so it is and so it shall always be. Playing the part of 'human' with the perfection He personifies, this very human aspect is an eternal revelation of the One He is, of His unbounded love for mankind, of His Mastery in Servitude ....

In accordance with the new Circular, since 1st April (for 2 months) Baba's darshan is available on Sundays only. However, a unique and delightful exception was made on the 2nd, when Baba received the Team of Indian Cricketers who are leaving to tour England for the coming Test Match. Since school days, cricket has been Baba's outstandingly favourite sport, and during an exceptionally hard and busy morning we have heard Baba remark "The poor Avatar has all this to do, when He would much rather be watching a game of good cricket." Baba embraced each player, and Eruch read out His special message for them — this was reproduced in the sports column by a number of newspapers, English and vernacular, local and national (some also giving pictures of Baba with the team and of Baba alone), with headings of "A Silver Lining", "Team Blessed by Meher Baba", etc ... At parting Baba embraced each one again, gave a copy of His message and said "Take my love with you, and you will shine well." It was an unusual morning, and heartening to see the hopeful confidence and loving reverence that shone on the Cricketers' faces as they left Guruprasad ....

Because of limited time and because the letter would get too long, not all items or details have been able to get in — but I must include one that I know you would like to share ... The caretaker who lives within the palace grounds, has (besides a big family) goats, cat, and a lovely dog with a silky coat and laughing face. Sometimes we have seen the dog and one of the goats playing together in the most unique manner, each respecting the method and rules of the other animal and each determined to outwit the other. After breakfast one morning, Beloved watched this four-legged sport with huge delight — and perhaps the fair contestants sensed who their Audience was, for they put up an unusually lively show ...

With Beloved's Love to you each of His dear ones,

very lovingly,



# *twenty-eight/*

Guruprasad, Poona

13th June 1959

Dear Family,

I begin this letter with an apology and a deep awareness that it should have been written weeks ago. However, if not wholly it was amply due to an enforced 'holiday' in bed, which to my relief (and also I'm afraid to everybody else's) has at last terminated. Determined to make up for my lack of promptness by making this a long 'newsy' letter, am not sure just where to start, so (like the Persian script) will begin from the end and go ahead backwards ...

To Baba-lovers in many parts of India, and very particularly to those in Poona and in Bombay, Sundays have come to mean a wonderful 'holy-day' in the true sense of the word, when they could come (usually with garlands, children and friends) to see their Beloved, touch His feet and receive His embrace. The 7th of June was the last such Sunday during our present stay at Guruprasad, Baba wishing to remain undisturbed from 8th June till we leave for Meherazad beginning of August. So you can imagine how every one who possibly could, grabbed the 'last opportunity', many coming from great distances for a morning with Him. As we saw them pour in towards where Baba was seated at the far end of the big hall, someone remarked that it seemed like a tidal-wave — and so indeed it did, which only the Ocean of Love could receive, drop by drop, as He did; blessing each with an embrace, greeting, smile. Marvin Campen (an American Baba-lover who came, with Baba's permission, from Switzerland to see Him — and who was present during the darshan program of an earlier Sunday) expressed the thought uppermost in many minds, when he remarked "Baba, you work so hard for us!" Marvin, sitting on the carpet by Baba's couch and looking deeply happy, also said how radiant Baba looked — which He did, though He had seemed very tired early that morning. But although that is how we have almost invariably known it to be, we cannot help marvelling afresh at each such recurrence.

That same Sunday had another special visitor sitting throughout the program at Beloved's feet — it was our lovely Rani, owner of Guruprasad. Baba has often mentioned how pleased He is with Guruprasad, which apart from its right atmosphere seems made to order for many of our ashram requirements, and specially prized is its marathon verandah which affords comfortable walking facility for Baba. But perhaps the biggest reason is the love with which the Rani has offered it for His use .....

Because of Baba's beautiful explanation, I must tell you of a professor of French from the Deccan College here, who came one Sunday to see Him for the first time and was introduced as one interested in 'yoga-practices'. Baba expressed His happiness to see him, and to the man's obvious expectation that He explain something about Yoga, Baba said:

"What do you mean by 'yoga' and what do you aspire to attain thru it? There is only one true 'yoga' and that is 'you go'. I know of no other yoga than 'you go'. The meaning of Yoga is as simple as that. You are your own curtain, and only when you go can You come. But the problem is how will you go — the only solution is love. When 'you' go (are annihilated) thru love for God the Beloved, 'you come' (emerge) as You really are."

About no more darshan or any programs, Baba said "I will stay at Guruprasad till beginning August. But I have decided to stop giving darshan, even on Sundays, from 8th June onwards. I want to be completely free for one month. None should disturb me during this period by bringing insignificant things to my notice, and none should try to see me unless called for by me. Continue your work at the Centres and outside, spreading my message of love. Be unmindful of the results of your efforts — those who are to come will come. Just do your best, with love and sincerity.

It is difficult to write backwards in sequence, so I'll have to do a little hopping to tell you of two other highlights at Guruprasad. One was a performance by some Andhra lovers, who spread Baba's message by travelling from place to place (city, town or village) and recounting Baba's life and mission in what I can only call a 'ballad-play'. Last month the act was performed in Poona, and had a large attendance. Their pride performance however was before Baba — their 125th one. Although it is done in Telegu (a language of the south we do not understand), with only three actors and no props, we were enchanted. Their costumes and acting, their musical instruments and their rendering of the songs and speech we found very original and good — combined, it conveyed the sparkle of champagne in a crystal glass and the depth of a heart in love ...

The second highlight was indeed unique — a wedding of two young Baba-lovers of the Bhajan group, who (with their excellent voices) lead the Arti and Baba-songs at all programs. The couple are Hindu in religion, but from the still unrelenting orthodox view of caste they are poles apart, and ordinarily such a wedding would not even be considered! But it not only had the sanction and approval of Baba who teaches us that love is highest and that all are equal, but it was His helping hand alone that brought it about. The ceremony was held before Him, at Guruprasad\* amidst a fair gathering of Baba-lovers, in utter simplicity and beauty. Baba said it was the first and last wedding performed by Him as Baba. As Lord Krishna too He had personally helped in bringing about one union, that of His sister Subedra and His most-loved disciple Arjun.

Afternoon drives with the mandali to Bindra House (home of Eruch's family) have been a regular Baba-item until recently. And though the main attraction seemed to be the littlest newcomer named Mehera, Baba smilingly said one day that He came only for "Pappa" (His affectionate nickname for Eruch's father). We didn't fully realize this until after Pappa's unexpected demise recently (of heart failure), and were full of wonderment as we recalled the many little ways in which Baba had expressed His love for him, giving him every opportunity for His intimate sahas. Dear Pappa's "last words" were but one word: BABA.

14th: ... For those with Baba, and the intimate few daily visiting Him, today marks a special milestone in His present momentous phase of working, for it is exactly one month since it began. Hinting more often that the time was drawing near and His universal burden increasing greatly, Baba asked all concerned to fully help Him in this work of 56 days (beginning from 14th May) by being completely resigned to His every wish and giving Him not the least cause for irritation. He added that if all went as He wished, His work would be done 100% successfully with glorious results. However, knowing the frailties of His human disciples, He also said that if we did our utmost, He would help us to help Him. And so we tread each day as 'cats on hot bricks', lest we are caught off our guard and trip unintentionally ... About this phase here is an extract from Baba's explanation to the mandali:

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\* except for the signing at the registrar's later .....

"These days 'maya', the principle of ignorance, is in full play and tries to oppose my work. So, particularly those who live near me must remain very watchful. Knowing my love for you, maya awaits the opportunity to use your weaknesses. The moment you neglect my instructions, maya's purpose is served. I have to put up a big fight with Maya — not to destroy it but to make you aware of its nothingness. The moment you fail to obey me implicitly, it tightens its grip over you and you fail to carry out the duties as assigned to you. This adds to my present suffering,

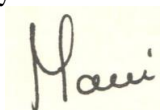
In God there is no such thing as confusion — God is infinite Bliss and Honesty. In illusion there is misery, confusion, chaos. As the eternal Redeemer of humanity, I am at the junction of Reality and Illusion, simultaneously experiencing the infinite Bliss of Reality and the suffering of Illusion. With Reality on the one hand and Illusion on the other, I constantly experience as it were, a pull on either side. This is My crucifixion. I do not ever let go my hold on Reality. Imagine for instance that the pull of Illusion becomes too great, what would happen? My 'arm' would be pulled out of its socket, but I remain what I AM."

I am afraid the letter is getting longer than I really intended or hoped, but the temptation to put in as much of Baba's talks as possible (for which blame and thanks are due to Eruch who gave me the copies) has been overwhelming. So I end by quoting again Baba's words to an intimate gathering on June 1st, in regard to His health:

"I appear to you cheerful, radiant and in fine health — but my health is far from good, My personal doctor asks me to take complete rest, not to walk fast, and to discontinue the darshan programs as they are a great strain on my health — and the doctor is right. When I retire I feel as though my body had been wrung out. Yet you see me busy from morning till late in the evening, attending to minutest details regarding work of varied nature. Now see the contradiction. On the one hand my general health is getting worse, on the other hand I am getting much more active. But let it be clear to you that it is not for reasons of health that I stop giving darshan. It is for my universal work that weighs on me tremendously, and of which you can have no idea, The time I have been hinting at is come, The universe is come out of Me, and has to come unto Me. This is no idle talk. I say it with the authority of my experience of being the Ancient One."

With the Beloved's Love to you each dear one,

ever lovingly



P.S. Baba desires to give no instructions for the observance of this 10th of July the 34th anniversary of His Silence), and leaves it entirely to the inclination of each concerned — i.e. it may be observed if and as we like, or not observed at all. No queries should be sent here in regard to this .....

# *twenty-nine/*

24th August 1959

Dearest Family,

It is like 'old times' to be writing once again from Meherazad to which we always return with the renewed revelation of how very much we had missed it. We left Poona on 8th morning — but as our cars wended out of Guruprasad it was not yet goodbye for the group of heavy-hearted Baba lovers, who had gratefully drunk of their Beloved's presence at every given opportunity during the long stay in Poona and now would not see Him again till that inevitably remote 'next time'. They were gathered for the farewell in the grounds of the Bund Gardens\* (a slingshot distance as it were, from Guruprasad), where Baba had promised them He would stop on the way. The Beloved kept His date, under the huge mango tree by the river — the selfsame tree beneath which Babajan often used to sit with devotees and followers.

The drive was pleasant for we had a good monsoon in Poona, but were anxious that there was yet no rain 'back home'. Nearing Ahmednagar we found a depressingly marked contrast in the countryside: the grass in gradually scantier patches, the crop in the rows of fields poor or nil, and the river beds more arid — till the last one that we cross before coming to Meherazad (Pimpalgaon) did not even appear damp. And so, as we entered the gates of Meherazad, it was to the very welcome sight of a refreshingly colorful garden that our dear Kaka had managed to keep up despite the heat and absence of rain. As for the four-legged ashramites, their welcome was as usual too exuberant for our physical comfort but delightfully satisfying nevertheless.

What is more wonderfully reminiscent of real 'old times' is something we have not seen for several years, something we had resigned ourselves to never perhaps expecting to see: Baba walking back and forth to the Mandali's unaided and unaccompanied, The sound of that sudden clap so dearly familiar and we run out to find Him walking over to our cottage, open umbrella in hand and with a not so noticeable limp. We are not quite used to all this and can still find ourselves joyously startled when He suddenly gets up and walks over by Himself to another room. This is not only contrary to our most optimistic expectations, but contrary to the emphatic opinions and advice of eminent doctors and specialists who had been concerned in the matter and knew the extent of the injury. One of them, who has seen the transformation said "It is exactly the condition that would have resulted from the operation we advised, It seems He has performed His own operation! I am indeed most happy." And so it was that I teasingly warned Harry (Dr. Kenmore) who is once again allowed to be with his Meherazad family for a few weeks from this September, "You will be literally 'running after' Baba this time".

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\* It is by the embankment of the river where Baba used to boat as a college boy. In the rains it is lovely to watch the water cascading over the broad parapet and the brown forms of the fishermen on the rocks below with their nets and baskets .....

But despite this unexpected and heartening progress in walking, Baba's general health, in utter contrast, has been far from good. At times one sees a great tiredness in His God-eyes, and He says "I am not only infinitely tired, but infinitely tired of being tired. But my work must and will be done." You must have received by now the recent Circular of Baba's statement given on August 13, which gives us, if not a glimpse, a glimmer of the work He has set Himself to do by October end and the odds that He has set up to work it through ....

For us this Circular was hardly unexpected, as in Poona (on 7th Aug.) Baba told the disciples gathered at Guruprasad, that August, September and October are to be the most crucial months when He will be burdened infinitely with His universal work; that due to pressure of this work He will be most tired physically and mentally; and that this will be the period He has often spoken of, the period of His helplessness and humiliation — and if by October end His physical body remains intact, there will follow the breaking of His silence and His glorification.

Baba said "I want my lovers to help Me in this." He then helped them by showing them how they should help Him. For those not staying with Him, He gave instructions that they should not disturb Him in the least on any account till October end. They should not come to Pimpalgaon during these three months unless called, and not express their desire to stay near Him. They should not communicate with Baba, either by letter or telegram, and whatever difficulties they may have to face during this period they should not send the news to Baba, nor come personally. He added that it would be better to die than give Him the least disturbance, because any disturbance would be great owing to the infinite pressure of work He will be undergoing during these three months.

For the women and men mandali staying with Him in Pimpalgaon His instructions were that none should go out of Meherazad during these three months under any circumstances; all should keep Baba happy by trying their utmost to do what they know would please Him; none should argue or discuss anything with Baba; and none should convey any piece of bad news to Baba. Lastly and mostly, all should try one hundred percent to obey Baba implicitly.

And so as always each one is determined to do his and her uttermost — the thing one can't help feeling however, is that only Baba knows the extent of our 100%. When we in our short-sightedness and self-ignorance think we have reached the limit of our resources, Baba pushes us one step further — making us dig deeper into the scrap bag of our individual capacity, to find there's after all more of it than we thought; and every time this painful process is over we are left a little happier, wiser, and bigger. Perhaps some day we will reach the 100% that He really wants — not out of our imperfect love for Him I'm sure, but out of His infinite love for us .....

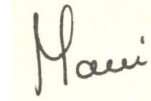
I tried to find a simile for the 'surprise mixture' observance of this 10th of July but could not think of anything apt. Although nearly all participated it was in various ways, according to each one's inclination just as Baba had asked it should be. Baba 'celebrated' it in His own inimitable way — He visited the home of a dear family (which serves as Monday meeting-place for Poona Baba lovers), bowed down to 100 poor people and gave Rs. 10 to each.

Just as I think of ending this letter, there is a most heart-gladdening torrent of rain — the first of its kind this year — but am almost afraid to mention it lest the clouds 'hear' me and packing up their bounty flit smilingly away as they have grown in the habit of doing.

I mustn't really end however, before sharing with you a precious Baba-quote given at one of the informal morning sessions with the mandali. Apropos of the subject that came up Baba said "Why is it so impossible to find God? It is because you are looking for something you have never lost."

With BABA'S LOVE to you each of His dear Family,

ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature reads "Maui" in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

P.S. I take this opportunity to acknowledge with love the dear letters received, as I am unable to reply individually to each much as I would want to .....



*thirty/*

Meherazad, 16th October, 1959,

Dear Family,

It is a bright fresh morning, and Meherazad calling long-distance once again to His dear ones who are never away from Him. To us it is another special day, in the sense that it is one more day nearer to the 28th of October, on which day — as Baba has told us — the present most critical phase of His universal work will end. He also said that the result of this work will unfold by the end of this year.

A circular to this effect is being sent to all concerned in the East, with additional instructions for November and December when Baba will continue His universal work and be busy in His own way. All have been asked to keep in mind Baba's wishes that none should write or visit Baba, except and only when instructed by Baba to do so for reasons of work. Adi has been permitted to inform Him in the matter of serious illness or death among Baba-lovers, but those sending such information must bear in mind not to expect a message or instructions from Baba. Baba emphasized that during these months, any disturbance of any nature is most undesirable; and those expecting or hoping to see Him or write to Him after October must curb their impatience and desire in order to uphold Baba's wish, as it is essential for His work.

We can have little hope of understanding the import of our Beloved's work, for such things will always remain beyond the domain of intellectual understanding. As Baba said, anything intellectually comprehensible can never touch the fringe of Reality. No wonder that He asks us not to try to understand Him, but just to love and obey Him. Baba frequently reminds us that His present work is of unparalleled magnitude, with more than we can ever dream of in the balance. He asks us not to worry, just to obey Him implicitly and to be on guard against Maya who will do everything it can to hinder and seemingly overwhelm. This, He adds, is inevitable as the time draws close for His manifestation when God will reveal Himself in all His Glory. There's a very apt illustration\* regarding this that Harry got from Eruch the other day and which I'm sure you would equally love to share:

Maya is God's infinite shadow. To use an analogy, when the Sun appears to be setting over the horizon, the shadow projected by any object appears to grow longer till it becomes much bigger than the object itself. But when the Sun is directly overhead, the shadow disappears and is 'trampled' under foot of the object as it were. Thus it is, in this phase of His helplessness and humiliation that Baba tells us of, the Sun's rays appear faint and weak and the Shadow appears larger and more potent than that which creates the shadow, seemingly overriding it in all proportion. But when God (the Sun) is in His zenith at the time of His manifestation, Maya (the Shadow) disappears, being virtually non-existent and powerless, and the object receives the full and direct force of the Sun. This is Victory over Maya when ignorance and darkness disappear in the glory of God's manifestation.

The one aspect of His work I would have no trouble in accurately and volubly describing is the outward aspect that He invariably makes use of for the function of His infinite working. But here too my long tongue is tied — this time by Baba. He does not wish us to give out just yet the details of the routine of

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\* Baba's figure

specific work and duties set by Baba for Himself and the men and women with Him during this particular period. Among the ones asked to share specially in this work are Eruch, Harry\* and Francis; and of course there's dear Kaikobad who continually has this privilege.

Inevitably there are the lighter moments of 'relaxation' for the Beloved, such as when occasionally playing with the Boys\*\* the Indian game of "Seven Tiles" — which begins with the player aiming to crash with his ball the seven bits of tiles or stone piled on one another at a goodly distance away from the player. The successful member gets a handful of claps from Baba and party, but this becomes thunderous when Harry hits a bulls-eye which is amazingly more frequent than expected, and often more frequent than the others are able to achieve. Coming over with him to the house one afternoon, Baba said to Harry, "You are most fortunate. You are not only staying with God, you are playing with God." It is wonderful to have him with us once more, and there is no doubt he will bring along with him many precious memories and anecdotes to share with you all dear ones.

Then there was the happy visit of another Harry I must tell you of, Harry Dedolchow (of dear Ivy's group in U.S.) on the morning of 7th September, a young man in the Navy whom I fondly call Baba's "Sailor Boy". He had been trying for quite some time to meet Baba, and against many odds at last managed to do so. Baba had allowed him "five minutes", and then Baba-like lovingly extended it to over two hours during which He also showed him round the garden and grounds. We felt his love for Baba very much, as did the others of His groups in Poona and Calcutta ....

The first copy of 'Stay With God', Francis Brabazon's book that I mentioned in the February family-letter, arrived by Air on the 8th; and what Baba said in His cable to those concerned in Australia, speaks for the book more than any description I can give. He said, "Stay With God has come to stay and My Love to all those who helped to make it the perfect book that it is." We know that Baba wants this book spread not only among Baba-lovers (He wishes each family to own at least one copy), but as widely as possible among the general public —and naturally His lovers will be doing all they can to help make this possible. One of the ways one can do this I feel, is to take the opportunity of this coming Christmas and New Year when it would make a splendid gift for special friends, regardless of whether they know Baba or not.

The welcome generosity of the rains since the last letter has been little short of overwhelming, and once again the countryside is draped in green, while the little turtle in our well feels daily more 'uplifted' as the water level keeps rising. The view from the window of Baba's room is as a framed picture-card of constantly varying scenery. Baba calls this His "television", and sometimes points out to us a particularly eye-catching shot: sheep and cattle grazing on the sloping hillside or wending homeward, a patch of bright blue sky with a rainbow or bright pink clouds caught in the sunset's noose ... In the close foreground is a little plant, with the leaves on one stem clearly outlining the shape of a bird singing, and seeming most realistic when it sways in the breeze. This He calls the Parrot, and it has never failed to delight us to note that not a single 'feather' of this parrot has ever been ruffled after the rains or storms, no matter how heavy or recurrent ...

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\* Dr. Kenmore whom I mentioned in the last family-letter, as also in a much earlier one.

\*\* The Mandali, and the staff including the garden boys, cook and driver.

I think I have put down nearly all the items kept in mind (or scribbled on backs of envelopes) for this news letter, but I wouldn't be a good reporter if I failed to mention a special occasion on this day, for two close ones in Baba. It is the wedding of Baba's niece, and the boy too has come to love Baba very much; he said he was doubly lucky to find Gulnar, for thru her he found BABA. The Beloved allowed them to come for a day during this restricted period, to give them His personal blessings of love they longed for.

I must also tell you of the children of the Railway colony at Santragachi in Calcutta, the little lovers of Baba aged between 6 to 12 years. They have formed their own Baba-group that daily increases, and built a tiny Meher Mandir (prayer room) of their own adjoining the regular one, wherein they have placed the Beloved's picture. Here they sing to Baba, perform puja, offer fruits and sweets to Him and then distribute the prasada amongst themselves and visitors. They sing Baba songs and bhajans that they are well conversant with, and on days of special significance decorate the mandir with colored lights and flowers. An older Baba-lover writes:

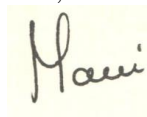
"The joy of the children in performing Baba's puja and bhajan is immense. They also participate in all the activities of the regular Meher Mandir. The little ones love Baba very much, understanding Him to be no less than God, and so they are blessed. They are doing their best in their own way to love Him, but we elders have not been able to do all what ought to be done, We are far behind in understanding Baba and His Avatarhood."

Only Baba of course can help us to do that, as no doubt He did when He had a prayer read out on 25th August, a Prayer for Baba's Lovers and Mandali as follows:

"Beloved God, help us all to love Thee more and more, and more and more and still yet more, till we become worthy of Union with Thee; and help us all to hold fast to Baba's daaman till the very end."

AMEN, and much love to you each

in BABA,



P.S. Please note that orders for "Stay With God" may be placed individually or collectively (enclosing with it check or money order) direct to:  
GARUDA BOOKS, P.O. Box 6, Woombye, Queensland, Australia.

Price is \$3.50, including postage.

# *thirty-one/*

Meherazad, 15th December, 1959.

Dearest Family,

If I didn't write this letter sooner, it wasn't just from lack of time, but lack of permission to give news of Baba. Once again there is a lot I can say but little I can tell, for Baba has extended (to the end of December) the curb on our reporting any of His activities during this period of His work in seclusion. However, for your loving interest, I would like to tell you of some of the activities of Baba-lovers in India during this period.

Baba-lovers in Andhra, south India, marked the end of October (the termination of that most crucial phase of His universal working) with an all-out effort, financial and otherwise, to spread the Beloved's message through one of the prominent English newspapers in Madras, THE MAIL. Their labour of love was deservedly rewarded, as the paper devoted four full pages of Baba-material, with pictures. They are now endeavouring to bring out a 1960 DIARY, heading each day with a Baba-saying or quotation from His books.

From the north emanated the urge for a round-the-clock Baba-Jap\* (repetition of Baba's name) embracing all parts of India. Baba-lovers hailed it spontaneously, and the repetition of His beloved Name spread like a Flame from lip to lip, from heart to heart, in towns, cities and villages; and was kept bright and burning in a non-stop vigil — in turns, individually and collectively, in homes or at Baba-centres, till the end of October.

There was of course the difficulty of working out a schedule to suit different individuals, as most of the men and a number of the women had all-day jobs, but it was carried out harmoniously and faithfully despite all odds. I would like to mention here the instance of a young woman in a village of Hamirpur (north) who was laid up with a bad attack of typhoid fever lasting nearly six weeks, but nothing stopped her from continuing her daily Jap of three hours, throughout her illness. Incidentally, at the end of it (on the arrival of a group-head of that district who had returned after a visit to Baba), she walked the nearly half mile distance to meet him and hear about the Beloved.

There is an ancient Hindu tradition of worship to the memory and shrines of saints and gods, when men make a pilgrimage on foot to fetch water from the sacred rivers and pour it on the deity of their choice on specific days of religious festivals. This old custom, carried on more from habit in the dusty footsteps of the past, was sparked with a unique life and significance by the villagers of Arangaon (the "Baba-village" near Meherabad where Baba first established His residence with His disciples), who had also participated fully in the Baba-Jap.

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\* Pronounced to rhyme with the word Cup.

To commemorate the end of October, a number of these villagers trekked on foot the 45 miles to Toka and back, bringing the water of the river Godavari\* — not for the deity of their choice but for the Beloved of their heart — to pour on the feet of the living Avatar, just as they had done during the Sahavas in Meherabad. However, as Baba extended the seclusion period till December end, they poured it on the feet of Baba's picture, happy in His will. And thus is life breathed into the shells of hoary customs when love, not habit, becomes the motivation behind it. "... goodness is only a sound and virtue a mere strife, till the spirit of Love is the breath of everything that lives and moves in the heart."

Though hardly surprising, Maya too has been pretty busy during this time as we gathered from experience and from letters of dear ones in the West and the East. Here's an instance I'd like to cite:

The 30th of October was "Divali", the Hindu, festival of lights and fireworks, when cities, towns and even villages are brighter and noisier than the rest of the old year ending on that day. It is the symbol of Light over darkness, of good over evil; the renewal of hope and resolutions, and the offering of thanks and worship to God.

On that evening, Srinivasan (a young Hindu Baba-lover in Poona, in whose home the weekly Baba-meetings have been held for quite some time), was busy decorating the room and Baba's big framed photo that graced the wall of the modest home. An electrician, daily cycling 10 miles to his job and back, he returned from work determined to give a festive 'new look' to the place as a happy surprise for next days' Baba-meeting. In the process of repairing a corner of the canvas ceiling, he fell from his perch from the ladder headlong on to the stone floor — he was rushed to hospital where he died without regaining consciousness. Baba sent a telegram thru Adi, to the boy's family (parents, sisters, wife and children who are devoted to Baba) with the message:

"Baba wants the Mudaliar family to know that His dear Srinivasan has earned his nivas\*\* in His Beloved Baba."

I would like to reproduce here excerpts from a letter that Eruch received from Ramkrishna (the young group-head in Poona, an indefatigable and dedicated Baba-worker) — he says:

"Yes, Srinivasan's absence is felt conspicuously. We were shaken for we have lost a strong steady and silent hand working (in Baba's cause) behind the scenes. Not for his death, for the sort of death he was blessed with, I am sincerely envious of. Srinivasan had his fall while doing work for the Beloved's cause, and when I received the telegram with Baba's message I felt overjoyed — for Srinivasan has attained what we all still seek. It is my wish and prayer that I may fall at His feet while in the act of working for His Cause. What else is there to aspire for?"

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\* Carried in brass pots slung from bamboos across the shoulders, and never to be placed on the ground till the destination is reached. (While taking rest enroute, the pots are hung on branches of trees.)

\*\* 'nivas' literally means 'abode'.

Referring to this bolt out of the blue from Maya, he goes on to say "Baba's children were not, are not and will not be affected by anything that Maya engenders around us. With all our mistakes, with all our weaknesses we try our best to be worthy of His love that He showers upon us. His dear children in Poona will stand up to any tests and trials. We are prepared to burn in that fire of His Great Love and we seek only to be burned."

A proof of this was touchingly brought home to us by the boy's father. When he found that the Baba-group planned to hold the weekly meetings, for some time at some other place in order to afford the family their rightful privacy at such times, he begged and insisted that they continue at his home — just as though Srinivasan was still alive, which indeed he truly was now, in BABA.

As said in the circularised message from Baba given out on the 9th for all concerned in the East and West, these five months have been a strain on Baba's health.

But though the heavy burden of work shows its marks of wear and tear on the physical garment He has assumed, it cannot quite hide even from our 'blind' sight the Light of His Infinity. In fact at such times it seems to show more through the rents and chinks of the physical veil, I remember Him saying once, in reply to a visitor asking Him why He didn't reveal Himself, "It is easy to reveal Myself. Hiding Myself (till you are ready to perceive Me) is difficult."

There are times when we see Him looking immeasurably tired, and times when He looks so radiantly aglow. One moment He appears so 'human' — a friend, brother, child; seeming overburdened, tired, 'helpless'. Next moment when you look up at Him you want to proclaim, like the Mast who was brought in 1946, who (pointing to Baba) said to those standing by "Look at this Man's face and forehead, they shine as if the sun were there, can't you recognize WHO He is?"

The other day someone wrote "I feel so empty of words, I have nothing to say", and I thought how much nicer to be empty of words than to be full of words that are empty. And it brought to my mind Baba's remark one morning regarding one of the mandali whom He jokingly prodded with the little aluminum basin that is kept by His side. At the resultant sound it produced, Baba smilingly said "Pukar is full of emptiness." Then He said to be 'full of emptiness' is the ideal state to be and did the Mandali understand its real meaning. Harry Kenmore who was here at the time said it meant emptying out of yourself the ideas, wants and attachments experienced in illusion "like squeezing out the dirty water from a sponge." Baba nodded, and explained "It means turning one's heart and mind inside out, becoming empty and naked. To be empty means to be rid of all desires, and concerns the heart. To be 'naked' concerns the mind, and means not to care for the opinions, criticism, or censure of others in one's pursuit (of the true Goal). This is what Junaid's Master meant when he told Junaid to become both empty and naked."

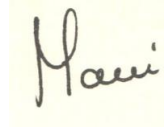
The 21st of November was a very special day for a dear Baba-lover from New York, Joanna Smith, who was traveling in India. The longing of her heart to see Baba was heard and granted, for Baba allowed her to come to Meherazad that morning. My diary records: "She was overcome with happiness

and love at the meeting, and to see Baba walking so briskly as He personally took her round the garden." She asked Baba when He would come again to the West, adding "They must see you walk like this Baba." Baba's reply was a smile that was noncommittal.

Then there are two other dear ones from the West whose coming we are looking forward to. They are not only allowed to visit for a week or so, but will be having Christmas with Baba at Meherazad. The lucky ones are Don Stevens (who has been promised this visit for a couple of years), coming from Holland and bringing with him Alan Youeil, a young cousin and friend who has not met Baba but has come to love Him dearly. This will bring the figure of Baba-visitors from abroad to a round dozen for this year.

With His unbounded love from seclusion,

ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Maui', is written on a yellow rectangular sticky note. The signature is centered below the text 'ever lovingly,'.

P.S. I would like to specially mention here the second (revised and enlarged) Indian edition of Irene Conybear's book "Civilization or Chaos" just out. Irene tells us it has a foreword by Dr. Evans Wentz and a favourable comment from the vice president Dr. Radhakrishnan. I am sure those in Australia (who have been waiting for this newer edition) and elsewhere, will not fail to get their copy (from the publishers, Chetana Ltd., 34- Rampart Row, Bombay 1, India). The book has been written in a manner calculated to interest the general public in the East and West, and in 1956 condensed translations of the book in several Indian vernaculars were also printed.

# *thirty-two/*

Meherazad, January 5th, 1960

Dear Family,

This brings 1960 greetings from the heart of Meherazad, as it beats in unison with that of Baba's lovers in all parts of the world. May that 'heart' keep growing in the life-giving Love of Baba, till there is no room for all that is not, and only BABA is.

"Baba's village" of Arangaon was blessed by His first program of the year, in response to the villagers' plea for a visit from their beloved Master, their living Lord Krishna. Thus, on the morning of 2nd January, Baba started early for that short but shaky drive (over bumpy roads) to Meherabad and Arangaon ....

Only one who has visited 'real India' can have an idea of the utter poverty of the innumerable little villages that India is studded with. But Arangaon, though equally poor in that sense, is not only unique in its good fortune of being chosen by Baba as the village near which to establish His first abode of Meherabad, but it is replete with His love. As Baba pointed out to the Westerners with Him, "These villagers may be poor in the eyes of the world, but they possess more wealth to make even the richest envious, for they are rich in love of the Ancient One." The village put on its most scrubbed and festive countenance for that morning of mornings — when Baba walked with them from home to home, smiled at them, embraced them, and gave each one His darshan. He had a special greeting for the old barber (the first who used to cut the hair of the mandali when Meherabad was established); as also for the old woman who had been His first servant in Meherabad ...

On the pathway by the huts of these poor simple folk that Baba visited, the housewives had laid out their best saris for Him to walk upon before entering their homes. Quite regardless of the painful hip-joint, it was estimated that Baba walked a total distance of at least two miles during that darshan visit! He said that it was their love that made Him walk so far and so well, over the dusty uneven roads of the village. To us it was just one more instance of our Beloved placing such simple and sincere love above His own health and comfort.

The Arti\* was sung at the village Baba-Centre\*\*, led by the best songstress of the group, a pretty little girl of about 9, who adores Baba. But that morning Prabha could not continue. Standing before the object of her arti, she soon broke down completely and just sobbed out her song of love. Baba gathered her into His arms, and later said that such song as hers was the true Arti, coming from the fullness of the heart and needing no words.

There is a small tuberculosis hospital a short distance away from the village, which was also blessed by Baba's presence that morning. This unscheduled visit was seemingly due to a nurse from the hospital, who requested Baba to visit the patients, using as bait the fact that there were a number of Arangaon residents as patients there and therefore they too were entitled to take part in the Arangaon Darshan program. Baba acquiesced telling her with a twinkle in His eye that she had a good argument there. He saw each patient, patted or embraced them, and gave His prasad ....

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\* "of an innermost closeness".

\*\* A humble affair of one fair-sized room, opened by Baba that morning.



Among the Meherazadians with Baba that morning were Don Stevens and Alan whose visit I mentioned in the last letter, and though they could not be here in time for Christmas, they began the New Year with Baba. At the request of Baba-groups, on their way back Don gave a wonderful talk on Baba to a large audience in Bombay and Poona (followed by a press conference which was reported in several papers), and as a disciple who was with him in Bombay said, "Don is a rare gem." Young Alan loved Baba though he had not met Him, and now loves Him 101% (as he himself dearly puts it).

Another special visitor was our dear Yogiji - Yogi Suddhanand Bharathi, a widely-travelled and well-known figure in South India who has Ashrams and a following of his own, and who accepts and acclaims Baba as the Avatar of the age. His thirty years of sincere search for Reality culminated in his meeting with Baba, and he declares he has dedicated himself to Baba's cause, and spreads His message of Love wherever he can.

On 4th January Baba gave darshan at His Centre in Ahmednagar; and besides the many Baba-lovers and workers, hundreds flocked to take advantage of this opportunity, a number of them having travelled from surrounding towns and villages in bullock carts or by bus. Every family seemed to have brought their numerous children along, including the youngest members of only a few months old that they laid on Baba's feet! Consequently, despite the large number assembled, the adults were apparently in a minority. No doubt, what added to this predominance of youngsters were nearly a hundred children from the Ahmednagar Remand Home, brought over by Roshan (our Dr. Goher's sister) who is a teacher in the Home. Then there were the local urchins who were solely tempted by the prasad of banana given by Baba! But despite the obvious anxiety of these ragamuffins to rush away with their prize, Baba never failed to give each a touch or pat ....

Among the dignitaries and officials of Ahmednagar who came for His darshan were the Civil Judge and the D.S.P. who seemed loath to leave Baba's presence. Adding to the number of close Baba-lovers were 65 men and women from Andhra, who had come from a distance of two days' train journey for this opportunity, and Baba allowed them to visit Meherazad after the darshan. The Beloved walked with these devoted ones across the garden, showing them His Hill where He had stayed in seclusion years ago. Baba joined His hands to forehead in salutation to the Hill, and asked the group with Him to do likewise. Walking with Baba, the women made a picturesque procession, with their gorgeous silk saris that South India is noted for.

The 24th December marked the end of the phase of our Beloved's work as explained in the Circular, and incidentally it was also dear Mehera's Birthday. On that day Baba washed the feet of 24 lepers and bowed down to them (i.e., placing His forehead on the feet of each) and giving Rs. 5 to each\*, also serving them tea and ravo\*\* with His own hands. On the 27th there was a similar program, except

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\* The only time Baba touches money is when He gives it on special occasions to lepers and the poor, or to masts.

\*\* A home-made sweet dish made of finely ground wheat, a favourite among the Parsis for all special or festive occasions.

that the number of lepers was 27. A very special visitor that morning was our charming and gracious Rani\* on her first visit to Meherazad, and we were as happy to have her with us as she was to be with her Beloved Baba. Don and Alan too had arrived that morning, and Don and Jal kept their movie cameras busy capturing memorable shots of Baba with the lepers whom He referred to as beautiful birds in the ugliest of cages. Watching these ostracised children of God receiving God's compassionate touch and blessing of love, one can only do so through misty eyes. And watching, one cannot help wondering at the hidden magnitude of this blessing bestowed, so far beyond our mind's interpretation and comprehension. Perhaps that is why He does not explain to us, for in the ways of the Master's working we are not only children, we are Helen Kellers at the age of 4. My saying this makes me recall Baba's discourse with the mandali one morning when He quoted the Prophet Mohammed saying, "You cannot see God because you are blind, deaf and dumb (to Truth);" and the Perfect Master Bayazid who told his followers, "You cannot attain God unless you are blind, deaf and dumb (to illusion)."

Another Andhra Baba-lovers' effort crowned with success is the publishing of THE WAYFARERS in Telugu, appearing in installments in a weekly newspaper of Andhra. And I would like to make special mention of a beautiful little Baba-book in German called LIEBE UND WEISHEIT (Love and Wisdom), just printed by Hilde Halpern, a German-born American Baba-lover who longed to spread Baba's message in Germany and other parts of the Continent, and whose patience and labour of love has been rewarded. The book contains a selection of Baba's discourses and messages, together with a biographical sketch. She writes, "It was my goal since I started the happy work on Baba's book to have His discourses made available to a large circle of German readers. This seems now to be achieved." On receiving the first air-mailed copy, Baba cabled her, "I bless your effort to spread my Love and Wisdom in your mother tongue."

I must not fail to mention the passing away of an old and dear Meherazadian during the Beloved's recent seclusion: watch-dog Gulu (alias Bhooty) whom Baba had brought as a pup from the Himalayas during one of His trips in that mountainous region. This courageous Tibetan mastiff was Kaka's sole companion during our long absences from Meherazad, and she was intensely devoted to Baba. Her grave is marked by a mango sapling planted in her memory, and the first handful of earth was poured on her remains by her divine and human Lord and Master, Baba. A truly lucky dog!

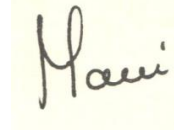
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\* The Maharani of Baroda, whose mansion in Poona ("Guruprasad") she leaves vacant for Baba's use whenever He may wish, and which no doubt Baba will grace with His presence again this summer.

The next family-letter will no doubt come from Poona where we expect to be from the middle of March, avoiding the usual severe summer of Ahmednagar.\* Once again the verandah of Guruprasad will know the touch of the Master's footsteps as He will walk up and down the length of it, and the Meherazad garden will patiently wait till he returns to walk among its trees and flowers in daily blessing ....

With Beloved Baba's Love to you each and all His dear children,

very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Maui', is written on a rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the text 'very lovingly,'.

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\* However, please note that the postal address will continue to be our usual Ahmednagar, one. And, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you all dear ones to please accompany your cables (sent to Baba or us) with a REPLY-PAID cable form. This is much more preferable to your sending a check later to cover the expense of our cable. And, should the need not arise for our sending a cable in reply, your reply-paid form will NOT be wasted; in fact it will be very helpful for sending a cable to you or to anyone else in your country should Baba at any time wish to do so,

Also note that the cable address is just "MEHERBABA AHMEDNAGAR (INDIA)" - and if the cable is to one of us, then the name plus CARE MEHERBABA AHMEDNAGAR (INDIA).

# *thirty-three/*

Meherazad, 12th March 1960

Dearest Family,

It seems but such a short time ago that we were hauling out winter clothing from the bottom of our trunks. And now we are putting them by with equal vigour, for the seemingly endless packing up and putting by it involves; yet hardly sorry to escape Ahmednagar's broiling months of April and May. There is a soft cool breeze playing which makes the Pippal tree by Kaka's kitchen rustle its leaves in that manner individual to the Pippal — with each dangling leaf quivering independently by itself and clapping against the other, so that the result is a shimmering mass of leaves and the sound as of gentle applause.

Last year the Hindu religious anniversary of Mahashivratri (which means 'the great Night of worship of the Lord Shiva', and which is also a national holiday) happened to be on the 7th of March. This year Mahashivratri was on the 25th of February: a united day of worship — for millions of Hindus in honour of Lord Shiva, and for thousands of Baba-lovers in rejoicing and thanksgiving for the 66th Birthday of their Lord and Beloved, BABA.

The 25th of February, or G-Day\* as Eruch named it, was observed on a magnificent scale this year. God's Baba-birth on earth was not just remembered in the silence of His lovers' hearts, but "proclaimed from the rooftops" as it were — with every Baba-abode (or centre) across the length and breadth of India ringing out His message for the many that would hear, for those that would listen and for the ones that would heed.

In some places it was observed for a day or two, in other places for a week, and in still others the programs continued for over two weeks. Each Meher Centre\*\* issued printed invitations and programs for any and all to participate regardless of caste creed or religion; sometimes also announcing it in the papers, or going from house to house to infuse the beauty of His Name in their homes, that it might awaken their hearts to the Reality of His Being. In Vijaywada Baba's picture looked down from huge posters on to the streets full of hurrying humanity, while in Calcutta His profile looked up from little booklets containing His messages, printed for the occasion and distributed free. In many places such and other Baba-literature was distributed, while in Masulipatam each who attended was given a beautifully enlarged colour print of Baba.

Though the programs varied to suit the preference and temperament of Baba-lovers of different places, they had an unvarying unity in the main theme of expression, reflecting Baba's three aspects: Compassion which His very name depicts, Love which is His sole commandment, and the spirit of Joyousness which

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\* God's day, or Guru day, or Grand day.

\*\* Headquarters or meeting-place for a Baba-group gathering. It may either be a Baba-lover's home, or a spacious room or place kept reserved for the purpose (and which in many cases has been blessed by Baba's physical presence during one of His visits).

His message (of indivisible eternal Existence) conveys. 'Poor feeding' was a main item of the program in a number of places, and thousands of poor and disabled were given food; while in other parts orphans or poor children were given clothing and sweets. There was mass repetition of Baba's Name, reading of passages from His books and discourses, and the recitation of His Prayers (Parvardigar prayer, and the prayer of Repentance). Baba-lovers spoke to large gatherings on Baba's Life and Message, or (as in Andhra) enacted it in the form of a ballad-play — "Burra-katha", or great recitation, as it is called. There was of course always the Arti and pooja and the distribution of 'prasad' in His love. In Indore, students of a school for the Blind each received a new shirt as Baba's prasad, and the Delhi program included presenting of balloons to the youngsters. There was the unfurling of the seven-coloured Baba-flag, and the showing of a Baba-film where possible (both for the first time in Pakistan). There was kavvali and other singing, sometimes by well-known singers as in Bombay, Andhra and Karachi, and musical recitals on a variety of instruments by children and grownups. Ahmednagar center held a "Mushaira" (a symposium of poets), the Urdu and Persian compositions being in honour and praise of Baba. In various places state ministers, among others, attended the function. While in Calcutta the morning program was presided over by the mayor of the city, in Bombay it was a once governor of U.P., and presiding for Karachi's program was ex-mayor of the place. In Kovvur the Baba-lovers concerned chose this Day for the laying of the foundation of the 'temple' that is soon to hold a life-size bronze statue of BABA, and Baba's message to them was "I was with you when you laid the foundation stone of your temple of love."

Often schoolchildren participated. In the small town of Pathardi 2000 boys and girls were given dates as Baba's prasad, while a number of the boys and girls were presented with a full set of clothing. The headmaster of the Higher Secondary School at Bhimvaram held a Birthday meeting with the Principal, masters and professors of the school. He writes, "I gave an account of Baba's life and His message, and explained to them the need to surrender to the Master when the Incarnation is still in this Mortal frame." He adds, "Baba is our Rama, Krishna and Siva, and everything; nothing else is, and we are blessed."

A number of reports, pouring in from all corners of India, told of processions as part of their Birthday program. It is impossible for me to make mention of them all, or give the varied details of any of the reports, but I would like to give an outline of one of the outstanding processions they had, in Andhra (in the south of India). The following is of the town of Masulipatam.

India is a land whose people make no secret of their joys and woes. Unable to contain within doors the spirit of their festivals of worship, they pour it out into the streets for all to share — in gay informal processions often accompanied with the beating of drums, music, singing and dancing, at all hours of the day and night.

Heralding the hour of His Birth, 5:00 a.m., the women section of the Meher Mandali rode out in the procession at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 25th, along the streets of Masulipatam, singing Baba-bhajans to the accompaniment of a pipe band, and at intervals filling the air with MEHER BABA KI JAI. MAY OUR LORD AVATAR BABA BLESS YOU ALL. Inmates of the houses (no doubt asleep at this hour) would hasten out to see what it was all about, and quite a number joined the procession. Such fortunate 'rude awakening', such happy disturbance!

The men had an even earlier program, starting at 2 a.m. with the stars and a cool wind for company, relaying Baba-bhajans thru mikes from a decorated bullock cart, as (to quote from a letter) "harbinger to flash the news that the holiest of holy events falls on that day — covering almost all the main roads, and awakening the town to a new consciousness; returning at 4:30 to the Meher Mandal."

Their evening procession was the grandest imaginable – with BABA (i.e. large pictures of Him) carried on a splendidly decorated 'chariot', throughout the town. But here too I can do no better than quote from a letter received:

"The beautifully painted temple Chariot came, and Baba's photos placed therein, with His seven-colored flags waving on either side. Along with a band, two sannayi\* sets, Kolatam in dramatic costumes, fire works, and mikes fitted in decorated bullock carts with Bhajan parties riding inside, it made the procession more than a furlong long. What a grand procession it was! How many thousands participated in it! It started at about 6:30 p.m., on 25th and returned by about 2 a.m. on 26th, having covered all the important routes (stopping now and then for the singing of Baba's ARTI, and the traditional breaking of coconuts). We felt proud that Baba gave us this opportunity of service to so many all over the town. By the time the procession returned, some tens of thousands must have paid their homage to Baba. When it touched Murty's house, Balagopala Bhaskararaju and his party were singing Burr-katha on Baba's life and His message. When our procession with thousands of people accompanying it halted at the place, where there was already a gathering of thousands hearing the Burrakatha, it was a sight for the gods to see! The whole atmosphere resounded with cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!"

And what about BABA, the Object of this expression of love, the Pivot round whom revolve the lives of His lovers in the East and West, how did He spend this 25th day of February in the company of His few men and women disciples staying with Him at Meherazad? At the Hour, 5 a.m., He was sitting at the table we had gaily decked for the occasion, looking radiant in a new pink coat and a garland of fragrant fresh flowers that Mehera had placed round His neck, as we sang Happy Birthday in English and Gujerati. Before Him was piled, in the form of cables, telegrams and fascinating variety of greeting cards, the love of many Baba-hearts in the West and East; while others had sent it silently. Baba had each cable and telegram read out, and looked at every card. There was also a stack of printed Birthday programs from the Groups in India and Pakistan, to whom Baba gave the following message, and told me to send it for you all His dear ones in the family-letter:

"THE TRUE LOVER IS BORN ONLY AT THAT MOMENT WHEN HE DIES FOR GOD".

As on joyous occasions there was the favourite sweet dish for breakfast, we hung strings of fresh flowers across the doorways, and drew patterns in white

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\* instrument resembling clarinet.

Note: A similar procession in Srirangapatnam (a place of popular pilgrimage in the South) had fourteen bullocks drawing the Baba-carriage through the town ...

and colored chalk powder on the floor in front of the doorsteps. Meherdas, one of the mandali, expressed Birthday greetings from the men in a novel form — arranging a little act with the co-operation of some of the mandali and most of the staff. Dressed up in costumes cleverly made from odds and ends, they represented Shiva and the heavenly contingent who had come down from Heaven to pay homage to BABA on this G-Day. Standing beside a beautiful little paper temple having the symbols of the four religions in each corner (into the making of which they had poured many hours drawn from their fully busy days), they sang their song of devotion.

But all this was our morning program; Baba's began at about 8 a.m. when we saw the sun shining in the scrubbed eager faces of sixty schoolboys from the neighbour-village of Pippalgaon, standing in queues to receive prasad from Baba as He bowed down to each of them. These children (ranging from about 5 to 12 years of age) in clothes that were neat but often in holes, walked home proudly hugging to their chests the new pair of shorts and shirt each had received from Baba, and which moreover had been sewn to order to fit individually!

Meherdas and co. also put up a variety of performances in the afternoon for our Beloved's relaxation which He much enjoyed, praising each one for his effort and achievement. Baba was hugely delighted when Kaka (playing an important role) quite unperturbed solemnly bent to pick up his false moustache that had fallen to the floor in the midst of a dramatic little speech, and just as solemnly and unhurriedly restoring it to its rightful place, though a little off-centre. Such moments bring back Baba's words, "Long long ago I lost my self and became God, but thank God I didn't lose my sense of humour."

I meant to write this 33rd family-letter from Poona, but am glad it has been possible to do it sooner. It has turned out to be a Birthday letter entirely, but though so lengthy I'm sorry it hasn't been able to accommodate more of the details or even the highlights of the functions at all the places. I find there are places I have failed even to mention, such as Poona, Nagpur, Bhopal, Jubbulpore, Meerut, Dehra Dun, Agra, Hamirpur, Navsari, and many others. I mustn't forget to add the Birthday message from Baba in response to His Bombay Group's request for one to read out to the gathering. Baba sent the following:

"When one remains fully and completely resigned to the Divine Will of God, all service, sacrifice, solitude, seeking, and surrenderance, merely symbolize one's love for God."

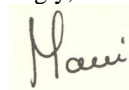
But I would like to end the letter with the wordings of a telegram Baba sent, on the 25th of February, to Anil Sarkar — a Baba-lover in Calcutta who had an accident and broke his leg. Baba said:

LET ANIL SARKAR REJOICE IN THE THOUGHT THAT HE IS SHARING A BIT IN MY INFINITE SUFFERING FOR WHICH I AM BORN TODAY AND FOR EVER AND EVER —

Meher Baba.

Baba has said "My Centre is in the heart of my lover."  
With BABA'S LOVE to His each and every centre in the West,

most lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meheri', written in black ink on a light-colored rectangular background.

P.S. I want to express deep appreciation for the reply-paid forms that accompanied your Birthday greetings and other cables, although no reply was inferred.

# *thirty-four/*

Guruprasad, 29th April, 1960

Dear Family,

Greetings to you from Guruprasad, which has reawakened to throbbing life after its winter sleep of Baba's absence. It is a soft summer's morning and the mauvish patch of cloud visible thru the door makes a fitting canvas for the brilliant red bunches of bougainvilia, the flowering plant that seems not only to defy the Indian sun but to thrive on it. Above the motley of household sounds familiar in the pantry where I'm typing — clatter of dishes, persistent chirrup of sparrows, the musical 'plot' of water dripping from the cooling earthenware chatty — can be heard the strains of a song in Hindi. Tracing it to the hall in the East wing of the house where Baba sits with the Mandali each day, I discover it is one of the Baba-lovers from the north who has come from over a thousand miles to sit once again at Baba's feet, expressing his love in a song he has composed for the Beloved.

The hours from 9 to 11 each morning are devoted to the devoted ones coming from 'out-stations', i.e. from places other than Poona and Bombay. And so it is a daily familiar sight to see groups of men, women and children sitting by the gate, having arrived impatiently early but happy to patiently wait for the signal to come in to Baba. These Baba-pilgrims wend their way from all parts and distances, their focus being their beloved Guru at Guruprasad. Now it is a batch from Calcutta (Bengal), about fifty strong including toddlers and babes in arms; and a group from Jubbulpore (Central India) and from Hamirpur in the north where Baba's name is a perennial prayer in many a heart and home. It includes a bride and groom to whom the reality of His darshan had been a cherished dream, and who have used their hard-earned savings to come to Baba for the honeymoon stay. Baba told us He was touched by the simplicity of their hearts filled with His Love. He asked them how long they intended to stay in Poona, and they replied simply "As long as our last penny lasts." At times one can make a long journey without knowing the actual goal one is destined for. This is what happened in the case of a pundit of Badrinarayan Temple in the Himalayas, who came with his wife and son to Bombay to obtain the best medical treatment for his boy who has polio. Stopping at the Dharmashala (Inn) by the Poona Station, he met some Baba-lovers from Hamirpur who were putting up at that Inn during their stay in Poona.\* Hearing Baba's Name he felt drawn and asked them who He was. "The Avatar of the Age", they told him. He wanted to hear more and more about Him, and begged to accompany them during 'Guruprasad time' next morning. When he took Baba's darshan Baba said, "I am in everyone and in everything. I am everywhere and everything, For years you have worshipped Me in the Badrinarayan Temple — worshipping the image of stone. Today you are blessed to have the opportunity of My darshan in this physical form." The pundit seemed deeply touched, and left with Baba in his heart and a number of Baba-books and photos in his trunk. Incidentally, later while out in the crowded area of the city, his wad of currency notes (his entire travelling store of money) was stolen by a pickpocket, leaving him desperately stranded. Baba-lovers helped him thru his embarrassing predicament, financially and otherwise...

The "locals" (i.e. those from Poona and Bombay) have their day too. Every other Sunday the majestic capacity of Guruprasad is tested and found wanting in accommodating the thousands that file in to place their heads on Baba's feet and

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\* All those who come from any distance, make their own independent arrangements during their Darshan stay in Poona, which is anything from a couple of days to a couple of months according to their means and circumstances.



receive His blessings of Love and prasad. As usual the children were seldom deprived of this opportunity, and it never failed to fascinate us to see a babe-in-arm placed at (or even on) His feet for its share of the darshan — sometimes a mother placing the baby on Baba's lap so she could untangle the skein in her garland of fresh flowers to be placed round His neck and receive His embrace unencumbered by her fair burden. Baba, the universal Father and Mother, seemed to enjoy thus finding Himself Baby-sitter of the moment, and His smile would pour great tenderness on these tiny darshaners. Sunday the 17th was indeed a full morning's program that went off surprisingly well despite the surge of darshan seekers. As our dear Maharani (of Baroda), who sat throughout the program with unflickering attention, summed it up, "It was lovely and love-full". One of the happy newcomers of the morning was Doctor Bodh, Zoroastrian high priest, whose interest in Baba developed during his stay in the U.S.A. and took this opportunity of meeting Him. He left expressing his genuine desire to visit Baba again, and Baba too seemed very happy to see him.

As usual at these strenuous occasions, Baba was looking beautifully radiant. I don't think we will ever get used to the wonder of seeing Him give so abundantly of Himself, whatever the state of His health, whatever the consequent strain. But then of course He has come to "give", and perhaps some day we will learn to take what He has come to give, instead of eternally asking of Him that which we think we need and want — and which, sadly, He often gives us until at long last we may be ready to receive the only thing that matters, from the only One who can give.

The next D-day\* is on the 1st of May — it is also a very special day for millions of Indians celebrating the birth of Maharashtra, a unilingual state the Maharashtrians have aspired and struggled for thru the years. The symbol and inspiration of this achievement is Shivaji, the great Maratha warrior and leader of over three centuries ago, whose birthday this year heralds the birth of the State.

During our Poona stay this summer, there were also two other important anniversaries, of special significance to us at Guruprasad: the First Birthday of two baby Baba-lovers at Bindra House, the home of Eruch's deeply devoted family. The part best enjoyed by each birthday-child was the sweet drink and savoury that they sucked from the end of Baba's preferred finger, and Baba was hugely delighted at their puckered up faces when they felt the prick of His moustache on their cheeks where He had implanted a firm kiss.

2nd May, 1960

The Darshan yesterday was as great as the last such D-day, except that despite its being a "working Sunday" (when offices, banks, etc. were declared open half-day to 'actively' inaugurate the birth of Maharashtra) the darshan attendance was bigger than ever. Baba sat thru till long after the announced closing hour so that all who attended could have their turn.

Among today's visiting group were a fair number from Andhra, including the Baba-lover who has had a life-size statue of Baba made in bronze, having inaugurated on 25th February the foundation of the 'temple' that will hold it. One of the party was a happy bearded little fellow who always wears a pink coat and has his boys do the same, because it is Baba's favourite colour. Wedged firmly on his head is a sola topee which he never seems to remove (was never seen without it during his week's stay at Meherabad sahas), the topee having once been worn by Baba during a visit to Andhra. One of his small sons, accompanying

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\* Darshan Day.

him to Poona, looks a delightful replica of Daddy, with his pink bush-shirt and little sola topee which his father and Baba bless with His touch during an earlier visit, He (I mean the father), full of simple-hearted devotion and unconscious wit, contributed more than once to the lighter moments of the morning and surpassed himself at a conversation piece that had Baba and the entire assembly just about doubled up with laughter. At the end of it Baba remarked, "In five minutes he has lessened the weight of my universal burden."

At times during these morning conclaves, when Baba is in the mood for it, a trivial remark or incident will lead to a beautiful discourse from Him. At other times, as at all times, His Presence alone is all-sufficing. To one of the group around Him, hoping for a special word from Baba in regard to a personal Matter concerning her peace of mind, Baba said, "Shut the trap of your mind and end all your worries. Open the trap of your heart and release Love." I'd also like to quote a little anecdote Baba gave the gathering on Easter morning: "Once an inquisitive and doubtful man went to Bayazid (the Perfect Master) and said, 'You being Perfect, ought to know the thoughts of others. What am I thinking of just now?' Bayazid replied, 'You are thinking that which you ought not to have thought of, and asking that which you ought not to have asked. Had you come with an open mind and curbed tongue, you would have received that which you ought to have received, instead of this well-deserved rebuke.'"

This morning's schedule also included Baba's visit to the homes of some of His Poona group, having to climb a flight of steep steps at one of the places; and also to a hospital to visit the wife of one of them who was unable to be at her home to welcome Him. Tomorrow afternoon there will be a Kawwali singing, which is the type of singing Baba truly and most enjoys, being couplets of great sufi poets and lovers of God rendered in song. There have been other musical afternoons too, when well-known artists have offered their time and talents in loving homage to Baba, either in a singing recital or playing Indian instruments. Their reward? Apart from the privilege of Baba enjoying their music, it is usually one of His used handkerchiefs given with His own hands.

There is now also another newly-wed couple come to spend their honeymoon in Poona after having Baba's darshan. They are from Nagpur and the boy's mother, on meeting us, said "We can never know how fortunate we are, for we can never know the extent of Baba's love and compassion which are truly infinite!"

I must not fail to mention the passing away of Pleader\*, an old and beloved disciple of Baba who spent the last few days of his great physical suffering near Him in Meherazad as was his wish, and breathed his last in Meherabad where he had been for years with Baba in the past. Over the garden wall that fences off the mandali's living quarters from ours, we could hear him at all times calling out his Beloved's name, "Baba". Baba had promised him that before leaving the body he would have a glimpse of BABA as He truly is. At Meherabad, a few hours before dying, Pleader asked the disciple who was attending him to put off the light as there was too much brightness. This remark was surprising to say the least, for it was midday, the room was kept cool and dark, and no lights were on when Pleader complained of this 'too bright light'! Later, a few minutes before he died, he turned to his companion and said, "Tell Baba I am eternally grateful to Him."

Baba has said that he who takes His Name when breathing his last, comes to Him regardless of everything. And that therefore one should keep taking His Name at all times, so that it comes naturally also at the last moment. It is obviously natural to one young Baba-lover of Poona who recently emerged unscathed from what might have been a nasty accident. Riding home on his lambretta from the aerodrome where he works, He went over a pothole which caused the sudden

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\* In February, when we were in Meherazad.

jamming of brakes and he found himself flung to the far side of the road with his machine flung in the opposite direction. He cried out Baba's Name at the time; and when next afternoon he recounted to Baba the incident of his miraculous escape, saying it was He who had saved him, Baba said, "Do not attribute the miracle to Me; the miracle was of My Name."

7th May 1960

This news letter has been further delayed to enable me to add the now complete and approved draft of a circular that is being sent out for the information of all concerned. It says:

"Meher Baba will be leaving Guruprasad, Poona, on June 20th to be at Meherazad - Pippalgaon - (Ahmednagar). He directs me to inform all Baba-families and concerned as follows:-

1) From the 10th of June Baba will stop giving Darshan and will NOT be available to visitors, local or otherwise, till the end of 1960.

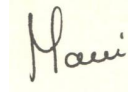
2) From July 1st till the end of the year, Baba will remain completely secluded at Meherazad. During that period of six months, except for those whom He will call expressly for some work, no one should visit Him or express a desire to do so.

3) No one should correspond with Baba till the end of the year. Only in case of emergency, a reply prepaid cable direct to Baba, is permitted.\* However, necessary correspondence other than with Baba, may continue as usual.

4) On this 10th of July, the 35th anniversary of His Silence, Baba wishes all who love and obey Him, and all who would want to do so, to observe complete silence for 24 hours, from 8 p.m. of 9th July to 8 p.m. of 10th July, in accordance with the local time."

With LOVE from the GURU and the Guruprasadians,

ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meher', is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper.

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\* Cable address: "Meherbaba, Ahmednagar, India." If sent to anyone else at Meherazad or Ahmednagar, then please put the name of the person plus "c/o Meherbaba Ahmednagar India"

# *thirty-five/*

Meherazad, 10th July, 1960.

Dear Family,

"Drown all sound in My SILENCE to hearken MY WORD of words."

Baba gave this message in response to Baba-lovers in Calcutta asking for some words from Him for a little booklet they were printing for the occasion of His Birthday. And what more appropriate than that I should begin this day's letter with this same timeless message from Baba, to mark the 35th anniversary of His Silence.

I remember Baba once saying, years ago when someone asked Him why He did not speak, that the question should have rather been why He did not remain silent, for in reality He spoke continually — it was just that we had not yet tuned our heart's ears to be able to hear Him. Only when we still the ceaseless babbling of our mind can we hear Him in the silence of our heart.

You have of course switched over the focus of your thoughts and heart to Meherazad, where the Beloved has begun His Seclusion from 1st July. Before entering this momentous phase of His work, Baba gave a message for His lovers in the East and West, a copy of which comes to you along with this letter.

Just as one fully realizes the extent of a noise only after it has suddenly stopped, the return to secluded Meherazad in the sudden wake of the intensively active months in Poona, made us more fully realize the extent to which Baba had unsparingly given of Himself during the stay in Guruprasad this summer. 5th June was the 'meridian' for the feasters of His darshan, when altogether (as the local newspaper reported) over 10,000 people availed themselves of the opportunity — including of course the usual sprinkling of those who had come out of plain curiosity. On that concluding Darshan Day, there were gathered at the feet of the Beloved not less than 800 lovers of Baba from 'outstations' alone (i.e. apart from those in Poona and Bombay), having started from different points on the Indian map, as well as some places outside of India, to converge at the common goal of their journey of love. That day, Guruprasad seemed just about ready to burst at the seams.

Baba gave them His beloved company without stint, day after following day, throughout the mornings and afternoons. He saw them en masse, in groups, at times individually. He sat through the tiring programs, showering the radiance of His Love on these His children whose prayer was that they should have His grace to love Him as He should be loved. Among the group of women from Hamirpur were many who had sold their silver and gold bracelets and other ornaments\* in order to make this journey possible. The lovers from Hamirpur, coming as they did in large numbers, made accommodation for their stay in school buildings that were vacant during the summer holidays; while many coming in equally large numbers from Andhra, travelled in special railway carriages they had reserved for some days, and in which they camped during their stay in Poona. As Eruch wrote in one of his letters, it was a sight to see these carriages stabled at the Poona Railway Station, with boards of "Jai Avatar Meher Baba" and pictures of Baba outside and inside the carriages.

Guruprasad during those days was brimful with human-beings with a single purpose, though people of variegated religions, professions, castes, customs

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\* Apart from a necessary adornment, it usually also serves as the Indian woman's "saving bank".

and languages. We were made conscious of this superficial diversity covering the inward uniformity, whenever Baba gave a message or a discourse. For, as soon as Eruch would relay it over the mike in English, some others from different regions of India would consecutively follow it up with translations in various regional languages for the benefit of those not conversant with English.

There were also more visits to the homes of His group in Poona, and during some of these one of the Guruprasadians accompanying Baba was a near and dear Baba-lover from California, Lud Dimpfl, who was permitted a four days' stay with Him enroute (or rather off-route to be more correct) to Iran where he is transferred by his Company. He was immediately merged in Baba's sahavas — seeing Baba at work and in relaxation, Baba with the multitude and with the intimate few, sharing the different endearing facets reflected by Baba's mood of the moment. In short, being just one of the mandali, except that he carried around an 'I must surely be dreaming' look on his happy face. Baba seemed just as happy to have Lud with Him.

An equally lucky one was dear Irwin Luck — an American boy who had never met Baba before, but who was compelled by the urge of his love and longing to make the trip after obtaining permission. He did not wish to return home, but in obedience to Baba's wish did so after a few days with Him. The cable Irwin sent home to his dad after meeting Baba, said "Baba is all and more than what I said He was. Love to you and Mom."

We had not ceased wondering how Baba's body kept up under the infinite strain of those long busy days; though we knew Baba could do it, being BABA. This last remark makes me want to tell you of a delightful incident that occurred one afternoon. A devotee (who is also a tailor) came to one of the darshans, and very much wanted to make for Him a pink coat — which he did, and sent to Baba. Baba tried it on and found it was much too big to say the least — the sleeves were down to His finger-tips, shoulders half way to the elbows, and the back draping like a cape. Baba came out to show it to the mandali, with a delighted smile and a 'I can't believe it' look in His twinkling God-eyes. Later I told Francis that perhaps it was as the tailor really saw Baba — for, I had heard of a number of people who at first sight had the impression that Baba is much bigger than He is. I meant of course in physique. However, Francis quipped, "But that's exactly it, Baba IS much bigger than He is!"

I mustn't fail to mention Baba's two "Poor Programs" in the month of June — on the 19th in Poona while we were at Guruprasad, and on the 26th in Ahmednagar after our return; and as we had witnessed the former, I will try to describe it. At this Poona program, 160 poor people, both men and women, each received Rs. 5 from Baba's hand,† after He had placed His head on the feet of each one. They had been selected in advance (from among the poor working class) by Baba's men, and given an admittance card that he or she had to present before being allowed to approach Baba for the tangible blessing of money and the intangible. blessing of Love. Baba sat in a chair before an old table with improvised steps that served as a 'platform'. Each one climbed on to this, and stood before Baba for Him to bow down, while the recipient was strictly instructed not to express thanks or reverence by word or gesture.\*\* To have seen Baba place His forehead on these unshod, dusty, (and often gnarled and horny) pairs of feet, is not only a deeply moving emotion of the moment, but a never to be forgotten experience.

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† 161st one was the head of a middle-class family in dire need, and received Rs. 200/

\*\* As a general rule, at Baba's express wish, no garlanding or darshan of Baba is allowed for the rest of the day following a Poor Program.

The Ahmednagar program was for 150 very poor people, mostly lepers (many of them in a highly advanced state of malignancy), each receiving Rs.5 and a piece of cloth from Baba after He had washed their feet with loving care and touched their feet with His forehead. Eruch tells us this program took nearly two hours, and the exertion left Baba drenched in perspiration as well as from the water that had splashed on Him when washing the lepers' feet with His beautiful bare hands. While the prasad of money is an unfailingly welcome relief, in the case of the lepers it seemed overshadowed by their touching incredulity and happiness at Baba's expression of Love for them, these usually shunned and 'untouchable' children of God.

And in conclusion, I must not fail to include some of Baba's messages given during this stay at Guruprasad,

When a Zoroastrian child is still under twelve or so, he is confirmed (as is similarly done in the Christian religion). This ceremony is called Navjot, and is performed by the priest who puts on the child the traditional white garment called 'sadra' and affixes the sacred thread called 'kasti' round its waist.

At the ardent wish of the parents, the three adorable and adoring young sons of Jimmy and Roda Mistry, devoted Baba-lovers of Bombay, were 'confirmed' in Baba's love, simply by Baba giving them with His own hands the 'sadra and kasti' for them to wear.' This was done on the morning of 16th May, in the hall of Guruprasad thronged with Baba groups from Poona and Bombay, after which Eruch read out the message of the day given by Baba for the occasion:

"May Ahuramazd, Zoroaster, Meher Baba, free you from the superficial binding of Shariyat (rites and rituals), and help you to lead a life of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, and bestow on you the grace of loving Baba. I have given you this emblem of superficial binding to make you free from this binding, and give you the real binding of Love."

The following was Baba's message given on His visit to the Hindu Women's Rescue Home, at the invitation of the head of the Society, in Poona:

"Love and understanding never condemn, but seek to help and encourage. Men and women have departed from the custom and laws of Truth and goodness, but God never condemns us or turns us from His door; so we should not condemn even those who condemn us. I bless you to try to understand and love those who are trying to help you to take your place in God's Work through serving His humanity."

To Father Anthony, principal of St. Catherine of Siena School in Bombay, who has dedicated his service to the cause of destitute and abandoned children, Baba said:

"By serving the abandoned you are serving Jesus the Christ because He too was abandoned by all, even by His own apostles. The emblem of abandonment

is the Cross. Hence, to serve the abandoned is to serve the Christ — and I am He, undoubtedly."

As the Father beamingly expressed his intention of printing in his Magazine this spontaneously given message from Baba, Baba made him repeat the message. This the Father did, except for the last line — at which Baba reminded him that he had left out the most significant part, and Baba repeated, "I am He, undoubtedly."

Another message of the day, given by Baba on 6th June, said:

"It is better to deny God than to defy God.

Sometimes our weakness is considered as strength, and we take delight in this borrowed greatness.

"To profess to be a lover of God and then to be dishonest to God, to the world and to himself, is unparalleled hypocrisy.

"Difficulties give us the opportunity to prove our greatness by overcoming them.

"A child's trust in its Mother is complete, because it leaves all its worries to her. She has to take care of it. So if we trust God and let Him worry for us, we live contented and happy.

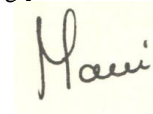
"When the leader of a Nation puts complete trust in God, God makes him the instrument to guide the nation rightly.

"We should think well of those who think ill of us."\*

I had hoped this would be a long letter and am glad it is, for we are not permitted to send out news pertaining to Baba's work (or health) to anyone in the East or West during this period of His Seclusion. Although the fam-letter will be coming to you in between (for no doubt there will be enough previous material to draw from) the silence will be longer than usual. But it will only be a silence of words, for though you have not 'news' you have HIM with you wherever you are.

"I am not contained in earth or heaven; I am contained  
in the believer's heart." (Rumi).

With love to Baba in each of your hearts,  
and LOVE to you from BABA in Seclusion,  
ever lovingly,



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\* a copy of this entire message was given to Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, (President of the All-India Congress Committee) who had come to see Baba on that day and received His embrace of love.

# *thirty-six/*

Meherazad, 15th September, 1960.

Dear Family,

Here comes the news-letter that cannot give news. We're in the middle of Baba's seclusion, and the ban on reporting any aspect of His work during this period continues. So, I feel somewhat like the person whose shop is picketed — having the goods that cannot be delivered; even though whatever I would have reported would only cover the outer crust of the substance of His work. As Dr. Donkin says (in the Wayfarers) in regard to Baba's work, "Like an iceberg, we see only the eighth that stands above the surface of the ocean; and the submerged seven-eighths, the real mass of the thing, is hidden from our eyes."

On the other hand, the silence of Seclusion will afford space for those tidbits that couldn't manage to elbow their way into previous letters, and which were tucked away in memory's attic for future use.

I'd like to begin with a discourse that Baba gave to a renowned Indian film director who came for Baba's darshan at Guruprasad this year, along with an equally well-known playwright. The man expressed his love for spirituality and how it had always inspired him in his work and aspirations. Baba said:

"You are convinced of God's existence. God exists; therefore God is to be sought, seen, realized. Do not search for God outside of you. God can only be found within you, for His only abode is the heart. But you have filled the abode with millions of strangers and He cannot enter, for God is shy of strangers. So unless you strip your abode of the millions of strangers you have filled it with, you cannot find God.

"What are these strangers? They are your age-old desires — your millions of wants. These are strangers to God, for incompleteness in the form of wanting is fundamentally foreign to God who is All-Sufficient and wanting in nothing — His omniscience and omnipotence will not brook it. Honesty in your dealings will clean your heart of strangers. So push the tenants out of your abode that is His and you will see Him, find Him and realize Him."

The next item to be dusted and unwrapped from the treasure chest in the attic is a couple of telegraphic messages from the Beloved. One was sent to a Baba-lover in Andhra who, undergoing an operation, wired "condition serious". Baba replied:

"NOTHING CAN EVER BE SERIOUS EXCEPT LACK OF LOVE FOR ME  
AND THAT YOU HAVE IN ABUNDANCE."

In reply to a telegram from the wife of a Baba-lover in Calcutta whose husband had septicemia, saying that in the agony of his physical pain he was abusing Baba for not relieving him of it, Baba said:

"ABUSE FROM MY LOVERS IS SWEETER THAN PRAISE FROM  
MY HYPOCRITICAL ADMIRERS."



Someone who wanted Baba's blessing for a job, reminded Him, "Baba, you say you are the Slave of your lovers. Well then, you must give me your blessing that I get this job." Baba smilingly retorted, "I am not your Slave. I am the Slave of your LOVE. Remember that."

We have an instance of this in a report received from Hamirpur, and account of which incident appears in their monthly Hindi Journal devoted to Baba, called "MEHER PUKAR". It speaks of the horrible experience of a Baba-lover in that district, and the call of her heart that the Beloved answered. I give a translation of the account in English:

"Baburam Vyas, a schoolmaster and resident of the small village of Muskara (in North India) is a Baba lover and worker. His 55 year old mother, Jagranidevi, also loves Baba devotedly. Early in the morning of 4th May (1960) Jagranidevi went out to cut and fetch grass for her goats and cattle. While returning with a huge bundle of it on her head, she encountered a man of about 30, with a stout stick in his hand, who approached her and asked her if she knew him. She replied 'No son, I don't know you'. Whereupon he bent down and catching hold of her ankles yanked her off her feet. The woman fell on her face and broke two of her teeth. She sat up and berated him for his cowardly attack. He commanded her to remove and give him the gold and silver ornaments from her person. She said she would not give him one grain of her gold or silver. At which he caught her by the legs and dragged her towards a nullah (dry river bed) a short distance away. Realizing her life to be in danger, she cried out, 'Baba! Beloved Baba! Meher Baba, save me! If my love is sincere, and you are verily God Incarnate, save me!' The man laughed, 'You cry in vain. There is not any 'Baba' here, or anyone else to help you. I shall kill you and remove your ornaments and leave you in the nullah, and no one will know.'

When they reached the nullah — she still shouting 'BABA' at the top of her lungs and from the bottom of her heart — he raised his stick for the onslaught when, at that exact moment three cows, seemingly from nowhere, appeared on the scene at a quick trot; and the russet coloured one, mooing fiercely, rushed at the man and attacked him with her horns throwing him to the ground. He got up, and defending himself lashed cruelly at the animal. Jagrani took this opportunity to rise and run, but her assailant caught up with her and dragged her back to the nullah. Again the cow charged at the man, and however much he lashed out at it, the animal kept dodging and attacking with great energy and fury, mooing loudly the while. In the meantime the two white cows stood on either side of the nullah as guards, protecting the woman and helping their 'red' companion by butting in at the right moment. The woman was by this time too exhausted and frightened to do anything except keep repeating Baba's Name. The fight was at its height, when a bullock cart was heard rumbling towards them, on the path to the village. At this the thug gave up, and fled for his life. Help was given promptly and the people of the village took Jagrani home, the three cows accompanying the group for about two furlongs. Next day the villagers went in search of the thug, helped in the right direction by the marks of his footprints; he was finally caught and given into custody."

Baba has said that we should not attribute such miracles to Him; that it is one's own love and faith that performs the miracle. Baba's comment on hearing the above was "God is omnipresent, and the one who calls out sincerely to Him never fails to be heard and to receive His help."

The Beloved's silence is felt amplified with the added silence of His outward activities. Burdened as He obviously is with the pressing load of His work in Seclusion, it is good to see Him 'take it easy' in the physical sense at least, and we are afforded more of His company than ever. With the absence of programs and the ban on visitors, Meherazad days seem purringly tranquil despite each one's eternal race with time to get the thousand daily nothings done in time. The dry spell of Ahmednagar is at last broken and the skies have opened out their heart in blissful showers. The morning after the first torrent, every bush and tree had that drunk dazed look of having feasted too well after a long long fast. Soon it will be picnic time for the cattle who have not seen a green blade of grass for many months, and once again we will see them grazing on Baba-Hill — and once more the croaking of frogs plays its part in the orchestra of familiar Meherazad melodies. Although the rains were not in time to save the peanut crop, it will save the villagers from the stark famine they feared was imminent, and which has been tragically rampant in other parts of India owing to too much rain and consequent floods.

Among the Baba-books printed this year is "Divya Leela" (Divine-Game), a play in Hindi written by Bhau, one of the mandali residing with Baba. We found it beautiful reading because of the utter simplicity of its presentation and language; a book particularly suited for the 'newcomer' into Baba's family, or one who does not know or understand about Baba. However, forestalling the thought a number of you will have on reading this letter, let me add that it would not make a satisfactory translation into English because of its colloquial phrases and its characterization of Indian Life and thought.

Another intriguing piece of work is in Marathi, by Maisaheb — the dowager Rani of Kurundwad — a sweet old lady who adores Baba and whose constant regret is that she did not know Baba years before. This little booklet is an introduction and biography of Baba for the children, woven into a half hour's story-telling by Gran when the children clamour for a story while gathered in the garden under the moonlight. In fact it is called "By Moonlight."

We are about half way across the span of the present Seclusion, and our focus is not so much on the Seclusion itself as on what lies just beyond the span. There are a number whose attention is focussed on the breaking of Baba's Silence that He has said He would do this year.

On the other hand, those who are and have been with Baba, have not felt He has been silent and are therefore not 'craning their necks' to see the breaking of His silence — they have HIM; they hear His silence speak in their hearts and their lives unceasingly. But those who have only of His silence, eagerly await what the breaking of it will reveal. They are the believers-of-His-Silence, and time and again they remind the believers-of-Baba about His silence.

And there are still others who are concerned wholly and solely about His promise to break His silence — concerned that He should be breaking His promise instead of His Silence! And finally there are those selfish fish-in-the-shell who pray that Baba will once again and yet again postpone the day, for although it will herald the dawn of Universal Unity and Harmony, it will be at no little cost to His beloved person.

And of course He will break it just when the moment is right.

As Pharaoh said, some 1,300 years before Christ (in reference to Moses), "One day, in His own good time, HE will speak The Word that cannot be misunderstood."

Baba said, "The one WORD full of meaning has produced innumerable meaningless words, and when I utter that WORD all words will have meaning."

Some seem to feel in regard to His Silence-promises, that He has to break His word many a time before He breaks His Silence to Utter the WORD. And there are some who wonder if Baba will ever break His Silence after all. To this Baba has said, "Of course, I will break my Silence. Otherwise, why would I have observed it?"

What inspired me to touch on this subject is the criticism someone expressed in one of the Gujarati newspapers about Baba continually putting off the day of breaking His Silence. I loved the remark Eruch made in his letter to the Baba-worker in Bombay who had sent him the clipping:

"The delay that we feel to be made by Baba in carrying out His word is but the reflection of the delay within us in our preparedness to accept His WORD of words. This delay on His part therefore is nothing but the exercising of the Avatar's Infinite Compassion." He then added in a lighter vein,

"You may tell Mr. B.... that Baba may be putting off the day of breaking His Silence in order to put off those people who might believe in Him for merely being true to words rather than for being the One who will give The Word. Mr. B.... and Co. would be believing in Baba because of it, while we believe in Baba in spite of it."

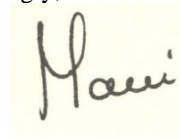
Good gracious, for a letter with "no news", this has turned out to be quite a long one as measured by the typewriter! Fearing there wouldn't be enough material to begin with, I now find myself putting back some of the items in the 'attic' for next time — except this little piece I'd like to end the letter with, and which as a matter of fact comes from Eruch's diary:

"THE ONLY PLACE THAT CAN HOLD ME IS THE HEART.  
KEEP ME CLOSE WITH YOU - I AM ALWAYS THERE."

- MEHER BABA

This wings to you each of BABA's beloved brood, much love from the heart and hearth of Meherazad,

ever lovingly,



# *thirty-seven/*

Meherazad, 10th November, 1960.

Dear Family,

The question is not whether to write or not to write. 'What to write', that is once again the question. Besides, to be frank I haven't the courage to compete with my last family-letter that many have praised as "one of the best". Happily, that isn't necessary. This time it is "the best" that comes to each of you dear ones direct from beloved Baba, in the form of His Message and Wish.\* And so, trailing behind the light of His Message to you, whatever little I can say (or whether I say it) will matter little ...

The injunction of fasting as expressed in His Wish will gladden the hearts of many — some, because they like the idea of fasting for health; others for the discipline being beneficial towards 'spiritual progress'; and still a few others because it would benefit the figure, but they hadn't the will to impose it on themselves. And, by far the most of us will be happy to fast simply because it is Baba's Wish.

These last are the true recipients, for to us who have the good fortune to follow Baba it is not the actual fasting that counts but simply our unquestioning obedience. To a follower who had some time ago undertaken fasting on his own, Eruch had written: "Baba says that it is good to fast the belly and silence the mouth for physical fitness and discipline in life. But this is utterly insignificant when one has determined to fast and silence the mind itself, by implicitly obeying the dictates of a Sadguru — the Perfect Master."

Doing something on one's own is never the same as doing that same thing because the Master tells you to. Baba once explained this in an anecdote:

"One day a Perfect Master told a disciple to take a job, to do some service. The next day he told him 'Don't do any work, don't take a job'. The third day the disciple was told to arrange to get married: on the fourth day the Master said 'Don't marry'. The disciple got confused and asked 'But why do you keep wanting me to undo everything you order me to do'? The Master explained: 'What you understand as 'doing' is in fact undoing. Everything that you do by your own will is undoing. Everything that you do and undo by My Will is the real doing.'"

The Seclusion goes on, and we are made more aware of it by the obviously heavy burden that He carries, as we see it reflected in the shape of a familiar aspect of Baba's working. And, while it is difficult for us to watch, He tells us that His work is being done most satisfactorily, for God takes on human form to shoulder the load of suffering that humanity suffers through ignorance. And so we continue to accept His compassion and love, not striving to 'understand' or ask questions.

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\* Dated 25th November, and being circularised to all concerned in the East and West.

Baba had once said, "He who says he understands, has not understood anything; for, that which is to be 'understood' is beyond understanding. I am the Beyond — I am beyond understanding, and he who has 'understood' Me becomes Me."

I recall someone who came to Baba, prepared with a long list of questions that Baba might answer. While sitting beside Him all the queries melted in His loving presence and were forgotten. While leaving however, the person seemed to recall the previous intention and admitted to Baba that there had been so many questions to be asked. Baba smiled and said:

"There is only one question. And, once you know the answer to that question, there will be no more questions to ask. In fact, there are no two questions.

"There is only the one Original Question. And to that one original Question, there is only one Final Answer. In between the original Question and the final Answer there are innumerable false answers.

"From out of the depth of unbroken Infinity arose the Question, 'WHO AM I?'. And to that one Question there is the only Answer, 'I AM GOD!'"

The blessings of the belated rains are visible all around us — in the garden, the fields and the countryside; in the variety of wild flowers and in the green grass that veils the tired wrinkles of the hills and gives the cattle a wide choice of terrain to pick their monotonous calories from. The birds escaping the approaching winter in the Himalayas are migrating south, and every morning the Redstart perkily walks into the house and cocks his head at us for the crumbs he knows he'll get.

In the historical district of Hamirpur in the north it will soon be 'Spring' for the lovers of Baba all over the district commemorating another anniversary of the day their land was first blessed by the touch of His feet, in November 1952! They will express their heart's rejoicing in the Baba-Fairs that they hold yearly\*, going all out to observe it on a grand scale this year — running for 10 days, at nearly as many places that were blessed by the Beloved's visit. To this gathering of thousands, will join a number of lovers from different Centres in India who have been invited for the occasion. Among the group from Poona will be the singers of Baba's bhajans, going at the express request of the Hamirpur folks who will also be 'host' to the party's entire expenses. Consistent with Baba's wishes Jal too is going with his little movie camera to capture shots of this unique pilgrimage of love — unique for it is not in line with the myriad traditional pilgrimages observed in revived memory of past Saints, Masters and Avatars, but is a blossom-fresh homage of the heart to the present Avatar while He is still amongst us.

To come down to Ahmednagar district, I must tell you of an interesting development in the small town of Patherdi, a few miles from here, where Baba's Love is spreading in ever growing measure. In observance of His Birthday last year, the Baba-folks of this town gave away clothes to many needy

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\* (see AWAKENER, First Quarter, Vol. VII, Number 1)

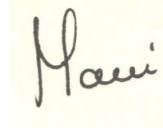
children, and Sayings of Baba appear regularly every week in their local Marathi paper. And now we hear, that their School has introduced a book about Baba (in Marathi) in the school curriculum, with a certain percentage of marks allowed for studying and passing in the subject!

May the percentage of their love, and ours, keep increasing till it reaches 'the 100%', so that we may love Him as He should be loved.

In ending the letter I repeat a message from BABA given some time ago:

"DON'T LOSE HEART, BUT KEEP ME IN YOUR HEART  
AND REMEMBER I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU."

Very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature reads "Hani" in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

# *thirty-eight/*

Meherazad, 1st January, 1961.

Dearest Family,

BABA-Greetings to you for the New Year.

1961 - Another figure to remember to head one's letters with. Another step in the march of time nearer towards the manifestation of the Timeless One. Another little bend in the long winding road of our journey towards the unwinding of ourselves from the wheel of Karma. Another peg to hang new resolutions on, as well as renewed ones from the pile of last year's neglected or frayed promises made to oneself.

May the New Year's resolve of those who love Baba be to make no resolutions, for our one-and-only resolve worth resolving has already been made long ago: to hold on to His daaman throughout, till the very end! Let ours therefore be rather a prayer, that we never waver in that resolve, through calm or storm. And may our Ancient One, despite His withdrawing Himself into deeper Seclusion, hear that prayer .....

"Baba's Seclusion" — one lap of it is over, another begins. The 1960 lap began on 1st July and, as far as it concerns our limited perception, seemed to flow in a routine of unusual serenity and an atmosphere that seemed still as a bird floating in the skies on unmoving wings, vigilant but relaxed. Twice Baba fasted, for a week at a time, on just sweetened water and weak tea, besides the intermittent fasts. Twice He held a "Poor Program" for respectively 220 and 101 poor individuals selected from the neighbouring villages, when He laid His head on each pair of feet and put Rs. 10 in the hand of each one thus blessed. Daily for about an hour Baba did His work in the company of Kaikobad. Baba worked with Nilkanthwala, the mast\* from Rishikesh who came with unexpected eagerness after repeatedly refusing to do so in previous months. For over three weeks this child of God, a monarch in the realm of the heart, was a most weighty and refreshing fragment of the Meherazad family. Seeing the mast in Baba's company, it was difficult to say who was the happier — the mast or Baba! As I had written in a letter to Bili Eaton dated 1956: Baba loves us who give Him our imperfect love, and loves all saints, but most of all He loves the masts, whose salient characteristic differs from that of the saints in the sheer overwhelming love for God that they get absorbed in — hence the name "mast" which literally means 'intoxicated'.

There were moments when Baba looked so pulled down despite the lack of any apparent cause, and moments when He looked specially radiant despite His fasts and generally indifferent health. There were moments when there would appear a slit in the wall of Seclusion so that certain items of correspondence or information could be squeezed in to His attention, or were even inquired of by Him. And of course there were the moments of relaxation — unexpected ones too, like the morning after the terrific torrent of rainfall when Baba and we drove down to the end of our little private road to watch the Lake cascading its overflow of water down the embankment — a sight for sore eyes in a place where drought is a yearly fear.

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\* pronounced to rhyme with 'just'.

And so the months wove on in a familiar 'seclusion pattern' when — on 5th October — the atmosphere changed from the simile of the 'bird floating in the skies' to one that plummeted down to earth without warning. And, once again we were afforded a glimpse of an outer expression of His inner working, through the aspect of physical suffering.

Not only was Baba's health affected, He had severe pain. I, with those who witnessed the weeks of suffering Baba underwent, witnessed Baba's own words in a discourse, "You are Bliss itself. To make you aware of it, I come amongst you and suffer infinite agony." And more than once Baba told us, "The pain is bad, but the extent of my work being done is good!"

Note: By now, as I write this, much of the above-mentioned suffering has passed away. There is now no cause for anxiety, and Baba does not wish queries written here about it.

A dear one from New York, on hearing that Baba's health was not good, wrote "We hope it is nothing serious. We feel so helpless and far away." And, during these long weeks of Baba's suffering, we who were physically near Baba, felt exactly that! so helpless and far away in any capacity to alleviate or share in the burden He had chosen to carry.

138 lovers of Baba must have sighed in deep disappointment and sadness when the opportunity of their seeing Baba receded into an unknown distance on their getting a 'last-minute' message that due to worse health Baba had cancelled the Meeting. This important meeting was to be held at Meherazad on 4th December, attended by 138 men selected from different parts of India, for the taking of Baba's message and personally giving it to each and all concerned at their respective places. But Baba has told them "obedience is greater than love", and they resignedly await their Beloved's next command, whenever that might be ....

It was during this time that the visit of "Benjo" — Dr. Ben Hayman of Texas, and Joseph Harb of His Sufi group in California, U.S.A. — was timed; and as He had already postponed it often before, Baba seemed not to want to do so again despite everything. Messages were cabled back and forth across the oceans, and we (as well as they) were not sure till practically the last moment whether it would definitely be 'Yes' or 'No'! In a later cable Baba gave them the choice of seeing Him for 5 days now, or for 10 days later in February 1961 — and the mandali and we were delighted with their eagerly choosing (as we had expected) the "bird in the hand" rather than two in the bush! We feel Baba must have done some work not obvious to us, through all this tense uncertainty and activity of changing and re-changing, and when at last we saw these very dear ones of Baba it was with doubled happiness, for ourselves and them. Baba's youngest brother Adi jr. (who has settled in England with his family) was also permitted to accompany them, and saw Baba and India after nearly five years. During their five days with the Beloved, Baba gave of Himself so abundantly, seemed so radiant despite His health, that even the close mandali (who had predicted a certain amount of happy change) were 'floored', and Eruch couldn't help saying to Benjo: "We must thank you for choosing to come now and giving us the opportunity of seeing Baba look so good, for we haven't seen Him like this in a long time!"



The change was in more ways than one, in that it was also what might be called an 'interlude' before His beginning the second lap of Seclusion which seems more secluded than ever in His withdrawing from all outward activity. To give you some idea of this second phase I couldn't do better than quote from Eruch's wonderful letter to a Baba-lover in India, dated 21st December:

" .....Beloved Baba seems now to be interested in being totally disinterested! He appears to be very absorbed in something very serious and, along with His unique Silence He has obviously silenced all activities immediately around Him. He does not want to hear anything and He does not want to see to anything, nor take part in the usual conversation we hold while we sit near Him.

"Moreover, this Seclusion has also put us all into a kind of "seclusion at Meherazad" — the kind we are experiencing for the first time in our decades of life with Him. The atmosphere around Meherazad is charged with a sort of 'stillness' — not inactivity (far from it!) but a sort of HUSH personified.

"Beloved Baba has wished me to make quite clear to whomsoever I write, that henceforth He will not put any attention to any correspondence, will not see anyone whom He does not call on His own. And, even if He were to go to Poona or elsewhere in 1961, He will continue to remain in Seclusion till such time that His Silence is broken. In short, He wants His loved ones to remain completely resigned to His Will and continue to learn to seek His pleasure rather than their own! It would seem that Baba, in His own imperceptible way, is now compressing into the hearts of His loved ones the spirit of complete surrender to His WILL."

There is little I can add to this. Guessing the import of Baba's work in all periods of Seclusion, and knowing the gravity of this one, this phase of all activity appearing outwardly to be at a stand-still would seem to signify the tremendous rate of accomplishment of His inner work — just as anything revolving at great speed appears to the onlooker to be stationary.

And at this time when Baba seemed to have most 'withdrawn' from His immediate circle of surroundings, His presence was most felt hundreds of miles away in the district of Hamirpur, by the hundreds of His lovers who had thronged at the festival of Love, rejoicing in the "birth" day of their villages and towns that were blessed by His physical presence some years ago. In all recountings of this large-scale celebration in the Beloved One (which one newcomer attending described as "heaven let loose on earth"), it said that they had felt Baba's presence so strongly throughout, that it was as though He were actually there with them! We, who were with Him at Meherazad, cannot doubt that ...

Baba told Ben Joseph and Adi junior not to inform anyone in the West (as others were equally not informed in the East) of particulars regarding Baba's health, until I released it in the family-letter when permitted by Him. This was due to Seclusion reasons, and partly because His devoted ones would naturally write anxious inquiries which He did not wish. Baba also told Ben Joe Adi, in regard to His prolonged phase of stricter seclusion, to inform whoever they could that He will not see anyone in 1961\*, and therefore none must come to see Him. Baba wishes me to emphatically repeat this here (as Adi K. Irani has also informed all concerned in the East), and to add that any and

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\* most particularly during the first eight months of 1961

all who expected or hoped to come or be called in 1961, must NOT do so. It is His wish, and He wants all concerned to be completely (and if possible happily) resigned to His Will. Baba sends His LOVE to you each and all His dear ones. A number of you must have also received it through Ben Joe and Adi; on the day of their departure from Bombay, they had a telegram from Baba saying:

"Let Baba's Banjo play Baba-tune of Baba-Love over the oceans and across the continents stop My LOVE to Ben Jo Adi and all enroute and at destination.

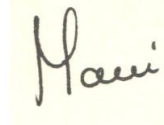
-Baba In Seclusion-

The No-correspondence-with-Baba ban will continue, but there will be the occasion to express your love in a cable or card of greeting to Him on His 25th February Birthday, which He has permitted. But even while you cannot write to Baba, He hears all that you say to Him, for the Beloved is always 'eavesdropping' at the doors of His lovers' hearts.

Baba received all the Christmas thoughts and love that poured into Meherazad. There was a Christmas lantern we put in His room, and its light seemed to reflect the presence of all the Baba-lovers everywhere — for every heart that burns in His Love is as a living Christmas lantern to the living Christ.

May our faith in Baba keep it shining the whole year through, in the steady flame of love and surrender!

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the signature line of the letter.

# *thirty-nine/*

Meherazad, 9th March 1961.

Dear Family,

This lazily warm afternoon in Meherazad is a sharp reminder of the real summer just around the corner, which we know will beamingly emerge with the smug certainty of an unwelcome acquaintance. The harvesting is over, and once again the fields are bare — but they don't look barren, for they have the satisfied appearance of a mother resting after delivering her 'produce'. It is our usual "autumn" at this time\*, and every now and then it rains gold leaves which I hate to see swept away each morning by the boy that keeps the garden clean. In the faint fanning of the breeze the flowers and leaves appear to be dozing, unperturbed by the butterflies bustling in and out with impunity or by the birds practising their singing and venturing on higher and higher notes ....

But our days and moods do not reflect this calm that surrounds us, and our normal daily duties with their myriad minor details seem abnormally magnified against the background of Beloved Baba's state of health, so that they feel like a barrow of pebbles being pushed uphill. Hence it is natural we avoid looking over the shoulder at the fast-approaching trip to Poona for which preparations must be made, yet on the other hand we shall indeed be happy to move because the change is bound to add to the improvement of Baba's health.

However, our happiness will be solely for Baba, as it cannot include that of the hundreds eagerly waiting to be able to see Baba again at Guruprasad, the thousands hoping or expecting to have His darshan this summer. But the Beloved is truly compassionate, and gives His lovers an opportunity to express their love which is not in seeking to have His darshan but in seeking to do His Will. To give us His darshan is the expression of His Love, to be happily resigned to His Will is the expression of our love; and blessed are we that He helps us by showing us how we may give shape to our love through unquestioning obedience. And so a Circular has been sent out thru Adi to all concerned, as follows:

"Avatar Meher Baba will be in Poona for some months from about the 15th of March 1961.

Baba wants all His lovers to know and to bear in mind that none should come to see Him for any purpose, much less for His Darshan or for private visits to Guruprasad at any time during His stay in Poona.

For reasons of His very strict Seclusion and very bad health, Baba expressly wants all His lovers to help keep Him absolutely undisturbed throughout His stay in Poona — until such time as Baba, on His own, asks anyone to see Him for His work at Meherazad or Poona.

In short please note that the Beloved will continue to remain in strict Seclusion irrespective of where He may be residing, at Meherazad-Ahmednagar, or at Poona or at any other place."

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\* shedding time for certain Indian trees.

And so it seems that the 'complete' Seclusion that Baba has been wanting for His work, is at last in view. But the restriction He has imposed on His lovers is infinitesimal compared to the suffering imposed on Himself. Despite the best care and medical treatment, the pace of improvement in His health is that of the proverbial snail, and it is only on looking back that we realize progress has been made. To see that He takes sufficient nourishment to help Him rapidly regain strength, is one of the stiffest jobs of those around Him, for He has always been a lamentably light eater. As one reads Ramju's diaries of their days with Baba in the 20's, one finds them dotted with exasperatingly regular mention of Baba's fasts, of His taking just one light meal or any liquid including water only once in 32 or 40 hours, for months on end (even during their weary travels on foot from place to place, which would leave them all exhausted at the end of the miles except Baba who led the party). But now His body doth protest, and we remind Him that even if He is in Seclusion He cannot seclude His dear body from the special care it needs at this time — for it has yet to serve Him as it has faithfully done despite the wear and tear of such a stupendous task as that of serving as vessel to "hold" the Ocean of Infinity which we are unable to perceive in Its true unsheathed Glory. As I wrote recently to a Baba-lover, "And thus it is that age after age He clothes His Bliss in the garment of suffering, and becomes "less" so that we might become "more" .... And there is no greater criterion of His greatness than the 'littleness' He assumes for our little selves."

We are afforded many endearing opportunities to serve during this eclipse of health He has once again taken upon Himself. As He allows us to 'guide' His body in its specific care and well-being (at this time of His entering the complete Seclusion when He wants to be outwardly disassociated from all things) I can't help being struck by the simile of a great Ship entering the harbour, allowing Itself to be guided by the many puny tugboats that noisily scurry and worry around It.

Baba's 67th Birthday, on 25th February 1961: Against the complete silence of this present Seclusion during which Baba has as it were "hung up the receiver" as far as any outward contact with any of His lovers is concerned (except the residents at Meherazad), the Great Day of His Birth stood out in startlingly happy contrast. The expression of His lovers' love poured in from all portions of the globe, and the mail-bags with our post that the boy from Ahmednagar cycles over with twice daily, were that day bursting at the seams with cables, telegrams and greeting cards that in their turn seemed to be bursting with the love they carried to the Lord of Love. As the Birthday cable of a dear one in New York said: "How lovely to be allowed to slip a cable into a crack in the Seclusion ... It brings all my love." Of the Indian greetings I would like to quote the apt Birthday wish of a Baba-lover in Bombay: "MAY YOU HAVE THE JOY OF OUR ETERNAL SUBMISSION TO YOUR WILL." That can be the only Birthday gift to The One if we may care or dare to give it.

In response to the greetings received for that day from all His dear ones, Baba gave the Message:

"CONVEY MY LOVE-BLESSING TO ALL WHO ARE  
CLOSE TO ME IN MY LOVE ON THIS DAY."

The best way to convey an idea of how the Beloved's Birthday was celebrated in Meherazad, would be to enumerate all the things we did NOT observe this year, in accordance to Baba's wish. But whatever expression of

exuberance was suppressed here where He is present physically, seems to have burst forth in full force everywhere else where He was with all who gathered in His Name.

We did not think they could surpass last year's Birthday activities, but it was proved possible from the printed programs that came from each Centre. Last year I tried to give some idea and description of the mammoth Birthday observance at the different places. This year's Celebration was even more of a Giant in size and stature, in the simplicity and splendour of His Love. It was multiplied in scope of activity so that new ideas were woven in, spread in horizon so that it included more towns and new Centres, stretched in time span so that in some places the Programs covered nearly a month, and widened in range so that it included as participants a bigger portion of leading citizens and more leaders of the Nation.

Predominant in all the programs, as the emblem of His Name and Compassion, was feeding of the hungry. Hence it was also the 'birthday' of so many, and "Baba" in the hundreds of orphans and thousands of needy, was greeted with clothes, food, and sweets as birthday homage. In some parts of India (where gatherings are allowed to be held throughout the night) Baba-lovers assembled together from 24th evening, staying up the night in singing His praise, so that at 5 o'clock in the morning (the time of His Birth) they could all be together to hail the Avatar, "ringing the message that God is here" ... One writes from Calcutta: "The children of Children-Mandir (Santragacchi) also kept awake whole night on 24th in order to do Pooja and Arti precisely at 5 a.m. on 25th. They too spent whole night with Kirtan and Bhajan in the praise of BABA, the Avatar of the age."

For this 67th Baba-Birthday many Centres printed little booklets, and some contained exactly 67 Baba messages; and in the program of the little town of Patherdi was included a delightful item: the congregation, including many students, exactly at 5 in the morning fired off 67 firecrackers, the kind called "atom bomb" because of the terrific sound with which they explode. And so the rest of the town was literally "awakened" to the joyous salute of the ones awakened to His Love. Then followed Arti and the rest of the program, including a keen exposition on Baba's Discourses and Silence among the students, and distribution of prizes.

Reading the many centres' wonderful reports of the successful carrying out of their Birthday programs, it is difficult to avoid the temptation of including more information, describing more facets of their efforts to spread the message of His Love so that others may share in the Treasure they have received — but that would probably result in 67 pages to this family-letter! However, I shall include just one more item; a novel idea and the creation of Kohiyar, the Baba-lover of Mahabaleshwar where Baba and we spent many summers. It took the shape of a rural drama, performed in the local dialect (Marathi), depicting Baba's life and message. For this a company of professional touring actors was hired, and the play proved a "thumping success" as one of the audience wrote, To quote Kohiyar's letter: "The play lasted from 9 p.m. to 2.30 a.m.! There was a crowd of not less than 3000 people — men, women, children — I did not expect that!! We performed in the square of the Main Street which proved a natural stage accommodation and an open-air theatre. The streets were simply packed with a thick crowd of the local folk and neighbour villagers, filling even the bylanes, balconies, shops — they say it was a record crowd that any play had drawn, and no one moved away throughout the play. There were 15 players — they performed very well. Baba's Messages were conveyed in a RURAL way — and a delightfully amusing twist was given to the drama by showing a bogus guru and

his pompous methods compared with our Beloved Baba's ways of awakening us to Truth. All this was possible only because it was all Baba's doing. It was Baba who worked, Baba who acted, Baba who watched ....." For the audience there was of course no "entrance fee" for their entrance into this most precious knowledge of Him who is Love Incarnate. And I think if Baba ever visits Mahabaleshwar again, He will have a difficult time indeed keeping "secluded" from darshan-seekers!

But those who labour in love for Baba do not measure their reward with the magnitude or magnificence of their efforts, their reward is in the privilege of being allowed to serve as the thousands of His hands and feet and tongues to carry the flame of His silent message safely thru the whirlwinds of Maya's storm to as many hearts as possible.

However, altho a Baba-lover's reward is in the 'doing', nothing one tries to do in Baba's work is smooth sailing. Whereas "progress" for workers in lesser fields may seem fast and furious because they travel o'er beaten tracks, every step Baba-workers take must mean a strenuous clearing of the undergrowth tangle of doubt and indifference, a weary cutting down of gnarled prejudices that shelter the darkness of ignorance, a jumping over obstacles of 'time and money' that seem scattered all along the worker's path. But however narrow the road of our digging may seem, it follows in the Footsteps of Him Who leads the Way, for all the world to tread some day .....

As for the equipage of the worker, I would like to quote from the letter of a dedicated one in Poona who wrote to Eruch: "I have been practising your dictum of 'GIVE IN in Baba's work and GIVE UP in Baba's love', and I am happy to say that this practice is bearing fruit. I have learnt many things during this lengthy period of Baba's Seclusion and am convinced that no work can succeed where there is the least thought for self glorification. The life of the worker is the greatest work possible for Baba on this earth, and so long as the life of the individual workers is not moulded in the message of His Love and Truth (which the workers are supposed to convey to others) all work is naught. As Beloved Baba says: 'LET YOUR LIFE ITSELF BE MY MESSAGE OF LOVE AND TRUTH TO OTHERS.'"

The next scribble on my memo-pad for the family letter is a note about two 'fasters' from among the thousands who fasted at Baba's Wish. They are the littlest fasters, littlest in age and therefore all the bigger in their love. One is a fair four year old of Australia, Radha, who gathers flowers every morning for Baba, and for Christmas sent Him a drawing of a pink smidge of a flower, saying "because it's His best colour you know!" She fasted for 24 hours. Another is Meera, a devoted 3 year old of Nagpur (India), and her father wrote to Eruch: We have all completed the Jap (repetition of Name) successfully, including our youngest Meera of 3 years. She also observed a fast of 24 hours — not only willingly but wilfully — taking only Ovaltine. All along she was cheerful and kept telling everybody that she is observing fast for Baba!

During this difficult time of Baba's Seclusion, one daily hears or gathers from personal letters from the East and West, how a number of His close ones are privileged to share in His phase of suffering in one form or another. Suffering, He tells us, is a true blessing of God's Love and helps most to melt away the layers of separateness from Him. As I wrote to a dear one in Baba, " .... but separateness hates to melt away, and so it is that we cannot help wishing that the Hand He lays on our head in blessing were less heavy! The pity is that we are not ready to receive or carry the weight of a blessing so great as His, and thus we always cry out to Him to make the burden a little less, a

little lighter — and the irony of it is that the 'load' we feel we cannot bear is the weight of the Hand that is trying to unload us of our burden of so many nothings! But altho our weaknesses are great, His Love is greater — in fact it is so great that all of us who are 'close' to Baba fail always to get the glow, and (as He draws us closer to Him) may feel its scorch more often! However, eventually the fire of Baba's Love will dissolve everything, including our difficulty in being happy where and how He places us; for our doing that, best helps Him to help us best.

In explaining this glorious 'helplessness' of the lover's surrender in confining himself entirely to the Master's Will, Baba once quoted Hafiz:

"In loving my Beloved I have become like an ant under the foot of an elephant — safe and secure, but helpless to move."

Even those of you dear ones who like my news letters to be measured by the yardstick will admit this is not a short letter, and I'm hoping it will help to cover the longer-than-usual interval that is likely to follow before the next letter from Poona.

Our little northern visitor (the Redstart I mentioned in a previous letter) answers to the name of "Bicki" bestowed on her because she's shamelessly fond of biscuits, and hops near to my table the moment she hears the hammering of the typewriter, twittering and fluttering with more gusto than grace to attract attention for a tidbit. We strongly suspect she will continue overstaying her visit this year, and will fly back to the snows of the Himalayas only when we migrate to Poona to avoid the scorching summer months of Ahmednagar. The car trip will be undeniably tiring for Baba to say the least, but happily Eruch has coaxed Him into having a short ride every morning, daily increasing the distance so that He will stand the 75 miles (over hot dusty roads) without too much fatigue on the day we leave for Poona.

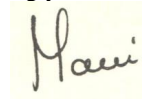
Reading this letter through I find it is strewn with the word "love" — yet it could scarcely be otherwise when writing about BABA! As Baba once said:

"God does not listen to the language of the tongue –  
"God does not listen to the language of the mind –  
"God listens only to the language of the heart,  
which is LOVE."

And so I'll wind up the letter by quoting from a Birthday cable sent to BABA by a devoted couple in Washington:

"LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE"

Ever lovingly



P.S. I would also like to add here my very loving acknowledgement of all the dear letters received that I have been unable to reply to individually. I know you lovingly understand, and my thanks go out to you in the silence of His Love.

NOTE: Please note that our postal address will continue to be the same as now: c/o Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar (dn).

*forty/*

APRIL - MAY 1961

30th April

Dear Family,

This April hello is sent to you softly from the silence of His Seclusion that has been carried over from Meherazad to Poona with the care of a fragile fragrance, and bottled in Guruprasad palace — a worthy container, offered with so much love by our dear Rani. A few days before our coming, the place was swarming with people — but these were workers putting a rejuvenating coat of makeup onto the stately mansion, overhauling the lighting system, adding a practical item here and an item there for greater comfort of the Beloved's stay — and above all we marvel at the intuition that prompted the Maharani to make so timely an addition to its privacy by having a dainty trellis girdle the entire verandah.

Happily, the drive from Meherazad to Poona on 21st morning was considerably less trying and tiring than we had cause to expect; and as we glided through the familiar gates, Guruprasad looked as if it were all dressed up to go out but had planned a quiet evening at home. And, the month of April has indeed been a "quiet evening" at home, with no ringing or knocking at the portals of Baba's Seclusion. In fact all concerned have helped most earnestly to preserve it, difficult though this has been particularly for those in Poona for whom Baba is so tantalizingly near and yet so far out of reach. To give a little instance, those Baba-lovers whose work takes them along the road that runs past Guruprasad, have either abandoned the route altogether or risk a stiff neck as they cycle past looking dead ahead in case a glance at Guruprasad tantamounts to disturbing His Seclusion!

Nearly forty dates have been plucked from the Calendar since our arrival here, but in absence of Poona's usual summer diet of Darshan-feasts, it somehow has seemed a shorter time. However, this April silence of activities is not like a fasting, but is as though Guruprasad is 'chewing the cud' of past fills while ruminating on the possibility of more to come, with the confidence of one who has had experience of His Compassion.

Apart from His inner working that we are not afforded a peep into, physically it has been for Baba a phase of "convalescence", each day punctuated by a schedule of various "do's" and "musts" — like someone that must sit down to his daily monotonous practising on the piano scales. One note introduced in this routine has been outings in the car, sometimes with the mandali and sometimes with us — outings to nowhere in particular. Another prominent item has been indoor games as contribution to His physical exercise, including an old favourite of His: table tennis or ping-pong as we call it. The tic-toc of the balls is a familiar sound, and it is delightful to see Baba get His mandali partner in a sweat trying to cope with His expert shots — this despite His below-par health and restricted scope of movement! (playing while perched on high stool, as standing any length of time is tiring due to old hip injury).



Evenings we look forward to, when we sit with Baba on the front portion of the verandah from where one can see the road that is at just the right distance and angle to the house so that it is entertaining without being a nuisance. India, the land of too many religions and languages, castes and customs, is a place of extreme contrasts shuffled together like a huge multicoloured patchwork quilt, and it is fascinating to watch the continually varied expressions of life flashing by. Closer in the foreground we see some of the garden and the statues standing round the fountain gazing entranced towards the pool of water before them; and sometimes the robins or bulbuls perch on their marble heads to pour cascades of song into space.

The progress in Baba's health has not been a smooth gradual improvement, but has rather been outbursts of marked improvement followed by heavy setbacks, so that we would wonder if our longing to spot rapid improvement had not after all made us imagine it — just as those in the desert thirsting for water create a hopeful mirage! But on second thought we realize it is "just Baba" and the mercurial tendency of His health as we have known through the years, and as the ancient Rishi Bhrigu (who lived 4,000 years ago) has said about Baba's health according to the Bhrigu Samhita\*: "The general tendency and state of His health will be quite peculiar quite alright and well one moment, weak and unwell at the very next moment."

That is why it's difficult to write accurately about His health to anyone, because by the time the letter reaches the individual Baba's condition may be quite different to what was conveyed! But despite its elusiveness, the present improvement has shown itself increasingly more solid at each appearance, till now we can safely assume it to be a definite improvement, in many ways.

And so the Seclusion continues in Guruprasad, and in the hearts of His lovers wherein He is securely closeted while remaining physically hidden from their gaze. But as Baba once said, He is eternally in Seclusion for His true Divine Self remains hidden from us, At someone asking why He did not reveal Himself, Baba said: "It is so easy for Me to do that. It is the concealing that is difficult." He then gave a delightful simile of wind in the stomach, saying "How easy it is to release it! It is holding it in till the right time that is not only difficult and uncomfortable but can be painful."

The "right time" cannot be far away. May we grow in our love and preparedness for the Beloved's Manifestation. As a dear one from England writes: "I hope this year we shall all grow in awareness and love. To be awake in these times of sleep, when the world is in a dream and drifting to destruction but for the finger of God upon it, is necessary."

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\* the great Rishi's compilation of thousands of Kundalis or life-charts giving innumerable horoscopes to cover all persons born at all points of time. The details of Baba's life-chart according to the Bhrigu-Samhita, have appeared in The AWAKENER.

14th May

Having bound His lovers with the invisible cord of His wish that He might be left completely undisturbed, the first week of May found Baba in the mood to decide opening the Door of His Seclusion just the merest slit to allow a glimpse of Himself again. The one to be chosen for the privilege of paving the way by being the first to enter, was none other than our lovely "hostess", the Rani. Next in line to enter this kingdom of heaven were the children of God. Wishing to begin in a 'little' way, Baba had us arrange to have only the 'little ones' come visiting — i.e. the children of Baba-lovers in Poona. Once this idea began to be put into shape, it became increasingly obvious that the children would amount to more than the trickle of a few dozen that we had at first imagined, and indeed the final number swelled to a wave of over 300 that threatened to rush open the Door and submerge the Seclusion!

It was a lovely program and above all it was a unique one, when Baba was surrounded by His little ones ranging in age from 1 month to 12 years. And to them went the thanks of a hundred mothers or aunts that were allowed to accompany their charges. The Twins (Baba's nephews) who are about 15 years old, made themselves indisputably eligible for the Visit by one of them dressing up as a babe in arms and the other as a mother dressed up in sari carrying the hefty hollering infant into Baba's presence amidst a burst of delight from the assembly! It was good to see Baba shaking with His warm silent laughter as of yore.

To each child Baba gave a prasad of sweets, and there was the kind that was not only shaped like a whistle but sounded like one — and Baba blew it for many a tot to show how it was done. No garlanding or bowing down was allowed, but at the end of the program when some 300 young throats lustily shouted "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" it was music to our hearts that sent up a prayer of thanks for the change in His health and mood that brought about this Children's Day.

The sober silence of His Seclusion was drowned by the incessant young chatter and noise. There was the boy that recited a Sanskrit verse composed in praise of Baba's Silence; there was two year old Mehera who adores Him and insisted that Baba should give her the sweet that one of the mandali had in his hand; and there was Baba's first great-niece, of a few months old, who played on His lap for the first time. Behind the scenes there was the toddler that cried for a biscuit, and when given a little cake hollered all the more because it wasn't a biscuit. But when one of us told him that the biscuit had turned into a cake because he was in Baba's home, his crying stopped like magic and he couldn't take his awed gaze off the cake for a long time. And then there was the little girl that kept pulling at her mother's skirt and pointing at Baba with an ecstatic look, saying "Ba-ba! Ba-ba!"

After each had approached Baba for the individual caress and a sweet, they trooped down the steps with Him and up again from the front side of the verandah. Surrounded by this crowd of youngsters, little of Baba could be seen — so that our Highest of the High looked the Smallest of the small! The 7th of May was indeed the children's Day, with Him who is their Father in the truest sense of the word.

The children's Day heralded the adults' Visit, and all concerned were notified of Baba's wish through a circular issued on 5th May that said:

"Avatar Meher Baba is happy at the way His lovers are doing their best to help Him remain absolutely undisturbed in His strict seclusion. He says that His Seclusion will continue to remain as such and He will want His loved ones also to continue to help Him remain undisturbed whether He is in Seclusion in Poona or in Ahmednagar or elsewhere.

"Baba will be in Poona at Guruprasad Bungalow, till the end of July 1961. "In response to the silent yearning in His lovers' hearts to see Him, Baba has lovingly agreed to allow them to visit Him once in His Seclusion during TWO WEEKS ONLY from the 15th through 31st May 1961, between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. only, on any one day at Guruprasad, providing each lover strictly abides by His following wishes:

"Baba wishes the visitors to see Him only ONCE on any one day during the specified fortnight, any time between 4.30 and 5.30 in the evening. Baba will NOT see anyone individually.

"Baba says He would not wish His lovers who live at very distant places from Poona to undertake the long and strenuous journey incurring heavy expense to see Him only ONCE for such a short time. Baba says that those unable to see Him this time should not feel worried, for later on He might give them a better opportunity in His own way.

"Baba wants His lovers visiting Guruprasad to fully help keep His Seclusion undisturbed by:

NOT bringing any offering to Him; NOT seeking to garland Him; NOT bowing down to Him; NOT seeking to have an interview with Him; NOT seeking His advice on personal problems of oneself or others; NOT putting questions to Him, spiritual or otherwise, nor expecting any spiritual discourse; NOT seeking permission to put up at Guruprasad, nor to repeat the visit.

"Baba says that by observing all these points His lovers will help Him keep intact His Seclusion, and those deciding to visit must come fully determined to please Baba by observing His wishes."

Lastly, it was made clear that this Visit is only for those close in Baba's Love, and not for the general public.

Hence in significance and in fact the Seclusion will remain unshaken and intact, with just its outer surface rippled by the splash of a fortnight's program, beginning from tomorrow. And so once again we have started moving the furniture around, just as we did so often last year, to adjust the dining room and sitting room which combined turns into a magnificent hall accommodating hundreds at His feet.

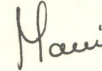
And we think of those hundreds who live for Baba but must do so at great distances from Him physically. We know from letters already received that a number of them, despite Baba's gentle injunction, are planning to come for just that one hour. But there are many that cannot, either from lack of leave or money; and they will await the next opportunity, with Baba keeping the vigil along with them in their hearts. Once Baba had said to a devoted couple who were dismayed that they could not see Him more frequently, that better than their being with Him was His being with them; and that this was always done by their remembering Him and taking His Name. Baba said:

"I am in everybody's heart but I am sleeping there. It is My old, old habit. In order to awaken Me you should always call out to Me and say "Baba – Baba – Baba ..." continuously. Then I, who am asleep in your heart, will not find any pleasure in remaining asleep. Let alone sleep, I shall not find time even to doze! I shall slowly be awakened in your heart by hearing your constant call — your taking My name constantly.

"Once I am awake in your heart you too would awake and remain awake for all time.

"Therefore repeat My name constantly and awake Me in your hearts so that you become awake for all time."

Very lovingly,



P.S. Although today is 14th, it looks as though it is the 15th according to Baba Time, as those who have already come to Poona for that ONE glimpse are being sent for by Baba to come to Guruprasad this evening. Howsoever overjoyed, they will perhaps not be surprised at this surprise visit granted by their Compassionate One.

NOTE: Those who have enjoyed reading "Civilization or Chaos?" by Irene Conybeare — will be happy to know that another book by her is expected to come out soon. It is entitled IN QUEST OF TRUTH (or "How I Came to Meher Baba"). Besides relating interesting episodes in her life prior to meeting Baba, and expressing her views on varied aspects of common interest to all, she devotes a number of chapters to Baba's life and work exclusively. Of predominating interest to Baba-lovers however, will be some articles by Baba that appear in it, articles given by Baba for this book at the author's express request and which have not appeared in print before. Details of where you may obtain this book from, and its price, etc., will be mentioned in the next family letter by which time I expect to be in a position to give the information.

# *forty-one/*

Guruprasad, Poona

11th July 1961

Dear Family,

"Unless you become as dust you cannot realise God.  
But first you have to become stone, for you  
cannot become dust right away. What is needed is to  
retain human consciousness and become as stone  
and then wear yourself to dust at the feet of  
the Perfect Master."

BABA was saying this, or rather Eruch was saying it as he read out Baba's gestures. It was the evening of 14th May, and over a hundred of His lovers were squatting before Baba, for the sound of the Seclusion door creaking open had reached those already in Poona in readiness for their visit next day. Among them was lucky Diana Snow, a Baba-worker from Australia who had been touring Europe and whose two day halt in India was timed by fate to coincide with the beginning of the Fortnight Feast. However, the very first visitor was from the heavenly regions, in the shape of a thunderstorm — and more than once some remark from Baba or someone's reply to Baba's query was aptly emphasised by a terrific crash of celestial cymbals, followed by a deluge of rain rushing down as though the sky also had decided to open its door on that day.

Baba was not giving a discourse — He had made it quite clear that during these "Visit Hours" there would be no discourses. But when He, whose first Whim brought forth the Creation, not the mood or whim in response to some comment or moment, we would receive from His Silence some added feast of words. For instance when Professor Deshmukh chimed out his favourite little marching song of "Beat the drums, beat the drums, sing Meher, sing Meher", it prompted Baba to explain how one must be 'empty' like the drum for divine music to emerge. Baba said:

"Only when the heart is cleaned out and the mind completely  
emptied, can they become instruments, hollow as the  
flute or drum, to give forth divine music."

Beginning with the 14th of May and ending with the 31st, the "fortnight" turned out to be more than fifteen days at both ends. Similarly the "one hour" by Baba-time was happily stretched to two hours and more according to the Swiss clock in the corner to which Baba would point as witness and reminder that it was long past time for all to leave. Only lovers of Baba were entitled to be the "visitors", and whereas on the first day they could be surmised as numbering a hundred, the number kept rapidly expanding like a gay balloon, so that the last day's assembly consisted of no less than 3,000! As they walked past in an unending file to receive from Baba's hand a sweet as prasad, Harry Kenmore was heard remarking to his neighbour, "They seem to be coming out of the woodwork!" And indeed, as they poured in over the window-sills and through the doors, it did seem so. But to wind back to the beginning ...

On 15th evening, the aid of portable gas lamps was sought to replace the crystal chandelier and wall lights, as an explosion at the electric power-house

had plunged the whole of Poona in darkness, for a number of days and nights as it turned out. It made little difference to the hundreds of Baba-lovers assembled at His feet in Guruprasad, and their faces reflected the light of His Love that reached out to them. Nevertheless, it also meant that the ceiling fans, kept working all day to give Baba some relief from the summer's heat, stopped working. But it may be true that whatever occurs, turns out to be an answer to somebody's prayer — and certainly the fan episode answered the longing of some of the young Baba-lovers to "do" something for Baba. They promptly ranged themselves about Him, and fitted with palm-leaf fans kept wielding them with perhaps more vigour than rhythm, throughout evenings and even mornings. As the electricity of Poona behaved temperamentally even after days of black-out, this Baba-Boys Brigade had more hours of the Beloved's sahasas than any of their elders.

The time selected by Baba in which to set the precious fortnight was a holiday season with schools closed for the summer. Attached to this advantage was the disadvantage of travelling at that time, as Indian trains are much too over-crowded any day and at such times overflow with holiday seekers packed like sardines — with the difference that they have not the tinned sardine's incapacity to care for anything! However, the "lucky fish" bound for Guruprasad were too happy to mind such inconveniences. And, when I asked one woman of a group from the north who had travelled by train for two days and a night along with children ranging from one year upwards, she said "It did not bother us, we were kept so busy singing Baba-bhajans."

There were quite a number of "new" ones too from different parts of India but particularly from the state of Andhra, who had not seen Baba before, but who were "not new in Baba's Love" as the beaming group-head explained when Baba appeared to show surprise and concern at their coming, and moreover from all this distance for just one hour. Baba ended by saying with a smile "I am happy you came; it was I who drew you to Me." However, two new ones (of the dear Dadachanji family) from Bombay who made their debut before the Lord of Love were not even aware they came; but their proud mothers will tell them as soon as they are old enough to know, how Baba held them on His lap when they were not yet two weeks old! and how He repeatedly reminded the mothers to wrap them well on the journey and to send Him a telegram on reaching Bombay. Another baby receiving Baba's special love and care was the first-born of the famous cricketer Nari Contractor — a bonny boy of two months old whom the young father nervously carried and beamingly placed on Baba's lap.

Lovely Ann Conlon, a journalist from the U.S.A. was a new one too in not having met Baba, but her longing to see her beloved "Awakener" was 'old' enough to make her grab the first opportunity and plane on reading the family letter. Another was Edward Luck, a boy from Florida whose brother Irwin visited Baba last year, and they just made it on the last hour of the last evening. Baba said to them, "Your love will reward you some day." Among the 'old' ones was Baba's faithful Fred Winterfeldt from New York, and touching on his devoted wife's longing to be with Baba, Baba said to Fred, "You are here with Me, but I am there with Ella." Then there were the dear Goldneys — Francis and Olla — who had the privilege of staying with Baba at Meherazad some years ago, and whose halt in India on the way back from an international conference in Japan could not have coincided more happily. But the biggest surprise was Dr. Harry Kenmore from New York who dropped in to see his "Pop" at Guruprasad one evening and walked towards Him through the packed hall. Although he could not perceive the infinitely tender expression on Baba's face as Baba embraced him, I am sure he felt it. And whereas Baba had put the prasad into the hand of each lover, He now unwrapped one and placed it in Harry's mouth.

I would like to add here that altho the coming of so many from distant parts of India was unexpected, the U.S.A. sequel to my report in the family-letter was quite unimagined — and I am sorry now that I did not time it to reach all concerned more promptly, However, there are still very many even in the East who were not able to be present physically and it seems apt to quote here what the Beloved once said to the gathering:

"Your being with Me is immaterial. It is My being with you that matters. So keep Me with you always."

Because of the queue of NO's attached to the Visits, including NO darshan, NO garlanding, NO discourse, part of the time Baba began to allow those who wished, to express their love by singing to Him or by performing a skit or anything that might be touching enough or amusing enough. It all began with some of the Centre's little tots who "with rings on their fingers and bells on their toes" sang and danced to Baba on the first day, and their performance was so delightful He made them repeat it on two more evenings. Then came the opportunity for the grownups, so that apart from an occasional Qavvali singer regaling Baba and His assembly of lovers with mystical songs, there were the amateurish efforts from some among the Baba-lovers who could sing, and some who seemed firmly convinced that they could! As the evening mounted, more individuals and groups mustered up ideas — a playlette, a verse in Baba's praise, a piece of Indian classical dance by some of the girls who were eager to perform before Baba, "just as Meera danced for Lord Krishna." Often the items were indeed good, but sometimes it was obvious that sincerity and enthusiasm far exceeded talent. However, we gained more from such moments, for they afforded us a further glimpse of Baba's compassion and patience, and spoke volumes for His silent Love that sees through all matter into the heart.

The Hamirpur party, led by dear old Pukar, planned to make this opportunity serve two purposes, and wrapped up in each form of their entertainment was their petition to Baba to visit their land again. As Eruch explained to the non-Hindi speaking lovers at the end of the drama, "They have made a life-size marble statue of Baba and they want to house it in Nauranga. It is to be the shrine of their united love and they want Baba's presence there. Therefore through this drama they are praying, pleading, cajoling, arguing, so that Baba visits Hamirpur district." This lighted up many faces and there were hopeful murmurs: would Baba visit Nagpur enroute? — and of course Calcutta? — and what about the state of Andhra, where a life-size statue of Baba in bronze is all ready to be installed in a house being built for it? Baba seemed to look most concerned and puzzled, and then said with a smile, "It is such a big problem for me to visit all these places where I already am! If I were not present there, I would surely pay the visit!" Then Eruch turned to Pukar and quipped: "So it would seem that first you must oust Him from your district for Him to pay that visit to Nauranga!" Before the laughter could die down, someone remarked "Then why shouldn't BABA go everywhere to see BABA?" And the Beloved said, "That is a wonderful idea, but how can I pay a visit to Myself when I am never absent?"

The performance that stole our hearts was a drama the Bhajan party of Poona Center got together, a drama depicting seven Avatars — Zoroaster, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Meher Baba — and the predominant expression of their Message to humanity. The actors were young Baba-lovers, boys and girls from 5 to 15 years old, and if the very limited rehearsing time caused some faux pas in their appearance or acting it added all the more colour. Undoubtedly it was the first show of its kind performed anywhere at any time, for its unique audience and spectator was the self-same One depicted in all seven Avatars. Baba's twin nephews walked in on the final scene as Baba and Eruch, Baba leaning on Eruch's arm —

and seeing the Twins go through the familiar scene of "Baba" giving darshan and prasad, while BABA was right before them, brought forth an uproar of delighted clapping and laughter from the onlookers. As for BABA, seeing Himself thus before Him, laughed so deeply He had to wipe the tears off His eyes! And at the end when "Baba" gestured (and "Eruch" relayed over the mike in five languages), "I AM THE ANCIENT ONE", there rang out a chain of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" from the spectators that shook Guruprasad to its gilded ceiling.

After one Qavvali (pronounced kuh-vaali) program Baba explained the meaning of a song "My glory is from here to there which has no end, and each one can perceive My glory to one's own capacity. So let Me see to what extent you can see My glory!"

Baba then added: "Ocean contains everything — water, dirt, nectar; and everything dissolves in the ocean. I am the Ocean. Nobody is debarred from coming to Me and helping himself to the endless expanse of Love; but how much of the Ocean you can take with you, depends on the receptacle you bring. If it is a cup, you can only take a cupful; if a pail, only a pailful. But once in a long while there comes the true hero, the giant in Love that can gulp the Ocean itself!"

The 1st of June found Guruprasad like the Arab that has folded up his tent — and with the veil of Seclusion pulled once more over His Face, the infinite Beloved seemed, what He had at times declared, infinitely tired. Consequently we found setbacks showing more often in the pace of improvement of His health. However, the threads of routine were gradually picked up and woven into the pre-fortnight pattern, and Baba's short car-outings with the mandali resumed, while half an hour of Qavvali music on the gramophone has become a happy addition. Although no more stiff necks were risked by Baba-lovers going past Guruprasad, all lovers joined willing hands to continue to preserve the Seclusion wholeheartedly respecting His wish of "no visits", etc....

But nobody had told the elephant of Peshwa Park about it! To the musical clang of a big bell round her neck, Mrs. Jumbo gives rides to children (and grown-ups) round the park — which is a combination of garden, zoo and picnic grounds. Her mahout knows Baba and makes her salute Him whenever He has been there. One recent morning, when Baba drove to Peshwa Park with the mandali, the Elephant ambled forward to deliver her salute, and (quite contrary to the Seclusion rules) received from Baba the prasad of a whole loaf and a bunch of bananas, and moreover she took His darshan by touching His toe with her trunk! But I guess elephants can get away with anything, and at least this one can be classed among the cats that are supposed to have all the luck.

We shall be leaving for Meherazad in the first week of August, and Kaka writes that the good rains of this year have made the place look so fresh and green. Here too the rains have been more than generous this monsoon, and the river at the Bund Gardens was shaken up to a fury fascinating to watch. Another 10th of July has sailed past — the thirty-sixth since becoming such an important date in the lives of those who love Baba, and the ring of silence has now grown so vastly bigger as it has spread wider to include more lovers of Baba in more countries, cities, towns and villages, observing the Day. We who live near Baba find that although the Beloved's continual silence is never 'felt' by us, we make our little silence very much felt by our clumsy efforts at communication through signs and gestures, and He seems obviously relieved when the next morning we burst into our usual talk and chatter that we manage with such practised ease! Comparing our little 'slips of the tongue' on Silence Day, we never fail to recall the most



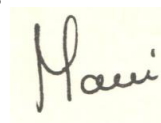
amusing one we know of, which was caused by Nilu (Dr. Nilkanth) when he was at Meherabad one 10th of July some years ago. The mast Ali Shah asked Nilu, "Why don't you talk, is anything the matter with you?" "No", spoke Nilu, "It is simply that I must not speak today."!

While Baba's Silence continues to speak without words, we continue to speak in words about His Silence. From the best of such a speaking I would like to quote Dr. Deshmukh's speech given recently at Calcutta:

"Meher Baba's silence is not merely the silence of the tongue but represents the great immeasurable silence of the beyond state of God from which all sounds spring forth only to be merged into it again. Just as there is the silence that speaks, there is the silence that hears. Baba's silence has to be heard by silence within our own self. For this it is necessary that our mind should be completely stilled. Mere silence from the physical aspect would not be enough in order to receive the living message of Meher Baba's continued silence of 36 years. His silence is the most significant expression of the infinite divine Love which is eternally sustaining all from the beginningless to the endless."

In this Infinite LOVE,

Ever lovingly,



18th July 1961

P.S. The above news, dated 11th July, could not be posted sooner, because of the disaster that befell Poona on the next day, in unprecedented floods that hit the business and residential heart of the city! On the 12th nearly half of Poona was under six feet and more of water (often covering the second stories of houses) as the swollen Mutha River completely washed away a dam 25 miles from here, and made a 100 foot breach in the Khadakvasla Dam which is the source of Poona's water-supply. To quote from a Bombay paper: — "Floods from the river — worst in living memory — hit the city twice in four hours. The first wave came in the forenoon when the raging river destroyed the Panshet Dam. Another mass of water cascaded into the city when the Khadakvasla Dam gave way in the afternoon. The entire city is without water supply and electricity. Altho some prior warning was available, the people had to take the full fury of the swollen Mutha river."

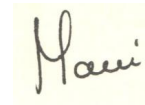
Altho casualties were not so many, damage was heavy — particularly among the banks of the Mutha river that flows thru the city, rendering very many homeless as most of the houses on both the banks have been washed away or badly damaged, and so have the main bridges of the city. More than over half the total population of seven lakhs were directly affected — as the chief minister who flew over from Bombay said, "A terrific blow to the people of Poona and the city's life." The authorities started rescue and relief work and 6000 food centres were opened, and precautions started against a cholera epidemic, while the "dry" part of Poona has been helping its stricken twin in many ways. But the whole of Poona's common problem, looming large even now, is the very serious one of lack of drinking water supply! Those few who own wells have thrown them open for public use; and likewise there has been a continual mob scene at Baba's boyhood home (where His brother Beheram lives with his family) as neighbours within a mile's radius come in with buckets and brass pots to draw water from the well that is within the house in front of Baba's Room — thus the pilgrims for water receive a double blessing.

None might have achieved a thing with such hairbreadth timing as Jal inadvertently did when he took some film shots of the Beloved at the Bund Gardens (which is nearby Guruprasad). On 12th morning, as some unexpected sun streamed thru the heavy clouds, Baba was persuaded to drive to the gardens and Jal used up his remaining rolls on scenes of Baba under the mango-tree beneath which Babajan used to often sit, and of the river, etc. A couple of hours later the railing against which Baba had stood, watch the river flowing below, was completely submerged; and there were boats on the spot where Baba had stood under Babajan's tree in the garden many feet above the river! Soon many hundreds of people walked, cycled, drove, ran past Guruprasad to the Bund Gardens (unaware of the havoc being played in the heart of the city) to see the river in flood, its waters reaching far above danger level and crossing over the heavy stone bridge used for traffic! We too joined them and watched the awesome sight of a river risen in maniacal fury, hurling its might against the man-made bounds and battering the bridge with surging waves of angry brown waters. Dark spots dotting the cascades were household objects that had been washed away from the homes in the "city" area — tables, cupboards, radios, doors ... Soon the whole of the garden was covered with water upto not many yards away from Guruprasad. Altho we were and are thus in the "dry" section of Poona's habitation, dear old Adi was frantic over the reports on the radio in Ahmednagar and rushed over in his car with supplies of water and food for Guruprasad. And, assured of our safety and well-being, he returned same evening to Ahmednagar.

On 13th, the people were hit by a wave of panic as rumour spread that the Dam had now completely collapsed and that the flood waters were rising again, "Twice bitten" the people were more than shy, and in utter panic rushed in hundreds of thousands from even the safe areas, to roll like a constantly swelling turbulent river of human beings seeking safety on the elevation of the Parvati and Fergusson hills. Never had Poona witnessed such a sight, never had it faced such a plight! It took a lot of convincing from the nation's leaders to make the people return to their abandoned homes or to homes that were no more ....

Such are the rude awakenings that help dislodge us from the dream of stability and security sought in attachments. But even as the Compassionate One takes away our necessities, He gives us our real need of calling out to Him — the Source and Succour that never fails us.

Please do NOT let this prompt you to send any contributions to us.



# *forty-two/*

Meherazad, 14th September, 1961.

Dear Family,

We have been home long enough to have gotten over the rapture and wonder of home-coming, discovering anew all the old charms and faults of Meherazad — like taking in every wrinkle and expression of a much loved face that had dimmed in absence. We seem to have picked up the threads of daily life in unbroken continuation from the point they were left off, so that it is difficult to imagine five months had gone by while Meherazad slept in the care of its faithful "nurse", Kaka. Driving from Poona was not too tiring for Baba this trip; and our first glimpse of Meherazad, long before we turn into the private road, was as usual Baba's Hill — atop which Baba had stayed several times in Seclusion and which appears in shape to be a perfect cone from a certain angle of the road.

Undoubtedly the garden had heard HE was coming, for it was dressed up in its best. As the Beloved went past, the row of gaily-bonnetted zinnias bobbed their heads in curtsy, the young plants in the background swayed tittering with joy, while the big trees clapped their leaves in a chorus of welcome. Our pets Peter and Mastan went wild with excitement and I can vouch for their having broken a few records for high-jump and running which they performed vigorously all over the house, and Baba had to ensconce Himself firmly in a chair before they could be let loose to express their exuberance of welcoming Him. The only Meherazadian that was undemonstrative in its love was Kasoba, the solemn little Turtle in the well, but I suspect it turned a merry somersault all by itself when it heard of its Master's return.

Meherazad, away from the noise and bustle of habitation (the nearest being the little village of Pimpalgaon about a mile away) is a far more natural setting for Baba's Seclusion than was Poona, and here Baba has pulled in the reins very much tighter so that nobody is permitted to pay a visit. The Rain must have included itself in this ban, for there hasn't been a sign of it for weeks, not since its first timid overtures on our arrival when we managed to collect enough rain-water for the Beloved to have a hair-wash (as the water that our well supplies us tends to be too hard). If this diffidence of the Rain continues, Ahmednagar district will soon be proclaimed a drought area. For, ever since that first generous outburst the skies have buttoned up, and no prayer or plea seems to pierce the clouds that continually go by, seeming always in a hurry to get elsewhere — perhaps to feed some already rising river, for daily the papers report another "unprecedented flood" in India.

When we left Guruprasad on 7th morning, Baba once again halted at the Bund Gardens to allow a farewell glimpse to the hundreds thronged by the river since dawn awaiting His coming. Seated once again underneath the shady tree (beneath which Babajan used to sit when she visited the garden) the beloved Saki dispensed to each His love-filled smile and presence that they drank in with their tears. He permitted them to sing the arti; and when He got into the car, each went by and kissed His hand. A cool soft morning for a tryst with God underneath a mango tree, and one can hear Hafiz saying: "Love knows no difference between monastery and drinking-booth, for the light of the Friend's face irradiates all."

Poona, known as the Queen of the Deccan, was a sad brave city on crutches when we said goodbye this year. In its freak of a flood which exhausted the city's water-supply, many more people were drowned than was officially made known. However, without wasting time on bemoaning its fate, the city started a pitiable but dignified struggle to get immediately back to its feet, befitting the birthplace of the Avatar who says to His lovers "do your best, and leave to Me the rest." Suddenly the value of water soared above everything else, and right after the flood it was as precious as it can be to the fish. Baba has told us that when mankind's conscious need for God is as acute, then will He manifest!

Even now the water shortage in Poona is its outstanding problem, and I think the best picture of the situation is conveyed by my nephew who writes that it is no longer in vogue to say to anyone you meet 'How are you?' but simply to pop the question 'Do you get water in the faucets at your place?!' Another illustration was given to us by Eruch's dear mother when she told us of the testy old major who lives by their house. Not so shaken by the flood, the major continued to accuse his milkman of adulterating the milk with water. The milkman couldn't believe his ears and said "Are you out of your mind sir? Water is too precious to waste in adulterating milk — in fact we might soon be adulterating water with milk which is less scarce!"

And so like a streak of light sneaking into a dungeon, there was in retrospect the humorous side to relieve the unbroken grimness of the tragedy, and some of the incidents were reported in the papers. In one house, a water buffalo had been found on the third storey, washed in by the floods! It was more than a week before the owner could find a way to take it down from its high perch; but we like to think that in the meantime the house-wife, though ill affording the space occupied by their unexpected guest, was able to utilize its milk for the children's breakfast. Then there was the example of coexistence that man speaks so much about but deplorably fails to achieve except when sharing a common danger. During the calamity, five men, two snakes, a mouse and a cat were perched on a tree top for hours together without harming each other in any manner, each going his way when the floods subsided.

A number of homes of Baba-lovers were affected by the floods, and one such home (of a school-master) by the river bank, where weekly Baba-meetings were held, was among those that got the brunt of the waters. Although much belonging was lost, the house stood its ground and remained intact while all the neighbouring houses had toppled over in ruins — and the water that submerged the place halted just beneath the framed picture of Baba that hung on the wall! The mark of the water left on the wall still shows this clearly, while Baba looks down from the frame in a gentle reminder that faith can move mountains, but adding that the biggest mountain to be removed is one's own self which is the obstacle to knowing one's true Self.

Another home concerned was that of Ramjoo's son who lives in Poona, and whose collection of Baba-books is the pride of his heart, but though the waters surged in they did not touch the books! To quote from Ramjoo's letter: "The Great Producer did not forget to add even such small touches of drama to the "film" as to leave the books safe and DRY in a house from which things like chairs and tables had joined the flooded Mutha!

Now and again we are reminded how the Beloved is at the beck and call of all who call Him from the heart, particularly when that call springs from the unclouded faith of a child. In an account sent to Francis from Avatar's Abode (where Baba held His Australian sahavas in 1958) one of the Baba-families that lives there told of a very big bush fire they had there. The young mother described the long lone battle the handful of Baba's men and women at Avatar's Abode had with the fiercely raging fire sweeping in all directions, and which long after midnight was finally subdued without damage to property or the precious crops and fruit-trees they have established after much toil. But what I want to tell you about is that when first the seriousness of the situation became evident, the mother quickly explained to her child that there was danger because of a big fire and she must sit quietly and obediently. The child simply said "But if there is danger, we must tell BABA, and He will stop the fire", and ran to His picture that was in the room and called out His Name. The mother joined both repeating aloud "Baba, Baba, Baba" ....

To jump back to the seclusion of Meherazad, Baba has warned us that the months ahead will be most difficult ones for those staying with Him and for His lovers everywhere in India and abroad. He said that the patience of His lovers will be greatly taxed and their love for Him tested by the measure of their forbearance. As for Himself, He added, His Seclusion work will further batter His health for He has still much to suffer. And already His dear body is so infinitely tired! As for the general state of His health if I were to venture a general remark it would simply be that sometimes there seems a definite change for the better, sometimes a change for the worse — and so the ups and downs go on like waves on which our spirits ride, now high nor low. But I guess this "thermometer" of Baba's health reflects the feverishness of this sick universe that He will nurse back to spiritual health and wealth. I like the way Eruch expresses it in one of his letters to the West:

"The pulse of the Universe seems to be throbbing faster than ever, as our universal Pivot is more firmly embedded in the 'socket' of His Seclusion at Meherazad. Judging by the present feverishness of world affairs, it is no wonder our universal Patient is lying quiet — while we who attend to Him hold our breath in curious expectation of what is to happen next in the succession of "nexts" that seem to follow each other to nowhere. There is no doubt that the world, while expecting the worst calamity to befall, is also expecting the unexpected to happen. I often wonder how people at your end must feel the tension and burden of the responsibility, whereas the few that are here remain unconcerned at the feet of The One who is the most concerned for all His children in all corners of the round world."

And so we discuss and we try to understand the ways of God and God-man, and Baba assures us: "He who says he understands, has not understood anything. For that which is to be understood is beyond understanding. I am far beyond understanding, and he who knows Me becomes Me." On another occasion He said "The more you discuss God the less you understand Him. So love God and become God." How can one earn Godhood? To that Baba has said: "You can earn livelihood with the sweat of your brow, and you earn Godhood with the blood of your heart."

For Baba's village of Arangaon it is a Feast today, both literally and figuratively, the Beloved having decided to give His prasad to each villager in the form of a sumptuous meal. Baba directed the main outline of the arrangements, and He approved the menu submitted by Padri who is in charge

of the management. As you know Arangaon is at the foot of Meherabad, and although Baba will not physically be present at this mass-meal, He will further bless it by paying a visit to Meherabad this morning — the first time since His return from Poona.

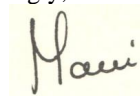
On the daily Meherazad schedule is an hour of Kavvali music in the afternoons, when records of Baba's favourite gazals are played on our little portable gramophone. As the immortal words of the great mystic poets from the past pour into song in presence of the Beloved, they seem but the cry from every lover's heart that has been pierced by love of God. In one song the lover of God says to the moth, (rough translation): "You hover around the flame and finally burn yourself in it, but with you it is only a matter of one night. I have to burn in the Beloved's love till doomsday!" In another song the poet Dag says: "You have taught me such a lesson that my mind has become void of all that I had learnt." And adds, "Of the thousands of gifts, you have given me the one Gift worth having — a desireless heart!" And what lesser gift dare we wish of that Highest of the High to whom nothing is beyond giving! Baba once said to a small gathering of His lovers in Guruprasad, "Unless you give up the breath of your desire and die to yourself, you cannot make Me the breath of your life and live for ever."

About His Silence, about the Manifestation, Baba does not any more tell us "the time is near" — perhaps because it is closer than one can perceive it, and will be upon us before we can expect or realize it. There is the fact that 1962 is foreboded as a fateful year for the whole world. Astrologers declare that a rare astral phenomenon of eight planets coming in conjunction in one house (of the Zodiac of Aquarius) will take place. One of our popular papers reproduced an excerpt from an English paper referring to this meeting of the Stars, as follows:

"Astrologers say that in February 1962, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the Sun and Moon will be in the same degree of Zodiac and it will be for the first time in something like 25,000 years! They claim that only twice before have even three planets been linked in this way, and that on the first occasion BUDDHA was born and on the second CHRIST was born. What will happen this time? Well, we have only a year to wait and see."

The astrologers who squint into the future may well wonder. Humanity that is complacent with worshipping the past, might well ponder. Whereas we fortunate few who know that HE is present amidst us again as Man, should kneel in humble gratitude and love as did the three Wise Men and offer our all to Him who is ALL in all.

Very lovingly,



REQUEST: "Heart with God, hands in work" is an old Persian line. The hands working silently behind The AWAKENER do so in love of our beloved Awakener of hearts. Apart from this Western Baba-Magazine (the only one exclusively in English), dear Warren Healy manages, on his own, to print from time to time hundreds of pamphlets or cards with articles or sayings of Baba, or poems about Baba at our request.

This Baba-literature is often distributed to His Family all over the world. Baba gave His full approval and sanction to the magazine, "The Awakener", which was begun by our dear Phyllis Frederick; and it has been uphill work ever since to keep this project of love moving, with the increasing cost for its publication far from enough to keep it pushing onward. I am sure there are many willing hands who will want to help, however small the contribution. Please send it to: Fred Winterfeldt, 200 East 66th Street, New York 21, New York.

**IMPORTANT:** Please continue to accompany cables that you send here, with a **REPLY PREPAID** form — it is much appreciated and is a help towards the correspondence budget.

However, should you forget to send a reply-paid form and wish to make up for it please do NOT do so by sending a check to Adi at Ahmednagar or to any of us with Baba. Receiving such checks for little amounts causes much inconvenience and impedes work. Instead you may please send the cable amount to Ella Winterfeldt, (200 East 66th Street, New York 21, New York) who will send it to us as advised. Please note change in address from 215 East, to 200 East). But may I repeat that what is best preferred, whenever possible, is a Reply-Paid form along with your cables that you may have to send here, irrespective of whether you expect a reply by cable or not. My loving thanks.

For your information, an LT cable from here to the States for the minimum of 22 words required, comes to about Rs. 14 - equivalent roughly of \$3. — whereas, for Commonwealth countries it comes to Rs. 9.

M.

# *forty-three/*

Meherazad, 15th November 1961.

Dear Family,

The time for another meal of Baba-news has come around — but alas there seems to be little in the larder from which to prepare a simple dish, let alone a grand meal of many courses! However, hoping that somewhere down my ancestral line there may be some French blood — French-women being able, it is said, to prepare a banquet from bones and a few condiments — I will begin to collect what bits of ingredients there are.

It is now 1.30 at Meherazad, somewhere midway between lunch hour and tea-time, the time when (as Wodehouse says) Nature seems to unbutton its waistcoat and put its feet up. The migrating birds from the Himalayas are here again, and perch on the wires and branches gossiping in their northern accent while the native birds look on with obvious tolerance. It is a crisp blue afternoon bathed in dazzling sunshine which no longer receives cold glares from us since the soil-drenching and soul-quickening rains came down upon Ahmednagar, soon after the last family letter. Although there has been far from enough of rain in regular sequence to satisfy the farmers, famine has been averted — and we saw Baba's Hill (which has been the seat of more than one of His seclusions) upholstered once again in soft green velvet. The cattle no longer go about wild-eyed like gold-seekers on the Klondyke, and many a cow now picks-and-chews on the slopes of the hills. After an absence of seven months, "Biki" the bird returned one day in late October, greeting us with all the aplomb and charm of her little self, demanding biscuit crumbs and investigating the old nooks and corners of her summer residence. Her trust in us is so firm, that she will seek our protection from another jealous bird that cannot tolerate her receiving so much attention and biscuit from us!

Last month was the festival of Dasra — when all instruments and conveyances (animal and metal) are worshipped; and clear before me rises a picture twenty three years old, of a Dasra day when we stood with beloved Baba on the balcony of a house in Mysore (South India), and watched passing along the street a fabulous pageant of bejewelled elephants and prancing horses, the gay procession dotted with towering effigies of Ravana (which would be burnt later to symbolize victory over evil). It seems so long ago, and yet the moment has stood still along with our precious moments of those bygone years, ready to be summoned on the screen of our mind — many a detail faded, yet standing out sharper in many a colour revived and enhanced by the generous brush of reminiscence.

In October the sky also stages a special appearance, of that inconstant lady, the Moon — known in English as the harvest-moon and in Gujarati as "Ruby-plate" full moon. Even if this description of her rosy complexion is somewhat an exaggeration, there is at least no doubt that she looks like a huge copper plate when parting from the horizon. From the window of His room, the Beloved and we watched Lady Moon rising once again in her full glory, and receiving a smile from her Creator seemed to make her blush all the more deeply!

However, for Meherazad this October moon was eclipsed by the illness of our dear Eruch that took such a serious turn last month, making it necessary for him to spend some weeks in hospital. Baba seemed very much to miss His "right hand" as He calls His Eruch, and seclusion or no, He drove over with the mandali



a number of times to the hospital to see him. Eruch is now well on the road to recovery, but please note that Baba wishes him to be free from the strain of correspondence, as well as from His other various Baba-jobs, for some time to come.

As our little brass clock chimes three in the afternoon, it announces that it is time for the Music Hour, when gramophone records of ghazals (mystical songs in Urdu) and bhajans (devotional songs in Hindi) are played for the Beloved's pleasure. A piece from my favourite bhajan says: "Thou art my Lord and Master through lives upon lives. My all is in Thy hands. I have dipped the cloak of my life in Thy colours, and when I wrap it around me people laugh at me and call me mad. I am ignorant as a child, Lord! I have not read the Gita, I have not studied the Koran or the Vedas. All I know is Thy Name, which I sing from morning to night."

Ghazals composed by the great mystic poets are particularly enjoyed by Baba, being the highest and finest expression of the nuances of the spiritual Path, each a cascade of agony poured from the chasm of a lover's heart in separation from the divine Beloved. When we play such Kavvali music I am reminded of what Baba said to those present during a good singing program in Poona: "If you were to receive through your hearing just a wave, a single vibration, of that "Aadi Naad"\* (Original Sound) you would lose bodily consciousness. I am that Original Sound. The best and highest of music that you hear and enjoy, is but the Seventh Shadow (shadow of a shadow of a shadow, etc.) of that Aadi Naad. But while I am with you on your level, I am pleased even with the seventh shadow (or vibration) of It."

One day in September (soon after the last family-letter went out, in fact) Baba declared Himself in the mood for a singing program by His lovers of Ahmednagar Centre, and Adi arranged it at short notice for a Sunday morning as wished by Baba — just for one hour, and only to be attended by those from Ahmednagar. During the program Baba more than once reminded the lucky and happy gathering that it should be clearly understood that His Seclusion remained unbroken, and that they were there only as a result of His sudden mood or whim to hear music! There followed another such Sunday, and yet another — but by now the gathering was reduced to a few as wished by Him, and excluded women. One well-known Kavvali singer (whose records we also have amongst our collection) offered to sing for Baba, and so it was one Sunday morning we were listening to one of the most masterly performances of singing and music we have enjoyed for a long time.

After an interval of a number of Sundays, Baba's music-mood revived enough again to have one more Sunday singing allowed — this time the singer being a young girl who had not yet met the Beloved, but has been attending the Ahmednagar Centre for some time, and the group of His Ahmednagar lovers permitted by Him to attend were a mere handful. The singer had a surprisingly mellow voice for her age, and she revealed an excellent control of the science of Indian music as her voice danced over the intricate pattern of scales with the ease of sunshine playing on the ripples of a stream. Baba told her He was happy with her singing, and gave her His blessing.

Each day at Meherazad, the pattern of the routine of life chalked out for the men and women staying with Baba, is like a gramophone record too — a record played day by day by the Master Hand that composed the music and set it to tune,

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\* Aadi is pronounced ah-dee, and Naad to rhyme with 'card'.

bringing together the varied and often widely contrasting notes of our individual temperaments and needs to fit into the universal symphony that He conducts from His Silence and His Seclusion. The time and rhythm may vary a bit, but little else.

As for the Beloved Himself, the tempo of His personal outward activities and interests seems to be slowing down every day to such an extent that we might almost imagine it at times to have stood still! Consequently for the first time, in the course of this indefinite seclusion, the deeper meaning of "seclusion" has been unfolded to us than ever we have known before! It is in such extreme contrast to the beat of the years when Baba did and conducted everything at a speed that had every one around Him breathless — whether it was during His mast work, or while on the Bus tours, or just in the ashram at Meherabad. Although even now He keeps us always "on our toes", we find ourselves doing it more from the momentum of the years of discipline with Him, than from the little "pushes" that have come to mean much to us in our too human efforts.

But I can only imagine that like the trellis of support that is removed from the plants when the gardener thinks it is time they should stand up by themselves, so now He deems it time for not only His close disciples but His lovers everywhere to carry on with the spreading of His message of Love and Truth without seeking His verbal guidance. The only question is our faith — His Love is the only Answer. His silence is more eloquent than we are apt to believe, but it can only be heard in the stillness of our mind. He is with you, in your heart, as He is here with us physically — perhaps more so! Hasn't He said, "I am nearer to you than your own breath. Remember Me, and I am there with you, and my Love will guide you."

"We are trying to fit an ocean into a little earthen pot" writes a Baba-worker from Hamirpur. The humble earthen pot he referred to is the small and primitive village of Nauranga where the Baba-lovers have built, with their hands and heart, a temple to house the full-size statue of the Beloved, of which I spoke in the July family-letter. The "ocean" is the gigantic program they are going to hold in the village, on the occasion of the "Moorti-Sthapana" (establishing of the Statue) in the Meher Mandir on 26th November at Nauranga, and where lovers of Baba from all over India will converge at the invitation of Hamirpur's Baba-family of thousands. To Adi is naturally given the privilege of inaugurating the Mandir, and the guest of honour will be our dear Rani who will make the three-day journey, with Adi.

When one thinks of the giant body of men and women (from all over Hamirpur district and a number from all parts of India) the village will accommodate for this unique occasion, and further when one thinks of the amount of time and heart and the barely afforded money these Baba-folks of Hamirpur district have put into it, one is at the least amazed! — but only for a while, until one remembers the mettle of their love for their Beloved, Baba, to which Baba has referred on many an occasion, Across the district of Hamirpur in the north of India, and the state of Andhra in the south, the flame of His Love has been so fanned and has spread over so wide an area that it could truthfully be described as a "forest-fire"!

One of the men from Meherazad will attend the occasion, and has been entrusted with a number of precious articles associated personally with Baba: an old coat, sandals, a much-handled cricket bat, a letter in His hand-writing dated 1922, a curl of His early reddish-gold hair, and other things to be exhibited in the Mandir for the lovers to take darshan of. But my sketch of this unique event will not be complete without a passage quoted from Adi's speech (which of course will not be delivered till the 26th!):

"Wherever love for God enters, there is a temple. Thus every heart that holds such love is a living temple of God. Without that love, the most lofty edifices or resplendent houses of Prayer are but an empty echo of man's mockery of worship. God is Love personified, and when a marble or bronze image of His physical Form expresses the love of so many of His lovers, it is brought to life with their breath, it is 'living' with the beats of His lovers' hearts, and where that Form is housed is truly a living temple of God. Thus truly blessed is this Meher Mandir!"

We have just passed Divali or the festival of lights — it symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, and to "chase away evil" it is accompanied by a lot of noise supplied by all variety of firecrackers, when no moment of the night is sacred from it. As the Hindus who love to spread the celebration of their wedding ceremonies to a number of days, do the same with their festivals, you can imagine the exuberance of the youngsters and the groans of the elders as Divali drives in! But it is all in the spirit of gaiety and 'unanimously' shared by the nation, when all are drawn together in the warmth and blaze of the lights, and the discordant notes of communal bickering is momentarily drowned in the boom of firecrackers. As every year, a scattering of flames at the end of oil-dipped wicks in earthenware lamps, winked through the night on the steps of Baba's room and elsewhere at Meherazad, and we lighted a few sparklers gathered round the Beloved, on the verandah. Each year Baba's Centre in Poona brings out a Divali greeting card with a Baba-message to send out to all, and on this year's the message was:

#### I AM THE ONE

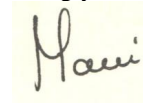
"I am the One Who is always lost and found among mankind.

"It is your love for yourself that loses Me  
and it is your love for Me that finds Me.

"Love Me above everything, for now  
while I am in your midst, I am  
most easily found as I really am."

= MEHER BABA=

Very lovingly,



# *forty-four/*

Meherazad, 14th January 1962.

Dear Family,

Babe in the manger,  
cradled in straw,  
Grant us to see  
What the Wise Men saw.  
Grant us to know  
what the Wise Men knew:  
All Beauty and Power and Love  
in YOU.

This Christmas prayer was in a greeting card that was amidst others heaped on the dining table, along with a pile of cables that expressed the love of many of Baba's western family and greeted the Beloved as He came in to breakfast on that Birthday morn. To us Christmas is a "living" Birthday as are all the birth-days of the Ancient One, since we know that in His greatness He is once again as Man amidst our littleness. We express this rejoicing of our hearts in varied little ways, and for our sake He shares in our expression of it, playing with us our "dolls-house" games as any loving Mother with her children. The dining wore a very Christmassy air, and the table was laid with tall white paper angels and a colourful scene of the occasion at Bethlehem 1961 years ago, in fascinating details (even to a mouse in the thatched roof of the manger!). The weather too contributed its share in the atmosphere and it was a really cold morning. There was a lovely cake a Baba-lover had sent and joy was complete when Baba gave a prasad of chocolates to each one including as always the staff at Meherazad. Music was provided by a little golden ball (a Swiss musical toy) that played "Silent Night", a gift from His devoted Campens, Marvin and Jeannie, when they were in Meherazad on a one-hour visit shortly before Christmas. Accompanying them were Kari and Joseph Harb, dear disciples from the U.S.A. who have settled down in Poona (with Baba's permission) to be near to their Beloved, on their first visit since coming to India some months ago.

As for the New Year, what best can we wish us? Let us wish that whatever it holds, may it hold our hold on His daaman; and, whether we deserve it or not, may we earn a little more of His Love. I remember Baba once said to a keenly intellectual aspirant, that it is impossible to "learn" God but one can "earn" His grace, and His grace can descend only when we can love with that love, and so it is an endless divine circle of which we can divine little!

I know how deeply you dear ones of His western family are wishing the wish that 1962 brings the answer to an old wish of many a New Year: to see Him physically again. This might be, for some of you at least, because even though there appears

not the least possibility of Baba traveling to the West in 1962, there is a large possibility that He will allow His lovers, from both the East and the West to see Him for a short span in the month of May during His sojourn in Poona at Guruprasad. Then again, the span may be as short as an hour (as it was last year) or as long as a week — He won't tell us from now. As there's no telling with the One Who won't tell, you must not hold anything I say here as "evidence against me". In my next family-letter I hope to state more definitely — till then please consider it only as a POSSIBILITY, and know that I have simply been chirping like the katydid, only my song is: "Baba-might, Baba-mightn't" ...

And please note very carefully NOT to let this prompt you to write here queries regarding it, for apart from the busier-than-ever time ahead with the moving to Poona in March, we will not be able to approach Baba for the necessary replies. Those whoever can conveniently afford both the time and money to come with the prospect of seeing Baba for perhaps just one hour, may do so — that is, IF Baba decides to turn the possibility into a certainty. In the March letter I will let you know of this, and will give all the details necessary. So you must have patience till then.

Speaking of patience inspires me to tell you of a disciple in north India who was on tenter-hooks for months, his fate in the hands of a near-naked man with the nature of a child, the speech of a Sanskrit scholar and the bearing of a king — in short, the Mast Nilkanthwala. The disciple, Kumar, had been told by Baba to bring the Mast to Meherazad, but only if and when the Mast showed complete willingness to do so. As Kumar was longing to visit Baba and could only do so if the Mast agreed to come, he had a wonderful opportunity to exercise patience! At last dawned the day when the Mast was not only willing but anxious to come to Baba, and Baba had a telegram sent to bring him immediately. A lightening and brightening in the atmosphere of Meherazad was markedly felt by all — not only because of the Mast's presence but because it reflected the Beloved's happiness, for Baba appears never so happy as when working with a Mast. He crammed in more hours than He might have, knowing Nilkanthwala would any day take it into his head to want to leave — and Baba never keeps a mast against his will. After about a week's stay the divinely delightful visitor was escorted back to Rishikesh in the Himalayas where his own circle of admirers awaited him.

There have been headlines in important newspapers, declaring the opening and successful running of a great Industrial Fair in Delhi. And one day in one of the papers appeared a very small para on a back page, like a leaf amongst a forest of words — but a leaf that shone moist with the fresh dew of love's labour. It read: "Spiritual Touch at the Fair. Spirituality and science co-exist at the Indian Industries Fair. Overlooking the pavillions which exhibit modern machinery is a small stall selling literature about a religious man (Meher Baba) who is worshipped by many. Two of the disciples, distributing folders to visitors, said: 'We admit the fair is an odd place for such literature, but we want more and more people to know about our Guru.' Immediately a man bought a booklet and hurried for pleasure-boating on the blue pool nearby."

Amidst the intimidating array of stalls displaying the mechanical moneymaking devices and giants that science has given birth to for slavery to man, was this little Baba-Stall that stood alone and unique in its purpose and service, proclaiming the message of LOVE that God has given to man for conquering himself. It was because of a handful of Baba-lovers' dogged perseverance against incredible odds that this little corner in the Industrial arena was obtained (and free of charge!), in which they fitted a table and cupboard accommodating a complete set of books by and about Baba and varied folders and booklets with His discourses, sayings and messages. Crowning it were placed three large pictures of Baba always

garlanded with fresh flowers. A letter to Adi from the devoted Sakhare couple (Wing-commander and his pretty wife stationed at Delhi) said: "I must say Baba has given us a wonderful opportunity of serving in this unique way. Thousands of people of all castes, creeds, communities and nationality visit the Stall, have "darshan" of His photo and hear His Name. Occasionally some sceptic starts an argument and that argument collects a bigger crowd and so more people get Baba's message. The other day a person got excited and started thumping the counter demanding an explanation! I coolly folded my hands and told him that nobody was forcing him to believe and as such he may please depart. This made the whole crowd boo him, and his friends had to drag him away. Many come and look at Baba's photos and pass on — while a number of them stay to ask about Him and buy some of His literature. One has to be prepared to answer all kinds of questions — some go away satisfied, some smile and walk off. It is all a wonderful experience .....

A heart awakened in His Love is not confined by convention or circumstance to be the recipient of an opportunity to share that Love and sings His Name. Some time ago, from another part of India, a letter arrived from a devoted one whom unfortunate circumstances had placed for a time within prison walls, saying:

"It is really a great privilege for me, as Dear Baba has given me the chance to tell of His Divine Name and Message to the "fallen ones". For Him, saints and sinners are equal. The criminals also need spiritual upliftment (perhaps more so), and even if it may not be in this life, I am sure in the course of future births they will get the benefit from hearing Baba's Name now. I am really happy that even in this prison Baba has created such a lovely atmosphere for me to spread His message. The staff, jailor and the prisoners love me. The Jailor was very co-operative and arranged for distribution of Baba's literature and put Dear Baba's portrait in a conspicuous place in the Prayer Hall. Books on Baba's Life and His Messages are kept in the jail library for circulation. The reformist teacher is being contacted by me daily and he helps me to tell the prisoners about Baba's Love and His Message. During the three days of Deepavali (Divali) the jail barracks resounded with Baba's bhajans, kirtans, and group talks ... One brother convict is now deeply devoted to Beloved Baba and is very helpful to me in spreading His Message of Love to co-convicts in the jail..... "

And so a prison too can be a temple when there is love! And a church, without love can surely be little more than a prison.

Verbally and thru letters we have had so many praise-filled accounts of the Moorti-Sthapana occasion at Nauranga that I find myself incapable of weaving a picture of it without getting entwined in pages of detail. However, you can get some idea of it from the impressions of a Baba-worker from Poona who had participated, in a most interesting write-up appearing in the coming issue of The AWAKENER — so be sure not to miss your copy.

It is not always the object achieved, but the achieving of it that is of real importance. Invariably nearly every work for Baba's Cause is beset with obstacles all along the way, and so success at the end is humbly prized. Thus it was too at Nauranga. And, out of all the efforts and trials and errors and labour, were born thru His compassion some beautiful messages from the Beloved, so that what we construct out of devotion serves not as thongs to bind us further but as reins to guide us to a truer remembrance of Him. These messages were sent out by Adi in a Circular to all in the East, and which I here reproduce:

Issued on 15/12/61

During Meher Baba's stay at Guruprasad in Poona in 1960 a number of His lovers from the district of Hamirpur, U.P., expressed a long-felt desire to have a life-size statue made of Him during His life-time, and house it in a Mandir built for it in the village of Nauranga, so that His appearance should be preserved in a permanent material for succeeding generations.

Being the slave He is of the love of His lovers, Baba acceded to His lovers' wish, but at the same time warned them against making His statue a focus of empty ceremonial worship, and not to call the building which housed it a Mandir (Temple) but a Dham (House or Abode); reminding them of what He had often said regarding temples and ceremonies, that the real House of God is the heart, and the real worship is that service done in love to one's fellow-beings.

The Dham was built, but the installation of the statue was deferred until the Annual Mela this year November 25 - 27, when Baba sent word to them that over the entrance of Meher Dham should be written in large letters:

"I BELONG TO NO RELIGION. MY RELIGION IS LOVE.  
EVERY HEART IS MY TEMPLE. ALTHOUGH IT IS IN LOVE  
THAT YOU HAVE BUILT THIS HOUSE OF STONE I AM ONLY  
IN IT WHEN YOUR HEART BRINGS ME HERE." /

And inside the building should be written:

"ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT  
CEREMONIES COVER ME BUT PURE WORSHIP REVEALS ME."

He also sent two Messages to be read out to all who gathered for the Occasion:

"On this particular Occasion I will be amongst  
you as one of My own lovers."

"All those who surrender themselves in love to Me  
will see and adore and realize the Reality  
behind My Form."

Baba says that the strain of His seclusion has told upon His health very badly. He also says that wherever He will be, His strict seclusion will continue till He breaks His Silence.

\* \* \*

Note: "Dham" is pronounced to rhyme with "farm".

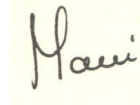
Not long after returning from Nauranga in north India, Adi was traveling to the south, accompanied by Jal, to attend a gathering of Baba-workers in several places in the state of Andhra. At one place it was to lay a foundation stone for a future Avatar Meher Baba Centre; at another to inaugurate a Free Dispensary for the Poor that they are planning; at still another to attend the completion of the Andhra Meher Dham that is to shelter the life-size bronze statue of the Beloved completed in 1960, with a large annex that will accommodate a gathering of Baba-lovers or for poor-feeding programs. There was a showing of the Baba-Film taken at the Sahavas at Myrtle Beach by Charmian Corrinet, and there was discussion on the further circulation of His book GOD SPEAKS. The lovers of Andhra are the first to print a translation of God Speaks, rendered in Telegu by Sri Thirumal Rao (then Governor of Vindhya Pradesh) and they are soon hoping to print a second edition. And so like the spring in the mountain that must bubble forth, love awakened must seek expression; and through our expression of His Love, God can be heard "speaking" from His ineffable Silence.

Bombay city is launching its own Avatar Meher Baba Centre, a fine hall acquired for the purpose by the untiring efforts and main contribution of two Baba-lovers, and which is planned to be inaugurated on the Beloved's Birthday. Baba has appointed this as the central body of the different Baba-centres in suburbs of Bombay that serve to spread His message of Love. S. Sigantoria, one of the main pillars of Bombay Centre, in the course of his private business concern has had the new year's calendar printed by the thousand for his clients as usual — but with a wonderful difference: each month is headed by Baba-sayings. One of these is:

"When, from the depths of his heart, man desires something  
more real than material power, the wave of destruction will recede.  
Thence peace will come, joy will come, light will come."

Some thing for his clients to chew over!

Very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Maui', is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the typed name 'Maui' in the signature block.



# *forty-five/*

Meherazad, 15th March 1962.

Dear Family,

I know how much you are looking forward to this letter in which I promised to tell you your fortunes for 1962: whether or not you will see your Beloved. All your hands being stretched out towards Him, I could easily have "read your palms", but thought it best to ask directly of the Maker of fortunes. Beloved Baba wishes me to tell you that He will give His company to His lovers, Easterners and Westerners alike, for one week in November (Nov. 1 - Nov. 7) this year, and NOT in May as was mentioned earlier as a possibility. Please read very carefully the details set out in the enclosed Circular.

The shower of love that poured down onto Meherazad in cables and greeting cards from all over the world on the Beloved's Birthday touched the Ocean of His Heart. BABA SENDS HIS LOVE TO YOU ONE AND ALL. The message that Baba gave for The Day was:

"On this anniversary of My Birthday I give you My blessings for the deathday of your false selves and for the Birthday in Me of your One True Self."

From His beautiful Centre in Myrtle Beach (U.S.A.) Elizabeth wrote: "This is the day of Baba's Birthday that we are celebrating at the Centre this afternoon. Quite a number will be coming. It is "yesterday" in India that Baba's birthday was celebrated there — a lot of love is flowing around/the world as the sun dawns in the various centres where hearts are concentrating on BABA on His Birthday."

Those who live in His Love, expressed the rejoicing of their hearts in varied ways in observing the 25th of February: the Day that graces the illusion of Time with its glorious significance for all creation. Reports of this year's Birthday celebrations have been streaming in, in letters from all over, and the combined effect is that of a grand chorus of different voices singing the Beloved's BIRTHDAY SONG with one heart, to the rhythm of His Love. To give part or all of those letters here is impossible, and to try to trim it to a general para begins to seem equally so. Feeding hundreds of poor in His Name was part of nearly every Baba-Centre's program, as also the "Nam-Jap" (continuous repetition of His Name) — in parts of Andhra this has been observed for weeks, and is still in progress in Vijayawada while this is being written. Booklets, pamphlets and magazines were printed and distributed, giving Baba's message and life-sketch. In a number of places the general public was encouraged to participate, and printed invitations were handed from door to door. Thus many new ones came, and went. Some came and were drawn to come again, and later said: "Oh why didn't we know of BABA before!"

In Poona, the foundation stone for the future building of the Centre was laid by Joseph Harb as expressly wished by Baba. The whole of Poona was celebrating that Day, with the streets all dressed up in gay flags and decorations — for it happened to be national Election day too! One can visualise the time to come when such festivity will be for His Birthday alone. In Bombay the new Centre, MEHER HALL, was opened by our dear Rani (the Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda) who is, as one said, "a combination of a great lady and a very humble Baba-lover." The evening occasion was a tremendous affair, held in one of the big public halls which was packed to capacity. An amusing incident at the Opening was that among the two dozen pairs of shoes that were stolen while the gathering was seated (squatting on the floor Indian fashion) inside Meher Hall, were the new shoes of those young Baba-lovers who had prankishly hidden the shoes of fellow sahavasis at the Gathering at Meherabad in 1958! A Baba lover writes: "The victims had to go home shoeless. However, it had been a wonderful morning and everyone was happy, including the shoeless."

A unique greeting card sent to Baba on His Birthday was from the Deaf and Dumb children of Nanhi Dunya (Little World), an organization in Dehra Dun. It was a little portrait of Baba painted on a sliver of wood from a tree, and beneath it they wrote: "Give us speech, O Silent Meher Baba! Baba wired them the message: "Your love for me speaks more than any speech, and the only thing worthy of hearing is my Word of words. I send my Love Blessing to you all of Nanhi Dunya."

One of the mandali, Bhau presented Baba with a play, which was put on by the Baba groups in Dehra-Dun and Bhopal on the Birthday. The play (JAI MEHER) in Hindi, is based on the theme of "God Speaks" and tells of Baba and of humanity's hope in the Avatar. On the morning of 8th March it was put on by the Ahmednagar Meher Centre, on the stage of Sarosh Cinema, a special show for the Beloved and all His family from Meherazad, Meherabad and Arangaon. As we came into Ahmednagar and as Baba's car drove past the Idgah (Mohammedan prayer ground) we heard the loud chanting of prayers and saw many kneeling figures bowing towards the East. It was the morning of Ramzan Id, and little did these devout realize that they were blessed by the presence of the One to whom belong all prayers and praise.

The Baba-lovers who produced, directed, sang and enacted the play did a very good job of it, despite incredible obstacles cropping up in their amateurish path till the very last moment. One of these was the loss of Time — the one who played the role of "Time" was unable to do his part and a new member had to be coached just a day before the show! About the same time the father of "Happiness" had a serious heart attack and had to be rushed to hospital. The hired costumes failed to arrive in time, and so the dress rehearsal had to be skipped. As one writes from Delhi: "I have found that in Baba's work initially all sorts of difficulties come up; at times they are heartbreaking, but eventually it turns out wonderfully well." So did the play. The background music and stage effects were most artistically created. The scene of the Ocean, with the stirring of the waves when the first Whim emerged, was as impressive as it was enchanting; and phases of Baba's boyhood and His meeting with Babajan, Sai Baba and Upasani Maharaj, were flashed on the screen in silhouettes. The birth of the Avatar was staged in a cradle scene, when little Merwan is sung to sleep by His young Mother, a role most realistically portrayed. When Earth, groaning under the burden of evil and suffering that she can no longer bear, cries for the Avatar, Time

assures her He will come. When queen Maya is enraged at mother Earth for singing His glory, she asks why the Avatar observes silence, except that He fears Maya? Earth replies "He observes Silence in order to silence Maya!" And when LOVE appears, Maya retreats in fear.

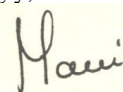
Apart from His all-sufficing presence, Baba encouraged them in His unfailing compassion, often starting a round of applause whenever they deserved or needed it. When the show was over He called each of the troupe to Him, praising his or her part in the entertainment, and letting them all know how happy their love made Him.

A well-sung verse of Kabir says: "Everybody talks of dying, but none knows how to die! If you must die, then die such a "death" that there are no more deaths after that dying." Of course the dying he means is the dying to oneself or desires. One cannot do it without the Master's grace, which sometimes descends in the form of a great suffering so that one is made completely dependent on HIM and one grows completely resigned to His Will. Then suffering becomes indeed the blessing it is said to be. We have seen such a resignation in Aloo, a young Baba-lover of Ahmednagar who was a cripple for over twenty years, confined to her bed, unable to walk and scarcely to talk, the movements of her sadly wasted limbs and frail body hopelessly restricted from advanced dystrophy of the muscles. But with her suffering and resignation her love for Baba kept growing. Soon after her birthday recently she developed a severe bronchial complication, suffering a week of agony when she could not even lie down, the while she could not help asking Him to release her from this body. Baba's Name was on her lips day and night, and she repeatedly assured those around her that her Beloved would come to see her. He did! Breaking His own rules of seclusion, Baba drove over one hot mid-afternoon to her home to give her His darshan and tender embrace. Two days later she passed away — a lover whose life was a silent tribute to His Love. Her younger sister, Dhunn, who is suffering from a similar physical handicap, has in addition to her great love for Baba, a great sense of humour which is mirrored in her laboriously hand-written letters that serve as moments of entertainment to Baba amidst the stress of His universal work. Blessed are they who see the light of His Beauty in the darkness of their suffering ....

Time seems to have marched by so fast, and another March is here, the last day of which will see us in Poona again. The countryside seems to be flexing its muscles for the onslaught of the approaching summer, and Biki with the other feathered guests from the north will soon be ready for the long flight home. The noonday sun already shines meltingly hot and makes the thought of our shifting to Guruprasad a welcome one. Before long the task of packing will weigh uppermost on the minds of Meherazadians, and it won't be easy for some of us to keep tucking away the unhappy thought of parting from our pets that stay on at Meherazad with Kaka. The Beloved's seclusion continues, and He continues to ask us to remain happy in His Wish and Will. Baba says:

"When one remains fully and completely resigned to the  
Divine Will of God, all service - sacrifice - solitude -  
seeking - and surrender - merely symbolize one's love  
for God. "

Very lovingly,



CIRCULAR  
Sent out by  
Adi K. Irani

Issued on 21-3-1962.

All lovers of Avatar Meher Baba in the East and West are eagerly awaiting the word from Baba regarding the possibility of His giving them darshan some time this summer during His stay in Poona. In response to this, Beloved Baba has directed me to send out this circular to all His lovers conveying the following: -

- (1) Baba will be in Poona at Guruprasad Bungalow, 24 Bund Garden Road, from the 31st of March till the 30th of June 1962.
- (2) Baba will NOT give His darshan in May 1962 or any time during His stay of three months in Guruprasad, Poona. During this period, except for those whom He will call expressly for some work, no one should visit Him or express a desire to do so.
- (3) Baba says that His Seclusion will continue to remain as strict as now and He wants His lovers to continue to help Him remain undisturbed whether He is in Seclusion in Poona or in Ahmednagar or elsewhere.
- (4) Baba will return to Meherazad, Ahmednagar — on the 1st of July 1962.

IMPORTANT: Attention please!

- (5) Baba with the men mandali will make a special visit to Guruprasad, Poona — on the 30th of October 1962 expressly to give darshan to His Western and Eastern lovers for seven days from the 1st of November 1962.
- (6) Baba wants all concerned to bear in mind that His permission to visit Him at that time in November will be only for His lovers, who are close to Him in His love, and is not meant for the general public.
- (7) Baba has lovingly agreed to allow all His lovers from the East and the West to visit Him in His Seclusion during this period of seven days from the 1st of November to the 7th of November 1962, between 4.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m.

Lovers from overseas ONLY will be allowed to visit Baba at Guruprasad Bungalow, Poona — each morning from 9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. in addition to the afternoon sessions. Easterners must NOT visit Baba in the mornings.

Baba wants all to strictly abide by His following wishes:-

- (a) Baba will not see any lovers individually.
- (b) Baba says that only those who can afford conveniently to make the trip may do so being mindful not to risk their health and jobs.
- (c) Baba says that those unable to make the trip due to unfavorable circumstances should not feel upset but remain resigned in His love.

- (d) Baba does NOT wish any of His lovers to write to anyone at Meherazad or to Adi K. Irani any problems or queries regarding this visit. Any lover of Baba who wants to come to Poona during the period and can afford to make the trip is free to do so. None should seek or expect to receive any special permission or instructions from this end. Each one visiting must understand that he or she comes on his or her own responsibility in every respect.
- (e) Baba wants His lovers to fully help keep His Seclusion undisturbed by:
  - (i) Not seeking nor expecting to have an interview with Him.
  - (ii) Not seeking His advice on personal problems of oneself or others.
  - (iii) Not putting questions to Him, spiritual or otherwise, not expecting any spiritual discourses.
- \* (f) Baba wants all those coming to Poona to make their own arrangements as regards conveyance, stay, food and other personal comforts. These arrangements must be seen to by the persons concerned without seeking the least aid from resident mandali at Meherazad, from Adi or his office.
- (g) Baba says that by observing all these points His lovers will help Him to keep intact His Seclusion and therefore those deciding to visit Him must come fully determined to please Baba by observing His wishes.

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NOTE CAREFULLY

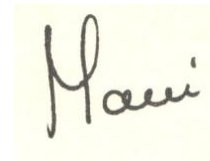
\* For the Western Lovers coming from abroad, Baba has asked me to add the following:-

- (1) You must make your own travelling arrangements right up to Poona.
- (2) You must ensure your return ticket from Bombay, from your travel agents.
- (3) Each one who is coming to India in November, should write to Meherjee by AIRMAIL, on the 1st of October, a short letter simply stating (in capital block letters), name and address, date and time of arrival at Poona, as well as duration of stay in Poona. Address your letter to: Meherjee Karkaria, Meher Villa, 7 Gidney Park, Salisbury Park Road, Poona - 1, India.

Please do NOT expect a reply to your letter to Meherjee.

- (4) Meherjee will reserve for you accommodation available at one of the hotels in Poona, at reasonable rates, and will arrange to meet you at the Poona railway station on your arrival.
- (5) Those who cannot afford or wish to stay the full week allowed, may stay lesser number of days.
- (6) Baba puts no restriction on the type of food eaten during the visit, non-vegetarian or otherwise.
- (7) There is no restriction on any sightseeing in India, or enroute while returning, AFTER the Darshan week is over on the 7th of November.

And lastly, a word from me to help you decide on suitable clothing for November in Poona. I suggest light clothing, but with warm jackets and pull-overs for the cold hours of the mornings and evenings, which can conveniently be removed during the hot afternoon hours. To the women I would say wear comfortable skirts and foot-wear for the darshan hours, as the formal apparel of tight skirts and high heels will prove an inconvenience, and a definite handicap for those wanting to take His darshan or preferring to sit Indian fashion on the ground.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature appears to be 'Haei' written in a cursive, slightly stylized script.

# *forty-six/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 10th May 1962.

Dear Family,

We have been in Guruprasad since six weeks — long enough for the Baba-lovers in Poona to groan and bemoan the fact that half the time has already expired and now only six more weeks remain before their Beloved leaves for Meherazad. They argue that even if Baba does not allow them to visit Him, just the knowledge that Baba is in the same town makes all the difference, for the very atmosphere of Poona becomes enlivened and vibrating with His presence, and they are content. Not that they have had a chance to prove their words, for He who is "as soft as butter and as hard as steel" has found His heart melting enough to call them now and again on a visit, mostly on a Sunday afternoon, when they could gather at His feet during a bhajan or kavvali singing. Usually it's been the intimate group of a few Baba-families (including those from Bombay holidaying here), but once in a while the reins are relaxed enough for all lovers of Baba in Poona to receive the opportunity.

Guruprasad, which is but a silent expression of Shantaben's (our dear Maharani of Baroda's) love for Baba, is not only our summer haven, but the "heaven" of His many adorers wherein they might be allowed when God wills it. But although Poona is a second home to us and Guruprasad is so well situated, it takes us Meherazadians a few days to get used to the city noises that carry on long past our customary early bed-time: all variety of road traffic, dogs barking, sometimes music blaring over the loudspeaker or the noisome gaiety of festive processions, hammering of roofs being repaired before the onset of monsoon, and the trains with their puffing steam-engines and piercing whistles — for the station is not far away. This is quite a contrast from the quiet of Meherazad evenings when the bursting open of the seed pod of a flowering tree (the 'pangara') sounds as startling as a revolver shot, and where the serenading of a stray cat splinters the silent surface of the night like a rock flung in a pool.

We heard a catfight at Guruprasad too, right in the hall where Baba and His assembly were gathered, although no cats were present! The feline screams, as well as the barking of a dog, whistling of birds, sound of musical instruments playing Indian and Western tunes, were all being emitted by a gently-spoken little man — a professional known as Swami, whose half hour performance of imitations and impersonations was an offering of love to Baba. He had attended the Birthday program at His Centre in Bombay and expressed his desire to be allowed to perform some day before Baba. Some of his dialogues, in different languages and different voices, were brilliant — and it was good to see the Beloved's bursts of laughter. Along with His Love-blessing, Baba gave him the prize of His own kerchief.

When the Swami heard of the absence of one of the mandali, Pendu, who was in hospital for a major operation, he insisted on visiting the hospital and giving a little private performance exclusively for Pendu, saying it is what a patient would need most. We heard that it cheered up Pendu no end, and of course the nurses and other staff who got to the ward in time had a good laugh too!

At the time of writing, poor dear Pendu has been in hospital over five weeks, and not for another couple of weeks or more is he expected to return to Guruprasad to his brother disciples who miss him very much, and to his Friend

and Master who has been more than ever with him throughout his days of crisis and pain.

Then there have been programs of singing: "kavvali" by a fine singer from Nagar who had sung for Baba in Meherazad, and who has that purity of voice and drive needed for rendering these songs of great Sufi poets. At the end of a song, or even in the middle of it, Baba would explain to us the meaning of some line particularly pleasing to Him in voicing a true lover's feeling. In one such line the lover says to the Beloved: "I have no wish, I have no desire — not even for God-realization. May the agony of your Love abide with me always!"

Another says, "Try a million ways to keep your daaman from my grasp, I still claim to have You — for You, and You alone are in my heart — there is naught else."

Still another cries: "Parched with thirst we cling to our empty glasses, for when You lift the wine-jar O Saki, You will pour out to fill to the brim!"

There was the inevitable "bhajan" singing — by our young bhajan group of Poona, who prepared many a new song to regale the Beloved with — as usual composing the words and setting them to music. Baba liked them all and had some of them sung again — particularly the song "Nauranga" which the bhajan boys had sung at Nauranga on the memorable occasion of the installing of Baba's statue at Meher Dham. And there was "scientific" style singing (which requires infinite precision and vocal command over the intricate patterns of scales), rendered beautifully by a woman who sings over the radio, and has come to love Baba. As she is from Nagar and regularly attends the Centre there, Baba heard her in Meherazad, and was so pleased with her singing that she was called to sing at programs in Guruprasad.

The 6th of this month was our sixth Sunday since coming here, and the small intimate group (of about 150) gathered at His feet had the joy of watching their Beloved truly enjoying a recital by three musicians from the Music department of the All-India-Radio station in Poona. The instruments were the Sarangi (played with a bow), the Tabla (drum) and the Sitar (seven-stringed). The artists proved their superb mastery over their instruments and it was as entrancing to watch them as to listen to them. The speed, grace and poise with which they played the instruments made us realize how akin music is to dancing! It was a thrilling recital, and the embrace that each three received from Baba was their happy reward, as they had performed for love of Him. When Baba told them their performance was the best, the principal player said it was due to His presence, for they had never before played so well.

Of course, to the assembly of Baba-lovers, the entertainment aspect of a program is merely incidental. To them the performance or music is a reflection of the beauty of His presence, and the singing is often an expression of their own hearts. And so while they sit before Baba, drinking in His sweetness and following the endearing expressions of His face, the artist sings for and to Baba. As Baba said, to the last kavval, "None of these people will really understand the songs. But don't let that bother you. You are singing to me, and that is enough — for I alone know their true meaning."

Often on an odd holiday or Sunday morning Baba has called a meeting of "The Boys" (Baba-lovers and workers in Poona, from 8 to 80 years of age) where work and pleasure, solemnity and laughter, are blended as only the master-hand of our beloved Master can do. Among these have already been four meetings



devoted exclusively to discussing and deciding on the manifold arrangements to be made for the oncoming East-West gathering of Baba-lovers in November. It is expected that a minimum number of 2,000 Baba-lovers will arrive in Poona from outstations and many points including the difficult task of obtaining accommodation for such a large number for their stay of seven days in Poona, were considered and put forth for Baba's decision and His instructions to the various workers concerned. The Westerners' hotel accommodation (and arranging for their police registration etc.) will be seen to by Meherjee, while Baba has appointed His brother Jal to see to their "sightseeing" in Poona — taking them round in batches to the important places associated with Baba's life and work.

For your special attention, here are a few points in addition to the ones intimated to you in the last family-letter:

- (1) Baba's wish is that you must NOT bring any gift for anyone in India neither for BABA nor for any of His folk in India.
- (2) Those planning to come by Sea, please inform Meherjee sooner of your definite coming — i.e. do not wait for the margin of October 1st stated in the previous letter.
- (3) Those coming by sea, might not be able to time their arrival too near to the date of Darshan beginning from 1st November. In that case, if they find they have more time on hand than they wish to spend in Poona prior to Baba's arrival from Meherazad on 30th October, they may visit (on their own) other parts of India for sight-seeing if they wish to do so — keeping in mind however, not to visit "masts" or saints. Also, anyone may, for reasons of work and business, visit places enroute prior to arriving in Poona by the end of October.
- (4) I mentioned about the available reservation that will be made for you at hotels in Poona at reasonable rates. For your information I would like to explain that "reasonable rates" would mean about \$4 to 5 per day, including meals (breakfast, lunch, supper, plus morning and afternoon tea or coffee). It might also help you to know, the hotel rate in Bombay is about \$6 minimum, per day, at any standard hotel like "The Grand" and others.

Kabir has said that were he to make the whole earth his paper, the seven seas his ink, the trees of all the forests his quills, it would not suffice to sing God's praise. But he sang all the same, in thousands of verses which have been sung throughout India, drawing his similes from the common things of life for the common man to realize the unreality of all else save The One. Like the sun that cannot help shining, the beauty of God once glimpsed must be expressed in one form or another, and reaches quickest the hearts least clouded with the hoard of conscious desires: the children, for whom Baba expresses a special love.

Francis Brabazon, one of the mandali here, has presented Baba with a new book of songs. He began composing for children some songs in praise of "Meher" (Baba), putting them to simple stirring tunes. Baba wanted more songs — Francis composed more, singing one to Him every day, his "arti" to His Lord, happy in this God-given opportunity of entertaining God. Finally Baba set the limit of 25 songs, and then expressed His Wish that they be printed as a book. This has been done, under the title "LET US, THE PEOPLE, SING". It was a Birthday gift to Baba, and I know that no Baba-lover would want to be without a copy of it. I know too what

a perfect present it can make for children and grown-ups alike. The pity is that the tunes have not been printed, as explained in the preface. Francis also says in the preface, "Some of the children who hear and sing these songs will, when they grow up, make better ones — and so on for seven hundred years when God-Man will again visit us, and there will be master-singers among us who will entertain Him and so ease for a moment the burden He bears."

The book is printed on handmade paper and is limited to 500 copies. Your copy may be ordered from: Mr. John Bass, 225 East 106th St., Apt. 17-C, New York 29, N.Y. (U.S.A.). Please note that the price is \$1.25 per copy, including postage from India to the distributor abroad, but not including regional postage at your end.

ATTENTION: On 15th June, Adi will issue the following circular.

Although it concerns the 10th of July, it is being reproduced here so that there is ample time for all to know and let others concerned know, wherever they are:

"On the 10th of July 1962, the 37th Anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete Silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th of July to midnight of the 10th of July, in accordance with the local time.

"Those who, for practical reasons, find that it is not possible to observe silence for the 24 hours on Tuesday the 10th of July 1962, should observe complete fast instead, for twelve hours of that day, from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. During this fast nothing must be consumed - not even water.

"Those who are fasting for the 12 hours on July 10th, should also observe partial fast in the morning from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. by taking only one cup of tea or coffee, before beginning their complete fast at 8.00 a.m.

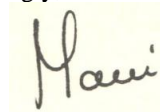
"Baba sends His Love-Blessing to each one of His lovers for the Silence Day."

We expect to leave with Baba on 1st July, and the unpacking and settling down once more in Meherazad routine takes some time. I am sure you will lovingly understand therefore, if the next family letter comes a couple of weeks later than the usual interval of 8 weeks.

Although this time Baba leaves Poona earlier than usual, there will be less days of absence for His Poona people to count on impatient fingers, as He will be back before the 1st of November, for the great East-West darshan.

With love from all at Guruprasad,

very lovingly,



P.S. ERRATA: in para 8, line 9, of the last family-letter (dated 15th March) please read "West" instead of "East". It should read:

".... many kneeling figures bowing towards the WEST".

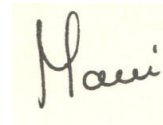
15th May

This news letter could not be complete without including Sunday the 13th, a day to be indelibly remembered by the mandali.

That afternoon, during the kavvali singing from 4 to 6, the Guruprasad hall was filled to overflowing with Baba-lovers of Poona. Among them were also the well-known cricketers Nari Contractor and Polly Umrigar who love Baba and had come from Bombay with their family to have Baba's darshan. Contractor, the Indian skipper who had a most serious head injury during the recent match in the West Indies, was particularly keen to see Baba, and Baba was happy to see him. Dolly, his wife, told us at parting, "People are amazed at Nari's quick recovery, but that is because they do not know Baba and His Love that protected and helped him throughout the crisis!"

The gathering had occasion to be thankful to the singers, for Baba liked the songs so well He let the program continue past the usual margin of 6 o'clock. Next morning He said, "The kavvali made me so happy, that in my happiness I absorbed Vishnu within Myself."

Vishnu is one of the mandali who has lived with Baba for over forty years, a smallish man with a regal bearing and the kindest of hearts, who has never been known to express anger or harsh words during his life with Baba. He had been suffering for some time from coronary thrombosis, and scarcely an hour had gone by after that Sunday's assembly had dispersed from Guruprasad, when dear Vishnu dropped dead of heart failure, in the midst of a sentence and with laughter on his lips. In death, as in life, he wore a tender look and as his beloved Master sat by his body, it seemed as though Vishnu had drifted into a gentle sleep. Baba sat thus for over an hour, and to Vishnu's brother-disciples gathered around, Baba said "I have never before sat by any of my mandali as I am doing today by Vishnu — he is indeed most fortunate". We later recalled Baba's remark to the mandali that morning — "Vishnu has one foot in this room and one foot in the grave." The ashes of this very loving and loved companion of ours will rest in the place dearest to him: Meherabad.



# *forty-seven/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 22nd June, 1962.

Dear Family,

It is morning's quiet hour, before the sun has kissed the tallest tree, when Bund Garden road traffic is limited to milkmen cycling with shiny brass pots to deliver to many a home the bounty of their buffaloes. The stretch of road visible from Guruprasad is filled this morning with a seemingly endless stream of cattle with bells round their necks, donkeys carrying hens, children, improvised tents and various household paraphernalia on their backs, and a spattering of goats. Beside them walk sturdy looking men with staffs in their hands, and women in colourful clothes and fascinating jewellery of silver and ivory: the Gypsies are on the move again, their exodus proclaimed by the cattle's brass bells tinkling in a most melodious medley of chimes.

Instead of the later-than-usual family letter anticipated, here is an earlier-than-usual one. This is because of an important change in the November darshan program as wished by Baba, being announced by Adi in a circular to all concerned in the East, as follows:

"All lovers of Avatar Meher Baba in the East and West must note very carefully that Baba has curtailed the duration of the November darshan program from seven days to FOUR days. Baba wants all concerned to know that He will hold the darshan programme in Poona for only FOUR days beginning from the 1st of November 1962, All those coming for the occasion are free to leave Poona on the 5th, as Baba will NOT be available after the 4th of November.

"Your special attention is drawn to the fact that apart from the change of date due to curtailment of the programme to four days, all other points in the previous circular dated 21st March, stand good." (This circular was incorporated in the 45th Family-letter of 15th March).

Even though you will see Baba for only four days, I might add that those who wish, may stay on for the seven days. To their advantage will be a visit to Meherabad and Meherazad being planned for the Western Group for the day (possibly on 6th of November), and the remaining time can be spent in "sightseeing" Baba-places in Poona.

**ATTENTION:** Please write to Meherjee right away, regarding your coming — do NOT wait for the 1st October margin. Even if it is a tentative schedule, please inform him as soon as possible if you have decided to come.

Re your hotel accommodation in Poona during the Darshan period note carefully that a single room per person is out of the question. Accommodation will be made for two or more persons per room. To assist you in easing the situation to some extent, you are requested to suggest a name or names of one or two persons (from your family or group traveling to Poona) whom you find compatible as room-mate, after first reaching an agreement on the matter amongst yourselves.

An item of information: 1st Class train fare from Bombay to Poona (one way) comes to a little less than \$4.

Poona is pleasant and much cooler since the last letter, what with the promise of rain in the air and the cool breath wafted from surrounding places where the monsoon has struck early. The acute inconvenience of water shortage in Poona continues since the "man-made" flood of last year, and the formerly lovely gardens are looking like Cinderella after the stroke of 12.

Some years ago an Indian classical singer visited Russia, and the story goes that after a performance Premier Kruschev asked him to open his mouth so he could see for himself that the singer did not carry any instrument in his mouth. Delighted, the singer obliged, to reveal that it was his vocal chords alone that had been responsible. The singer's name is Sri Patwardhan, and about three years ago he had sung for Baba (a performance offered in love), and Baba was so pleased He removed the garland that was round His neck and gave it to this master-singer. Sri Patwardhan is visiting Russia again this year, leading the Indian musical delegation to a cultural conference to be held there. On a Sunday of this month (3rd June) he was singing at Guruprasad again, and the applause from the hall full of Baba lovers was as spontaneous as it was strong. The Beloved enjoyed it extremely, and with His embrace gave the singer His handkerchief — which was received with the happy blush of a young boy and the deep reverence of a devotee.

There have been other "smaller" Sundays too, when only a few are permitted to gather at Guruprasad. We take the opportunity of asking the visiting Baba-lovers about Baba: "How does He look?" As our Rani replied, "A little thinner perhaps but radiant as ever!" Kari said "A little tired the first time we saw Him here, but now He looks just wonderful!" Another said "When does Baba ever look anything but glowing!" Our answer to that is: "Often, as we have seen Him during His Seclusion, looking tired and bowed down as with the weight of the world's suffering."

This aspect of Baba, i.e. His suffering, is puzzling and difficult for many to understand — particularly those who try to attain faith through understanding. They argue that there is no need for Him to suffer if He is all Power. How, in fact, can He be suffering when He is all Bliss? Once Eruch and I got to talking of this, and his explanation deeply impressed itself on me, Eruch said to the effect that:

When man becomes God, he is released from the finite and merges into the Infinite. But when God becomes Man, it means caging the Infinite into the finite — the finite being the absolute opposite of the infinite.

Bliss signifies Freedom, whereas suffering signifies bondage. Infinite Bliss therefore expresses absolute Freedom. Only the cords of Bondage (suffering) can hold down and restrain that Freedom (Bliss) into captivity within a Human form. Hence God Who is Infinite Bliss, binds Himself with suffering when He assumes human form. In short, God remains amidst mankind as man, only when He suffers Himself to be bound by suffering.

This emphasizes what Baba has told us: "The Sadguru has attained absolute Freedom and therefore (as Man-God) has merely to play the part of suffering in bondage, just as an actor in a play lives the part of a king or a beggar while enacting it. On the other hand the Avatar takes on bondage, and therefore (as God-Man) actually "becomes" the role He has assumed and has to really suffer."

Of course there are many who believe in God but are shocked at the idea of man being God or vice versa. What bothers Christian missionaries for instance, is the fact that Baba can call Himself God. We knew a couple of these good sincere people who did much humanitarian work for the lepers. They greatly revered Baba, and gratefully accepted His "prasad" in the form of money sent to them a few times through one of us, Dr. Goher, to use towards their mission of mercy. However, they received a jolt when they discovered from a pamphlet on Baba that He had made the 'blasphemous' statement that He is God! This 'claim' bothered them so much that they returned to Dr. Goher the last amount gifted towards their Leper Asylum, together with a disturbed note which they ended with a promise to pray for us all who could believe any man to be another "Christ". This was in 1956. It might interest you to share in the reply we sent these dear women:

"....It is indeed a pity that you could not accept the gift in the spirit of Christ which is surely universal, regardless of caste, creed, or even what you term as 'claims'. Meher Baba has never forced his 'claim' on anyone — on the thousands who follow him in India, America, England, Europe, Australia and other countries. Whatever we believe him to be is our own inner conviction. Surely such a strong deep conviction as shared by many of different nationalities, religions and ideas — men and women who have devoted their lives to Meher Baba, is not a thing to be acquired by intellectual dissertations. Meher Baba has been observing complete silence since 1925, and has 'said' (through the medium of his alphabet board) "God is everywhere, in everything, in sinner and saint alike. ALL ARE GOD, in some degree or another."

"We believe Jesus Christ was the Incarnation of God — as we also believe were Zoroaster, Buddha, Mohammed, Ram and others (whose respective followers too believe their Avatar to be the only One). But we believe that God in His Infinite Love and Mercy comes (as Messenger) every few hundred years to redeem humanity and to reveal that there is only one true religion: love of God. And surely we are, you and we, equally free to cherish the conviction of our hearts. But we do NOT believe that differences of any kind (be it conviction, colour or religion) should interfere in the "brotherhood" of man, and make us go against the spirit in which we believe — frankly, we consider your gesture of last evening to be un-Christian. We are not forcing our belief or deep conviction on you — Meher Baba would be the last person to allow that .....

"The amount is being returned herewith — if you still cannot feel you can accept it in love and goodwill for the 'children of God' it was meant for, then of course we cannot stop your returning it. In that case we shall despatch it to some other needy institution, in the universal love of Jesus Christ."

Their reply to this was extremely nice and apologetic, and they lovingly accepted the "prasad".

We are leaving for Meherabad on the 8th of July — just two days before the Silence day, and I'm sure with the saving of all the energy and time usually spent in talking we will get more unpacking done on that day than would otherwise have been possible. We are looking forward to the Baba Calendar, being specially issued for the occasion by Adi Arjani, a Baba-lover in Chittagong (East Pakistan). It is full of Baba pictures, sayings and messages, and its main feature is that it begins the year from 10th July, in commemoration of the Day of Baba's Silence.

On a Sunday afternoon at Guruprasad, one of the advocates in the assembly related to Baba how his son Govind had asked whether Baba would be able to speak audibly at the breaking of His long years of Silence. Turning to the child Baba smiled and nodded emphatically. Baba said, through gestures interpreted by Eruch, "Yes, I will speak audibly. In fact, when I break my Silence it will be heard infinitely clearer than the loudest of speech uttered by anyone."

I could not think of a better ending to this letter than quoting from a statement given by Baba when interviewed by the Associated Press of India in Bombay over 25 years ago — on 23rd November 1936, as taken from Kitty Davy's diary:-

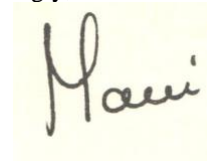
Asked when he intended breaking his vow of silence, Meher Baba replied on his alphabet board:

"There is no vow of silence. My twelve years of silence is no ascetic vow, but a period of working in silence for the spiritual upheaval preceding the manifestation of my universal work.

"But I shall speak, As the surgeon's knife cuts the matured cataract and restores sight, so when the world is ripe my message shall restore the drooping spirit of the world.

"There will be another great war. There will be no victors and no vanquished. When there will be universal despair and a universal cry to God, then God-realized and divine, I shall lead the way for those who seek."

Very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Meheri".

ERRATA, for "Let Us The People Sing" by Francis Brabazon:

Verse 4, line 3 of The Meeting, "love's moment's dream"  
should read "love's moment's gleam".

# *forty-eight/*

Meherazad, 16th August 1962.

Dear Family,

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

Clear and loud, these words were heard in our little dining room at Meherazad, as Baba and we six women were having afternoon tea. The first turn of the knob on our transistor radio had us listening to the end of the 27th Psalm, broadcast from overseas. Outside a wind had started, and we were anxious over the fact that it would blow away the succulent clouds that had been hovering undecided overhead, and which might have poured out their hearts on Meherazad's withering shoulders if given a sporting chance.

Returning to the quiet atmosphere of Meherazad after a spell in Poona, is like kicking off one's shoes in the privacy of one's room after a late evening out with friends. We put by our good clothes and pretty saris for the next trip to Guruprasad, and slip back into our comfortable rags — for here we almost never go out anywhere and seldom is a visitor allowed. Baba's seclusion continues, yet as usual He is not withdrawn from any of the outward aspect of His work that keeps those around Him unceasingly occupied.

With the starting of summer months, rain — or rather absence of rain — plays an important part in regulating the lives of Meherazadians. Poor Kaka struggles valiantly to keep up the drooping spirits of the garden and orchard, watching the water supply in the well sinking lower and lower. On our arrival this year it was found to be critically low, and a water-ration schedule was chalked out which allowed baths just about twice a week. Poona's Baba-lovers were most unsympathetic when they heard of this, pointing out to us that the simple solution would be for Baba and us to come right back to Poona! One of them went further and teasingly remarked that it was all our fault for whisking Baba away from Poona, instead of listening to the dear Maharani's plea that the Beloved should stay on at Guruprasad until November.

Actually Poona was very dry-skyed during the latter part of our stay there — there wasn't a drop of rain for many days and the city fathers were planning to cut down further on the supply of water and of electricity too. But the Heavenly Father decided otherwise, and the monsoon broke in earnest on just the midnight before we left for Meherazad on 8th July! We slept fitfully that night through the sound of the rains beating down, visualizing the throng of umbrellaed and raincoated Baba-lovers standing ankle deep in the slush at Bund Gardens next morning, where they would gather for the few minutes allowed to bid adieu to their Beloved. But we need not have lost any sleep, for it couldn't have turned out better for them. Baba had one of the mandali stationed at the Bund Gardens early next morning, to direct the Baba-lovers to Guruprasad, where He gave them a full hour of His company! It was just like another darshan program, with the Arti sung at the end —and, so that every one of the gathering could have the opportunity to approach Him closer, He allowed each one to kiss His hand before He got up to leave. To quote from Eruch's letter to a dear one: "The parting scene was most touching — about 500 lovers of Baba came for the send-off on the 8th morning. It was raining heavily ..... and all our luggage lying scattered on the verandah, and some of the children having a good time playing amidst it. Baba looked radiant and appeared to



shower His Love more profusely than the clouds that were giving us rain at the time. The group-head Ramakrishna put it in a different way in his letter to Eruch a week later: "It was the suppressed tears of sorrow within our hearts, caused by the pangs of separation from the Beloved, that found expression through the nature outside. And, from the morning of 8th July, Poona is still weeping."

Apparently tears of sorrow are much more passionate than tears of joy, for here we find the skies weeping too softly and the wind expressing its ecstasy too wildly, with the danger of Ahmednagar getting dehydrated. If this mood of Dame Nature persists much longer, there will be scarcity of even drinking water for the people.\*

All Meherazadians observed silence on 10th July, including the garden-boys and other staff. In contrast to this human silence, the wind that day sounded more than ever like the distant roar of the ocean, as it hit in waves against the trees and broke through the leaves in a torrent of sound, to which every bush and branch danced frenziedly without respite. Nearer to the shelter of the house and verandah, there seemed more birds about, singing louder and longer than usual. Perhaps we could enjoy such music more often if we observed silence more often. As for Baba, I think of all the thirteen thousand five hundred and forty two days of silence He has observed, the exasperating one must be the day when all those immediately around Him are on silence, on July 10th — for we are much better at speech than at silence, at talking nothing than at not talking! But we make up for it next morning when we can entertain the Beloved with amusing accounts of our slips of the day before. In honour of this silence anniversary, Baba-lovers of the Ahmednagar Centre cooked and served a free meal to hundreds of poor people. They asked Baba's permission whether the food could also be sent for Him and all at Meherazad. The reply was that He, being the "poorest of the poor" was happy to accept it — and we being the Poor One's poor ones, thoroughly enjoyed sharing in the feast.

On Zoroaster's Birthday, 6th of August according to the Irani's calendar, the Beloved stepped out of the gates of Meherazad for the first time since our return from Poona. It was on a visit to Meherabad — a rare treat for the families residing there, particularly those few that live on in the quarters on the Hill where we have spent many years with Baba in the "good old days", Easterners and Westerners together.

The second outing was on 9th morning, a special visit to Adi's home to see dearest Gulmai (Adi's mother), one of the oldest and closest of Baba's disciples whom Baba has always referred to as one of His mothers, and who had been ailing for some time. During the latter part of her illness she ceased to recognize anyone — relatives and friends; but at sight or name or picture of Baba, there was instant recognition. Taking a sudden turn for the worse, she was unable to speak and suffered spells of unconsciousness. During Baba's visit she was conscious, and her face lighted up when He kissed her forehead. She caressed His face and managed to say "Ba-Ba". She passed away on 10th. At midnight she started up from a coma and loudly called out Baba's Name — and although it was obviously a tremendous effort for her to do so, she kept this on without pause for minutes right up to her last breath. The Beloved showered roses on her coffin as it was

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\* Dame Nature must have heard me complaining to you, for since I began this letter there has been enough of a rainfall to allay our present anxiety, and the good earth is already wearing a saturated smile.

lowered in the grave on Meherabad Hill where her body rests in its last home, while she has come to her only Home — in Baba. It was through her love and ceaseless efforts that "Meherabad", the place Baba chose for His first establishment with His first few followers forty years ago, was acquired; and she has expressed the same spirit of devotion and sacrifice throughout the years of her life that was dedicated to Baba.

The rumbling of approaching November is distinctly heard through letters and reports of the Baba-workers who have begun to tackle the colossal job of accommodating the thousands of Easterners who will come to Poona for the November darshan. Schools have helped out in the past, but their commodious premises can scarcely be available in November for it is not vacation time. This is just one of the challenges that faces the Baba-workers. There is the matter of planning and putting up the huge Awning, in the compound of Guruprasad, where Baba will hold the East-West Gathering in the afternoons. It will have a dais erected at three places where Baba will be seated at different hours of the afternoon. Baba-lovers are putting up a few stalls in Guruprasad compound, where Baba books, photos, lockets, little albums, and gramophone records of His Arti, will be among the items available to those who would like to obtain them for themselves and for the dear ones who could not physically participate in the Darshan.

The mornings, which are reserved only for His Western family, will be spent inside of Guruprasad hall. So far 120 names have been received, of those who have intimated to Meherjee of their coming: about 82 from the U.S.A.; 28 from Australia and New Zealand; and the rest from England and Europe, including a Canadian coming from Calcutta. We know that many more from the West are longing to take this opportunity but are made helpless by circumstances, financial and otherwise — to them Baba sends the message: "Do not worry. I am always with you, and will be more so during the darshan time."

The names of those from whom intimation of their coming to India has been received, have been read to beloved Baba. He wants that as soon as possible (when the new flight schedule is out in September), each Western Novemberite should inform Meherjee: 1) date of arrival in Bombay; 2) date of arrival in Poona; 3) date of departure from Poona; 4) date of departure from India.

Note carefully, that Baba says none must be in Poona before 28th October, apart from the few who are coming by sea.

In Meherabad too we seem to be living two months ahead of time, and thus in the midst of August we are in November. This is because Baba is keeping those around Him very busy preparing for the launching of the November program which has begun to take definite shape and colour. End of October will once more find us at Guruprasad, and we women are especially looking forward to it for Baba has said He will permit us to see our Western sisters who are coming to India. Although it could not be for more than a few minutes, we are thankful as we are joyful to be granted this meeting. Please take careful note of Baba's wish, that during this meeting with us women you should not mention or talk of any correspondence, including family-letters.

Another wish of the Beloved, applying to all his Western Novemberites (men and women) is that while in India, none should contribute for any aspect of Baba's work or towards any project in Baba's cause, or any cause, without first obtaining Baba's direct permission. This I think is a good place to add the reminder of Baba's standing instructions not to meet saints or sadhus during your India trip or sojourn. Yet, another "No" concerns cameras — Baba's wish is that none should take pictures during the morning sessions held in the hall of Guruprasad.

At the end of it, if Baba walks out on to the verandah, or during the afternoon gatherings under the Awning, there is no ban on the use of cameras (barring 35 mm movies). Baba also does not wish that Easterners should visit Westerners at their hotels, except the workers entrusted with duties concerning the Westerners' stay. This is to provide privacy and rest to His lovers from the West in between the darshan sessions. Transport facility, to bring His dear Westerners over to Guruprasad every morning and afternoon, will be arranged by Jal — as also for the trip to Meherazad and Meherabad, which is exclusively for the Westerners and scheduled to be on the 6th of November.

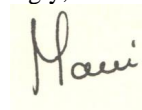
There is the possibility of your being accosted by the Press on your landing in Bombay. If so, you are not bound to favour them with replies, except to tell them emphatically the fact that you have come to India on a very short visit simply to see Meher Baba who is in Poona and whom you believe to be the Avatar of the Age. In case you are pressed for further information, it is best that you select beforehand some one, or ones from among your group who will be responsible for answering questions and to whom the rest of the group can direct the pressmen to. The Press may also be directed to obtain all further information they need about Baba, from the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre (secretary K.K. Ramakrishna, 107/5 Range Hills Estate, Kirkee, Poona -3).

Baba-lovers in the East, apart from those in Poona and a few from Bombay, were not permitted to have their Beloved's darshan this summer. Baba has therefore decided that He will give each one His embrace during the November gathering. This would mean His embracing over 3,000 men, women and children, and the best part of two afternoons! But He who dons the garb of human form for love's sake, does not spare His body for its own sake. However, with the prayer that they can make up for it next summer, the Poona families have willingly agreed to the Mandali's suggestion that they spare Him at least a thousand embraces by sacrificing their share of it during this November gathering. On the last afternoon, the 4th of November, it will be "public darshan" day, when admittance to Guruprasad is not restricted to Baba-lovers, but is open for any and all in Poona who may wish to come and pay their respects. This will give you dear ones some idea of the "mass darshans" that Baba used to give in Andhra and other places in the early 1950's. However, Baba's health is not one quarter as good as in those days, but even while we know it will be a strain on Him, we cannot but be happy in His Will. As Eruch said in a letter to Dr. Harry Kenmore in 1958, just before the U.S.A. sahas at Myrtle Beach:

"Baba's physical body also has limitations, but it has endured the burden of the Unlimited and has served long and well to veil His unbounded Reality from all that which is unreal. His is The Body - more than other physical bodies; yet it is not that which endures. It is to be used for His universal work and discarded as soon as it has served its purpose. When Baba gives His sahas, He has to make use of His physical body. It is meant for this very purpose; He cannot spare it then, even though it be feeble."

Time for the next family-letter would be about 15th October, but I shall skip it entirely because many of the Family are coming to Poona end of October, and the first hand accounts they will personally give (verbally and thru the Awakener) will more than make up for any absence of news from me. And so, until December, JAI BABA to you dear ones, and the heartfelt hope that the doors will open for those who are yet trying against all odds to make it to India.

Very lovingly,



Errata: The tree mentioned in the second paragraph of the 46th family letter (dated 10th May '62) is not the "pangara", but is called the "paisa" tree.

P.S. Please remember that Francis Brabazon's book "Let Us The People Sing", mentioned in the 46th family-letter, is now available from John Bass, 225 East 106th Street, Apt. 17-C, New York 29, N.Y. - price \$1,25 per copy (please add 10¢ for Customs-duty and postage), There are limited copies, so don't fail to send him your order soon."

IMPORTANT- for Novemberites: If you need to send a cable (for any last minute change in date or plan, or for any emergency) cable: IRANTOJJAR, POONA, INDIA - it will reach Meherjee.

# *forty-nine/*

Meherazad, 20 September 1962.

Dear Family,

This is the unexpected letter that I expected to write before His dear Novemberites leave their homes on their "journey to God".

The List of those of His Western family attending the November Gathering, now numbers 171 — with a few marked "tentative". This made up roughly of 123 from U.S.A., 33 from Australia and New Zealand, and the rest from England and Europe. The youngest of these will be a fair six year old from Australia, Radha Rouse; while the eldest will be 92 year old dear Ruth White from His Centre at Myrtle Beach in U.S.A. Every name on the List has been read to Baba, and Baba wants me to say that He knows the sacrifice it entails for a number of you in making this trip, and the heartache it entails for still more who cannot make it to India. He is happy for those of you who are able to come, and wants the rest of you to be happy in the knowledge that He will be present with you during your absence from the November Gathering.

While the problem of mass accommodation for the 2,000 Easterners from out-stations is nearly and unexpectedly solved, suitable Hotel accommodation for His growing number of Western Novemberites is beginning to cause some slight anxiety. This does not mean there will be lack of accommodation, but it might mean less comfortable accommodation as a result of rooming perhaps more individuals together. However, any hardship is a worthy part of every true pilgrimage, and should not be a subject for concern when the Object is the Highest of the High! Drowned in the outpouring of His Love, all discomfort is as the particle in the oyster that becomes the pearl. I cannot help recalling the first lecture that our dear Kaka gave to the Beloved's Western followers gathered with Him in Cannes (France) in the year 1937, in his halting English. Although many of those who heard it at the time have actually lived the lesson many times over during their long and hardy years of life with Baba, I reproduce here an excerpt from Kaka's short but comprehensive lecture as it might help others who are coming to Poona for the November Gathering:

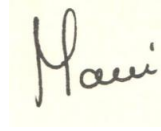
"Now I want to talk about our Master's order. When Master passes order it must be obeyed. Never mind if you like it or not. There should be no discussion. When you follow the Master, every desire must be left. Somebody wants good food, somebody wants good bed, somebody wants go swimming somebody wants to shopping — then what use coming to the Master? Go holidays!"

A very near and dear one has "come to Baba" before November — she is Baba's beloved archangel Mary Backet (of England) who passed away on 5th September, conveying her love to her Beloved Baba just before breathing her last. Along with dear Will Backett, her husband, she was of the small group of Westerners who stayed in India, at Nasik, in 1937. This devoted couple, whose very lives have been Baba's message of Love, have always been referred to by Baba as His "Archangels", and Baba sent Will a cable as follows: "My Archangel Mary has come to Me after fulfilling her appointed task. Be happy in My Love."

All our grumbling and complaining about the shameful lack of rain has been put to a complete end by the glorious downpours we have been having since the last letter. Often, the boy who cycles over daily from the King's Road office at Ahmednager (9 miles away) with our mail, has to wade through waist-high water when crossing the usually dry river-bed about midway. The garden and the countryside seem drunkenly happy, and our potted rose bushes have burst out in a rash of roses — one little bush has three bouquets of over 15 roses each! The jasmine are as fair and plentiful as God's uncounted blessings, and each morning we find carpets of jasmine on the ground while the vines are no less studded with them. Mehera is planning many little additions to Meherazad's "garden of Allah" for the very special visitors who will grace it on 6th November.

Beloved Baba sends His Love to you each.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the signature line of the letter.

N.B. BABA wishes you take very careful note of the Circular attached herewith: "ATTENTION Western Novemberites" for which this special family-letter is being sent out. Please bring with you this important Circular to Poona, for your reference.

Meherazad  
20th September, 1962

ATTENTION Western Novemberites!

To be on the safe side, all available accommodation at all suitable hotels in Poona is being reserved from 28th October. It is Baba's wish therefore, that all who possibly can should arrive in Poona on 28th. He wishes that you do NOT tarry in Bombay after your arrival there on or after the 28th, but catch the soonest train possible for Poona. Those whose flight is arranged so as to reach Bombay on 29th or 30th, may thus arrive in Poona on 29th or 30th. All must be in Poona by latest 31st morning (except some of the Australians whose ship arrives on 1st November).

Baba wants you EACH ONE TO IMMEDIATELY AND FINALLY LET MEHERJEE KNOW the exact date of your arrival in Poona. Despite this reminder in the last family letter, many have not done so! But whether you have already done so or not, Baba wants you to rush to Meherjee a final confirmation of the dates of your arrivals and departures, in and from Bombay and Poona, and whether you are coming independently or by a Group Flight arrangement (stating Group flight number and name of the Baba-lover under whom it is arranged).

For our double checking, those in charge of Group Flights must also please intimate Meherjee well in advance (if it is not already done) details of GROUP flights arranged: Flight No., the number and names of passengers, arrival date and time in Bombay and in Poona, and departure dates and time and flight No. from Bombay. Individuals flying independently must also furnish Meherjee with the above information which is most essential and must reach Meherjee right away.

On your arrival in Poona, Meherjee will help you in intimating the authorities concerned regarding your Foreigners' Registration (this does not apply to British and Australian passports), and in confirming your return flights.

If you are stranded and need to contact the Mandali in an emergency (during the day time) you may phone Guruprasad: 23158. After 7.00 p.m. phone Meherjee's residence: 24578. Also take note of Guruprasad address: 24-Bund Garden Road; and cable address: Care IRANTOJJAR, Poona.

Regarding any electrical equipment you may bring with you (shavers etc.) note that the voltage applicable in Bombay and Poona is 220 Volts A.C.

A word of caution for you to remember during your stay in Hotels: please keep your cash and valuables locked before leaving your hotels.

As failure of electricity is not an unfrequent occurrence in Poona, you will find a torch (flash-light) a useful item to bring with you.

PROGRAM DURING YOUR STAY IN POONA: Beloved Baba is reserving the morning hours from 9.00 to 12.00 noon exclusively for the gathering of His Western lovers, to be held inside the hall at Guruprasad from 1st to 5th November. In the afternoons, during the gatherings under the Pandal (Awning) at Guruprasad from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. from 1st to 4th November the Westerners will participate with the Easterners.

Jal will arrange for transportation to bring you to Guruprasad each morning and afternoon, for you to reach Guruprasad at the following times: On the mornings of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th November, by 10 minutes to 9.00; on the afternoons of 1st, 2nd and 3rd November, by 10 minutes to 3.00. On the afternoon of 4th November, by 10 minutes to 2.00. On the 5th morning also, Baba wishes you to be at Guruprasad by 10 minutes to 9.00, for a final program and embrace.

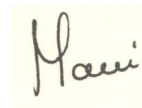
Jal, with his group of Baba-lovers to assist him, will also arrange for your sight-seeing of some Baba-places (as per list attached), in groups on 29th, 30th and 31st October, in accordance with your arrival in Poona. Those who feel indisposed need not go, but should at the time inform Jal accordingly.

All such transport expenses will be borne by you, in arrangement with Jal. This includes your trip to Ahmednagar-Meherazad-Meherabad on 6th November. Sarosh and his wife Viloo, will be your host and hostess at their home in Ahmednagar during your halt there for refreshments and lunch enroute to Meherazad and Meherabad. You will also be visiting the Meher Publications Office and the Baba-Centre at Ahmednagar that afternoon on your way to Meherabad. You will have to leave Poona at 7.00 in the morning, to return the same evening, The entire mileage of your trip on that day will total about 180 miles.

Baba has appointed Dr. William Donkin in charge of the welfare of the Western Novemberites' health with the assistance of Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, and in co-operation with Dr. (Mrs.) Bhandari who is also in charge of the Eastern women Novemberites' health. It is Baba's wish that you must therefore promptly inform Dr. Donkin whenever you feel indisposed, night or day. In the daytime Dr. Donkin will make the round of your different hotels at least once, and will be at Guruprasad during the morning and afternoon Gatherings there. At night he will be on call at the Napier Hotel, and anybody needing any medical aid should without fail phone him at: Napier Hotel, phone no. 22627.

A Circular is being sent out by Adi to all Eastern Novemberites, and Baba wants me to draw your attention to the following paragraph in it, because it equally applies to His Western Novemberites:-

"Avatar Meher Baba wants me to draw the attention of all His lovers visiting Him from different parts of the world, to the fact that they should come with the sole idea of enjoying His PRESENCE collectively, and NOT hope or want or ask for any individual personal attention or guidance from Him — regarding any matter concerning themselves or their families and friends, or in connection with Baba-work or Group and Centre activities. NO questions should be asked, spiritual or otherwise."





(Instructions to Jal)

PLACES TO BE SHOWN ROUND BY JAL

To The Western Novemberites.

- 1) Sassoon Hospital where Baba was born.
- 2) The house with the well where Baba and family moved after His sister Mani's birth and where now His brother Beheram lives with his family. This house has the room where Baba used to knock His forehead on a stone on the floor, during that period of infinite agony after the meeting with Babajan. This is known as "Baba's Room".
- 3) Point out the house where Baba spent His childhood and much of His boyhood. It is known as 'Bhopla' (pumpkin) House, because of the large round stone at the entrance.
- 4) St. Vincent School (where Baba studied right thru school).
- 5) Deccan College (that Baba attended after leaving school).
- 6) Babajan's shrine by the Neem Tree, in Poona cantonement.
- 7) The Bund Gardens that Baba often visited, as a boy and later.  
  
Show the Mango-tree under which Babajan used to sit often with her followers, at the Bund Gardens.
- 8) Tower of Silence which Baba frequently visited in order to sit there for hours at a stretch.  
  
(Jal to make sure beforehand that the car can go right up).
- 9) Take them via Laxmi Road and Janglay Maharaj Road, and show statue of Jhansi-ki-Rani (the Mahratta warrior queen).
- 10) Take them round Race Course side (of recent years Baba has often been there in the mornings to have a quiet walk with the mandali).
- 11) Take them to the site of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre where the Centre Hall is under construction.

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*fifty/*

Meherazad, 5th December 1962.

Dear Family,

"My words can never be in vain. Whatever I have said must and will come true. When it appears otherwise, it is due to your ignorance and lack of patience." Years ago Baba said this to us, and this November we had special cause to remember it, when the East-West gathering in India that Baba had spoken of long ago took place at last, and many of His Family from the East and West assembled together at His feet and partook of the feast of His Presence. Guruprasad, chosen to be the setting for many precious Baba-occasions and darshans through the years, gained its height in pride and joy when it was chosen to be the rendezvous for this unique global gathering of Baba-lovers "who came, who saw and who surrendered to His Love."

My difficulty in writing this letter lies not in what to say, but what not to say! This is because most of you who will receive this have been blessed with the good fortune to personally participate and need no description from me. And, it is for you to give a picture, verbally and through accounts in *The Awakener*, Divya Vani and Meher Pukar, to those of you who could not come and had to accept in silent resignation His silent Will — even though the accounts I could give and you will give, can only express the expressible. What each one receives from Him in the silence of His Love can only be between The One and the one. As a dear one from U.S.A. wrote to beloved Baba: "You do not give in words, nor can I express in words, the Love that you make one feel and know. My response is but a bit of your Grace returning to you."

We women of the Beloved's household had a "back-stage" view of the darshan proceeding, for although Baba did not want us to be seated among the gathering, He allowed us to watch from behind the windows and door. Hence we could only see Baba's back. Yet we saw His Face, reflected in the sea of faces facing us — His radiance and beauty mirrored in the eyes that were fixed on Him in adoration. To thus see The One in everyone, was for us who are with Him and see Him daily, an unforgettable experience.

Just as we received the reflection of His darshan through the direct recipients of it, we received the impression of His Westerners' visit through their letters pouring in to their Beloved. Reading out to Him these letters is an experience that is deeply moving, and to behold the radiance of Love on His face while He listens to them is a gladness that fills the being. With Baba's permission, I quote excerpts from a few of them — some flashes that reveal a glimpse of this "coming together of children of East and West in the house of their Father", as Baba said in His message given on 2nd November.

One writes to Baba; "So often while I was with You the phrase "my cup runneth over" ran joyously through my mind. I was filled with wonder at Your Love for us all — a Love that showed itself in endless ways from the most insignificant detail of our daily lives to the miracle of our being privileged to receive Your Darshan."

Speaking of the 'public darshan' afternoon, a young woman says: "Seeing You work in India, giving darshan to all those people, impressed me more than ever with the fact that You are the Ocean of Love, You are like the sun and cannot help giving Your love. That is why, I suppose, that You do not have to pay particular attention to each one as they touch Your feet. The action is automatic: one dips the cup in the ocean, it is only natural that it be filled with water. All one has to do is dip." Yet another writes: "I remember being suddenly and overwhelmingly struck during the public darshan that last afternoon, by the fact that here I was sitting in front of God — absolutely, positively God — while thousands of people filed past you, hour after hour. I remember too the contrast of the morning sessions when You fulfilled all and more than all of my longing as a child, a teenager, and even as a grown college student, for "this Friend who is God." A boy of 13 writes: "How radiant You looked dear Baba when we were sitting there watching You embrace thousands! To do that as well as carry the burdens of the world was a feat only possible for You. I know that the Westerners would never have believed it unless they saw it. You gave each of us so much love and so much joy."

If I allow the heart to take over, I can go on endlessly quoting from all the very precious letters that have come from His Western family who came to India, but the mind gives me a tight-lipped reminder that to attempt such a herculean task would be impracticable. So lastly, to see the visit from the eyes of the oldest Novemberite, I give a line from the letter of dear Ruth White of Myrtle Beach. She says to Baba: "This letter is written to give thanks unto Thee and say my visit was not so much to a place but to a kingdom of enlightenment, joy and devotion." And so it verily has been and is, His "kingdom on earth" which is the envy of "heaven", for Baba has more than once explained to His disciples that the angels in heaven envy human beings who have the means and opportunity to serve and be near the God-Man.

It is nearly a month since we are back in the lap of Meherazad, and all we wanted to do for the first few days was to sleep, sleep and sleep! We felt the utter contentment and drowsiness that follows a feast fully enjoyed, basking in the grateful knowledge of a program well accomplished. We are fairly "awake" again, and the reality of this November Gathering which now seems as a dream, is very much alive in our hearts and minds — for it is a dream of a dream come true, Meeting you dear ones and seeing you with Baba in India has meant inexpressible joy for us — marred only by the absence of those who could not come. But this absence was physical only, for Baba said to them in His cable: "While your love is with me here, I am with you there." On 10th November, when leaving Poona, Baba very compassionately spoke of His lovers' tears that flowed on that farewell morning at the Bund Gardens. Although there can be no "parting" from Baba, He felt the sadness of each heart that sorrowed at this separation.

Except to tell us to be prepared for whatever changes that may occur during 1963, Baba tells us nothing of His plans for the year. But He repeatedly hints that He wishes to be "free" from this 10th of December, free to attend to the carrying out of the work He has set for Himself. So

He wishes dear Mehera's birthday to be celebrated on the 9th of December this year (instead of 23rd), when there will be a kavvali singing program at Meherazad. One change for 1963 is already manifest in the circular that has been sent out to all concerned in the East and which He wishes me to give here for all you dear ones in the West:

For reason of His very important work, Avatar Meher Baba wishes that Meher Centres in India and elsewhere do NOT have any sort of celebration for His 69th Birthday in February 1963. However, lovers of Baba are permitted to send Birthday greetings to Him, by a cable.

Baba wants His lovers to spread far and wide His message of Love and Truth, in the spirit of His messages "My dear Children" and "My dear Workers" given by Him during the East-West gathering at Poona in November 1962.

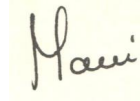
During the year 1963, Baba wishes His lovers NOT to write any letters to Him, and also NOT to write to any of the men or women mandali residing with Him. In case of emergency a direct communication may be sent to Baba, by a cable only. Such a cable must simply be addressed: MEHERBABA AHMEDNAGAR,\* and must always be accompanied by a reply-prepaid form which must sufficiently cover the cost of a reply.

Where His Western family is concerned, letters to and from Meherazad are allowed but ONLY for some specific work. Also, He wishes me to continue sending the family-letters, from four to six times in the year.

The Beloved wants me to include here the message for you, that although He is with you all the time you should consciously keep Him with you as much as possible, not worrying about the nothings that seem everything but leaving all to Him who is All.

Baba sends His Love-Blessing to you each.

Ever lovingly,



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\* as I have mentioned before, this is our telegraphic and cable address, and it is a waste of money to put the long postal address in your cable as many of you do.

# *fifty-one/*

Meherazad, 15th February 1963

Dear Family,

Loving greetings to you from your brothers and sisters at Meherazad.

It is a clear bright afternoon, and the owlets are sunning themselves on the branch of a neem tree. The feeling of drowsiness at this hour is enhanced by the hypnotic droning of bees and the persistent 'tonk, tonk' of the Coppersmith — a bird so named because of the resemblance of its call to the sound of the smith's hammer at work on his copper pots. The peepal tree that towers over the roof of the Mandali's kitchen is shimmering like a chandelier in the sunlight, each glossy leaf glistening like a crystal as it rocks in the soft easterly breeze. The green fields have turned blonde, and we can hear the lilting folk-songs of the villagers singing to each other as they toil at their harvesting, among the workers being many a mother with her babe tied to her back in a 'hammock' improvised with a piece of cloth. The little shepherd boys are herding their sheep towards the slopes of Baba's Hill, themselves lazing while the sheep are grazing, or playing marbles with stones they find on the hillside.

In such an atmosphere at Meherazad, it is difficult to imagine the intrigues and treachery of nations, or the mad mess they are making in their driving greed, pride and fear. And yet we are perhaps made all the more sensitive to the prevailing conditions because of their utter contrast to the values and purpose of life as shown to us by Baba. Conquest is in itself a most worthy aim if, as Baba tells us, it is directed towards conquering one's self instead of setting out to conquer others. But the Beloved also tells us that even to seek to conquer one's self is not for weaklings and falterers!

It is not man alone that shows a fierce fancy for breaking records. Nature has been doing it all over the world this winter. It is said that England and Europe have not experienced such weather since 1881, ringing in the New Year with arctic blizzards and bitter frost. New York was so cold, one Baba-lover wrote "It is as if we are living in the Ice Age". Ahmednagar had a heavy lash of rain this winter, a thing that hasn't happened for 80 years and thus earned headlines in the newspapers. Never do we remember longing for sunshine as we did during that watery week, when umbrellas and raincoats were frantically shaken out from their winter slumber in the storage room. The birds seemed puzzled for a while at this temperamental turn of Nature's mood and took shelter more often on the verandah, sometimes five varieties of them (from the tiny tailor-bird to the husky crow) sharing together the bread-crumbs put out for them, and looking delightfully drunken and bedraggled from the heavy soaking. But they recovered soon, and to our amazement we saw many of them taking far more frequent dunks in the bird-bath than ever before! Perhaps this was simply from

nervousness, or perhaps from a deeper wisdom than we possess, in the resolve that "what one can't avoid might as well be enjoyed"! This 'madly monsoon' as a friend called it, was followed by a welcome spell of cold; and before starting work in the mornings we would find ourselves drawn irresistibly to the blazing wood fire that is lighted for heating bath-water.

Teatime at Meherazad is a happy hour for us women, when we sit together at the dining table with the Beloved; and mingling with snatches of conversation and the tinkle of teaspoons in cups, is the music from our transistor radio — occasionally accompanied by heavy snores from our old Cocker-spaniel fast asleep in his corner by Baba's chair. Over the radio we have enjoyed, more than once this winter, songs sung by Vinayakrao Patwardhan, and musical recitals by Madhukar Golvalkar (head of Poona's All-India-Radio music department) and by Sri Kamat — the artists that performed for beloved Baba during the morning Western sessions of the East-West Gathering in November. This would find Baba drumming briskly on the table in rhythm with the music, the response from our brass tea-kettle being a jerky little dance as it would bob up and down with the vibration of the table. Sometimes there is a kavvali program on the air, when favorite Urdu 'ghazals' (songs composed by the great mystic poets) are sung — they are the expressions of rapture, anguish and longing from a lover's heart for his divine Beloved, and this at times puts Baba in the mood to discourse to us on matters that matter.

One afternoon He reminisced on Dhondibua the Mast who, when given anything for his material needs, would refuse it saying "I cannot bear comfort"! He would remain naked in all weather, be it in the blazing sun or piercing cold; and when a shirt or blanket were given to him by someone, he would gently but firmly reject the gift explaining that comfort did not agree with him and he could not bear any contact with it. He would sometimes be seen rolling in the dust. Baba said this was from the agony of love for God that the genuine Masts have. He went on "You cannot have the slightest idea of what such love means — it is an unbelievable agony that continually burns the lover, so that he is but a living fire! This Love is a gift from God, whereas God-realization is attained only by the Grace of the Perfect Master. Even these real men of God, the Masts, do not all gain God-realization — as a matter of fact, out of very many only one gets it! As Hafiz says in reference to God-realization:

'For ages the lovers of God long for and await  
what but one in a hundred thousand achieves!'"

Baba went on to say that this Love such as the Masts have, is very very rare, and fortunately therefore it is not necessary for us to possess that in order to attain God — just "obedience" is enough for us; all we have to do is to obey Baba and nothing else will matter. Baba added "It is as easy as that, to attain what is well-nigh impossible to attain"!

There was an unplanned and unexpected feast of a kavvali program for Baba at Meherazad on Sunday the 13th of January, when the great woman kavvali singer, Begum Akhtar, came to see Him. She is the singer

recorded songs have top priority among the favorites that Baba has us play on occasions. In response to a message sent to her thru Sri Golvalkar, this widely renowned singer was to visit Baba last summer in Poona, but was unable to do so because of her serious illness at the time. When she saw Baba she told Him that from the day she had heard of His call to her she had been craving for His darshan and daily sang a special ghazal before His photo, weeping while she did so. She requested Baba to permit her to sing this Ghazal to Him now that she was actually in His presence. Smiling, Baba replied that He would give His permission only on the condition that she gives a performance of four to five hours of her singing at Guruprasad on any one day in April or May. She was delighted at this and accepted the condition most lovingly.

Seated before Baba and a handful of the mandali, she sang this ghazal of her daily 'prayer' to Baba in her superb voice, while tears of love and joy coursed down her cheeks and beloved Baba gave her one of his own handkerchiefs to wipe them with! Baba was so pleased with her singing that she sang three more songs, and it seemed as though along with her tears she poured her heart out to Him in those beautiful ghazals. When Baba said to her "I am the Faqir of faqirs and the Emperor of emperors" she replied "There can be not the least doubt in that". When He hinted at a fee He would like to arrange for her for the special program she would give at Guruprasad, she bowed reverently but said emphatically "I want nothing except Your Love." Blessed is she to have chosen the most priceless of treasures as her fee!

Accompanied by Sri Golvalkar, she brought her daughter with her, and two big garlands of fresh flowers — and although one was for the daughter to offer to Baba, Begum Akhtar was so overcome she put both the garlands round Baba's neck herself! When we told her how happy she had made Baba with her singing, she exclaimed how 'happy-fortuned' she was to have done so. The parting was very moving — she held on to Baba's feet, and with her head on His knee wept quietly for a long time. Patting her bowed head Baba said she was most blessed. Begum Akhtar had come seeking permission at least to take Baba's darshan, and went away with her cup of joy full at having been given the opportunity of singing four ghazals to Him.

On that Sunday there was singing in the afternoon also, according to a program planned beforehand by Baba, when all of the Baba-family from Ahmednagar Centre were called to Meherazad. The artist was Sri Vatve from Poona, a famous singer of devotional songs who has often sung for Baba at Guruprasad, and who has now acquired the knowledge of singing "ghazals" since knowing Baba loves that best. It was an intimate and informal gathering, held as usual in "the hall" — a spacious room that once served us as a garage and later as a stable, and which is now the sanctum where the Beloved spends many hours of the day with His mandali. It was not all song — it never is in the Beloved's presence which gives life to the body of any assembly gathered before Him. As He lightens the heavy moments with gentle raillery and humour, and gives weight to the most trivial subject by using it as a starting point for serious spiritual explanations, the hours are moulded by His divine

Hands into a pitcher in which He pours the breath of His Love, and which each may carry home with him to water the parched moments of separation.

Through hand-gestures interpreted as usual by Eruch, Baba spoke of love and surrender. He said "The agony of Love is so dear to the lover of God that though it burns him to ashes he will not part with it for anything! Though it may make him an outcast from society, a stranger to sleep, hunger and comfort, he prizes this blissful torture above all things in creation. Only God can implant this divine Love in the human heart." Speaking of surrender He said "I do not mean the kind of surrender offered by a man who came to Meherabad years ago and said he wished to surrender everything to Me. When I asked what the 'everything' was, he replied 'myself, my wife and four children!'" This brought a hearty burst of laughter from all present, and Baba's smile showed He was equally enjoying the humour of it. Then Baba continued "God is not fooled by any outward show. He is completely deaf to ceremonial prayers and ringing of church bells and chanting of mantras — He is never taken in by such superficial veneer, never ensnared by such blandishments. Love alone can move Him — Love alone can conquer Him. Without that, nothing is to any avail."

Touching on the subject of God-realization Baba said "Man realizing God is like a drop of water swallowing the Ocean — no less! When, after the kiss from Babajan I knew that I was the Ocean, I did not want to come back to the ordinary 'drop' consciousness from that Blissful State where I alone was. But despite my resistance the five Perfect Masters kept 'pulling me down' to ordinary consciousness for My destined Manifestation as Avatar; and in the excruciating agony I went thru during this 'tussle' I used to knock my forehead on a stone in my room at home, during the nine months before Upasani Maharaj brought me down to normal consciousness. Much blood was flowed from my head onto that stone which is still in the room as it was then, and which will be worshipped universally in years to come."

To you each dear one of His Western family beloved Baba sends His Love, and wishes me to say that the letters to Him (sent after November) have all reached Him, and the love they brought has touched His heart and made Him very happy.

Baba also wishes me to mention about Adele Wolkin from New York, a nurse and a very dear Baba-lover whom He permitted to be in India for three months. During this time she gained nursing experience at a hospital in Bombay where she worked amidst the very poor and needy. Adele was looking whole-heartedly forward to continuing her stay in India, so that she could avail herself of opportunities for Baba's darshan whenever possible. However, the Beloved decided that Adele should return to the U.S.A., saying she would serve His purpose best by working there. Being among the fortunate few to whom obedience comes first, Adele bowed to His wish. Baba declared His decision to her when she came to Meherabad at His call, and her placing His wish above the longing of her heart made Him very happy. Adele is now on the high seas, on her way to the U.S.A.,



and her telegram to Him at leaving India said to the effect "Beloved Baba, I live to obey You" — that is real 'living' indeed!

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (127th Psalm).

MEHERSTHAN, the house built in Kovvur (Andhra State) for housing beloved Baba in bronze, was surely "built by the Lord", for it was His Love that inspired it and His compassion that permitted it. It stands on the bank of the river Godavari, on the spot where Baba gave His darshan to the people of Andhra during His visit to Kovvur in 1954. The ones blessed to be instrumental in erecting on this sacred spot the "House of Meher" (Mehersthan) and in having a likeness of Baba's beloved Person moulded in a life-size statue of bronze placed therein, are the dearly devoted Baba-lovers Koduri Krishna Rao and his wife. Baba declared His wish that His lovers from all over Andhra should gather at Kovvur to be there to welcome Him at Mehersthan on 28th February, when our dear Shantadevi (the Maharani of Baroda) will open Mehersthan and unveil the Statue of Baba, as wished by Him. Lovers of Baba representing His Centres from all over India will also be there at this unique welcoming of Baba, for Baba says "I will be present there at the time, and for all time as long as those who come to Mehersthan come to see Me and not my 'statue'."

Just as Namdev, as a child, brought the statue of Lord Krishna to life with the intense purity of his love and faith, may all who enter Mehersthan keep alive the Beloved's Presence by living the messages of Love and Truth given by the All-knowing and All-Compassionate — and not just making "words" of them by entombing them in the mind. Indeed all Baba's messages are "words" as long as we make them so by failing to translate His messages into the ordinary actions of our daily lives. Unless we can live His messages, we are as dead soil wherein He has taken pains to plant the seed of Truth. May His Love for us make us worthy soil to receive the blessing of His Grace.

I give here the eight messages that Beloved Baba sent to Koduri Krishna Rao, to be put up in bold letters and prominently displayed in Mehersthan:

Tear the curtain of set ceremonies and rituals and you will find that I am the Worshipped, the Worship and the Worshipper.

To clothe simple worship with the garments of ceremony and ritual is to expose Me to the cold winds of ignorance.

To faithfully love God-Man is to truly worship God.

To find Me here in Mehersthan search the depth of your heart.

Mehersthan has been built for Me with love, but  
I may only be found here by My lover who brings Me  
here in his heart.

As the heart is, so is the house; as the eye is,  
so is the Image within the house.

The heart of man has always been the ancient  
temple for the worship of the Ancient One.

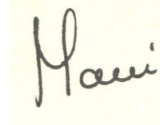
Nothing can house the Ancient One that does not  
house love .

This letter has crossed the usual boundary of five pages, but I feel indeed glad it has, for the next news bulletin will not be coming till end of April, from Poona, after we have settled down in Guruprasad for our summer sojourn. We expect to be leaving for Poona at the end of March, so please note that any cable of emergency you may wish to send to Baba during the months of April, May and June should be addressed: MEHERBABA GURUPRASAD POONA (India).

I end this letter with love to you each from your family at Meherazad and the lines from a ghazal that impressed me specially, for the poet puts in song the Beloved's constant counsel to all to 'keep happy and resigned to His Will':

Hold high your heart,  
and your head low at the feet of the Perfect Master  
in complete submission to His Will.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Maui".

# *fifty-two/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 13th April, 1963

Dearest Family,

Just as the perfume from a sachet placed among clothes comes up to greet you when the trunk is opened, so did the sweetly familiar memories of the East-West gathering embrace us when we walked up the steps of Guruprasad. The happy ghosts of those unforgettable November days came out to greet us from round the corners of the verandah and from every room we stepped into. Now as we look out of the pantry windows our eyes see a grass-patched expanse where the caretaker's children play and goats graze and dogs romp, but our minds behold the huge gay awning wherein thousands of His eastern and western children sat together before Him, filling their eyes and hearts with His Presence. In the evenings, the plaintive twittering of swallows as they circle about before getting into their nests for the night, brings this picture startlingly to life, and I think of what the Beloved said recently at Meherazad: "Only on certain occasions do I open My Heart and give out a little Love. At Poona in November I opened a small window in My Heart and doled out a little Love. When I break My Silence I shall open My Heart completely, and keep it open."

We left Meherazad after breakfast on March 24th, enjoyed a sandwich-lunch as usual in the car, and soon as we entered Guruprasad, fell to untying and unpacking the innumerable packages of household and personal belongings that we had spent so much energy in packing at Meherazad. On the way to Poona, Baba had the car stopped under a tree, apparently for some toilet purpose. However, as He stepped out and stood for a moment by the door, a black car which had been behind us for some time drew up in front, from which a man alighted and with joined hands walked straight towards Baba. As he bowed down to Baba he explained that he had last seen Baba in Toka, about 35 years ago, and expressed his joy at the unexpected blessing he had received from this chance meeting on the road! Baba smiled and gestured that He too was happy about it. The actual reason for Baba having stopped the car at that time and place seemed no longer obscure to us.

Guruprasad is "switched on" again and the light of the Beloved's presence is flooding the lives of His lovers in Poona and shedding its rays over the city's teeming population whether it is aware or unaware of the blessing. The lovers wait in tiptoed hope for a call from Baba that will throw open to them the gates of Guruprasad so that they might enter into the presence of God. Baidul, usually the appointed Peter of this heaven of Baba-lovers, knows the days and occasions permitted by Baba, and during holidays and Sundays he waves the visitors in with a vehemence that tunes in with their happy mood. They come walking, cycling, by car, bus, taxi or tonga; they come alone; they come with children, with garlands, with joy-rubbed faces. They come not just because of their love, but because of their Beloved's compassion which overrules the rules He put down in November about "no visitors, no darshan, no programs." In fact Baba has announced that this summer's stay of three months at Guruprasad will be dotted with musical programs fixed for every Sunday afternoon from 3 to 6

o'clock, during which time His lovers can be in His presence. It will be an Eastern gathering of Baba-lovers in a complete sense, for even the singers will sing for Baba in love, their reward being the privilege of singing to Him. This honour goes to such nationally renowned artistes as Begum Akhtar, Hirabai Barodekar, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Saraswati Ranay, Shahu Modak (who is also a famous film actor), and others. Begum Akhtar, fulfilling her promise given to Baba at Meherazad, will be in Poona for four days, and Baba has reserved two afternoons for her performance at Guruprasad — the first Saturday and Sunday of May.

This, Baba told us, will give Him some much-needed relaxation after the intense inner work He has been doing in Meherazad since the last three months — working with Kaikobad and often by Himself in the seclusion of His room, and which work He will carry on with doubled intensity on returning to Meherazad. When we plead with Him not to thus tax His health, He says He cannot afford to be kind to Himself — there is not much time left and He wants to break His Silence by the end of this year. He added "When I break my Silence my Presence will flood the world, and even an inanimate thing like a stone will feel my Love"! However, throughout that period of overwork, the radiance of Baba's dynamic mood was felt by all; the mandali would bask in the warmth of its vital fire, and often would feel scorched from the immensity of His presence and proximity. Mornings and afternoons Baba poured into them spiritual discourses and explanations, mainly inspired by some verse or ode from Hafiz of Shiraz, that incomparable Persian poet who was a Perfect Master and of whom Baba says "his words are as pearls in the Ocean of divinity, though to the average reader his words are as oysters." Baba would unfold to the mandali the pearl hidden in each oyster, as Baba, and Baba alone, could do.

Poona is a crippled city since the fantastic flood two years ago when the city was drowned in the water stored for its supply. The water problem still has top priority in the people's daily lives which must be adjusted to suit the hours of water allowance. Electricity too seems no longer a blessing to be taken for granted, and a sudden and complete black-out on any evening at what always seems to be the most critical hour or occasion, is worth the moment of happy relief we experience at the equally sudden reappearance of lights some time later. But perhaps these uncertainties could best serve us as reminders that all things are transitory and cannot endure. As Baba said repeatedly to Joseph Harb during his and Kari's interview with Him on the day we arrived here, "I am the only Reality. All else that seems real is illusion. I am God, 100% so! There is nothing besides Me. Therefore think only of Me and constantly repeat My Name. If you were to drop your body this instant, this alone will be of use to you." Joseph has been very ill for some time from a gall-bladder trouble of many years' standing, which took a serious turn and surgery was found essential. Baba told him to be operated on by Dr. Gharpure in Poona, and just as last summer three days after our arrival Pendu underwent a major operation, so this year did Joseph. The operation was successful and dear Joseph is home again. Beloved Baba went three times to see him at the hospital, and these visits were the strongest tonic that pulled Joseph out of the woods. At one time the doctors strongly suspected malignancy, but Baba assured Joseph "I tell you, you have no cancer. As a matter of fact, it is I who have cancer, for you all around Me, and the whole world, are my cancerous growth and so I suffer continually."

Since my attempt to approach the subject of Baba's suffering, in a family-letter last June, Baba has personally clarified it. This was on the memorable 9th of December, when some of His lovers from Poona and Bombay were given the coveted chance of spending a day with Him at Meherazad. The Beloved was in a generous mood and doled out a drop of nectar from the ocean of His Knowledge, to feed His ever-hungry children in a measure to suit their capacity of understanding. For us, the drop was a feast!

About His suffering, Baba explained: "Why and how can I suffer when I am the Ocean of Power Knowledge and Bliss? God has infinite Power, infinite Knowledge and infinite Bliss. The Avatar is God Himself incarnate on earth as Man. During His ministry as Avatar, He uses only infinite Knowledge. He does not make use of His infinite Power and infinite Bliss. This is because God incarnates as Man and goes through universal suffering and helplessness in order to emancipate mankind from its ignorance of suffering and helplessness. If the Avatar were to use His infinite Power, how could He experience helplessness? If the Avatar were to use His infinite Bliss, how could He suffer? He therefore does not use either His infinite Bliss or His infinite Power. Such is His infinite Love and Compassion for His creation! Jesus Christ Who had infinite Power, let Himself become helpless and suffered the humiliation of letting the people spit on Him and jeer at Him. He suffered crucifixion, but even while on the Cross did not help Himself from the Power and Bliss that were His. Instead He cried, 'Father, why hast Thou forsaken me!' He said it to Himself of course, for He and the Father are One.

"Again and again, God takes human form to suffer for His Creation. I am that One. Like you I have a body and mind and so I feel hunger and thirst, etc. But I also have Universal Body and Universal Mind, and therefore your individual suffering is as nothing compared to My eternal, universal suffering! I have infinite Knowledge. I do not have to use My mind in order to know — I just know. I use My infinite Knowledge. But although I have infinite Bliss and infinite Power, I do not make use of them. If I were to make use of the Bliss that is at My beck and call, how could My suffering be 'suffering'? And of what benefit would it be to mankind? I also do not use My infinite Power. If I were to use it, how would I remain helpless? I remain infinitely helpless because while having infinite Power at My command, I do not use it! I shall use it only when I break My Silence to give a universal spiritual Awakening; and when I drop this Body I shall use My Bliss for 700 years till My next advent.

"Hold fast to Me so that I will take you where I go, otherwise you will be lost. I am the Emperor. If you belong to Me, you will have access to the Infinite Treasure that is Mine. But if, instead, you go after the guards and servants of the palace (the Sants and Sadhus) it is sheer folly on your part!

"I suffer physically and mentally. My physical suffering can be seen. My mental suffering is much more intense than the physical, and is due to the anti-God element that is at its height, and the universal prevalence of hypocrisy —specially of those who profess themselves to be saints and spiritual personalities. I suffer spiritually because although in Me I am Free, in you I see and feel Myself bound by your ignorance; and so I suffer

infinitely. In no previous Avataric period have I disclosed these secrets, because the time was not ripe for it then. At present science has advanced by leaps and bounds; and anti-God element is at its maximum; why then should not spirituality also be at its maximum! Blessed is he who holds fast to My daaman."\*

Referring to the anti-God element rising to its height, Baba remarked that Tibet which was once considered to be "the seat of God" is now transformed into a military camp since the Chinese invasion. For India, in general, the attack on her borders by China has meant untold privations added to the common man's daily struggle for existence. But it has also meant a national unity of purpose, determination and courage, that has drawn the friendly hand of sympathy and generous help from our brothers across the oceans.

Tek Chand, an ardent Baba-lover from Delhi who is in the army, was home recently on a few days' leave and gave a talk at the Delhi Baba Centre on his experiences during the recent Chinese invasion, and which we have gathered as follows from a Baba-lover's letters: Tek Chand who is with the frontier road-building set-up, was deep in the Subansiri division on 9th November together with 700 non-combatants without arms, when the Chinese began encircling them. They received orders to withdraw immediately, leaving everything behind. Panic seized them as they had no food and no arms! Tek Chand instilled hope and courage into his men by assuring them they had nothing to fear because the living God, Avatar Meher Baba, was with them, and so no harm would come to them and they would get back safely. His men were visibly cheered by this, and Tek Chand told them more about Baba. Taking the help of some hill tribesmen Tek Chand with the 700 men trekked back through the jungles. They trekked for seven days and nights, through unfamiliar terrain, without food and without protective clothing, in the biting cold and rain and slush —Tek Chand singing bhajans in praise of beloved Baba, with the men joining in and taking Baba's Name. They encountered breathtaking hardships on the way. Some of the men had to swim across the turbulent waters of a river when the temporary bridge gave way under their weight, but they managed to get across safely. Others, overcome with hunger, ate D.D.T. that they found at an abandoned post, mistaking it for flour! However, they were violently sick and brought up the poison, and their brothers helped them to carry on. Through it all, there was the constant fear of being spied by the Chinese. At last the incredible journey was over and the men returned to their post in Assam, famished and looking terribly emaciated in their tattered clothes, but without a single casualty. In fact not one of them suffered frost-bite or any lung infection despite hopelessly inadequate protection from the cruel cold. Thus did Tek Chand return from the frontier, instrumental in bringing back his 700 men to safety through Baba's Love.

Although the Beloved's Birthday celebrations were silent this year, there was a grand chorus of Birthday greetings sung through cables and telegrams from His lovers in the East and the West, and no herald angels could

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\* Note: "daaman" (literal meaning 'hem of the garment') is pronounced to rhyme with salmon.

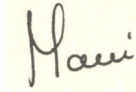
have sung a sweeter melody than was this "love-song" to the Creator, from those chosen to know and adore Him while He walks the earth again as Man. Every note touched Baba's heart, and He has told me to convey to you each dear one His Love.

Feramroj, an old Baba-lover who is one of the main pillars that sustains Baba's office at Ahmednagar, is a thin man whose looks belie his age and whose serious demeanour fails to hide his inexhaustible store of wit. One of Adi's helpmates for years, he always has his nose to the grindstone of Baba-work. On Baba's Birthday this year, the deluge of telegrams and cables to Baba came from all over the world and lasted for nearly a week! This has been too much for the small and meagrely staffed Telegraph Office at Ahmednagar, and an extra rush of work for Feram who was kept legging it to the T.O. all day long for confirmation or correction of the speedily deciphered contents, or to check the accuracy of the reply-paid forms. Feram's note to Meherazad spoke volumes and I can't help reproducing it here: "My dear Eruch, the local T.O. is in a hustle and bustle, as also, I hear, the Poona T.O. Even Bombay is wondering who Meher Baba is, because for an individual this rush of cables and telegrams is unprecedented. The local T.O. is hard pressed and the clerk told me that for the last few days they are dealing only with "Meher Baba". So much the better, as their sanskaras will be lessened. Even with my over-growth of hair on the chin, I was sirred and stooled (meaning I was addressed as 'Sir' and offered a stool to sit on, which is a rare honour for a shirt-pant-sandalled individual as I am). But I am not flattered because I have had no rest! However I look forward to better days."

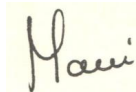
Shantadevi, our charming Maharani, on the first of her many visits to Baba at Guruprasad this summer narrated to us the glorious event at Kovvur, which she described as "out of this world". But, she said, she had no words in which to express the depth of the Andhraites' love for Baba that they unostentatiously expressed in everything they did or said; and she also spoke of how very much Baba's presence was felt by all at Mehersthan. On the morning of 28th February, we all who were at Meherazad, both women and men mandali, stood before Baba in the hall. At 7.32, exactly at the moment Shantadevi unveiled the Statue at Mehersthan, Baba clapped — and we all shouted with one voice "PARVARDIGAR"! This was at Baba's express wish. An old Baba-lover from Bombay who was one of the pilgrims to Kovvur, sent a wire to Baba: "Manifestation of Your Love felt and evidenced at Kovvur. May Your Love manifestation deluge the world soon with Your Glorification before I die." And this is the message Beloved Baba sent by telegram to dear Koduri Krishna Rao and his wife whose love has made Mehersthan possible: "You are blessed in your love for Me. The love of My lovers gathered in Kovvur for the opening of Mehersthan on 28th February has filled Mehersthan with My Presence for I abide where My lovers are. I give My blessing to Mehersthan and to all who have made this pilgrimage to Kovvur to welcome Me."

It looks as though this family-letter too is going to be six pages long, yet I feel there is much more I could say. And yet again, what is there that one can really say about Baba! As Sant Tukaram says: "Were I to have Your sahavas (close company) continually, the mystery of Your Being would still not be unfolded to me." This couplet Baba has referred to at times, saying to the mandali that although they were with Him all the time, yet they could not really see Him. To illustrate it, Baba would put up His hands in front of His face, and would ask one of us sitting near Him, "Now can you see My face, although you are so close to Me?" The answer would of course be "No"! "That is how the thick curtain of Maya hides My Face from your sight" Baba explained. "But", He added, "do not let it worry you. Let your only worry be as to how to love Me and obey Me more and more."

Ever lovingly,



Important: There are two gems you must not fail to add to your treasure-chest of Baba books — a priceless one of discourses by Baba, discourses never before printed; and another of rare beauty and brilliancy, by Francis. Details regarding these two books will be mentioned in the next family-letter, which I hope to send out before leaving Poona end of June.





# *fifty-three/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 12th June 1963.

Dearest Family,

Once when our dear Maharani Shantadevi came in to say goodbye to us, she told us delightedly, "Baba said we are both going to become immortal". To our questioning look as to who the other one was besides herself, she replied "Guruprasad and I"! Unique beyond doubt is the role played by Guruprasad in the life and activities of the Avatar of the Age, and by its gracious and fortunate owner who has placed it at His service in love.

This summer a rich harvest of the Beloved's sahavas has been gathered by Baba-lovers from many parts of India, and Guruprasad has added to its score of cherished memories many more Baba-occasions, expected and unexpected. There was "Meher Leela", a drama depicting Baba's life and enacted in dance by the students of Kalakshetra dancing school of Eluru (Andhra), which was first presented at the opening of Mehersthan in Kovvur and which Baba asked to have performed before Him at Guruprasad. Beautifully danced by a cast consisting mostly of girls under twelve, it earned frequent bursts of applause from Baba and the assembly. The first scene when Lord Vishun (played by natyacharya Gudimetla Krishna) hears the cry of Mother Earth imploring the Ancient One to descend again and restore dharma, was splendid — as was the dance expressing Nature's ecstasy when at last the Avatar has come. One of the youngest dancers who played the role of "Baba", stole our hearts by her performance — particularly in the scene where, as Merwan, she cycled past Babajan before receiving the Kiss. Backstage, two blind musicians supplied fascinating music on the violin, harmonium and flute; and their moment of joy obviously came when Baba embraced them. The songs that accompanied each dance were rendered by two young women, who as girls took up the profession of street-singers to support their mother and little brother. They went thru years of bitter trials and temptations. Then Baba stepped into their life, and its course changed completely — and so did their songs. They still sing from street to street, from place to place, from district to district of Andhra state; but instead of the common songs considered popular, they now sing songs about Baba. This change earned the sisters not only respect but much popularity, and their singing is in demand on festive occasions and at private functions. Baba was touched when He heard of their recent contribution towards India's defence fund, earned from singing Baba-songs.

We think of that weekend as the "Andhra-weekend" — nearly 200 Andhraites came by special train carriages, including a number of children and the inevitable babes in arms who were placed by their mothers at Baba's feet for their share of His darshan. That Sunday there was Burra-Katha also, as desired by the Beloved. It is a sketch conveying the story of Baba's life and the glory of His Avatarhood, performed partly in dialogue and partly in song by the Trio who originated it, and played before Baba at Meherabad during the 1958 sahavas. It was their fourth performance in His presence, since the eight years they have devotedly played it over a hundred and fifty times to crowds of thousands of people in Andhra, thus carrying Baba's dear Name and message of Love to villages and towns and cities all over the state.

The Hamirpur weekend was no less memorable. Two large groups came — one by train, the other by private bus across which was painted in Hindi: "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!". Their contribution to the weekend's program was unexpected but thoroughly enjoyed by all — they enacted, in condensed form, one of Bhau's plays. A simple affair, seasoned with much humour and spicy acting (especially as the women's roles were played by men), it revealed the true story of Hamirpur before the tide of Baba's love swept away the severe opposition that faced the first few lovers who pioneered to spread Baba's message in that district. The priests and the orthodox were scared of this unknown 'menace' which threatened to dissolve all distinction of caste and creed in a brotherliness and oneness of love for God, and so they incited the people to harass these followers of Meher Baba and stop them from endangering their age-old ideas and customs. When Baba first visited Hamirpur, He was to give darshan to Nauranga — the place where Meher Dham now stands — a little village where rural life and transport facilities are primitive. Water is channeled to the heart of the fields thru big arteries of canals that are crossed by crude bridges. A few hours before the morning Baba was to arrive, the opposition party tore down the bridge and breached the canals, flooding the area and the surrounding fields, so that Baba had to give darshan on the outskirts of the village. But Love won, as sooner or later it must. On Baba's next visit there about a year later, the opposers were among the foremost to welcome Him. Today Hamirpur district has one of the largest Baba following, and yearly big fairs are held at the different places sanctified by His visits.

Every day seems a Sahavas Day for some Baba group or other. The number increases in size by Friday when outstation Baba-lovers rush down to Poona for the weekend, swelling into such a crowd every Sunday morning and afternoon that the palace seems too small a place to hold them! But like a mother hen Guruprasad manages to spread itself to accommodate under its wings all the Baba-chicks gathered around Him for their hearts' feed of His presence. Baba gives them His darshan or embrace; He gives them spiritual discourses; He listens to the singing or musical recital with obvious enjoyment and appreciation; He teases Dr. Deshmukh whose outburst of song at unexpected moments is expected by all; He recalls some amusing incident of the past or asks someone to narrate a joke and the hall resounds with laughter. And Baba says: "You see Me doing all this, but simultaneously my work continues. It is as breathing is to you — you talk, work, play, eat, sleep etc. but you never stop breathing. It is the same with My work which continues without a stop whatever else I may appear to be doing. However, when I have special work to do I go into seclusion and wish not to be disturbed.

At another time Baba said "I am so Infinite that I myself cannot fathom my own infinity. My shadow (Illusion) also is so infinite, that once when I tried to count the universes that come out of Me — not galaxies mind you, but innumerable universes — I could not do so. Infinity cannot be fathomed — and, just as there is no end to Reality, so there is no end to its shadow, Illusion. All of you are addicted to Illusion, just as some are addicted to drink or tobacco etc. But there is no addiction like Maya! You can give up drinking or smoking, but Maya is an addiction that is impossible to give up — unless by God's (My) grace.

"Only Dnyan (Self-knowledge) can make you realize that I am nearer to you than what you are to your own self. Nearest to your vision are your eyes, with which you see everything around you. Yet the eyes, that are instrumental in seeing everything, do not see themselves. You have to hold a mirror before you in order to see your eyes. Thus to see your inner Self you have to hold the mirror of Dnyan before you — and only Baba can give you that mirror."

The sun of His Knowledge threw a ray of light on the present panicky problem of over-population everywhere, and revealed an explanation as intriguing as it is unique! Baba gave us to understand that there are 18,000 worlds in Creation which are inhabited, some by human beings with 100% intelligence, others with lesser and varying degrees of it. But the value of our Earth, where mind and heart balance, is inestimable. For it is here, and here alone that one can go thru the process of Involution and experience the subtle and mental spheres; here alone that God-realization can be attained. Thus it is that souls (jiv-atmas) from other inhabited worlds finally take birth on this Earth for their emancipation, more so during the Avataric advent when the highest spiritual benefit is gained — and most so when the Avataric manifestation is greatest. Hence the present influx of population on Earth is but the natural outcome of the rush of 'migration' from other worlds, and the ones migrating from the worlds of highest intelligence are responsible for carrying Science to the peak it has reached today. Baba said, "All this has been recurring since timeless ages, in a never ending tide and ebb. Even this Earth expends itself in time and another such earth takes its place. Science will soon come to know a little of what I have said."

"I will break my Silence and manifest when on the one hand science reaches its highest level and on the other hand anti-God elements rise to their peak. Accordingly, my spiritual Manifestation will also be of the highest. When I break my Silence the world will be shaken into realization of Who I Am. When I break my Silence the impact will jolt the world out of its spiritual lethargy, and will push open the hearts of all who love Me and are connected with Me. What will happen when I break my Silence, is what has never happened before."

We who are with Baba, are understandably not excited when the Beloved pinpoints a time when He says He will break His silence. Those concerned most with Him, are somehow least concerned about when He will break it. But at this time, Baba has so often been saying that it will be in nine months' time that I feel I must record it here. Baba has compared the nine months before His silence ends, to the gestation period when the child is carried in the mother's womb. Baba said, "Wherever we turn we find depression, confusion, conflict. It is nothing but a sign of my soon breaking silence and releasing a fresh dispensation of Truth. After I return to Meherazad, there will be an increase in pain and suffering, mental torture and chaos, the world over. It will be a reflection of the suffering I will undergo during the nine months, reaching its height at the time of 'delivery' (the breaking of my Silence). Then will come the Birth, when both "mother and baby" will get relief."

"The time is arriving, and very close it is in arriving, when I will shake everything off Me — that is why I keep saying let your hold on my daaman be very strong. The coming nine months before I break my Silence are very important. So in the nine months at your disposal engage yourselves in spreading my message of Love, and trying your utmost to live the life you ask others to live. You must live what you say, otherwise the best thing would be to keep your mouth shut. There can be no compromise. My lovers should be 100% honest in spreading my message of Love and Truth. Don't let any hypocrisy enter into it. Don't let jealousy or backbiting creep into it, or the thing will be spoilt. If you travel about to do my work and cannot afford to do so by jet plane or train or car or even a bullock-cart, then go about on foot. But, whatever work you do for Baba, do it honestly. Don't think you are doing the work — it is done by God's Will."

The Beloved gave a special message on a special occasion — in fact "unique" is the best adjective to describe the occasion, for never before has Baba taken part in such a function, and the newspapers rightly proclaimed: "Sports history was made at Poona....." It all began when Mr. Pulsulay and Mr. Rege of The Poona District Cricket Association came for Baba's darshan and requested Him to award prizes to the winners at this year's Annual Prize Distribution Function, which they would arrange to hold wherever it would be most convenient to Him. The outcome was that Baba accepted, and chose Guruprasad as the place where the function would be held. And so the afternoon of Sunday the 26th of May found the assembly hall at Guruprasad filled with cricketers and members of the P.D.C.A., while the verandah and adjoining rooms were packed with the usual gathering of Baba-lovers. It was a field day for the cricketers. They received their trophies of shields, cups and merit-certificates from Baba's hands, along with His blessing of Love; they received His darshan and participated in the Arti sung at the end of the function. As one who knows and loves cricket, Baba advised them to play bright cricket and not to make it boring for the spectators just for the sake of remaining unbeaten. To illustrate this He cited a humorous incident of His school days when He was wicket-keeper batsman, and the cricketers seated before Him thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed the story — and The Times of India spread headlines over its sports page: GO IN FOR BRIGHT CRICKET SAYS MEHER BABA. The Indian Express produced part of His message and said "Hundreds of his devotees witnessed Avatar Meher Baba preside at the function, which in the words of a veteran sportsman was 'unique'." Another paper commented "Avatar Meher Baba has devotees by the thousands, not only in India but in other parts of the world. Baba has a big following of cricketers, prominent among whom are India's skipper Nari Contractor, Polly Umrigar, Khandu Rangnekar, and others."

The message that Baba gave them on the occasion was:

"I am happy to present these trophies today. When I was a boy in school and college I played cricket. Now I play my Divine Universal Game, which includes cricket, and so I am still fond of that game.

"It is good to excel in whatever one takes up, so long as with excellence there is a feeling of humility; for this leads to love of God, and to love God as He should be loved is the best excellence.

"I give you my blessing that one day each of you may have that love."

Although the programs mentioned here have been given in details to some extent, for lack of space it is not possible to include all the events and song feasts held at Guruprasad. But I would be sorely amiss if I did not speak of the program that towered over the many "singing Sundays" of this summer — Begum Akhtar's. Begum Akhtar sang to the Beloved for two afternoons, in a Guruprasad that overflowed with His lovers. Her love for Baba, and the charm and warmth of her personality, added to the richness of her songs — and though we expected highly of this favourite kavvali singer of our Highest of the High, she surpassed our expectations. Underneath the serene clarity of her voice lay a storm of feeling, and she skirted the musical precipices with intoxicating ease. By gestures of hand and radiance of face Baba expressed His happiness at her singing, and turning to us He would repeatedly say what a magnificent voice she had. Baba told Begum Akhtar "A voice such as you have is very very rare." She bowed and said "It is all Your grace." Among the things that He gave her as His prasad of love, was a ring set with His picture and a pink scarf that she wore throughout the afternoon. Once again (as in Meherazad) Baba gave her His handkerchief to wipe the tears that coursed down her cheeks during a song. The song that Baba loves best she reserved for the last — its first line is: 'I am the smoke from a snuffed out candle and am going towards my Goal.' After hearing her in person, I doubt if we can ever fully enjoy her short recordings as we used to, for they do poor justice to the vocal beauty expressed in her full-length songs. I must also add that Mohammed Ahmed, the famous tabla exponent, offered to come along as her accompanist when he heard about Baba from Begum Akhtar. It was as fascinating to listen to his tabla (Indian drums) as it was to watch him play it, and he seemed to enjoy playing for Baba as much as Baba enjoyed his excellent performance.

England is the poorer by the loss of one of Baba's oldest and dearest lovers: Will Backett, who died last month after a short illness. As Charles Purdom writes, "Will gave his life to Baba's work — indeed he lived it." For dear Will himself it was nothing but gain, as we can see from the message that beloved Baba sent in a cable to Mollie Eve of His English group:

"Your cable regarding Will's passing away received.

Both my dear archangels Will and Mary Backett have  
come to Me for all time.

- BABA."

Another dear one that has come to Baba is Judith Humphries of Australia, one of the Novemberites who wanted to stay on in India but who returned to Australia in accordance with Baba's wish.

I asked Baba how He would wish His Silence anniversary observed this year by His lovers in the West and East, so that His directions regarding it could reach you dear ones in time thru this letter. Baba has decided that it be observed according to the directions sent out last year for the 37th Silence anniversary.

Please note therefore:

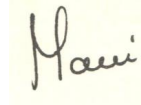
On the 10th of July 1963, the 38th Anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th of July to midnight of the 10th of July, in accordance with the local time.

Those who, for practical reasons, find that it is not possible to observe silence for the 24 hours on Wednesday the 10th of July 1963, should observe complete fast instead, for twelve hours of that day from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. During this fast nothing must be consumed — not even water.

Those who are fasting for the 12 hours on July 10th, should also observe partial fast in the morning from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. by taking only one cup of tea or coffee (with or without milk), before beginning their complete fast at 8.00 a.m.

Baba sends His Love-Blessing to each one of His lovers for the Silence Day.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meheri', is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper. The signature is positioned to the right of the text 'Ever lovingly,'.

P.S. We leave for Meherazad (Ahmednagar) end of June.

# *fifty-four/*

Meherazad, 9th August 1963.

Dearest Family,

I've been sitting at the typewriter for half an hour ready to begin the letter, but the page before me has remained as blank as my mind seemed to be. It is an unusually still morning in absence of the gusty wind that has lately been blowing itself hoarse through the trees, rattling our windows and tempers, whisking off papers that are not under paper-weights, and whipping one's hair up in the latest 'beehive' fashion. A lizard is digging the soft earth by a flower bed to lay its eggs in, and the pert little tailor-bird is tugging at strands of coir from the mat just a few feet away from where I sit, to line the nest of the family it is planning. The sky is a thick canopy of clouds, but in the dictionary of Meherazad clouds don't necessarily mean rain.\* When the sun comes out the bumble-bees buzz in busy circles round the blue flowers of the jacaranda. Another bloom that welcomed us on our return to Meherazad was that of the Cactus plant which flowers once in a long while, but which seems to make up for lost time by the richness of its exquisite blossom! It is Meherazad in one of its pleasantest moods, but one which the Meherazadians have not often the time or mood to appreciate or enjoy — life with Baba rarely permits it. Each of us is kept continually occupied with his or her duties, allotted or unexpected, with little time that can be called 'one's own' — but then that is as it should be, when one's all is His!

Baba has been with the mandali all morning, and soon now He will come over to the women's quarters for lunch. He will be carried in a lift-chair by the boys, because the pain in His hip-joint is considerably more (partly owing no doubt to this cloudy weather) and walking the distance becomes an ordeal for Him. To us this means one more 'binding' that the Beloved has imposed upon Himself — one of the innumerable bindings God takes on when He has bound Himself in the human form for the sake of humanity. As we have seen through the years, doctors and health, as everything else concerned with Baba, serve as a smoke-screen for the real purpose of His work not revealed to us. As I once wrote to Harry Kenmore: So that we might 'remember' our True Self in Him, Baba does a lot of 'forgetting' to Himself. He has 'forgotten' to make speech, He has 'forgotten' to write, He has 'forgotten' almost to walk and scarcely to eat. May we always remember His forgetting, and forget our remembering, till there is nothing to remember except just HIM!

It is over a month since we left Poona, and although our Guruprasad stay seems a long distance away, it stands out in detail before our mind's eye — it is like looking at an object from the opposite end of a pair of binoculars. Particular moments and scenes stand out with shining clarity, and here are some flashes from the endearing memories of this summer at Guruprasad:

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\* Since writing this, we have had good rains!

Baba was in the assembly hall, and the crowd of His lovers seated before Him seemed to cover every inch of floor space available. Baba singled out a little girl barely four years old and called her to Him. She trotted up eagerly and bowed down at His feet like any grown-up, and then an ecstatic smile lit her face as Baba drew her to Him and embraced her and caressed her cheeks. She was from Sagar, a place a long way away from Poona, and her parents were not with her — she had come with her neighbours. When she heard that her neighbours were going to Poona to see Baba, she pleaded with her Mummy to let her go with them, insisting with all the determination and tearful persistence of a child who will not be deterred from its object. She won her point, Baba's embrace, and the hearts of all who heard the story of her purposeful pilgrimage.

One crowded Sunday we saw among the long queue of darshaners who were awaiting their turn to approach Baba, a woman who was having trouble keeping her two boisterous youngsters in order. I did not think the Beloved could even have seen her, surrounded as He was with the others who were garlanding Him, taking His darshan and offering sweets or fruit which often He would touch and return to them as prasad. But He had! When the woman came up to Baba, He asked her, "Do these kids trouble you?" She feelingly replied "Yes Baba, indeed they do!" With a twinkle of His eyes Baba said, "If only two children can make your life a hell, can you imagine My plight who has billions of children?!" I'm sure that remark must have warmed the mother's heart and brought Baba closer to her than any books or explanations could have done.

On a weekend in April, a small village somewhere near Bombay wore a completely deserted air. Its thirty odd mud houses were shut, nobody was about, and the cattle were under their shelters with enough fodder near them to last till their owners' return next morning. The reason for this was that the entire village had gone to Poona for the day to have Baba's darshan! Baba's love had been ignited in the hearts of these village folk by a Baba-lover of Bombay. This lover has a bushy beard and Baba teased him, saying that he looked like Father Christmas. One of the mandali remarked that if the beard were white, he would positively have looked the part. Eruch then put in that he could rightly be called Father Christmas, since he had brought the gift of Baba's love to all these villagers! Baba embraced each of them, and expressed His happiness at their coming. As He has said more than once, "When I break My silence, all will come to know Me. Fortunate are those who know Me now."

15th and 16th June comprised the last weekend for darshan seekers from outstations, and among those who did not fail to take this final opportunity were a couple from the south — Andhra state's Minister for excise, prohibition and social welfare, Sri M.R. Apparao and his attractive wife. What makes their visit unforgettable to us is the expression of their love for Baba that we were witness to. Firstly they were granted their wish of doing Baba's 'pada-pooja' (literal meaning 'feet-worship'), a rare privilege, and they washed and anointed Baba's feet with milk, honey, curds, spices and perfume. And then Sri Apparao said to the Beloved that, on behalf of himself and his wife, he wished to declare publicly what they had believed in their hearts — that Baba is the Avatar, God in human form.

During a kavvali singing program, Baba would explain to us some lines from the ghazals. One of them was: The lover says to the Beloved, "I experience the parched desert of separation as an ocean of water, for I have grown so much in love that I quench my thirst by thirst itself!" Another line was, 'Only those eyes which have intense longing for a sight of the Beloved, can have some inkling of the secret



of that intoxication which the Beloved's eyes impart.' Baba then said: "See the irony of it. In spite of the prevailing law of Prohibition in the country, there are many people who continue to drink. Now, where the 'wine' of Divine Love is concerned, there is no prohibition. It is abundant and free for any and all who may wish to have it, and yet there is rarely a one who wants to drink it or craves for it — that is the humour of it!"

One morning someone from a theosophical society, obviously a very learned person in his own estimation, came to see Baba for the first time, and asked Him for a message. Baba said, "My message is, love God to such an extent that you become God. That Love is a gift from God. One of the means by which it can also be won is selfless service — but the selfless service should be so sublime that you should not even have a thought that you are serving! Truth has to be experienced, and for that one has to go beyond mind, which is so difficult that it is just about impossible! You can love God. You can see God. He is not anywhere outside, but right within you. So you must seek Him within. Conviction through understanding is possible (by reading and contemplation etc.), but conviction by sight is the real conviction. After that, some rare one can achieve conviction by actual becoming — i.e. realizing God.

"What I say is not mere words of intellect, but of Experience. They are not words coming from the mind, but from experience of the Beyond. I am the One, the Only One, and experience Myself one with all. When I break My silence the world will come to know who I am. As a rule, in the past it has been the lot of posterity to know who the Avatar was. But in this unique Avataric advent the world will know who the Avatar IS while Baba is yet on earth."

At another occasion Baba said, "God is not to be found in the skies or in the caves of the Himalayas. God is in the heart of each one. Once your heart is clean, God will shine out in it. But it is not easy to clean one's heart. It is like diving deep into a sea of fire! To love Me is to lose yourself. Hence, where you are, God is not; and where God is, you are not. It is easy to become good but very difficult to become God." With tongue in cheek, Adi remarked that it should be easy to become God after becoming 'good' — one just had to knock off an 'o'. Baba replied, "It is no joke to do that — even if one were to die in the attempt to knock off that O one would not succeed!" Baba continued, "To love God is not easy. The easy path is to hold fast to My daaman. Throw down all your burden of sanskaras at My feet by complete surrender to Me. I am the Ocean and can absorb all your burden. But in fact there is no such thing as 'burden' - it is all imagination, a play of Maya." Baba said, "Maya has been compared to ringworm infection. The more you scratch, the more you want to scratch, and the more miserable you become. In the same way, the more you indulge in Maya the more you want to indulge in it, and become all the more miserable."

Baba touched on the subject of 'saints' and 'masters' that abound in the East today. He said, "They are like seashells scattered on the beach, their superfluous glitter attracting the loiterers on the beach who pick them up and think they have gained the treasure of the sea. But it is a far cry from the Pearl ensconced in the deeps of the Ocean! And so it is that Hafiz says how foolish people are who compare pearls with seashells. The Real Pearl is here, (Baba pointed to Himself). Do not go after shells." The Perfect Master, Sant Tukaram, spoke strongly of the hypocrites who set themselves up as spiritual teachers, and

among the poetical compositions he left for posterity, one of his favourite ones was: 'Wearing long matted hair and with ash-besmeared body, there are many frauds in varied guises. Tukaram says let their (dead) conscience get burnt — it is no sin to thrash them!' Baba had Eruch recite it in the original.

The weekend mass of humanity gathered around Baba was always made up of men and women of diverse religions — Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Sindhis, Christians and others; of different castes and creeds, and from varied walks of life. The 'tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man.....' of the game we used to enjoy as children, were all there. Concentrating on a corner of the hall, to the left of Baba, I once tried to make a list of the men sitting there, by their professions and occupations; and the result was as interesting as I expected. Among that group were: a lawyer, yogi, businessmen, cricketer, medical doctor, clerk, bakery owner, army colonel, poet, wing-commander of the Air force, journalist, sessions judge, schoolboy, major-general of the army, musician, university professor, farmer, member of parliament, principal of a college, typist, chiropractor, editor, shop-keeper, school teacher, bank accountant, cook, motor mechanic, geologist, priest, college student, pathologist, singer and salesman. But however varied their religion and mode of life, like flowers threaded together in a garland they were united in their love for Baba, in their desire to love Him as He should be loved, and in the conviction of their hearts that He is God incarnate, the Avatar of the age.

Among the gathering we also saw many faces we had not seen before — 'new-comers' who had heard of Baba from other lovers. We gather too from letters, how the Beloved's Family grows daily, in the East and in the West. Baba-centers have sprung up all over India, the workers carrying His message and Name to as many as possible through individual and combined efforts. There are at least three men who we know have taken a 'holiday' from their jobs till the end of this year and are individually touring India, giving talks about Baba at every town or city they halt. Others give His messages in newspapers and magazines, in the vernacular and in English. Through various means and in different ways Baba's Name reaches the eyes and ears of the multitude, making a channel for Baba to touch the hearts that are ripe to open to His Love. But even just to hear His Name is a 'contact' that must benefit the hearer, for Baba tells us that the time is near when the divine 'power-house' will be switched on and all hearts connected to it will receive directly of His Love, and those that come even within the orbit of His Name will get its warmth and glow.

The spreading of His beloved Name and message seems about to be carried out on a world-wide scale through the medium of THE WORLD FAIR that is being held in the U.S.A. starting from April 1964 and running for two years. This World Fair project of America is a gigantic affair costing 100 billion dollars, covering hundreds of acres with magnificent buildings that will represent and exhibit the culture, industry, religion and art of almost every country in the world. President Kennedy has estimated that seventy million people will visit the Fair during its life term of two years. Jane Barry Haynes is a very dear Baba-lover in the U.S.A. who had come to India for the November Gathering with her three children who adore Baba. When Jane knew of the World Fair she couldn't help thinking 'What a wonderful opportunity this would be of spreading Baba's message of Love!' But could she dare bring that thought outside the realm of 'a beautiful dream' that it seemed, into the daylight of reality? She did, and the dream is fast becoming a reality. The staggering task of obtaining a little space for Baba's work at The World Fair has been achieved, with the help of His many lovers in the U.S.A. The innumerable barriers that stood in the way were surmounted, for when it is His Will we are always shown the way. As Jane says, He is the Doer, we are but instruments. She said in one of her earlier letters to Adi:

'On the day we arrived in India, here (in the U.S.A.) the ground was broken for the Vatican City Pavilion, an awe-inspiring building that will house the original sculpture of the Pieta by Michelangelo sent over by the Pope for the Fair. When I saw the plans for this building, and a tremendous one for the Protestant Center, another for the Mormon Church, I was glad that spiritual life would be incorporated in the Fair as in one way it will make our work easier. I was sad too, to the point of tears, to look at all the grandeur planned in Christ's Name and in His Cause, when He is with us here once again, and we must pray and plead to have one little space in His Cause! This is ever the way, though, of the messengers of God. They work in God's Way, Their Way, and how blessed we are to share this Work.'

When the idea was first submitted for Baba's decision, Baba expressed His happiness and approval, and sent a cabled message for all lovers to help as they could in the project. The response was wonderful, and contributions flowed in from Baba-lovers all over the States to make up the sum of over \$7,000. that was required to lease the 100 square feet space, which has been obtained in the Western section of the Fair as wished by Baba. MEHER BABA'S UNIVERSAL MESSAGE is the title that will crown the reserved space along with a picture of the Beloved — and thus will the 'universe' be accommodated in a little corner of the plot representing the 'world'!

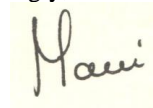
But there is much yet to be accomplished before the opening of the Fair. Visitors stopping at the Baba-stall will want to know about Meher Baba and His universal message. For this it is planned to bring out a pamphlet giving a short life-sketch of the Beloved and His message, to be given free to the visitors — and at least a million copies must be on hand. To meet this expense, as well as towards other items essential for the work, generous contributions will again be needed — and beloved Baba would wish that His Western lovers respond once again to the need of the Project. Jane will soon be sending out a circular letter to the U.S.A. groups about this in more detail.

And now, as I'm overstepping the margin of five pages set for the letter, I must close — with the message that Baba gave for His 38th silence anniversary on 10th July 1963, in response to a request from our Swami Satyaprakash Udaseen, editor of the English Baba-magazine 'Divya Vani' issued quarterly in Andhra State:

MY SILENCE AND THE BREAKING OF MY SILENCE AT THE APPOINTED TIME  
WILL MAKE SILENT THOSE WHO TALK OF EVERYTHING BUT GOD

- MEHER BABA -

Very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meher', is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper.

August 11, 1963.

Baba sent the following Message by cable with His instruction to add it to this Family Letter:

"HOLD FAST TO MY DAAMAN NOW MORE THAN EVER

MEHER BABA "

# *fifty-five/*

Meherazad, 26th September — 3rd October 1963.

Dearest Family,

I was determined not to begin the letter with a remark on the weather, but found it difficult to dodge past a topic that has been looming largely in our small talk — not because we've been short of subjects for conversation, but because we have had the novel experience of being short of sunshine. Some real hard rains we had prayed for and got, but the long spells of chilly drizzle was not on our list of silent prayers. At such times it was as if the sky had a perpetual cold, its swollen and puffy clouds constantly streaming, its wheezy breath blowing down the back of our necks. On the other hand, now when we get snatches of really sunny days (which means as a rule that it's hot) we wish for more rain. I don't know who it was that wrote: 'As a rule a man's a fool; when it's hot he wants it cool; when it's cool he wants it hot; always wanting what is not' .....

The year has grown some twelve weeks older since our return from Poona. After the first refreshing plunge into Meherazad's quiet life we cease to gasp in renewed wonder at all the little things that make Meherazad what it is, but we can never completely take its blessings for granted. In the moonlight, when the jasmine bushes look like leafy nets that have caught a shower of fallen stars, we still gaze fascinated. And when at dawn these fragrant little flowers cover the garden paths like white carpets, we still find time to stand and stare. Of course there is the other side to Nature's coin, and competing with the profusion of the jasmine are the midges and the mosquitoes that seem immune to all our attempts to outwit them; and when on an evening we hear the sound of vigorous slaps and claps, it is no cause for concern — one or the other of us is up in arms against these humming horrors. However, pleasing form of life has also been on the increase, and it is already difficult for us to tell the babies apart from the parents — I'm talking of course of the birds: the bulbuls, sunbirds, mynahs and others; while Mrs. Swift is in the process of hatching her family in her little mud bowl of a nest outside our cottage wall. When some restless or curious fledgling would drop out of its nest, we would put it back in its frantic mother's care. We played the role of anxious aunties when they ventured on their first non-stop flight from one tree to another; for, not all of them are little Lindbergs, and more than once we've picked up a bewildered and bedraggled young bird from one of the water tanks in the garden. Whenever this happens, after the bird is thoroughly dried by the log fire until its feathers are fluffy and it has regained its aplomb and lung power, before setting it free we invariably take it to Baba. The Beloved gently caresses its sleek head, and sometimes blesses it with a kiss. That is as far as we see of the blessing — how can we fathom its unseen depths? How can we stand the silent miracle of His presence that wipes out hordes of sanskaras, the alchemy of His touch that turns the consciousness of a bird or animal into that of a human being in its next life? As Kabir has said: 'One moment, half a moment, even half of a half moment spent in the company of a Perfect Master, cuts away crores of one's sanskaras ".

If the Perfect Ones of the past have explained this for us, beloved Baba also has done so on rare occasions. For instance when we were in Agra, during our Bus Tour in 1938, one morning we found a bird lying in the grounds, a woodpecker that had been badly injured by the sling-shot of some boy. We brought it in, dressed the wound and bandaged it. Baba held it in His lap, caressed it, fed it. For all our nursing the bird did not survive long, and just before the end it struggled out of its box towards where Baba was sitting and dropped dead at His feet. Baba picked it up, and then said (in gestures of course), "You can have no idea how fortunate this bird is — it will now incarnate in the form of a human being." We reflect how the receiver of this immeasurable blessing was unaware and unconscious of it — and it is the same indeed with all of us, who can never know the magnitude of our good fortune in having Him in our midst. God's blessings spring from the compassion of His all-knowing Heart, and so they come to us in silence, or in disguise. After all, the greatest Blessing for mankind is the One in disguise — the Infinite in finite form, the Avatar!

Keshav Nigam, a dear Baba-lover of Hamirpur who is editor of "Meher Pukar", the Hindi Baba-magazine that he has kept running for over ten years, has composed forty verses in praise of Baba, known as Meher Chalisa. Baba has often had Keshav recite the Chalisa to Him, for the quiet depth of his recitation is as beautiful as the verses of his love-song to the Beloved. One verse says:

Though limitless, Thou hast come to us as God-Man;  
Though Infinite, Thou hast bound Thyself with finiteness  
in order to uphold and prove  
the limitations of the finite.

That we may 'find' Him, He allows the finite to 'bind' Him. And while bound, He is human enough to miss His infinitely Free State of Being, as we gather from His comments. In Poona this summer Baba said, "In Me I am Free, but in you I feel bound. In the Parabrahma (Beyond) State there is no binding; there is absolute Freedom, absolute Existence. What a sublime State it is! From that sublime State I have come to your level. Babajan often used to remark on my having come down from that exalted State to get myself bound here, quoting to me the Persian lines: Having gained Freedom, you have come back as prisoner (to free others)."

Whenever the Beloved talks of Babajan, it is with a deep love that is sensed by all who are present. He told us that in her previous incarnation she was the Sufi saint, Rabia. In the days when He was still Merwan, Baba used to visit Babajan daily, along with Gustadji. Although she would not allow anyone to touch her person, she would ask Merwan (Baba) to scratch her head and her back — and He would do so for hours. At that time none could persuade her to have some shelter built overhead where she used to sit under the Neem tree, nor would she consent to have some sort of a seat made for her so she would not have to sit on the bare ground. But when Baba requested her, she allowed Him to have a low wooden platform made for her, with a cotton mattress placed on it for her comfort. The mattress had an amusing sequel for Gustadji, because one day when it rained heavily and the mattress got soaked, she had Gustadji carry it on his head so it could dry! Babajan explained the reason to Gustadji, saying "It is a very precious

mattress, because my Son (Merwan) has given it to me." Although Babajan would talk with others always in mysterious and cryptic sentences, when alone with Baba her speech would be quite normal and clear, and once she related to Him at length the story of her early life. Baba told us that Babajan had come all the way from her birthplace in Baluchistan and settled down in Poona because of the Avatar's advent — she had come to Poona solely for Baba. Baba has often referred to her as "Emperor", in the spiritual sense; and indeed she herself was very averse to being called 'Amma' (mother), and hence was called 'Baba' (father) Jan. She would flare up if anyone called her Mother, for women are considered to be the weaker sex, and she would state that God-realization was not for weaklings!

There is an island quality to our life at Meherazad, for we seldom go outside of it during the many months that we stay here after our return from Poona. Having a visitor is an occasion for us, and indeed a very special occasion for the Baba-lover visiting because rarely does the Beloved permit anyone to visit Him here, and still more rarely to stay for some days. But there are times when a number are expressly invited, as they are on the 28th of this month (September), when Baba has arranged to have a singing program at Meherazad. The singer is from Bombay, now a Baba-lover since having come many times to Guruprasad this summer to regale the Beloved with very good ghazals and also some songs of his own composition in praise of Baba. This man, M.Y. Mohan is popularly called Mohan-Saigal, because his wonderful voice has a twin resemblance to that of Saigal, a nationally popular singer who is now dead. It is interesting how his first visit to Baba, at Poona, came about. A telegram was sent asking if he would come to sing for Baba. He was naturally addressed as MY Mohan, which read in the telegram as "My Mohan", and his instantaneous response was "Your Mohan is most happy to come". And so 'Baba's Mohan' will be singing again to Baba, on the 28th — as I have started drafting this letter before that date, I might recount the program in the next letter.

Baba's love for music was outstanding even as a boy, as was the quality of His own singing. Years later, whenever a neighbour would talk about 'Merwan' to Baba's mother, one of the most consistent remarks would be 'How beautifully Merwan used to sing!' Once Baba told a gathering of His lovers: "Three things make me happy: taking on the suffering of the universe; hearing good music (good music mind you, not Dr. Deshmukh's brand!); playing cards with my Boys and seeing them rub noses on the floor."

Although this game of cards is known as Larisque, the way it is played by Baba and His men it is as unique as it is delightful, and defies all known conventions of the game, or indeed of any card game. At times, when Baba is at Guruprasad, the players are as many as forty in number, so that even though most of two packs of cards are used, each player gets only two cards. The game is divided into two parties, and half the fun is the uproar the men create when they disagree on some point, or think someone has been cheating to add zest to the game. Although it is all in the fun and spirit of the game. I don't see how anyone's argument can be heard for they all talk at once — until Baba, pink in the face from silent laughter, gives a loud clap that brings the clamour to a sudden halt. However, the best part is reserved for the last when the game is over, and the losers bend over together and rub their noses on the ground before Baba; and that I fancy is the part many of them look forward to most! Once Baba explained to a lover, a Judge, who was participating in the game for the first time, "My reason for playing this game of cards is threefold: (1) The burden of my universal

work gets lightened; (2) The minds of the players are focussed on me in a most natural manner; (3) Those who lose have to rub their noses on the carpet before me, the Highest of the High. This is a privilege filled with significance, and thus the losers become the winners." Baba then quoted the Urdu lines, which mean 'It is a game in which the winner feels ashamed and the loser rejoices.'

You must be wondering when I'll get down to mentioning about the Beloved's health — but I can't help evading a subject that is always the most difficult part of the letter; and by the time the report reaches you there might well be a change for the better or worse. The pain in the hip joint was considerably less a few days ago, and now it seems to have started in earnest. The little walking exercise He used to get when going to and fro from the Mandali's has still not been resumed and the lift-chair is still used. One lover writes, 'If Baba is well, the world is well.' We think it is more likely to be the other way round, for His suffering reflects the pulse of the world, and the world is far from well!

Perhaps He allows His dear and near ones to share in some form or another, for 1963 seems to have been a record year for sickness among Baba-lovers, including such stalwarts of the Mandali as dear Kaka and Baidul; and most recently Baba's indispensable "right-hand and mouth-piece" Eruch, who returned home yesterday after two weeks at the hospital. The 'emergency' telegrams and cables received almost daily make us realize that quite a number of Baba-lovers are blessed with physical suffering or mental agony at this time. What does Baba say? Well, at Poona He once said to one of His lovers, a police officer who was facing some agonizing family troubles: "Be courageous. Think more and more of me. I know your love for me and the circumstances you are placed in. Don't wear yourself out with worry. Instead, thank me for the suffering that has come to you", and Baba quoted the Persian lines: 'I may cause my enemies to flourish and kill my friends. This I may do, and none has the right to demand why I do so!'" To another Baba said, "It is natural that at times you feel 100% miserable. Be sure that I know everything. When everything goes wrong, the mind becomes helpless and has to rely on the heart. These are the moments when you resign to my will and rely solely on my help. When you leave all to ME, I dare not neglect you, and you get relief from your predicament. I am the Ocean of Love and Compassion. Indicating the helplessness of a lover, the poet Hafiz has said 'In loving my Beloved, I have become like an ant under the foot of an elephant — safe and secure, but helpless to move'. To demand anything from the Beloved is an insult to Love. Love only gives and goes on giving till the will of the Beloved alone manifests through the lover."

Tukaram, a Perfect Master of the sixteenth century, says in his writings: 'Sahaj bolanay hech updesh' — which means 'Even the most casual remark of the Perfect Master has the significance of a sermon'. When God is with us as Compassionate Father, Friend and Master, He guides us in the silence of His love and in the declarations of His discourses. Lest we get confused or distracted on the way, He reminds us to be vigilant, warns us not to let the stream of our life be ever diverted from its straight course to the Ocean — BABA.

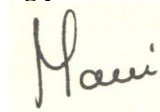
Recently the Beloved sent a cable to Irwin and Edward Luck, young Baba-lovers of Florida (U.S.A.) as follows: "You should under no circumstances contact any spiritual teacher or master, easterner or westerner." It makes me recall what Baba said to His lovers one time at Guruprasad: "Remember the way is slippery. Guard yourself against 'posing'. The hypocrite deceives himself and others.

The sin that God does not forgive is hypocrisy; and even though I am the Ocean of Compassion, I feel nauseated by the hypocritical saints and masters that now flourish everywhere like poisonous mushrooms."

Again Baba says, "Keep your hold on my daaman even if 'heaven and earth become one'. Don't worry about conflicting thoughts, but constant vigilance over your grip on my daaman — do not let your grip relax at any time."

Beloved Baba sends His blessing of Love to you each.

Ever lovingly,



A loving Reminder: In order to help our heavy postal budget, please do NOT fail to send your cables reply prepaid whether a reply is indicated or not.

P.S. In my April letter I had mentioned about two gems that you must not fail to add to your treasure chest of Baba-books. One of these, THE EVERYTHING AND THE NOTHING\* is a new harvest of Baba's discourses for Truth-starved humanity, and you all will have received copies of it by now. In the meantime, the entire first edition of this has been sold out. However, a paper-back edition is in the process of being printed by Meher House Publications (Australia) and many of you will no doubt wish to obtain copies of this second edition to use as inexpensive but ideal gifts for every suitable occasion. As the printing is not completed, the exact price is not yet known, but it is expected to be 70¢ for the U.S.A.; Sterling 4/-

The other book, THE EAST WEST GATHERING\* by Francis Brabazon has more than satisfied our expectations, and has enabled us to relive the precious moments of the Event that this book celebrates. I use the word 'celebrate' deliberately, for it is no journalist's report but truly a celebration in prose, verses and songs of those memorable days. It is not merely a shore account of that oceanic event in history — Francis has sailed beyond the horizon to reveal a breath-taking expanse of the beauty of God as Man! You must not miss this book — it is also published by Meher House Publications, beautifully printed and bound, and is priced \$1.80; sterling 13/-

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\* place orders through your group-head or write direct to William LePage, Meher House, Kalianna Crescent, Beacon Hill, N.S.W., Australia.





*fifty-six/*

Meherazad, 10th December, 1963.

Dearest Family,

If I were to place on the Meherazad news-scales every grain of information stored since the last family letter, it would weigh considerably. However, it would be outweighed by our memories of the timeless event of over a year ago when three thousand lovers of Baba from the East and West, like the three wise men of yore, came from afar to pay homage to the King of kings — and the gift they brought to place at His feet was the love they carried in their hearts. As we stepped into another November we were plunged into remembrances of the last one, as no doubt every Novemberite was, each day bringing back the dear moments shared together in beloved Baba's sahas. Although Diwali, the festival of lights, was some days earlier by this year's calendar, its bright glow reflected last year's Diwali when a number of Baba's Western family landed in the land of His birth. We felt the joy of that event rekindle in our hearts as we watched the flames winking in the little oil-lamps placed on the doorsteps at dusk; and as we straightened up after lighting the numerous wicks we saw the sun setting in a glorious display of colours — the sky too was celebrating the anniversary!

In north India, yet another November memory was celebrated — a November eleven years old, when Baba first visited the district of Hamirpur in 1952. As an expression of their evergreen memory of that visit, the Hamirpur lovers hold a big "mela" (fair) each year at the places visited by Baba, where His lovers from all over Hamirpur district (and a number from other parts of India) gather to rejoice in the glory of His Love. It is at Nauranga that the lovers have built "Meher Dham" (Baba-Abode) which shelters a marble likeness of the Beloved; and so, like the central pearl of a jewel, the focal attention of the pilgrimage is held by Nauranga — a small place that cannot be found even on the biggest of road maps, but which has grown in unique significance with the breath of God's Love. Our Sarosh and his wife Viloo were among those who were sent by Baba from Ahmednagar to participate in the Meher Mela at Nauranga and Maheva this year. On their return they came to Meherazad and reported to Him of the love-feast they were privileged to take a chief part in. They said they had never before witnessed such devotion and enthusiasm at such a mass gathering held purely for the sake of love for Baba, in His physical absence.

Mehersthan, the Baba-abode at Kovvur in Andhra Pradesh (reported in my letter of February) is daily drawing more people to Baba's Love that reigns there. Among the pilgrims to Mehersthan recently have been the Governor of Andhra Pradesh with his family, and several ministers of the State. The mission of Moorty — Dr. G.S.N. Moorty M.A. Ph.D, who has been speaking on Baba to large gatherings all over the state of Andhra (and in other parts of India) during the past many months — has no doubt helped to fan the unawakened spark of Baba's Love in many a heart. A supreme speaker when on the subject of his Supreme Beloved, Moorty has been in eager demand by Baba-Centres all over India; but as his tightly packed schedule bulged to bursting point he was unable to accommodate every invitation.

Life at Meherazad runs along its customary pattern, and here time seems to run as fast as at any other place, The flower beds have been a blaze of yellows, reds, mauves and pinks, and the vegetable plots have responded with more grace than usual. This was made possible by the generous rains we had this year — while Meherabad, only 15 miles from here, has had one of its worst droughts, and the Baba-families residing there have to economize strictly on their daily ration of water supplied by wells that are fast drying up. Biki, our beloved bird, is back after her absence of seven months and remains unspoilt by all our affection and attention. The Swifts\* have grown up and winged off from their mudbowl nest, while the cherry-bottomed bulbuls have raised another family. The birds are a prominent feature of our daily "breakfast hour" when Baba is with us and the radio turned on; and they fly in through the window to have their breakfast from the feed-box placed on the window ledge inside the room, just five feet from Baba's chair. At first the mother bulbul would collect the big crumbs in her beak and keep flying out to feed her young trio perched on a bush near by, But soon she had a brighter idea and started bringing them right into the dining room to the feed-box, and as she shovelled the food down the gaping beaks of her brood who sprawled there quivering and chattering excitedly, Baba and we would watch with great delight! Now the trio are old enough to feed from the box on their own along with their elders. The other smaller birds patiently await their turn, and Baba is never quite happy until our favourite female robin (whom we've dubbed Putla) has come for her share. Putla seems to find our company as attractive as the food, for after a few pecks she just sits there on the mound of crumbs, cocking her head at us and seeming to listen to the songs over the radio with keen interest.

Many a time the songs rendered are by those who have sung before the Beloved at Guruprasad — among them Vithal Shinde, Hirabai Barodekar, and that incredible singer Vinayakrao Patwardhan who was chosen by Baba to sing before His Western lovers last November, and who has never failed to answer Baba's call for a program even when it has coincided with his engagement to sing elsewhere. Every time Baba has told him, "you are fortunate". Another fortunate artist is Begum Akhtar, recently awakened to Baba's Love, who has been Baba's favourite kavvali singer for years and who is now one of His Family as well. She seems to be making up for some of the lost time when she had not known of the Beloved, for once again she took an opportunity to have Baba's darshan and sing to Him, It was during her recent visit to Poona to give a concert in aid of the Police Welfare Fund, which was announced in the papers in bold captions: 'Vocal musical recital by the famous Lucknow artiste, Begum Akhtar!' Through letter and phone calls she sent her plea to Baba to allow her to visit Him, and the Beloved did not have the heart to say No. She came with an enormous garland of fresh flowers for Baba, and with her came the famous tabla exponent Mohammed Ahmed who would not be denied this God-given opportunity of seeing Him again, And so it was that once again in the seclusion of Meherazad, with the few mandali as her audience, Begum Akhtar sang to Baba, songs she had just recorded during her visit to Poona and Bombay. It goes without saying how extremely happy Baba was with her singing, and equally so with her love when she requested to be allowed to stay at Meherazad for one month so that she could sing to Him every day! She is starting a music school in Lucknow which she asked Baba to bless, and she took along with her a large photo of Baba which will grace the school, She also visited the Meher-Dham Mela at Nauranga, cancelling her singing program at Aurangabad in order to do so.

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\* Although we commonly refer to them as the Swifts because of their strong resemblance to swifts, according to the Who's Who of birds they are known as crag-martins.

18th October was chosen by Baba for another Song-day at Meherazad, a happy day for a number of Baba-lovers whom He permitted to attend and a tiny respite for Baba from the pressure of His universal work which good kavvali singing always gives Him. The well-known Jaipuri kavvals were the singers at this program, arranged by K. Gajwani, a dear Baba-lover who has seen more than sixty summers but whom Baba refers to as His "child". It was strictly an "All Men" gathering, the only exception made by Baba being our Maharani Shantadevi.

If the women Baba-lovers have had cause to feel disheartened over the fact that the men are always given more opportunities to visit Baba than they are, they now have cause to rejoice, for Baba has fixed an "All Women" day on the 23rd of December when over 250 women will be spending the day at Meherazad! This will be the first such program of its kind, and truly befitting the occasion because the 23rd of December is the birthday\* of dearest Mehera, in whose honour Baba has had it arranged. Even though the list of names consist of intimate Baba-lovers from only nearby places like Bombay, Poona, Ahmednagar and Navsari, the most difficult part of the arrangements has been the task of limiting the number to less than 300, which is over and above the maximum that Meherazad could accommodate. Eruch teasingly remarked, 'There seems lack of space even at the abode of the Maker of Space!' And we cannot help wondering, as the circle of His lovers expands in number and from place to place, what the problem of such an arrangement could be like in some years to come. Baba remarked to some intimate ones who recently visited Him and were seated before Him in the quiet of Meherazad, "Make the most of this opportunity. The time will soon come when you will find it difficult to obtain a close glimpse of me — you will be jostled to the rear by the crowds of 'new ones' who will be flocking to me"! As the sun of His Love ascends, we find its rays touching hearts and lands yet unawakened to His presence as the Avatar. Among them are Israel, and Iran, where barely a handful of Baba-lovers are spreading the light of His message; and Japan, where a lone Baba-lover has set out with the torch of the Beloved's Name — he is Rin Jubishi, who has started a Baba-magazine in Japanese entitled 'Aum'.

Perhaps this is the right place for me to give you a piece of really welcome news. Charles Purdom, English Baba-follower of many years standing and author of "The Perfect Master" published in 1936, has written another invaluable book — a comprehensive life of Baba entitled THE GOD-MAN which is to be published in London (by George Allen and Unwin) by next May. It is an entirely new work, not merely an enlarged edition of his previous book "The Perfect Master", although it incorporates all factual material from that book. This new book by C. B. Purdom will be a volume of nearly 500 pages, with 8 pages of illustrations, and will contain an account of Baba's life, journeys, work, and His more important messages and declarations. It will also contain an interpretation of His spiritual explanations, His silence, and His significance for mankind. As no Baba-lover would want to be without a copy of this priceless book, I must not fail to mention the price, which is estimated to be 42 sh. per copy (or about Rs. 28).

The Beloved is with His mandali from about 8 to 12 every morning, and for about two hours every afternoon. The first thing, both morning and afternoon, the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance are recited by the mandali before Baba. When we pass by the Hall door we can hear Eruch's voice reciting the Prayers, or reading out important correspondence and telegrams to Baba who is seated in the high-backed chair. If pain were a human being, it would surely be

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\* according to the Zoroastrian calendar.

listed among the staunchest of Baba-lovers, for it is holding firmly to Baba's "daaman" despite all that we can do to make it ease its grasp. The hip joint (known I believe as the 'universal joint') has now become not only painful enough to restrict His walking to a minimum, but it makes the hours that He spends seated in the chair increasingly difficult. However, we cannot say it is unexpected when we remember what Baba had said in Poona this summer: "After I return to Meherazad, there will be an increase in suffering and chaos the world over. It will be a reflection of the suffering I will undergo during the nine months...." We have often been reminded of these words since our return from Poona, by the news of the world received through newspapers and radio. The most shocking among them was the assassination of the U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, which has proved to be not only a tragedy for the U.S.A. but a loss mourned by nations and individuals all over the world. India has described his murder as 'a crime against humanity', and it is indeed amazing how President Kennedy's death has been felt as a personal loss by the man on the street everywhere! This could only be because he sincerely made his fellow human beings feel he was a brother to them, and championed the cause of the downtrodden. Beloved Baba said of him: He was a great man, good and sincere. Dying as he did, has not only made him immortal in mankind's memory and history, but it has given him a great push forward spiritually. However, although he was assassinated because it was ordained to be, it is not a good thing and it portends more suffering ahead for the world.

At the time of writing, arrangements are in full swing for the accommodation of the large number of women-guests coming on Mehera's birthday, and the space problem that concerns us in "Meherazad space". But, this does not mean we have no other space interests, with all we read and hear of man's achievements in outer space! Science's leap into the exploration of outer space does not constitute even a baby-step into the unimaginable vastness of boundless nothingness. Even so it is a staggering move, and surely the deeper man goes in search for knowledge of Creation, the closer it must bring him to the conviction that there is a Divine Hand that has created it and sustains it. The renowned space-age scientist, Wernher Von Braun, has said: 'Manned space flight is an amazing achievement. But it has opened for us thus far only a tiny door for viewing the awesome reaches of space. Our outlook through this peephole at the vast mysteries of the universe only confirms our belief in the Creator.' One morning some remark from one of the mandali inspired Baba to touch on the topic of space, and He explained: However far man may fling himself into outer space, even if he were to succeed in reaching the furthestmost object in the universe, man will not change — wherever he goes, he will remain what he is. It is when man travels within himself, that he experiences a metamorphosis of his self. It is this journeying that matters, for the infinite Treasure — GOD — is within man, and not to be found anywhere outside of himself.

This opened a door in our memory three summers old, when the Beloved, seated before a roomful of His lovers at Guruprasad, told them of this Treasure that lies hidden. Baba said: The infinite Treasure is within you. The only drawback to your realizing it is that you do not seek it within you. You look without. This has been your habit for endless lives since your apparent birth in the beginningless Beyond. The moment you get up from sleep, you start looking outside of you! When you are on the Path, you begin to look within you and see some sparks of the Treasure — but these are just reflections from the Real Treasure. The Perfect Master has the key that opens the last gate which holds this Treasure from you. To aspire to this infinite Treasure is in a way sheer madness, and it has to be that degree of madness which remains unaffected by the most alluring of pleasures or the most painful of sorrows! The infinitely compassionate look — nazar — of

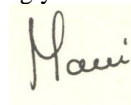
the Perfect Master can awaken such 'madness' in you. And for this to happen, you have to live in complete obedience to the Master, in complete resignation to His will. It makes no difference whether you are physically near or away from Him.

Beloved Baba sends His Love to you each of His dear family, and wants me to add that His wish regarding not writing letters to Him, nor writing to the men or women mandali residing with Him (except only for some specific work), is to continue until He directs otherwise. You may continue to communicate with Him via cable or telegram in case of emergency and also when you wish to send a greeting of love on happy occasions, including the occasion of His Birthday.

The next family letter will not be going out before end of February, so I'm glad this one has been quite a longish one.

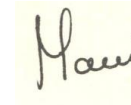
With loving Baba-wishes to you all from your family at Meherazad,

ever lovingly



P.S. Please remember to continue to send a reply-paid form with your cables or telegrams.

I would like to draw the attention of His dear U.S.A. lovers that the amount for this should not be less than the equivalent of \$ 3.00. Nor should it be more than the equivalent of \$ 4.00, as otherwise it would exceed the cost of a cabled message of about 30 words, and each reply prepaid form can be utilized by us for sending out only one cable.



# *fifty-seven/*

Meherazad, 7th February 1964.

Dearest Family,

The aim of life is to love God.

The goal of life is to become one with God.

The surest and quickest way to achieve this goal  
is to hold on to my daaman by loving me more and more.

I have suffered much and will have to suffer much more  
till I break my silence.

I give my Love to my lovers.

- MEHER BABA -

This is the message beloved Baba has given to His lovers for 25th February 1964, His 70th birthday — a message that is surely for all time, comprehending all messages. May His message be our prayer, leaving nothing for us to ask of Him but His grace in loving Him more. 'I want nothing but to love You more and more, and that is wanting everything', a dear one from California had once said in a letter to Baba. Blessed are the fortunate few who ask for nothing less from the Highest of the High.

For Baba and the family at Meherazad, the Birthday will no doubt be one of the quietest periods of His seclusion; while for His lovers elsewhere it will be an opportunity to express their joy and obeisance to the glory of this Day of days which shall ever stand witness to God's Love for us, when once again He was 'born upon this earth that's thought so fair, that's but the Cross that He must bear'. Meherazad will be as the eye in the centre of the storm of celebrations expected to blaze at Baba-Centres everywhere this year, unlike last year when Baba did not wish His birthday to be observed.

After Christmas, Meherazad dropped the 'party look' that it wore for Mehera's birthday when a happy crowd of 250 women Baba-lovers spent the day in His beloved sahas, and resumed its Cinderella appearance. We are made more than ever aware and appreciative of the prevailing quiet atmosphere by the thought of the approaching shift to Poona, when once again Guruprasad will spring to life and vibrate with the songs and throngs of lovers coming for His darshan. We try not to let even the thought of packing for the summer move encroach on our present mood, but we know March is round the corner waiting to

shake us out of it. The first half of our winter has been something like an Indian scientific song — now rising to a high pitch, now dropping to an all-down low; but the good steady spell we've been recently having should take the sting out of our summer's dreaded approach. The neem trees are having their autumn, and the winds have a grand time shooing the leaves off from their branches and chasing them all over the grounds till they land up in golden piles against the walls or find refuge in flower beds. And then there is the Sunbird (or humming bird) — I'm sure some of you can't help smiling or frowning at my inability to stay off the subject of birds, but when it is so clearly a part of our life at Meherazad it seems natural to include it. There is an arbour with a shady flower vine between Pendu and Eruch's rooms, and dangling from the tip of a slender twig is the incredible and fascinating nest of a tiny sunbird, right in front of Eruch's door and so low that one's head barely escapes touching it! But quite unmindful of the people going in and out of the room, the little mother sits swinging in her oval pouch of a nest, her head sticking out of the small entrance which is topped by a thatched shade projecting like the visor of a helmet.

Although as a rule Baba does not permit visitors when He is in Meherazad, there have been exceptions that prove the rule. One of them was Mr. Pataskar, his excellency the Governor of Madhya Pradesh (India's central state) who recently inaugurated the Avatar Meher Baba Centre in Raipur; and many heard the Beloved's name over the radio, for the governor's inaugural speech was relayed by the A.I.R. (All India Radio) Raipur. Mr. Pataskar and his wife expressed their keen desire to have Baba's darshan, and Baba sent word that they could come. And so one morning we found the long approach road that leads to the gate of Meherazad studded with police guards standing stiffly at attention as the governor's car with its convoy drove in. Mr. Pataskar won the hearts of the mandali with his sincerity and unaffected manner, and he was obviously moved when Baba embraced him. When his wife, who is afflicted with arthritis, was carried into the room on a chair and seated before Baba, she cried out 'Closer, closer, put me closer to Baba!' She talked to Baba with the confidence of one assured of His love and understanding, and some of her remarks were very touching. When at parting the Beloved said to them "Remember, I am God in human form", they acknowledged it by bowing with deep reverence. The guards stationed along the road did not miss their share of the blessing either, as their plea for Baba's darshan was granted soon after the procession of cars had left.

Another procession of cars, on another morning, brought a number of military officers stationed at Ahmednagar, with their wives and children. They had heard much about Baba from Sarosh and Villoo\* and entreated them to request Baba to allow them to have His darshan. To complete the group of that morning there was the surprise arrival of General Bhandari and his very charming wife and daughter who were on their way to Delhi where they plan to settle down. This dear family has been growing close to us in Baba's Love since their first meeting with the Beloved over two years ago, and their home was among the very few that Baba visited last summer in Poona. Kamla (Mrs. Bhandari) writes from Delhi: 'I have not been able to get over the good fortune of having been graced with the Beloved's darshan before our final departure from Poona. You have no idea how this fact sustained us throughout our journey and still does ..... We are now far away from beloved Baba, but I pray that He ever remains close in our hearts and guides us from within .....

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\* Khan saheb Sarosh K. Irani and his wife who were hosts to the Western Novemberites when they visited Ahmednagar during their trip to Meherazad.



Just as the chiming of a clock in the stillness of night magnifies the silence that follows it, so the occasional visits allowed to darshan-seekers has served to emphasize His seclusion rather than disturbing it. Among those who have been to Meherazad were a family from Andhra; a doctor from the Evangeline Boothe hospital; a school-master from the village of Pimpalgaon; farmers and labourers from a neighbouring farm; the Collector of Ahmednagar; and some from the U.S.A. — Don Stevens, Stella Kusevich, and Baba's 'sailor-boy' Harry Dedolchow. One can never tell when Baba will be in the mood to say "yes" to allowing someone to visit Him, and when He will say "no". But whichever it be; it has been accepted happily by those who love Him enough to be happy in His will, knowing that He knows best. However, there was a letter recently from a Baba-lover in Poona which informed us that there were some who felt that only the rich people were given the permission to visit Him during His seclusion at Meherazad, while the poor were not. Although we know this to be far from true, the Beloved was amused when He heard the letter and remarked, "Howsoever it may appear to be, the recipient of my darshan owes it to his good fortune, be he minister or mendicant. If the 'rich' have been allowed, it is a matter of how rich their connection with me might be, and not their pockets. And the fact cannot be denied that while the so-called rich may bow down to me, I bow down to the poor!"

Dr. Subodh Chandra Roy can certainly be said to be 'rich' in his connection with Baba, for Baba not only granted him permission to visit Him at Meherazad, but showed much concern when he failed to show up on the expected day — which was due to some incredible confusion that found the doctor at Ahmedabad instead of Ahmednagar, a difference of some 500 miles! But when the will is there the way is found, and at last Dr. Roy arrived one morning and received Baba's embrace. This brilliant Indian scholar, who lost his sight at the age of seven, has been teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York since 1948, and first heard of the Beloved from one of His lovers in the U.S.A. The subject of his present tour in India is "Modern Trends in Hinduism", made possible by a Fulbright Research Scholarship, and we learn that he is the first blind scholar to earn this coveted fellowship. Dr. Roy's desire for Baba's darshan grew to determination after his talk with our A.C.S. Chari of Calcutta, and he spoke of his coming visit to Baba at a press conference in Bombay and during his interview over the radio.

This genial scholar was with Baba for nearly three quarters of an hour. The Beloved was in the mood to discourse and answered the doctor's questions. When Dr. Roy asked what Baba's 'darshan' could mean to a person without sight, Baba lovingly drew His hand over the doctor's face and explained "All who come for my darshan are blind, for none can see me as I am. There are very few in the world who can 'see' me, the rest see only Illusion. But the contact of touching me or receiving my embrace is a darshan of untold blessing, and so you are blessed." When Baba was asked about the breaking of His silence, He said "The fact that I have observed silence, is in itself the answer that I must break it. My silence is no vow — I had the urge to observe silence, and I will equally have the urge to break it. An urge is independent of time, but the time is fast approaching when I will have the urge and break my silence." Dr. Roy spoke of his deep study and findings of the different world religions and invited Baba's comment. The Beloved touched on the two aspects of religion, the ceremonial and the spiritual — i.e. the husk and the substance. Baba said that when man's consciousness begins to involve and he dives deep within, he can rightly assert that he belongs to no religion but that all religions belong to him.

To some of the doctor's other questions Baba said he should look for the answers in "God Speaks", and told him to study it thoroughly and absorb it. Dr. Roy said that Baba's teaching was the same truth established through the ages, and Baba smiled and remarked "If it were otherwise, it would not be Truth! Truth is but one, the same and eternal. However, I have not come to teach it but to give it", and He pointed to the metal plate on the wall. Eruch read out the wording of the saying on it: I HAVE COME NOT TO TEACH BUT TO AWAKEN. While leaving Meherazad the doctor told the mandali how happy and satisfied he was with this meeting with Baba, and said more than once 'Baba is indeed compassionate!'

That morning's topic of darshan made us recall the message Baba had given ten years ago, when we were in Dehra Dun after we returned from our visit to the beautiful Baba-Centre in Myrtle Beach, U.S.A. Dehra Dun is a town at the foot of the Himalayas, near Hardwar and Rishikesh, where we have stayed for long periods in the past during the 'gypsy' phase of our life when we travelled to many parts of India with the Beloved. To be given darshan, commonly means to be granted a meeting. To have darshan of, literally means 'to have a sight or vision of', and in Rishikesh and Hardwar (where Rishis and sadhus abound) it is not unusual to greet a friend with: 'I haven't had your darshan for quite some time!'. Devotionally speaking, to take darshan is to place one's head on the feet of the adored or revered object. What real darshan means, Baba has explained in the following message given by Him at the public darshan in Dehra Dun, on 1st November 1953:

"I am happy to be in your midst.

"It is the deep love of some of my lovers in Dehra Dun that has drawn you all together today to have my darshan.

"But to have my real darshan is not easy.

"To see me at close quarters, to do obeisance to me, to offer me fruits and flowers, to bow down to me and then to return to your homes can never mean that you have had my darshan.

"Having seen me with your eyes you have still not seen me as I am.

You have not had even a glimpse of my true Being in spite of your having gone through the convention of so called 'darshan'.

"To have my real darshan is to find me.

"The way to find me is to find your abode in me.

"And the only one and sure way to find your abode in me is to love me.

"To love me as I love you, you must become the recipient of my grace. Only my grace can bestow the gift of divine Love.

"To receive my grace, you must obey me whole-heartedly with the firm foundation of unshakable faith in me.

"And you can only obey me spontaneously as I want when you completely surrender yourselves to me, so that my wish becomes your law and my love sustains your being.

"Age after age, many aspire for such a surrender, but only very few really attempt to surrender themselves to me completely as I want.

"He who succeeds, ultimately not only finds me but becomes me and realizes the goal of life.

"My being in your midst today would serve its purpose even if one from among this multitude has understood what I want you all to know.

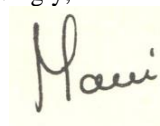
"I give my blessings to you all."

The seed of His blessing must bear fruit when the time ripens; and since that last visit of Baba, more and more families in Dehra Dun have grown wholly devoted to His cause, carrying the pollen of His Love from heart to heart. A long cherished dream of the lovers has been to build a Baba-Centre there, graced by a replica of the Beloved's form in marble. Now with land and money donated by the dear Balkishans, a family more recently awakened to His Love, the dream has come true; and on 23rd March of this year, the 'Avatar Meher Baba Dehra Dun Centre' will be declared open. Baba has appointed Sarosh and Viloo to inaugurate the Centre, and lovers from different parts of India will be there to participate in the feast of His Love and witness yet another expression of the love of His lovers.

The date finalised by Baba for our move to Poona, is the 1st of April. Baba has declared that He will not see people in the month of April. In MAY His lovers will be given the opportunity for His darshan at Guruprasad, during fixed hours on fixed days as decided by Him. From this we conclude that June will not be a darshan month either. We expect to return to Meherazad at the end of June. Please remember therefore, during the three months (April, May, June) to address your cables: MEHERBABA, GURUPRASAD, 24 BUNDROAD, POONA.

As there will be little to report in the way of news (and little time in which to report it) till after May, the next family letter will probably be going out in June. This one comes to you much sooner than expected, because of the Birthday message it carries to you from the Beloved. Baba wishes me to add that He is happy with the love of His dear Western family, received through the flood of Christmas cables from groups and individuals everywhere, and He sends His Love to you each.

Ever lovingly,



# *fifty-eight/*

Guruprasad, 22nd April, 1964.

Dearest Family,

We waved goodbye to Meherazad in the early morning of 1st April, our kerchiefs fluttering from the car windows at dear Kaka and the staff and pets we were leaving behind, until the familiar gateway receded out of sight. To our right was Baba's Hill assuming different shapes from different angles, and when we got to the end of the road we saw the blue surface of the lake sprawling to our left. Before Baba's car had gone ten miles Baba got down to visit the homes of some intimate families in Ahmednagar, and was greeted by a large crowd of lovers waiting in the grounds of Adi's residence and office for a glimpse of Baba. A little further on another dear family had gathered by the road outside their bungalow, two invalided members in wheel-chairs, and Baba stopped to accept their love and bless them with His caress. Still further on, under a tree by the road that branches off to Meherabad, a throng of devoted ones from the village of Arangaon were waiting since dawn, and once again Baba's car slowed down and halted amidst shouts of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!". Thus was the royal coach held up a number of times, and of course what these 'highwaymen' wanted to steal was a smile and a look from the Beloved.

Little surprise therefore, that although we left Meherazad at about 7:30, we reached Poona not before 11:30. As we crossed the Bundgarden bridge over the river on which Baba used to sail as a college boy, memories of previous Poona summers woke up and stretched themselves, and by the time we entered Guruprasad they were bright-eyed and chattering all around us. Having walked and climbed more steps that morning than usual, Baba's hipjoint was painful at the end of the tiring drive, and on arrival He was carried up the Guruprasad steps in the lift-chair by the mandali. As we stepped in we felt dwarfed by the space of the big verandah, and the hall with its chesterfields and chandelier seemed enormous. But uppermost among our first impressions was the difference in temperature, and we kept exclaiming 'How nice and cool it is!'. At Meherazad the summer had already set in with the determination of a broody hen before March was half way through, and we were thankful to be escaping the clutches of its scorching April. Perhaps this factor tipped the scales in favour of beloved Baba deciding on the move to Poona, for this year He had seemed reluctant to leave Meherazad.

In the three weeks' stay here we have come to realize the impact of Baba's message that was sent out to all concerned in the East and West (in the Circular issued on 23rd February), for Guruprasad has been a strangely silent abode. Missing is the human stream that flowed constantly along the driveway, and the happy stampede of darshaners that was almost a daily occurrence last summer. To the many who had hoped and planned to

come to Poona this May, to stay as long as they could so as to have the Beloved's sahavas as much as they could, the announcement that He will NOT give darshan this year came as a 'bolt from the blue', and reacted on those around Baba too. But the empty feeling of disappointment that we felt for Baba expressed in their resignation to His Will. This has been most felt in the response from Baba's Western lovers, which could be summed up in the words of Dr. Ben Hayman (from Texas): "Baba's wish is supreme"! Truly the highest 'pooja' is performed by them who place the flowers of their longing at the altar of His wish.

At 5 o'clock in the morning of 25th February — the time and date of His Birth on earth — Baba-lovers everywhere were singing His Arti or repeating His name. We at Meherazad, at Baba's direction and in His presence, loudly called out the name of God at the stroke of 5. The message from the Beloved that was cabled to His Western groups — in U.S.A., England, France, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Austria, Israel, Africa, Australia and New Zealand — for His 70th Birthday was:

ALTHOUGH I TAKE BIRTH FOR ALL MANKIND  
FORTUNATE ARE THE ONES WHO LOVE ME  
WHILE I AM ON EARTH  
- MEHERBABA -

And on that Day of days, His lovers in different parts of the world expressed their good fortune by proclaiming to all who might share it, the fact that God walks the earth again. The measure and mode of their expression were varied; and if I were to put down all the reports this would turn out to be a book — besides, I'm sure you will read them in "Divya Vani". In the state of Andhra alone, 30 Baba-Centres celebrated the Birthday, some continuing to observe it from one week to three weeks! And, as the lovers there have the refreshing characteristic of being unrestricted in expressing their hearts' conviction, the Birthday functions at some of their Centres were magnificent. Widely distributed invitations carried Baba's picture and His Birthday message along with the day's programme. This invariably included a gorgeous procession through the town or main part of the city, with a large picture of Baba arranged artistically on a carriage or car profusely decorated and illuminated, and accompanied by music. Besides the usual unfurling of the Baba-flag of seven colours, singing of Arti and bhajans, speeches made in the vernacular and English, there was the enacting of Baba's life in the fascinating dance-drama 'Meher Leela', and the 'Burra-Katha' which depicts it in dialogue and song. There was the showing of Baba-films, and at Vijayawada the Birthday celebrations were announced in the daily local news broadcast over the radio. Slides of Baba's picture were seen by the public on the screens of the main cinemas, and enormous posters with a beautiful picture of the Beloved were placed high up along the main thoroughfares. An album of photos sent to Meherazad by one of the Centres there (Ramchandrapuram) gave us a glimpse

of the grand 'mandap' that was put up to accommodate the big Birthday gathering that attended, with the stretch of road leading to it as brilliantly lighted as the interior. One snapshot showed huge mounds of cooked rice on matted palms, prepared for the feeding of hundreds of poor — an item that was included in the program of nearly every Baba-Centre in the East: feeding the poor, the disabled and the lepers, and distributing sweets to school children. Outstanding among the Baba-booklets printed in many places was a Marathi magazine published in Poona, carrying a coloured photo of Baba on the cover of its February issue which was devoted to His messages and biography. And, a most unusual touch to the Birthday programmes was given by the Rajahmundry Centre (Andhra): the unveiling of Beloved Baba's portrait at a number of schools.

Not everywhere can the lamp of Baba's message shine unfogged by the challenge of public opposition, and we salute the Baba-lovers of Karachi for their brave effort to shake up the hide-bound prejudices of the people there — especially the orthodox Parsi (Zoroastrian) community. The success of their plans for Baba's Birthday was all the sweeter for the hurdles they were faced with at every turn. They invited Dr. Hoshang Bharucha from Navsari for a lecture tour; the Beloved's East-West Gathering film which was shown at a number of places aroused keen interest, particularly among the young people; and the cream of their achievement was the broadcasting of Baba's 'Meher Mana' Arti over Radio Pakistan, Karachi. For the dear Baba-group of Zoroastrians in Karachi to set out to openly acclaim Baba as the "Messenger of God" was indeed a big step for Pakistan; and it caused much apprehension among its orthodox Zoroastrians who prefer to keep their heads buried in the sands of tradition — as was proved by their frantic thrusts of criticism through the Parsi press.

"I am happy to know that the 70th Birthday anniversary of Shri Meher Baba is being celebrated in Delhi. I send my best wishes on the occasion and hope that his teachings will continue to inspire a large number of people in our country." This message was sent by the President of India, Dr. Radhakrishnan, for beloved Baba's Birthday function held in Delhi, the capital of India. The 25th was the crowning day of the Birthday Week celebrated by the Baba-lovers in Delhi, and the function was held at the Constitution Club — inaugurated by Sardar Hukum Singh, Speaker of the Lok Sabha (House of Commons), and presided over by Shri D. Sanjivayya, Union Minister for labour and employment. Among the packed audience at the Constitution Club that evening were several other Ministers, Members of Parliament, and prominent personalities in the Capital. And so we find that gradually more and more, the men who guide the pattern of the country are beginning to be drawn into awareness of the One who holds the world in His hands. An unprecedented part of the Birthday celebrations in Delhi was that a section of the program was relayed over All India Radio; and far away in Meherzad we sat round our little Transistor that night and heard the commentator announce in Hindi: 'You are listening to a report of the 70th Birthday celebration of Meher Baba'. This little miracle was made possible by the efforts of Sardar Amarsingh Saigal, a Member of Parliament and a staunch lover of Baba. It also resulted in brief reports of the Birthday programme of some other cities in India being broadcast over the

radio. I will quote from Eruch's letter to Sardar Saigal: "All mandali at Meherazad heard the ten-minute programme on 25th night at 10 o'clock relayed by A.I.R. Delhi. The way you recited the Master's Prayer of "O Parvardigar" thrilled us all. The reception here was clear and your voice was ringing clearly over the wireless. We also received reports from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Bhopal-Indore, Lucknow, Calcutta, Nagpur and Bombay, that these stations also relayed 'glimpses' of the 70th Birthday celebrations from their respective stations. It was the first time that the Avatar's Birthday was proclaimed over the wireless from the Capital of India. It is a unique occurrence in the history of the Avataric cycle and you are blessed to have been instrumental in this respect." It was a joy too to hear the gentle voice of Shri M. Thirumal Rao (M.P. and ex-governor of Vindhya Pradesh, who translated "God Speaks" into Telegu), who spoke in his welcome speech of the need to love without any selfish end, concluding: 'and that love you find at the feet of Meher Baba.'

Once again at Meherazad we heard the 'Parvardigar Prayer' over the radio, recited in Hindi in a clear sweet voice by one of beloved Baba's 'mahila mandal' (women's group) in Dehra Dun. This time the occasion being reported by the A.I.R. Delhi, was the inauguration of Baba's Centre — named MEHER DHAM\* — at Dehra Dun that I spoke of in my last letter. We have heard reports of the glorious function from lovers in different parts of India who attended, and here is a little excerpt from brother Kutumb Shastri's letter to Adi: 'The function was a grand success. The great outpouring of Baba's Love and blessings was felt by all. There was abundant harmony and brotherly love among all those that assembled. Many Baba-lovers from different parts of the country came and participated. It was touching to see how three young lovers from Hamirpur area, who could not afford to travel by train, had cycled the whole distance of about 420 miles and reached the place in time to participate in the Baba-love programmes at Dehra Dun.'

Baba has said, every heart that loves Him is His Centre. Baba has also said that the time for His manifestation is near, and His lovers should spread His message as much as they can. The Baba-Centres that are blossoming in many parts of India and abroad, serve as worthy vessels in which is poured the energy and service of His lovers, and from which His message of Love may be dispensed to as many as will receive it. This 1st of May will truly be a May Day for the "Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre". On this day beloved Baba will open the Centre personally — just as He did the "Avatar Meher Baba Ahmednagar Centre" over a year ago. It will be the first time since our coming to Poona this summer, that Baba will step out of Guruprasad where He has been maintaining a non-active routine almost identical to that of Meherazad. However, it is not an unexpected move, for Baba had promised to bless the Centre with His presence when it was completed. Baba has directed Ramakrishnan (the devoted Secretary of the A.M.B.P.C.) to arrange the inauguration in a very simple and quiet manner, and so only a few Baba-lovers from Poona will be present

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\* 'Dham' means abode, and is pronounced to rhyme with 'farm'.

at the opening. The Poona Centre is unique on a number of counts — the biggest being the fact that it is in the birthplace of the Avatar. A tremendous lot went into the making of it — determination and work, hope and despair, endless controversies and delays, and the love of thousands from many places who contributed funds to make it possible. At last the structure is complete — build on simple solid lines, its big hall can hold hundreds of people at a time. May it hold and share beloved Baba's Love in ever growing measure.

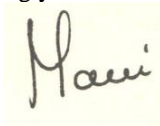
To posterity, every place hallowed by the Avatar's presence will be a Centre in the truest sense, and as such Poona can surely be called a beehive of Baba-Centres; the hospital where Baba was born, the house He lived in as child and man, the school and college He attended, the alley where He played games with other boys, the house with the well that has 'Baba's Room' in which He used to sit for hours and wherein lies the stone of incomparable significance — and of course Guruprasad, which He has declared will be 'immortal'.

Another important date is the 22nd of April — the date set for the opening of the World's Fair at New York which is graced by the beautifully arranged booth named "Meher Baba's Universal Message", and of which I spoke in my letter of last August. This project has proved a wonderful opportunity and challenge for Baba's lovers in the U.S.A., and their response to it has been more than wonderful. Contributing time, money and service to make it possible, they are now prepared for the mammoth job manning the place all day and late into the night throughout the long term of the Fair's existence. 'As one small candle may light a thousand...', may their love light the hearts of those who visit this little corner at the World's Fair, the corner that holds the eternal message of Love and Truth from the Ancient One. This is what the Beloved has said to them, in His cable sent for the opening:

BLESSED IS THE LOVE OF MY LOVERS IN AMERICA  
THAT HAS ADORNED NEWYORK WORLDS FAIR WITH  
MEHERBABAS UNIVERSAL MESSAGE STOP I SEND  
MY BLESSING OF LOVE TO ALL MY LOVERS AND  
WORKERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE AND WHO WILL  
STAFF THE BOOTH FOR THE DURATION OF THE  
WORLDS FAIR

- MEHERBABA -

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meher', is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper.



ATTENTION

The following is the copy of a circular letter  
sent out by Adi K. Irani to all group-heads in India.

King's Road,  
Ahmednagar.  
10th April, 1964

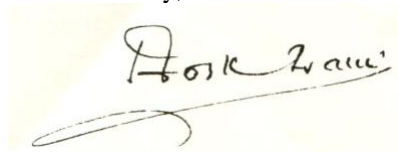
My dear .....

A number of you may have received a printed folder with the title "The Blows I Dedicate" from a man in Delhi called Krishnaji. This man is of South India (Kerala) who was for a time with Baba in Satara. Often he had confessed to the mandali that Baba's Love and compassion had retrieved him from a life of degradation, and that he had not known what love was before he met Baba. Being by nature an exhibitionist, Krishnaji wore a robe and kept his hair long, but Baba directed him to discard such sham and had him dress in ordinary clothes. Although he lived with the mandali for a while, he could not accommodate himself to the simple life lived by Baba's men. Shortly he found that his presence in his home-town was imperative due to some unpleasant affair he had been involved in, and beloved Baba instructed him to return home for good.

Later this Krishnaji came to Delhi, and reverting to robe and long hair began to observe periodic silence and to pose as the 'chargeman of Meher Baba'. Now he calls himself "BABA", claims to be observing complete silence and is said to communicate with visitors by means of an alphabet board. Thus this man trades in Baba's name to gain people's attention and to have the publicity he has always craved for; and in his frustration he is apt to go to any length in order to achieve it — he has this trait. Therefore, you are advised to give no countenance to Krishnaji's cheap methods of trying to win people's sympathies and gather them round himself. It is best to disregard any communication you may receive from this source.

Please inform all Baba lovers in your jurisdiction by sending a copy of this letter to each of them in English or the needed transcript, and advise them that should they receive a copy of such a folder from Krishnaji, the best thing they could do is to ignore it.

Yours brotherly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Adi K. Irani".

# *fifty-nine/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 17th June, 1964

Dearest Family,

We have been here over eleven weeks, but the novelty of our experience of a silent Guruprasad has not worn off. The Beloved's family in the East and West have been wonderfully faithful in observing His wish not to disturb Him this year, and we can imagine how difficult this must be for them. For the many who are in Poona, to be so near Him and yet not to see Him must surely be like being in paradise blindfolded! There have however, been darshan seekers, mostly individuals who had not seen beloved Baba before, coming from hundreds of miles for a glimpse of Him; and as a rule Baba remains "not at home" to visitors coming for His darshan. While we enjoy the comfort of Guruprasad as a home, visions of next year rise before us, floating on fond hopes and speculations woven from hints dropped by Baba that next summer He might make Himself available for darshan to all. And so we live in anticipation of the future and contentment of the present.

It is good to see beloved Baba relaxing, at least outwardly, and to see the course of His health maintaining a somewhat steadier pace than we usually expect, although the pain in His hip-joint has been steady too. In the mornings and afternoons Baba sits in the smaller hall with the Men mandali, and the group around Him grows bigger by a handful on weekends when a few of His close family are privileged to be with Him. While Baba is at the dining table with us for breakfast, we can see the fountain in the garden pond with the flash of pink bougenvalia behind it; and Baba often notices the doves and mynas and hawks that come to drink from the basin of the fountain and bathe in it. Just as breakfast is over, four tots troop in — the eldest being a boy of 5 and the youngest a girl eighteen months old who sometimes toddles in clutching some rose petals in her hand to place before Baba on the table that she can barely manage to reach. These young visitors, children of the caretaker and manager of Guruprasad bungalow, sit every morning on the steps waiting to be called in to Baba, solemnly greet Him and receive His prasad of sweets. The toddler wants to be the first to get the prasad and often gives the sweet back to Baba for Him to unwrap it for her, which He does. Sometimes she brings her doll with her and gives it to Baba to play with.

Another "baby" is the Siamese tomcat that adopted us last summer, seeming to come from nowhere and making itself completely at home in Guruprasad for the rest of our stay here. We kept searching for its owner, and the family that owned the cat kept searching for it. At last its charming mistress Mrs. Dolly Dedee traced her lost treasure to Guruprasad and found the greatest Treasure of all, BABA. She kept coming again at every opportunity last year for His darshan and is now one of His large family. She expressed her happiness at the cat's refusal to leave Guruprasad. 'How fortunate it is' she said, 'And how fortunate I am to have found Baba through my pet!' The cat, which by now has

acquired a dozen nicknames, is with us again this summer; and although it is petted and fed and spoilt more than ever, its adoration for Baba stands out above everything. We see it sitting expectantly outside beloved Baba's room, and is the first to enter when the door is opened. It loves to rub its head on His feet, for all the world as though it were taking His darshan! When Baba is sitting on the chair, He will often bend down to pet it, and sometimes it will stand up and place its paws on His lap for one more caress. Whenever it meows the Beloved is convinced it is hungry, and has us give it a fresh bowl of milk despite our united assurance that it just had a good feed! We have often heard the expression "a lucky cat" — now we know one.

This year too we have known someone to have found Baba after losing a dear one — but in this case it was through a terrible personal tragedy. Keki Billimoria is a young man whose wife and lovely daughter (only child) were among those drowned in a motor-launch disaster at Bombay last month when the family were on their way to the Elephanta Caves with friends to enjoy a Sunday picnic. He is son-in-law to Jal Dorabjee of Edward Hotel in Poona, a man of fine qualities whose many acts of unselfish service and unswerving faith in Baba have endeared him and his dear wife and family to us ever since we have known them. Beloved Baba's love for Jal Dorabjee was apparent when He made an exception of His own rule and called him and his wife after the double tragedy which deprived them of their only daughter and grand-daughter. The solace and strength they received from His Love helps them carry their burden of emptiness with a braveness of spirit and a resignation to God's Will that is poignant and fills us with deep admiration. Knowing that only Baba could calm his son-in-law's anguish of mind after the sudden loss of wife and daughter, Jal Dorabjee was happy when Keki expressed his desire to see Baba — and again the Beloved made an exception. Before leaving, the young man told Baba how his wife (who had come for Baba's darshan last year) had tried to persuade him to come too, saying 'I cannot express in words what you will get from Baba, but just sit for a few moments at His feet and you will know' — and still he did not come. He told Baba 'Now I have come, and I know what she meant. I will ever be grateful to her for this, but am filled with remorse that I did not come to you when she was alive.' When he left it was with a braver heart, a calmer mind and a deeper resignation, something of which he tried to express in a touching letter he wrote to Baba.

We hear from others how they were first awakened to Beloved Baba through what seemed amazing coincidences, or by merest chance, or through dreams. Dr. G.S.N. Moorthy, who has been touring extensively for a year in many parts of India giving talks to people on Baba and winning over many in His Love, told us this delightful and profound experience of how a couple of vegetables brought a close friend of his to Baba. Dr. Moorthy's friend did not believe in Baba despite the Doctor's continual efforts to convince him of Baba's Avatarhood. Then one day as Dr. Moorthy and the friend were going to dinner at someone's home, and the conversation inevitably turned to Baba, the friend impulsively cried out 'If your Meher Baba really is what He says He is, then let the main dishes at our dinner this evening be bhendi (okra) and baingen (egg-plant). I will consider that convincing proof.' Dr. Moorthy was dismayed at this challenge, not only because his friend's attitude towards an approach to Baba did not seem right, but because the vegetables were not right either — both these vegetables were out of season and not available in the market! By the time they reached their destination the topic was apparently forgotten. When their host led them to the dining room,

they found the table set Indian fashion with the prepared dishes laid out on the table and covered with a cloth. When the cloth was removed, the eyes of Dr. Moorty and his friend were riveted in amazement and wonder on the dishes uncovered — the main vegetables in the central dishes were okra and egg-plant! Needless to say the friend is a firm Baba-follower since then — what all the eloquence of Dr. Moorty had failed to do, two inanimate objects were chosen to be His silent instruments to awaken a heart.

The following happened in Iran. The 'peesh Imam' (Mohammedan priest who leads the prayers) in Tehran, had a dream in which a voice told him that the eagerly awaited Imam Mehdi (the Saheb-e-Zaman, or Avatar) is now on earth, and he would find Him at a certain house in Tehran. In his dream he was guided to this house which he saw clearly before him in vivid detail. In the morning the priest went in search of the house, found it, and knocked. To the man who opened the door he said 'I have come to see Hazrat Saheb-e-Zaman'. He was asked to enter; and when he related his dream to the householder (Asfandiar Vesali) and his wife, tears flowed down their cheeks for they were lovers of Baba. Asfandiar Vesali came to see Baba at Poona in 1963, and was one of the Meher Ashram boys at Meherabad 34 years ago. His house that the priest was guided to in the dream, serves the Avatar Meher Baba Centre in Tehran where weekly meetings are held in Baba's Love.

There was yet another surprise for Baba's Centre in Tehran. One morning one of the Baba-lovers went to the bazaar to buy bread, and seeing bystanders reading "Raushan-Fekr" (a leading weekly magazine of Tehran) he glanced at it and was astonished to find two full pages devoted to beloved Baba with His photos and messages! Having no money with him to buy a copy, he ran for home and sent his son to get a copy while he informed the others about it. Soon after, the French magazine "Tehran Journal" also produced the articles in French along with photos of the Beloved and some of His group there. This is how it came about: One day a Baba-lover took some Persian books on Baba to the office of "Raushan-Fekr", and returned with a promise from the co-editor that he would look into them and show them to the Editor. Some days later, when the Baba-group had congregated for their weekly meeting at the Centre, there was the unexpected arrival of the Editor and staff of Raushan-Fekr. They seemed much impressed with all that they saw and heard, and at the end of the meeting asked questions and requested more books and photos of Baba. When leaving, the Editor demanded "Why did you not inform us about Meher Baba before?"!

Shantadevi, our gracious Maharani, was the only one called by Baba to visit Guruprasad this summer for any five days during our stay here. She chose the month of April, staying in Poona for about a week and coming every afternoon to pay her respects to Baba and have His beloved sahavas. She was not present when Baba opened the A.M.B.P.C. Hall on 1st May, but Eruch wrote to her a detailed account of the function from which I quote parts that will help you form a mind picture of the occasion:

When Baba arrived at the Hall it was surprising to find a large crowd of lovers of Baba from Poona awaiting His arrival. The invitations were extended to about 200 persons, but the invitees also brought their families and the number swelled to almost 700 men, women and children! The Hall was well decorated and all the arrangements seen to with great care by the lovers there — some of them had worked round the clock for a

week to complete every detail. The actual programme was very simple. Baba was garlanded at the entrance by the Chairman of the A.M.B.P.C. Trust, and then escorted by the Trustees into the Hall after He had cut the seven-coloured ribbons and unlocked the entrance door. When Baba was seated in the specially made sofa-chair on the dais, the crowd was permitted to enter the Hall and sat down in a very orderly fashion. When the Hall was entirely full, with the lovers facing their Beloved God in person, some children played a very prominent part in welcoming and entertaining Baba. They sang and danced pieces prepared solely for the occasion, and also recited the Prayers and sang the Arti. Baba appeared touched by the devotion of His dear ones there, and permitted each one to approach Him despite His previous ruling that none should do so. He was profusely garlanded by many who had brought garlands with them, and each of the gathering received His physical touch in the shape of a pat, a caress or an embrace. At the end of the programme He was conducted to an adjoining room which is reserved for Him, where He may relax before and after such programmes. There Baba drank some fresh cocoanut water, and the mandali with Him were served a light snack. The morning's programme had lasted two hours, and Baba returned to Guruprasad at 11 o'clock. Beloved Baba has told the Trustees that He will give darshan at the A.M.B.P.C. Hall just once more, on 1st May 1965, after which He will resume His darshan programmes as usual at Guruprasad.

India has emerged from its official mourning for the death of its Prime Minister, but in the hearts of the people the mourning continues. In the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, not only has India lost a beloved friend and a brilliant leader who was dedicated heart and soul to its people, but the world has lost an unrivalled champion for peace. In a letter to Wasdeo Kain (of The President's Estate, who is secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Centre in Delhi), Eruch writes:

Beloved Baba remarked that with the passing away of Panditji, India has lost its first Prime Minister who also ranked first in dedicated service to India that he loved so dearly. Baba said that Jawaharlal Nehru was matchless as a statesman and India will have to wait another 700 years to find another jewel like him; he can be said to have been a Karma Yogi. It would be good if he has read at least some portion of "God Speaks" presented to him by Sardar Amar Singh Saigal (M.P.). Baba added, "Only when I come again, during my next Advent on earth, will there be another like Jawaharlal."

The above comments from beloved Baba were broadcast in part by All India Radio, Delhi, on 5th June in all the regional languages.


We will be leaving for Meherazad (Ahmednagar) at the end of this month, and shall have unpacked and settled down to the old familiar routine of Meherazad life in time for the observance of beloved Baba's 39th silence anniversary. I am giving here the circular that Adi is sending out to all in the East, so that it is sure to reach you dear ones in the West well in time to observe it as wished by Baba:

On the 10th of July 1964, the 39th Anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete Silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th of July to midnight of the 10th of July, in accordance with the local time.

Those who, for practical reasons, find that it is not possible to observe silence for the 24 hours on Friday the 10th of July 1964, should instead observe complete fast for twelve hours on that day, from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. During this fast nothing must be consumed — not even water. Those who are fasting for the 12 hours on July 10th, should also observe partial fast in the morning from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. by taking only one cup of tea or coffee (with or without milk), before beginning their complete fast at 8.00 a.m.

Baba sends His Love and Blessing to each one of His lovers for the Silence Day.

Very lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Meher', is written on a light yellow rectangular background.

*sixty/*

Meherazad, 20th August 1964.

Dearest Family,

The calendar reminds me that it is time for another news letter, and it seems incredible that eight weeks have gone by since the last one. Although we frequently remark "how time flies!" we never fail to be astonished at the amount of time that has flown by, particularly when such reminders as unattended letters, anniversaries, and birthdays come round. Despite the quiet summer we spent in Poona this year, we felt we had hardly settled down at Guruprasad before we were packing again for Meherazad. Perhaps this 'speeding' of time felt universally today, is a reflection of the quickening of the spiritual awakening awaiting mankind in this great Avataric age.

Beloved Baba left for Meherazad on 1st July, and His lovers in Poona were overjoyed to know that they could gather at the Bund Gardens for the usual farewell. Moreover, as many of them no doubt had prayed, the weather took a hand in making an improvement on this unexpected blessing. The monsoon broke early, and for a week before our departure it kept raining day and night, so that the idea of stopping at the Bund was dropped, and at daybreak of July 1st the members of His big Poona family had assembled in Guruprasad for their Beloved's darshan before He left. To those of us who sat in the car with Baba, the most touching glimpse of this momentary meeting and parting was when the car was wending its way out of Guruprasad grounds. After having their hurried share of His darshan in the Mandali's hall, men and women were standing in a line along the driveway up to and beyond the gate; and as Baba's car slowly passed by them, each one in turn surged forward to quickly touch or kiss His hand, crying out "Baba", "My Baba", "Meher Baba", "My Father", as the heart of each was prompted to exclaim. Baba, who was sitting by the window, smiling His Love on them, put His hand out further to make it easier for the eager hands reaching out towards Him. This fleeting panorama of faces, dark and fair, all equally aglow with love, flashed past us till we turned the corner round the gate — and remained with us long after we left Poona.

Baba looked so tired during and after the journey, that we couldn't help wondering how His health would withstand the strain of next summer's anticipated activity. And even in a letter of recent date, one of the Meherazad mandali writes: "Beloved Baba's health is like the weathercock; sometimes pointing to radiant health, at other times to a very pulled down condition. It is like the sun in a clear sky becoming suddenly overshadowed by clouds. If the indication of His 'health weather' continues as it is at present, I cannot see how the darshan programmes in Poona next summer can be made possible! But please do not let this prompt you to request us for further health news of Baba, for there is nothing in particular to report — I am really giving you a general picture of His present divine mood..... "

As we crossed the boundary from Poona into Ahmednagar district, the countryside took on the anaemic complexion of rain-starved earth, and I'm sure

even a goat could not have found a green blade of grass in all that miles of space. We were looking forward to breathing the air of Meherazad once again, but we hadn't bargained for the quantity that greeted us on our home-coming! There was a giant wind blowing fiercely all round the house, roaring through the trees and turning the garden into an agitated mob of leaves. For days it was all wind and no rain. It was exasperating to watch the succulent rainclouds race across the skies continually, their only answer to our plea being a growl of thunder. Then one afternoon the clouds broke down, and it poured so profusely that within half an hour Meherazad was looking like a duck pond. With beloved Baba we watched from the window of His room the saturated fields, and the nullahs overflowing with the torrent of water rushing down them. But if Meherazad has had a good rainfall so far this year, Meherabad (only a few miles away) has had no more than a few skimpy showers that helps the present crop but can do nothing to bring water to the wells dried up from years of drought. As Padri so aptly described it in his report from Meherabad, these sprinkles have served as oxygen to the dying earth, but not as the blood transfusion it needs to recover.

For the 39th anniversary of His silence, beloved Baba's message was:

No message about Love and Truth can draw  
the seeker even nearer to the real experience  
of them; but the breaking of my silence will  
shatter the seeker's hard crust of ignorance  
and reveal to him their true meaning.

The united observance of the 10th July by His lovers round the world, is not so much a drop-offering to the Ocean of His silence, as the receiving of His blessing that we might hear His silence. Baba once said: Hear me while I am silent, for when I break my silence there will be nothing left for you to hear.

The Avatar Meher Baba Centres everywhere honoured the occasion with celebrations on different days and in different ways, with the common aim of making it one more channel for the flowing of His Love to others. While working to spread His Message to the people, those who love Baba are bound to come up against questions regarding the breaking of His silence and His repeated postponement of it; and the replies must surely be as varied as there are ways of trying to understand it. But "God cannot be understood, He can only be loved" as Baba has told us; whereas Kabir has said "There may be thousands of pundits and crores of intellectuals, but God's business God alone knows". Baba alone knows the reason for His setting and declaring a time for the breaking of His silence and then just not doing it, at least in the sense we understand it to mean. But the reason is undoubtedly there, serving in His tremendous spiritual work, for when the Avatar is the Pivot of the universe His every action must have universal significance. Those who have known or been with Baba for many years, have time and again been through the postponement of the breaking of His silence, and I recall with delight my first experience of it. It was as far back as 1931 when I was at school; and when I came to know that Baba intended to break His silence soon, I frantically wrote to Him begging Him to put it off till my school holidays began, so that I could be with Him at the great moment. In His reply, darling Baba solemnly promised that He would put it off till the time I could be with Him during my holidays!



In conclusion, I feel I must tell you of this year's slip-of-the-tongue (among the "silencers" on 10th July) that amused the Beloved and the Meherazad folk most. It took place between two members of a family in Poona, who were observing silence. One said something to the other. The other, looking aghast, said aloud: "But you are not supposed to talk!"

"We are filled with wonder at the miracles of Baba's Love". So writes our Jane from New York, speaking for all the dear ones who help to spread beloved Baba's message of Love and Truth from His little corner at the World's Fair. She says in her report to Adi:

"The most vital thing standing out in one's mind about Baba's beautiful space is the strong, radiant, loving, powerful Presence that is felt by all who serve. As soon as one enters the circular space, all white and soft and lit so strikingly, one begins to feel the warmth and sweetness of the Beloved's presence. He tells us: I am with you; I am with you always. We do not always believe this or allow it to become a living truth; in Baba's little corner He makes it such a reality that we are newly aware of the miracle of His ever-present omniscient Self. As dear Mani wrote 'Those whose hearts are meant to be touched will be touched'. And so it is. How can one account for the girls who go by, take the Message (printed folder) with a smile, pass on and in two seconds are back again saying: we would like to know more! Or the young man who drives the little Greyhound car that takes people round the Fair, who found himself upstairs standing in Baba's space, asking so many questions, taking happily the things on the desk that tell of Baba's Love; and when we asked him how he came to the building this day, said in wide-eyed amazement 'Oh, my machine stopped dead right in front of your building!' Or the two children who walked boldly right into the little corner, which few do at first; took the 'Seven Realities' and beaming with joy bounced out again! Or the man interested in Theosophy who bought a copy of God Speaks and left, further along his goal. One soul comes forward gratefully, almost with hands out, and leaves with shining eyes for the gift of Love received; while another will pass, only a few feet away, and not look at all! How can one account for all those who come, who linger, who sometimes hardly know how they came ..... Only one answer can be given. There is never a coincidence or accident or fluke; it is all a part of Baba's exquisite planning. How fascinating to watch and know with confident faith that those whom He will send will come; those He wishes to stay will stay; those who will go further, He will help them to do so. We need only to be there as His servants and sentinels. Each passing day proves from moment to moment the truth of this."

The revelation of Baba's Love as witnessed by the volunteers through many individual instances at His corner in the World's Fair, has come to us through letters; and we hope all will be able to share it through the Baba-magazines later on. For statistical information I quote here another passage from Jane's report:

"We had a directive from the firm in charge of public relations stating that the gate at the building ('American Interiors' which holds the Baba-space) has clocked 438,000 admissions up to July 15th. Of this number we judge that at least half have made their way to His little corner on the third floor since opening."

This is indeed a substantial number by any standard, even though it might not seem so much when compared to the milling crowds swarming the other

pavillions that present free exhibits of scientific wonders, religion and art, and where amusement and entertainment is afforded. But then one wonders, is the result of any Baba-work to be measured in the scale of mathematics? Is actual numbers to be proof of the amount of struggle and work put into carrying out any project in His cause? For the Beloved, the only yardstick that can measure our efforts is our love for Him. And, as dear Kitty (Davy) says, 'Baba shows His Love for us in allowing us to work in some way, with the ability we have.' Moreover, in allowing us to work, Baba works in His own way, not only through us but within us; for if we are a means for the doing of His work, the work is often His means for the undoing of our ego. While the people are given His message of Love and Truth, His lovers are given the opportunity to live His message — by developing more tolerance, charity, understanding and love for those with whom we are harnessed in the labour of love. And if with every step we take and every stumble we make, some of our ego is worn down we should rejoice, for then His work is really being done.

Now that the time has come when Baba wishes us to let as many as possible know of Him and His ministry on earth, it is strange to look back on the early years of His work when He travelled incognito and the disciples travelling with Him were not allowed to reveal His identity under any circumstances. This concealment of His name was not always so simple or uneventful as might be thought. It has given rise to all sorts of situations during those incredible journeys that Baba undertook with a few of His mandali in search of 'masts' (the God-intoxicated souls) all over India, Pakistan and Ceylon — situations that were humorous, ironical, embarrassing, and exasperating. I heard Eruch relating some of them to Pukar this summer at Guruprasad, experiences of Baba's "leela" (divine play) as different from "miracles"; and most fascinating was the ironical one where a complete stranger severely rebuked the mandali for not knowing Meher Baba! But let me recount it from the beginning:

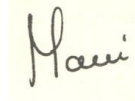
It was in 1942, during the second world war. Baba was travelling with 3 of His mandali in one of the third-class compartments of a train so packed with humanity that even the door steps were crowded with people hanging on to the handle bars; while the only means of entry left to the desperate was through the windows. Baba and His men were tired after their strenuous hunt for masts, and even this crammed accommodation secured in the train meant some relaxation for them. After a station or two, an old Mohammedan with a white flowing beard was seen to rush to a window of their compartment, holding aloft a 5 year old boy, begging the sardine-packed passengers to take him in. With voluble protests the passengers kept pushing the boy away, saying it was absolutely impossible, and as the train whistled its starting signal the old man got desperate, shouting "For God's sake take the child in!" At this, Baba ordered the mandali to intervene and take the boy inside. Amidst loud arguments with their co-passengers, the mandali pulled the child inside; and the old man was just in time to run off to some perch next door as the train started. However, he kept returning at every stop to see if all was well with the boy, who was sitting beside Baba. Seeing his pathetic anxiety, and (as Eruch said) Baba has always had an affinity for bearded old men, Baba told the mandali to also get the old man in! The mandali set to work, and after a storm of protests, arguments and assurances, the old man was hauled in through the window — he squeezed himself into the space offered next to Baba and seated the child on his lap. Baba was "disguised" in ordinary clothes, fur hat (Kashmiri type), and dark glasses.

In the course of conversation with the old man, the mandali learned he was from Gulbarga (a town famous for one of the biggest shrines, of a Perfect Master, in India) and asked if he knew of any masts thereabouts, as they were in search of men absorbed in love for God. In reply the man shrewdly asked where they came from, and learning they were from Ahmednagar he expressed great astonishment that they should go in search of saintly persons. He asked if they had heard of Meher Baba, and when the mandali casually admitted they had, he laughed derisively at them and said that being Zoroastrians and living in Ahmednagar they should be ashamed to go in search of men absorbed in love of God when there was One in their own community and town who could give them God Himself! What an irony of fate it was, he said, that they who lived in Ahmednagar did not care to visit Meher Baba, while he being in Gulbarga had journeyed twice to visit Him at Meherabad and could not see Him — once because Meher Baba was away to a foreign country, and once because He was in seclusion. "But", he added "I am determined to pay my respects to Him before I die, and I will go to Meherabad with my whole family." When the train stopped at Gulbarga the old Mohammedan thanked the gracious passenger by his side for having taken such pains to accommodate him and his boy, and got down.

Shortly after, Baba told Eruch to run after the old man and present him with Baba's picture (which was in a copy of the 'Meher Baba Journal' that Eruch had with him), reveal to him Who his companion in the train was, tell him that Meher Baba blessed him and his family and that now there was no need for him to visit Meherabad. Eruch caught the old man just outside the station getting into a tonga (a two-wheeled horse carriage), and delivered the picture and message. When the old man learned of Baba's identity, he exploded with anger at Eruch, roundly abusing him for having kept it a secret during all those hours when he had been sitting right next to Baba — not failing to include the entire "younger generation" in his abuse! As Eruch ran back to catch his train, the old man ran after him for all he was worth, reaching Baba's compartment just as the train was moving out of the station. Baba was ready at the window, wearing a happy smile, without hat or glasses, and leaning out He placed His hand on the old man's head in blessing.....

To you each dear one of His family, beloved Baba sends His Love.

Ever lovingly,



# *sixty-one/*

Meherazad, 24th October 1964

Dearest Family,

As a rule I like to reserve the best of anything for the last, including meals when the spinach is gobbled first and the favourite dish left to be savoured at the end. But when it comes to giving you good news, I have neither the right nor the patience to hold it back till the end of the letter. So here I go:

Beloved Baba has announced that (health permitting) He will give darshan to His lovers in 1965: to His Eastern lovers in the month of May at Poona, and to His Western lovers in the month of December at Bombay.

From 1st to 15th May 1965, while Baba is in Poona, He will be available for darshan to His Eastern lovers only, for not more than two hours every day. On May 1st Baba will give darshan at the Avatar Meher Baba POONA Centre, and thereafter (till 15th May) at Guruprasad. His lovers in the East (India, Pakistan and Iran) who wish to and can afford to avail themselves of this opportunity, may see Him in Poona during the fifteen days of May permitted by Him, within the time limit of two hours as will be fixed by Him.

To His lovers in the West, beloved Baba will be available for seven days during the end of December 1965, in BOMBAY. This sahas of seven days in Bombay at the end of December, 1965, will be reserved only for His Western lovers from overseas (U.S.A., U.K., Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Africa, etc.) — i.e. those who wish to and can afford to come.

One of the apparent factors for Baba selecting Bombay for the congregation of His Western lovers is the lack of suitable accommodation for their stay in Poona, now that Napier Hotel is taken over by the military authorities, Poona Hotel sold to some private concern for residential purpose, and another hotel rumoured to follow the same fate. Also, very few of His dear ones from the West would be able to withstand the heat of Poona or Bombay in May. However, important as these factors are, to us they seem incidental to Baba's own reasons for wishing to hold the 1965 Western sahas in Bombay.

Baba wishes all those who will come, the Easterners coming to Poona in May as well as the Westerners coming to Bombay in December, 1965, to know and to keep in mind that none should seek or expect from Him any spiritual discourse or private interview. Come only with the thought of being in His presence when He allows, being happy in seeking His pleasure, binding yourself to His wishes so that He is free to give from the silence of His compassion what He wants you to receive.

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NOTE Although all that is stated above clearly indicates beloved Baba's wish to give His darshan to His lovers in 1965, please remember that it is subject to the condition of His health. Final confirmation of it will reach you through a circular next year.

Going through the notes in Bal Natu's diary of the 1960 darshan in Poona, one sees how Baba has always been stressing this. Here is an instance Bal records in his diary: When someone from a group of His lovers seated before Him asked Baba's clarification on a spiritual point that puzzled him, Baba said:

"When love draws you to me, don't ask for anything. When you are in my presence, be a silent recipient. Ask and you lose. Love has no questions and hence expects no answers. Love itself is the answer to all questions. The more you love me, the less you question. Love is eager to respond to the slightest wish of the Beloved, and there is no scope for why and wherefore while obeying the Master. When in my sahas (company) be attentive and receptive to what I may say, but do not question. Pampering of the intellect brings forth innumerable questions. All these questions can be answered but that is not spiritually indispensable. Mere intellectual explanations will not take you out of the muddle of your mind but will puzzle you all the more. Try to grasp what I have already said. To demand anything from the Beloved is an insult to love. Love only gives and goes on giving till the will of the Beloved alone manifests through the lover."

Among Bal's notes I came across this delightful passage: Some from among the gathering expressed their thought that they have been seeing Baba all the time in a pink coat at darshan time, and that they desired to see Him wear some other colours. Baba smiled and said, "If I started changing the colour of my clothes to suit the taste of all my lovers, can you imagine what a variety of colours would be introduced for my wear? I am the slave of your love, but not of your whims."

Just as beauty finds the need to express itself in the form of art and other outlets, it is inevitable that love should seek expression in some tangible gesture. It is therefore natural that when the lovers come for beloved Baba's darshan they bring garlands, sweets, fruits and other offerings. What Baba had to say on this, was:

"Why do you bring these baskets of fruit and tins of sweets? Better that you come with empty hands, but not of course with empty hearts! As you sit in my presence, there is a possibility that your thoughts are diverted towards your offerings - you are here but your mind may be running after the garlands and baskets. So I give the signal 'Garland Baba, and let us be free of it'. Besides, I do not taste the many things you so lovingly bring as your offering. You know of my simple diet. So I have to distribute these sweets and fruits to the mandali and others." With a twinkle in His eyes, Baba added, "And when they have done full justice to the things, I get the stomach-ache!" But then He also says "I am the Ocean of Love, so whatever you do with love pleases me." At the last such darshan (1963) we noticed that although Baba accepted the garlands with love, He usually touched the offerings in blessing and returned them to the giver as His prasad.

Thinking of the many dear ones in the U.S.A. who long to see the Beloved, and how comparatively few of them can afford to make the repeated journeys to India, we offered the suggestion that this time Baba should once again give His sahas to His Western lovers at His Center in Myrtle Beach, U.S.A., as He had done three times before. But, Baba tells us that at present this is out of the question. Looking deeper under the practical layer of our suggestion, we find our prompting was largely mingled with our hope to visit once again that inexpressibly beautiful place which Baba has chosen for His spiritual Center in

the U.S.A., and which indeed He has said will one day become His Universal Center! The "Meher Spiritual Center" at Myrtle Beach is the sweet fruit of Elizabeth Patterson's love for Baba. The seed was sown by Baba, and it grew under His direct guidance. The Beloved denies performing miracles, but the Meher Spiritual Center is undeniably a miracle of His Love. I wonder how many of those who visit the place and bask in the beauty of His Presence that is ever present there, know of its unique history; or realize the boundless perseverance and hard work, faith and love, struggle and expense that have been poured into the making of it.

Baba sent dearest Elizabeth and Norina (Princess Matchabelli) to the United States from India in 1941, to locate a site for His spiritual center somewhere in the United States — one which would comply with the five conditions that He laid down. Two of the five conditions were that "it should be on virgin soil" and that "it should be given from the heart." After a considerable search for the ideal site, the property now known as Meher Spiritual Center,\* comprising of over 500 acres and two fresh water lakes adjacent to the Ocean, came into Elizabeth's possession through her dear father, Mr. Simeon Chapin. A perfect setting for the establishment of the Center as wished by Baba, it met all the conditions He had set down. This property, a virgin forest, was undeveloped and uncultivated by man, with only a narrow road or trail running through it which was used by travellers on horse-back (including George Washington and Lafayette while enroute from Charleston to New York). The breath-taking transformation we beheld on our visit to the completed Center with Baba in 1952, can never be adequately expressed in words, much less so in a letter! Kitty Davy, our dear companion of many years with Baba in India, who is entrusted by Him to help look after the Center in Myrtle Beach, has compiled a wealth of notes (largely from Elizabeth's letters to Baba and to her father) on the history of the place — thus preserving the many details that might otherwise be lost in posterity. I hope Elizabeth will some day find the time to edit the notes and put the account in book form, to preserve the precious history of a place precious to the heart of the Avatar of the age.

To us October is a foretaste of the long summer to come, but more so it is a pleasant reminder of the all too short winter that it heralds. At dawn, in the first rays of the drowsy sun, we would see the cobwebs glisten across the bougenvalia and jasmine bowers, perfect discs of gossamer that spring up overnight. We watched October's harvest moon rising in its glory, soon after the sun made its exit behind a gaudy curtain of flaming clouds. At night we would stand entranced before the huge white flowers with wax-like petals, resembling a lotus and chrysanthemum combined, known as Christ's Cradle because the heart of the flower is shaped like a cradle with a 'star' over it. The flowers grow on a vine with leaves that are similar to the cactus and blossom only for a night, opening to their fullest at midnight when they dazzle the sight with their awesome beauty. The suspense of our erratic monsoon is over, but the sum total of the rain's blessings is offset by the trail of misery it left in many places where there was either too much of rain or too little. Devastating floods and acute drought often made headlines in the papers. Translated into human suffering, in a land where hundreds of millions live in abject poverty for whom to lose one's little is to lose one's all, it is staggering. India is like the old woman in the nursery rhyme, "she has so many children she doesn't know what to do"! Never before has the national food crisis been so heart-rending as it has this year, and with all the drastic measures taken by the government and

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\* seven miles north of the resort town of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, (U.S.A.)

the most generous shipment of grains from the United States of America and other countries, we have barely turned the corner.

We think of Arangaon as Baba's village, for it was in Arangaon that "Meher-abad" (Baba's first permanent settlement with His disciples) was established. Many of the villagers were children at the time, growing up under the spiritual and material care of beloved Baba, their love for Him growing along with them. The village has been in the grip of drought for the third year running, and we heard sad reports of the desperate shortage of water and of the farmers being compelled to get rid of their indispensable cattle and sheep for lack of fodder. It was natural therefore that when their endurance and hopes were exhausted, the villagers should turn to their Compassionate Father, Meher Baba. One Sunday in September a group of them came over to Meher-abad, laying bare their plight before Him and begging for His mercy of rain. Baba gave them His blessing and told them not to worry.

The following Sunday they were back again, many more of them, young and old, men, women and children. They came walking, in bullock carts, by bus, on bicycles. They came with garlands in their hands, and with gratitude in their hearts, for the rains had come to Arangaon! In that week it had rained till the fields were submerged in water and the river was resurrected again. Every downpour was as a whip-lash to the demon of famine, each shower a balm to the chapped and shrivelled features of the earth. The sound of waters rushing through the barren river-bed was sweeter than music to them. The long dried-up springs that feed the wells started coming to life again, and water began flowing from the taps of Meherabad. It was truly a thanksgiving day for the villagers, as they gathered before their Beloved in Meherabad. While the older men looked picturesque in their red and orange turbans, and the younger ones wore the modern white caps, the women's saris lent the most colour to this rural gathering of Baba-lovers. For them it was a rare opportunity of His darshan, for me a rare opportunity to use the movie camera. Baba accepted their garlands and gave them each His prasad of sweets. He asked some of them to sing, others to speak of their activities at the Arangaon Baba-Center. This naturally brought up the points of dispute and disagreements that had been rising among them in the doing of His work. Baba encouraged the different workers to air their grievances before Him, and cleared up the fog of their misunderstandings with the sunshine of His presence, making them realize the unimportance of such differences in the way He alone can. He told them to love one another, and the simple reply was "It is so easy to love you Baba, but difficult to love one another!". Baba said "I know, but if you do that it will be a miracle greater than the blessing of rain that has brought you here today." He added, "Try your best and I will help you."

A written statement in the form of a letter and signed by a number of the villagers, was presented at Meherabad a few days later. There is not room for me to give it all here, so I must be content with giving a few passages translated into English:

"Avatar Meher Baba sanctified Arangaon — Meherabad — in 1923. Here He established Meher Ashram. At that time we were just teenagers. We, the Harijan boys of Arangaon, were admitted to the Meher Ashram. It was the time when we were not only denied education and the primary necessities of life but were treated as 'untouchable' — the low in caste. But indeed we were very fortunate, for Baba personally looked after our needs and education. He uplifted the Harijans in all respects. Since then, in His unbounded compassion,

He has been favouring us with His divine blessing in all ways of life. He is indeed the Saviour of the 'low and down-trodden'.

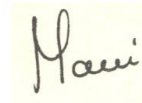
"Sat-Chit-Anand Avatar Meher Baba is God in human form. He is omnipresent — in all things and beings. Baba's light of love shines within the hearts of us all. He is the same One who descends on the earth and assumes human form. He was Rama, Krishna, and Buddha — the Ancient One. The Avatar's work in previous Advents was great, but in the present Advent, as Meher Baba, it is greatest. His ancient state and work are beyond the capacity of our understanding. He has not come to establish a new religion or to perform miracles, but He has come to awaken mankind to its spiritual heritage. It is therefore essential that every one of us should re-dedicate our lives at His holy feet, wholeheartedly."

Speaking of the blessing of rain they received, they declared: "It reminds us of the incident in Lord Krishna's life. Lord Krishna lifted the Govardhan (mountain) with one finger, gathered His lovers under it and saved them from the disaster that was caused by the rains. Now Meher Baba, the Avatar of the age, in response to our prayer has blessed us by showering plenty of rainfall. Hallowed be His Name!"

Unlike the rains, Baba's blessing is daily showered unseen in the lives of His lovers everywhere, as we gather from the reports coming in. We hear from them of the endless miracles of His compassion, of the ever growing number of men and women reaching out to the light of His Love, of the many little instances that reveal His omnipresence, and of the trials and afflictions in their personal lives that are but a 'seventh shadow' of the suffering borne by Him for the love that He bears for His creation. All this we hear, and we know that the Beloved's work goes on, seen and unseen, through His awakened ones wherever they are. With each succeeding letter, for lack of space, it becomes more difficult for me to be able to report the continually increasing activities launched by His lovers who toil so that others may share in the knowledge that God walks the earth again. Happily, you are kept faithfully informed of these activities through the different Baba-magazines.

I find that the best part of the letter has been saved for the end after all! On having heard the contents of this letter (which was read out to Him at His wish), beloved Baba tells me to add that He sends His Love to you each dear one.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed on the page below the text "Ever lovingly,".



# *sixty-two/*

Meherazad, 29th January 1965.

Dearest Family,

Greetings from your Meherazad family for a glorious 1965 in Baba's Love — may we be blessed to sing His glory that our voice may reach the hearts of all yet unawakened to our Father in heaven and on earth. May our prayer to the Highest of the High be as that of the ancient mystic, whose words we hear sometimes over the radio while seated at breakfast with Him:

Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated Lord to Thee.  
Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my moments and my days  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.  
Take my voice and let it sing  
Always only for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.  
Take my silver and my gold  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect and use  
All its powers as Thou shalt choose.  
Take my will for it is Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.  
Take my love, my Lord, and pour  
At Thy feet its endless store.  
Take my self and it shall be  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

These lines shine with a living significance, when reflected through the activities of His lovers in many parts of the East and in the West in their endeavour to carry His Love to as many as possible. With the rising momentum of work being accomplished everywhere in beloved Baba's cause, it is difficult for one to keep track of all that is being done; whereas for me to try to capture it in the form of a letter is an impossible task! Like the fingers of the morning sun picking out the folds in the surface of a mountain, I can but touch fleetingly on some of the activities.

One of the most recent and outstanding in our memory is the MEHER PURI MELA at Hamirpur town, in the north of India, where a unique idea has been launched in the Beloved's name. A number of Hamirpur lovers of Baba have

purchased plots totalling a large area of land, on which to build their homes as and when possible. In the centre they have laid a foundation for the putting up of a life-size marble statue in the likeness of beloved Baba, and the land immediately surrounding it will be made into a small park. 'Puri' means a sanctified settlement for a community. The 'Meher Puri' embraces people of different communities, regardless of caste or creed, the bond uniting them being Baba's Love. The occasion was inaugurated amidst a huge gathering of Baba-lovers from all over Hamirpur district and different parts of India. Those who went from Bombay, Poona and other places, returned filled with rapture and wonder at Baba's presence and love felt by them during their five days' stay "in another world" as they put it. Our Jimmy Mistry, whose wife was among the Hamirpur pilgrims, wrote of the Bombay group on its return: "They are still in the Meher-Puri Mela daze, and there is no end to their amazement at the overwhelming love for Baba that they experienced there!" And indeed, Baba Himself had said to those of His lovers from Poona and elsewhere who visited Meherzad, "If you want to see me and witness my Love, go to Hamirpur — I will be there."

The Mela (Fair) included a variety of musical, poetical and dance programs, arranged to attract the public too in large numbers — and if from among the multitude that did attend a handful are awakened to Baba's Love, His work is done. A constant source of wonder to the visiting Baba-lovers was the easy and efficient way the tremendous management of the five days' Meher Puri Mela was carried out despite fantastic financial handicap — but if the Hamirpur lovers are far from rich in pocket, they are millionaires in faith! When the stalwart Baba-workers who were in charge of the management were asked "How do you do it?", they replied, "We don't. It is The Silent One sitting quietly in Meherzad who does it all." When Bhau first wrote to Pukar to say that Baba would want them to plan the Mela on a solid basis and not leave matters 'in the air', the reply came to the effect: How can anything we plan or attempt be solid — our plans must perforce be 'castles in the air', and it is but the weight of Baba's Love that brings them down to earth for us in fulfilment.

All over Andhra Pradesh (a large state in south India) the banner of His Name is ever kept unfurled and held aloft by the unflickering zeal and faith of His many lovers there, and more Baba-Centres have blossomed in the state of Andhra than anywhere else. Among the big projects in progress and in plan, is the one to be held at Kovvur on beloved Baba's 71st birthday, at MEHERSTHAN. Koduri Krishna Rao and his family, who were blessed to build this "Abode of Meher" have now put up an adjoining building to serve as "guest house" for those constantly pouring in from different places to visit Mehersthan. To inaugurate the Guest-House in His Name, Baba has once again appointed Sarosh and Viloo — it will be their first visit to Andhra, and their first experience of the unbounded love of Baba's Andhra-family. Koduri Krishna Rao is hoping later on to establish there a Free Dispensary for the needy and a school for poor children, in Baba's love and service — for has He not said "By loving and serving the least of mine, you are loving and serving Me."

Beloved Baba's message to all His lovers, for His 71st Birthday, the 25th of February 1965, is:

BE TRUE TO THE TRUST I REPOSE IN YOU  
AND REMEMBER ME WHOLEHEARTEDLY.  
MY LOVE AND BLESSING TO YOU.

Every day is Baba's Birthday, in many parts of Andhra Pradesh, particularly in Hyderabad and Secunderabad; and also in the city and suburbs of Bombay. Since the 17th of December, the lovers there have begun a seventy-one days program in honour of His 71st birthday — gathering each day at the home of a different Baba-lover, in a different part of the city or town, singing His bhajans and Arti, showing Baba-films, holding public meetings. A delightful part of one such program was a drama in Telegu played entirely by children. This was in Kakinada, the play entitled "Meher Prema" (Baba's Love), and the players were mostly the grandchildren of the secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Centre in Kakinada. The play represents people of different religions, and these are the words of a song that appears in the last scene:

Sing, O sing Meher's name!  
Ring, heart-bells, His boundless fame.  
He is God and He is man,  
At His nod the world began.  
He is Truth and all Beauty.  
He is True Infinity.

Further reports on the activities of different Baba-Centres you will gather from DIVYA VANI, that invaluable Baba-magazine in English. This bimonthly magazine is the fruit of the untiring efforts of Swami Satyaprakash Udaseen, its Editor.\* By subscribing to it you will not only be helping him to carry on this labour of love, you will be helping yourselves to a feast of Baba-news.

Bombay was the scene of tremendous religious pomp and fervour during the 38th International Eucharistic Congress held there last year, beginning from 28th November and later attended by Pope Paul VI. As the mass of humanity from all over India and abroad poured into this already overcrowded metropolis and flocked in hundreds of thousands to attend the Congress in the Name of Christ, it seemed fair ground for the Baba-lovers of Bombay to scatter the seeds of beloved Baba's message amongst this multitude. As one put it "We should not want posterity to point the finger of blame at us for not telling them that the Second Advent they await has come to pass and that Christ is in our midst in person." Sorabjee Sigantoria of the Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre, wrote "I thought to myself that the means to spread Beloved Baba's message is now at hand, and it is up to us to find ways of doing it successfully." And successfully it was done, with many hands at the plough working day and night, surmounting incredible obstacles on the way. 16,000 brochures (on the pattern of the World's Fair Baba-folders) were printed in Jimmy's printing press in record time, and despite various official restrictions these were distributed individually by hand to thousands of Catholics, including cardinals, bishops and foreign delegates. One coincidence that struck us as most interesting was the time of the Pope's landing in India on the evening of 2nd December — it was the month, the day, the hour, and almost the minute, of the Beloved's car accident eight years ago!

At the same time, headed by the Dalai Lama, a large congregation of Buddhists met at Sarnath (near the pilgrim city of Benares in north India), a place we stayed at with Baba during the New Life. I quote from Eruch's letter to a Baba-lover in Bombay, dated 2nd December, '64:

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\* "Meher Vihar", 3-6-417 Post Office Street, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad-29 (A.P.), India.

"Bombay must be very full with the influx of lacs of visitors from all parts of the world for the 38th International Eucharistic Congress, and Sarnath too is overcrowded with Buddhists from all over congregating there to attend the seventh conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. But these huge crowds, when compared with the gathering of Baba-lovers at Hamirpur, appear to me as huge mounds of chaff that collect after the Harvester has reaped His crop and separated the grain for His barn! It must be very amusing for beloved Baba to witness the delightful game of 'hide and seek' that is played in India today in the holy name of the Ancient One. On the one hand the Eucharistic Congress in Bombay proclaims the presence of the Christ in spirit, and on the other hand the World Buddhist Conference in Sarnath revives the memorable advent of Lord Buddha and His first sermon 2552 years ago! It is not surprising that such significant events should take place whilst the same Ancient One in His present advent on Earth remains at Meherazad hidden from the masses. He seems to take delight in watching His children play hide and seek in His holy Name while He remains silent and aloof, so near at hand and yet far from being found. This, Baba stresses, is His divine game — 'Leela'!

"Beloved Baba says that it is of great significance to find so many Catholics from all over the world headed by the Pope, and so many Buddhists from all over the world headed by the Dalai Lama, to have congregated at the same time in two different places in India during His present Advent.

"They have gathered together from different parts of the world to commemorate the past advents of the same one Avatar who was the Buddha and the Christ. But little do they realize that the same Avatar is now in their midst in flesh and blood! They will return to their countries carrying with them a feeling of satisfaction for having made the trip to India to participate in the great events of the day. But alas the seekers and the One sought for will continue to play the game of 'hide and seek'. Blessed will be the day when some of the seekers in this game are blessed by the grace of beloved Baba to recognize Him as the Avatar of the age. That day will truly be the day of the Holy Eucharist and the pilgrims' pilgrimage to this land hallowed by the Avatar will then be truly sanctified."

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of Heaven." To witness the little ones of Baba's family express their spontaneous adoration for Him is an experience to cherish forever. Our hearts bow in humility and wonder to see their intrinsic acceptance of His Godhood, their trust in Him, their remembrance of Him at play or school, their complete assurance of His Love. It will never be possible for me to put down all the touching episodes of the children's love for Baba that we hear frequently from parents and friends, but I must share with you our latest experience of a child's love, of 7 year old Shireen who is beloved Baba's niece. She is the daughter of Baba's youngest brother, Adi Jr., who has settled down in England since many years, and who came for a visit to India last month with his wife and two children, all devoted to Baba. To watch Shireen's 'romance' with Baba, at every visit to Meherazad, has been an unending joy to us all. When Baba told her that He loved her, she went over and said in His ear: 'I love you even more!' Whatever gift she would receive from dear Mehera or us, whether sweets or toys, she'd run to offer it first to Him; and to please her Baba would partake of the sweets and play with the toys. She had a long list of questions in her mind to ask of Baba, saying "Only God can explain these things to me". And Baba, the Compassionate Father, did explain them to her. There is not room here to put down all of Shireen's questions and Baba's answers, so I give a few:

"Baba, I know we are born again and again, but you are God so how is that you get born?"

"Once in a while God takes birth because of His Love for His creation. I am born in human form so that you may see me as you are, and if you are fortunate to know me and love me then some day you will see me as I really am."

"You are in all of us, then are we all in you Baba?"

Baba nodded, "Yes, that is so."

"We are your children, then why can't we stay with you?"

"If you love me, than I am with you wherever you are staying."

"If I didn't love you Baba — oh I'm not saying I don't, because I do love you! — but just supposing I didn't, then it wouldn't be my fault would it Baba? It would be because you didn't want me to love you?"

"Yes, it is all my Will. My Will governs the creation. You love me because I want you to love me."

"You are beautiful and so merciful, then why did you create snakes and scorpions?"

Baba smiled and pointed to Eruch for an answer. Eruch said "God has created such things so that in our fear we call out to Him and remember Him." This answer obviously did not satisfy her, and she countered: "But God is all-powerful, so He can make us remember Him direct, instead of through nasty things as snakes and scorpions!" Then, with Eruch interpreting His gestures, Baba explained to her:

"You, Shireen, are so pretty and sweet, yet when you sit on the potty you bring out what is dirty and stinking. Why do you do it? Because it is necessary — and moreover it keeps you well and pretty. And so are all things in God's creation necessary. Both good and bad are mine." This answer was immediately acceptable to the child, as was testified by her deep sigh of satisfaction and the happy look on her face.

Among the few luxuries that have a part in life at Meherazad is our transistor radio; and the programs that we never miss are the frequent talks given by Sardar Amarsingh Saigal (M.P.), relayed from different stations of India. The topics vary, based on the national need of the day — emphasising honesty, integrity, brotherhood and love, and woven throughout with beloved Baba's sayings. Seated by the dim light of the kerosene lamp, we gather round our little transistor and listen to our Saigalji's clear vibrant voice, feeling thrilled every time we hear him say: "And, Meher Baba says ....." We usually count the number of times the Beloved's name recurs; and once, in a 15 minute talk over the Air, we heard it ten times! Amarsingh Saigal has also been giving talks on Baba at various Baba-Centres. Recently he had occasion to have Baba's darshan at Meherazad, and then gave a talk at Ahmednagar to a packed audience of over five thousand. The glowing reports of this program received from Adi and Sarosh who were in charge of the arrangements, made Baba happy.

Hearing of the sahasas for the Western Baba-lovers expected to be held in December this year, some have expressed the hope that it be held in Ahmednagar instead of at Bombay. And, if the light hint Baba has let drop once in a while can be taken as a clue, it seems quite possible that Ahmednagar may be decided upon for the Western gathering in December. But there is much water yet to flow by in the rushing stream of time, and His final decision and the necessary details will be conveyed to you dear ones later on. Some time after Baba's Birthday, Adi will send out a circular to all in the East concerning the May darshan for Easterners. And this I think is the right place for me to clear up a point many Baba-lovers seem uncertain about, and that is if a greeting can be sent to the Beloved for His Birthday. Yes, it is alright to do so, by a cable or telegram.


The love from you that flowed in at Christmas time, in cables and greeting cards, has reached its Source. Beloved Baba sends His Love to you each.

No Christmas carol is sweeter than the one that is sung by an awakened heart — and here is one from a "new" lover of Baba in the U.S.A. who heard of Him recently at the Baba-booth in the New York World's Fair. He wrote to dear Fred and Ella Winterfeldt: "On this, my first 'Christmas with Baba' I am so happy I could shout for joy. For so many Christmas-times I sought Him but could not find Him. The abstract concept for God was not enough. I wanted Him in human form; and now, in Meher Baba, I have found Him. He is now so real, so warm and human, so close to me. He is now so real to me that I almost expect Him to pop around the corner at any moment, so grand, so loving, with that twinkle in His eye — and that warm embrace. How I envy you who have experienced this in the flesh! And yet I am grateful that I have found Him in spirit. Oh my friends, His Love in me is so great that it flows forth to you who helped me to find Him."

And from the heart of an "old" lover of Baba in New Zealand, who was among the East-West gathering in Poona, came the following greeting in his Christmas card to the Beloved: "Glory to God in the Highest! May the light of the living Christ shine in the heart of all mankind. May the love of God which passeth all understanding ease the suffering of the Highest of the High. Beloved Baba, Ocean of Love, love to you and all with you this time of Christ, from drops in distant New Zealand."

You will find that this letter is longer than usual, but so is the time that has elapsed since the last letter — and the next one is bound to be equally or more delayed. We expect to leave for Guruprasad, Poona, on the 1st of April, to return to Meherazad at the end of June. I pray my next letter carries cheering news concerning beloved Baba's health and the fulfilment of His lovers' longing for His darshan.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Meher", is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper. The signature is written in dark ink.

NOTE: Adi Arjani of Karachi (Pakistan) has issued, for Baba's 71st Birthday occasion, a handsomely bound Diary for 1965. Carrying Baba's picture with His message given for it, it has a saying of Baba on each page and a number of articles. Combining utility with the beauty of the Beloved's words, it is a Baba-Diary all would want to possess.

Another Birthday publication none of you would want to miss is the booklet entitled "Meher Baba, The Compassionate Father", brought out by Dr. Hoshang Bharucha of Navsari. It is a compilation of various anecdotes by Baba-lovers, drawn from their experiences, and gives us a precious glimpse of Baba's compassion as reflected in the lives of men and women who have come within the orbit of His encompassing Love.

The addresses are, respectively:

- 1) Mr. Adi K. Arjani, "Windmere", Ghizri Road, Karachi (Pakistan).
- 2) Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, Cosmic Meher Centre, Kutar Street, Navsari (India).

# *sixty-three/*

Guruprasad, Poona  
14th - 21st April 1965

Dearest Family,

Greetings to you from the heart of Guruprasad, which throbs once again with the presence of beloved Baba.

We left Meherazad on the morning of 30th March, reaching Poona long before noon. Baba's car did not stop at any of the usual Baba-halts at Ahmednagar and on the way, but groups of His lovers could be seen standing by the wayside, bowing silently as the car sped by, or waving god-speed to God, or crying out: Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai! (Hail! Avatar Meher Baba). Among the very few privileged to receive Baba on arrival at Guruprasad, was our Siamese cat of the nine names, who ran to Him with loud welcoming meows; and later when Baba came over from the mandali's hall in His little wheeled chair, the cat was seated on His lap, looking demurely up at us from its place of honour.

"Will it - won't it - will it - won't it" seemed synonymous with the heartbeats of Baba's eastern lovers as the month of March drew nearer and magnified their hopes and fears of whether or not they would see their Beloved this May. Baba has given the final nod, making the darshan a certainty, even though the length of its time has been shortened from 15 days to 6 days. On March 7, a circular was issued from the Ahmednagar office by Adi, from which I quote:

"Avatar Meher Baba directs me to let all His lovers (Easterners) know that He will give Darshan in Poona for only 6 days, from 1st May to 6th May 1965, despite His very weak health.

"Baba says that His universal work has increased manifold and His universal suffering has also increased proportionately, and this is now telling greatly upon His physical health. But Baba also says, 'This body will not drop till one year after I break my silence. What could be more glorious than my suffering for all humanity!'

"Besides the continuous pain in His hip-joint and His inability to walk freely, He has had since the last many months pain in the cervical spine, i.e. in the nape of the neck and extending down to the shoulders. Of late the pain has become intense.

"The point of view of the doctors who have been attending Baba recently, is that He should NOT give Darshan at all in May. Notwithstanding their opinion, Baba wants to give His darshan to His lovers. And so the doctors have urged Baba to at least restrict the days and hours of darshan, and not to allow His lovers to approach Him too closely in order to avoid any jerky movement to His neck caused inadvertently."

Of the six days of darshan, the first day will be at the A.M.B. Poona Centre Hall, from 8 to 11 in the morning. The following five days will be in the grounds of Guruprasad, at the site where the East-West gathering was



held in November 1962, under a similar (but more rain-proof!) 'pandal' erected to hold the large East-gathering. The dais for beloved Baba too will be in the same place as then, but smaller in size as the lovers will not be receiving His embrace or garlanding Him. It will in fact be a "darshan" in the literal sense, for Baba has permitted His lovers to bow down on His feet. As a rule this has been forbidden, at Baba's express wish; and over the years at different gatherings, big and small, we have known the mandali go hoarse from repeatedly calling out "Please do NOT bow down — do NOT touch His feet", though not often succeeding in stemming the flow of this spontaneous expression of homage on the part of the Indian lovers. For this May darshan Baba does not only condone it, He fully permits it. As stated in the circular: "During the Darshan hours, none should seek to have Baba's embrace or to touch Him except His Feet. Those who bring garlands should be content to place them at His feet. This time Baba will permit all to bow down on His feet during the opportunity given to His lovers on any of the 6 days." The last direction in the circular reads: "Baba wishes His lovers, when they approach Him, to receive in silence the Love which He will give them through His Silence."

At the time of writing this, the Beloved's cervical pain continues. Like His compassion, His suffering is beyond all understanding. Dr. Ram Ginde\* of Bombay, a man of fine spiritual qualities and one of the topmost neurosurgeons of India who is utterly devoted to Baba, has for some time been treating Him for this painful cervical condition, with all the skill and love he possesses. When, on one of his recurrent visits to Meherazad, Dr. Ginde expressed his distress and surprise at the stubbornness of the pain, beloved Baba patted him lovingly on the arm and said "Don't worry. It is all by My will. I alone know the cause of my pain, and it will go away after July. All the same I want you to go on doing your best to lessen it", (adding after a while) "and I will do my best to increase it"! And of course the mandali could not help saying "We hope you win, Doctor!" If Baba allows him to "win" even to the extent of affording some percentage of relief, it will be because of Dr. Ginde's love and whole-hearted service, for the doctor realizes as we do that this pain is an outward reflection of His unseen burden. Baba has told the mandali more than once, "It is but the (yoke of) universal suffering round my neck" — and indeed, the surgical collar that He wears seems to us painfully symbolical of this fact. I am reading that tremendous book, "The Nazarene" by Sholem Asche, and was struck by the aptness of a passage in it that refers to the suffering of the Messiah: "He takes all sorrows on himself of his own will. It is within his choice to refuse to bear them, for all the power is in his hand. But he will not use it; he will bow his neck to the yoke, even as the Prophet has written of him". Thus spoke the disciples of Jesus Christ among themselves, even before His crucifixion on the cross. And we are reminded of Baba's own words to Dr. Harry Kenmore at Guruprasad last summer: "I carry the universal burden, and I suffer physically, mentally and spiritually. My physical suffering is seen by those around me. My mental suffering is intense, infinite. As for my spiritual suffering, it is ad infinitum. When I break my silence, it will be the end of suffering."

About the December sahas for His Western lovers, Baba wants me to say that it will take place. The details concerning dates, and the place where the sahas will be held (whether in Bombay or Ahmednagar) will be sent to you later from Meherazad. Beloved Baba also wants me to add that He was touched by the love that came from you all in the Birthday cables, and He sends His Love and Blessing to you each. The Birthday greetings from His little ones twinkled

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\* pronounced Ginday (the 'g' as in good).

brightest in the heavens of Baba's Love. A colour-splashed drawing by five year old Terry Hassan of California, seemed to capture His entire creation ranged round a central universal heart. Her mother's letter explained: "I asked Terry to draw a picture of all the things she thought Baba was. She did, and said 'Baba is more than the sun, stars, flowers, rainbow, but I can't draw them all.' Then she looked at me and said 'Baba is a HEART really!' She knows so much at 5 years, more than I do." It is not of course that we have so much to learn, but so much to unlearn before we can know Him with the clear vision of a child's love!

To the Meherazad family, Baba's Birthday was a day of simple rejoicing; but it could not be called a "quiet" day, for the echoes of the intense activities at Baba-Centres everywhere kept it vibrantly humming. As Eruch said in his letter to Maharani Shantadevi "The month of February has been a very busy month as usual, but this year the rush of cables, telegrams, phone-calls and letters received and answered, was too great and kept us breathlessly occupied. The Baba-birthday celebrations have been on a very, very grand scale at most of the Avatar Meher Baba Centres, while beloved Baba remained aloof from any celebration in the seclusion of Meherazad, bearing upon Himself the suffering of humanity." To give even an outline of all the different activities at all the different places that were launched in the Beloved's Cause, is not possible in the space of a letter. And, my problem in trying to report just this or that activity is similar to that of the Indian housewife whose kitchen shelf is stacked too high with cooking utensils — if she tries to take down a particular lid or vessel, the whole pile may topple on her! However, I can begin safely with the one nearest to us, by telling you of Begum Akhtar's unexpected visit with Baba at Meherazad on the Birthday morn. Part of the magnificent celebrations arranged by the Ahmednagar Centre, was a singing program by this great singer on 25th night. And on that morning she came to Meherazad and sang some special ghazals to Baba — it was her personal offering of love to Him which He called His "best birthday present"! Tired as she was after the long train journey, and the strenuous weeks of constant singing engagements at various places, Begum sang as superbly as ever. When Baba told her that her voice was matchless, she said "It is all your grace Baba, there is nothing else." Baba showed concern for her tired health and told her to take good rest that afternoon. Her tear-filled reply was "My rest is only at Your feet!"

Giving food and clothing and service to the needy in His compassionate Name has by now become an established feature of nearly all the Baba-Birthday programs. This year it was an occasion for the Masulipatam Centre (in Andhra Pradesh) to inaugurate the "Avatar Meherbaba Free Dispensary", its expenses and services being contributed by His lovers there. Sending His Love and Blessing for the opening of the dispensary, beloved Baba said "Feed Me and clothe Me and tend Me in the poor". The month-end report of the dispensary's running showed that over fifteen hundred men, women and children, were able to receive its medical service; and although this is but a mite compared to India's agonizingly needy masses, it is mighty in being an expression of Baba's Love, a channel of His blessing to the sick. The doctor in charge is a Baba-lover who gives his free time in serving at the dispensary, both mornings and evenings; and even the recent death of his wife did not keep him absent from his voluntary post. As the doctor explained, his staying away could not have pleased his wife, for it would have been a disservice to the Avatar's cause!

A great and novel idea was conceived and carried out by His Vijayawada lovers: an Exhibition depicting Baba's life and work, arranged in a

big hall in the centre of the city, open to the public. Sarosh & Viloo, conveyors of Baba's Love during their recent visit to Andhra State, spoke of it ecstatically. They said it was not just the accomplishment of the idea that they were impressed with, but the beautifully effected arrangement and artistic workmanship. Harmoniously grouped were series of pictures, photograph albums and portraits of beloved Baba showing different phases of His life and activities, as well as Baba-books and literature and enlarged replicas of the Charts appearing in "God Speaks". One section of the hall held perfect models of Meherabad Hill, the Tomb, Dhuni, and Mehersthan. Displayed among the many articles personally associated with Baba, were His used 'sadra' (white robe), coat, sandals, alphabet-board, cushion, the cricket bat and ball and the marbles He had played with. Large paintings showing Baba washing the leper, feeding the poor, and seated among His lovers, were cut out and arranged tableau-fashion, giving a startlingly realistic effect. Sarosh-Viloo said that everywhere they went in Vijayawada they were confronted with pictures of beloved Baba, appearing on huge posters printed in commemoration of His Birthday and put up at all the public places and thoroughfares. At the end of the detailed account of their unforgettable Andhra tour, Sarosh smilingly remarked that it would not be surprising if in time Andhra Pradesh came to be known as "Meher Pradesh"!

It is gratifying to see how those who steer the country's progress are being awakened more and more to beloved Baba and to the crying need for His message of Love and Truth. This year too, a number of leaders and distinguished people took part in celebrating Baba's Birthday on 25th February. Notes gathered from Eruch's file, give some idea of this:

In Delhi: Shri Subramaniam (Union Minister for Food and Agriculture), inaugurated the function; Shri Kamath, M.P., was the speaker; and Shri Humayun Kabir (Minister for Petroleum and Chemicals) presided. There were other speakers for the occasion, including Members of Parliament. The program was broadcast from AIR Delhi the same night.

In Bombay: The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Shri T. Bharde, presided at the grand function held in Sundrabai Hall from 6.0 to 9.0 p.m.

In Bangalore: Shri Vaikunta Balliga, the Speaker of Mysore, L.A., presided.

In Hyderabad: Barrister Das was specially invited from Calcutta to preside over the eminent gathering in which Shri M.R. Appa Rao, Minister for Excise, Prohibition and Social Welfare, played a very prominent part. The Chief Ministers of the states of Andhra and Mysore were to have presided over the functions in Hyderabad and Bangalore, but they had to attend an urgent conference at Delhi on the National Language.

Baba's Eastern lovers, wherever they were gathered in His Love on His Birthday, received from Him the following message:

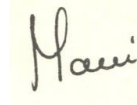
ALL TALK ABOUT THE PATH AND THE GOAL  
IS AS A LANTERN CARRIED BY A BLIND MAN.  
A BLIND MAN NEEDS A STAFF IN HIS HAND:  
THE SEEKER NEEDS HIS HAND IN GOD-MAN'S.

- MEHERBABA -

"I say unto you that he who believes in Me shall have everlasting life." This message from the Ancient One, who alone has the authority to give it to mankind throughout the ages, is resurrected again in the ancient land of Jerusalem. Rising from the dust-covered centuries of the past into the spring-fresh present, it has blossomed in a book in Hebrew entitled MEHER BABA SAYS. The first of its kind, this great little book is published in Jerusalem by Carrie Ben Shammai, one who has been blessed to carry the flame of Baba's Love into the heart of Israel. It contains a number of Baba's discourses, compiled and translated into Hebrew by her husband Mr. M.H. Ben Shammai, an eminent scholar who has translated a number of literary works. The cable from beloved Baba to dear Carrie, said: The book "Meher Baba Says" has made me very happy. I send my Love Blessing to you and to your husband and to all my lovers in Israel.

The approaching footsteps of May are heard and felt in the many movements around us, as preparations for the May Darshan are being speeded up. The compound of Guruprasad is a hive of workmen putting up poles and canvas for the darshan pandal (awning), working on the erection of the dais, planning the arrangement for thousands of chairs, for loudspeakers and other details. All available accommodation within practical distance of Guruprasad, appears to have been reserved by Baba-lovers from out-stations far in advance — hotels, inns, school premises, and 'karyalayas' (halls rented out for weddings and auspicious functions) which will serve as dormitories for hundreds of darshaners. By the end of March, Baba-lovers approaching hotel managers for room reservations, were told regretfully that they were fully booked up by "Meher Baba's party"! Two thousand of them, from various parts of India and from Pakistan, Iran and Aden, have been able to ensure for themselves some arrangement or the other for the stay in Poona; while efforts continue frantically to meet further requests pouring in. The lovers from Andhra and Hamirpur, coming in groups of hundreds, are working out their problem of mass-conveyance by reserving train-bogies and chartering buses. And perhaps by the time this letter reaches you, they will all have converged, from all points in the East, at the feet of The One who is the centre of their lives, whose Love is the sole reality of their existence. May they receive in full, the Love which the Beloved will give them through His silence.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the end of the signature line.

# *sixty-four/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 15th June 1965.

Dearest Family,

During Avataric ages all mankind and creation unconsciously derive the blessing of God's presence on earth as Avatar, but it remains the great good fortune of a few to receive it consciously. I recall beloved Baba's words: "I come for all, but I am for a few". Of the "few" who received the blessing of the Avatar's darshan at Poona in the first week of May, 1965, were thousands of His lovers from the East — from all over India, from Pakistan, Aden, Iran; as well as a young couple from Australia\* and "three wise men" from the U.S.A.\*\* who had Baba's special permission to attend this gathering of Easterners. They all came, these pilgrims journeying solely in love, from far and near, by land, sea and air, for a sight of their Beloved. They will surely remember May time as a time of gladness and madness in God's Love and glory — a time of that divine give-and-take which is the culmination of lifetimes of searching, the privilege of humans and the envy of angels, a gift of God's compassion and grace. Although our "giving" must comprise of the mountainous burden of sanskaras wrapped in a grain of human-measure love, it is an emptying which readies us for the "taking" of His Love that He releases on such occasions.

On 30th April, the night before May-Day when Baba was to give His darshan at the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, Poona had torrential rainfall accompanied by lightning and thunder that rent the night with its din. It was as though the skies were giving a roaring ovation before the curtain of May was lifted to a glorious dawn, which found Baba-lovers in their thousands flocking to the Centre grounds to await Baba's arrival. As the Centre's Hall could not accommodate more than some hundreds, every bit of the adjoining space was covered with 'pandals' wherein by 7 o'clock the darshaners stood packed in a solid crowd that tailed out over a furlong down the lane and along the main road. It was made up of men and women, young and old, of diverse castes, religions and languages, who cried out with one voice and heart: AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI! when the Beloved's car drove up at 8 o'clock. Baba was at the Centre for nearly four hours, so wondrously radiant and smiling; and although it was beyond possibility for more than a section of this massive Baba-crowd to approach Him for darshan, most of them were granted a glorious glimpse of Him from the balcony where they were accommodated in relays. The welcome address, read out by Ramakrishnan, the tireless worker and secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, was heartwarming simple. I give part of it here:

"Beloved of all hearts,  
Avatar Meher Baba,

What place is there in which to welcome the One Who is infinite existence, and what can serve as a seat for Him Who contains within Himself all Existence?

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\* Peter and Helen Rowan

\*\*Dr. Ben Hayman; Dr. Harry Kenmore; Joseph Harb

"However, in the light of your silent revelation we understand that it is through infinite compassion for mankind, that, responding to the call of human hearts you have clothed yourself in human form as our beloved Baba, so that we can offer God Himself a place and a seat amongst us.

"We welcome you, beloved Baba, not only to this place but also in our hearts, to be enthroned there eternally as our divine Beloved."

In reply, Baba gave the following message, thru Eruch:

"I am happy that in welcoming me to the Hall which in your love you have built for my work, you are welcoming me to a place in your lives and to a seat in each of your hearts. For it is to live in your hearts and to share in your lives that I have come among you."

A daily feast for the eye and heart were the five days of darshan programme held beneath the huge pandal built in the grounds of Guruprasad. Measuring about 300 by 75 feet, it held more than three thousand chairs. Over its gay canvas top was laid a tin roofing to cover the front half as precaution against the rains — an added labour and expense that proved not only unnecessary, but a challenge to the wielders of movie-cameras who did not have sufficient lighting equipment. It had been fascinating for us to watch the labourers erecting the pandal with the primitive facilities at their disposal, from putting up the heavy poles and fixing the endless bamboo framework, to draping billowing yards of materials dazzling with colour. The spot that would hold all the attention and love of the lovers gathered under it, was the softly draped arm-chair placed on the dais (up to its front edge) where Baba would sit every morning from 9 to 11, while each one came by for His darshan. As none was meant to come onto the dais, except our Maharani Shantadevi who was seated at His feet throughout the darshan hours, the surrounding space on the dais was banked with a most artistic arrangement of ferns and flowering shrubs; the two men who laboured in love to make this unique 'garden' had long waited for such an opportunity to serve Him.

By 6.30 in the morning of 2nd May, the first of the five days of darshan at Guruprasad, there was already quite a crowd of men and women and children standing outside the gates, chanting Baba-songs and crying out His JAI, growing in number every minute as more buses and taxis disgorged their occupants who had a date that morning with God. Before long the pavements were swarming with humanity, brimming over on to the road itself. When the gates were opened at 7.30, it was like the bursting of a dam — to see that tide of lovers pouring into Guruprasad was an unforgettable sight! In the movement of that first rapturous rush, some of the women who had been standing in the forefront, went down like nine-pins, and the wonder of it is that none of them was really hurt. When Baba heard of this, He ordered the gates to be left open, so that the darshaners could walk in as they came. And so we saw them hurrying in each darshan morning, a constant stream of lovers young and old, rich and poor, from ministers of state to the toiler in the field, their vocations and mode of dress as varied in range and expression as the notes of a musical composition.

There were those who walked with the support of a stick or helping hand, others who came at a brisk run or strode vigorously with cameras slung from their shoulders; and the children who hopped along in glee or walked solemnly with flower garlands held out ready for offering to Baba. Now we would see a boy on crutches walking with surprising speed, now a crippled young woman being wheeled in a chair; next in view would come a scattering of sadhus in ochre robes, men with venerable beards and turbans, women in saris of fascinating colours with youngsters of all ages trailing along. Many of the women carried babes in their arms, a number of them barely a month old! We were filled with wonder at the love and faith of these mothers who came from long distances with their little ones, braving nights and days of travel in the unbelievably crowded Indian trains. One young mother from the district of Hamirpur brought along her first-born, a 15 days old girl, because (she told us) she wanted to give her child the greatest thing there was on earth — Baba's darshan. Nearly 1500 lovers came from the state of Andhra; many of them by train in reserved tourist-carriages, some by bus. From Hamirpur, eight chartered buses brought part of the 700 coming from that district to Poona. Every village and town that these Baba-buses wound through, every city they crossed, every place they halted at, rang with the music of Baba's Name, echoed with the chorus of His JAI that cascaded from each passing bus. Bumping cheerfully along the hot dusty roads, the crammed occupants went on singing the May-Darshan song, a dynamic piece composed by one of them for this great occasion; it was also printed on leaflets which they distributed to the people in many towns on the way.

The longest journeying for this May-Darshan proved to be that of the lovers from Iran - eleven days from their starting-point (Shiraz and Teheran), travelling via train, crossing three frontiers and surmounting incredible obstacles on the way. Among this group of eight from Iran, were a young doctor and his lovely wife, a wiry looking man whose love for Baba flowed silently from his eyes, a strong peasant-featured woman who knelt at His feet and sobbed her heart out in love, a bonny youngster of about 4, and a tiny old woman whose withered face flowed with the sun of His Love every time she looked at Him or spoke to Him. And thus I could write on, touching individually on the many who were destined to be in His Presence at this lovers' gathering. For us who find ourselves in the ocean of His daily companionship, to witness the individual adoration of a multitude is to perceive some measure of the unfathomable depths of His Love.

Seated in His chair on the dais, wearing His white robe and a garland of flowers, Baba looked radiant throughout the long hours of darshan-time each day, His God-smile shining on the sea of lovers before Him. The gathering was obviously larger than the seating accommodation provided, for filling the seemingly endless rows of chairs it overflowed into the passageways outside the pandal, and (on the first day) trailed off to the gate in a long line of men who stood under the blazing sun patiently awaiting their turn. Beloved Baba's message for all, read out over the mike before the darshan started, was:

"All these years I used to embrace you, my lovers,  
and bow down to your love for me. Now I cannot embrace  
you, so I allow you to bow down to my Love for you."

Every one of them was given the opportunity to bow down to His Love that surpasses all understanding — His Love that gave no thought to what it cost His physical body which was racked with pain, and immensely fatigued after each darshan session. Because the lovers were many and the days were few, Baba gave of Himself for longer hours each morning and also for over an hour every afternoon. Even this seemed not enough, and on the third day Baba had Eruch announce over the mike that henceforth there would be no messages or announcements given, and no reciting of the Master's Prayer (which had so far been the first item every morning) — there would be no time for it! "There is but one threshold of the Beloved, and there are thousands of heads to bow down on it in obeisance" — this line from an Urdu ghazal by an ancient mystic might have been penned for this May-Darshan! All through the darshan-hours, men and women in alternate queues were seen endlessly passing by across the bamboo passageway, inching their way to the feet of the Beloved, thereon to lay their heads in love and obeisance. One by one they approached Him, and with upturned faces animated with the glow of His presence, stood before Him for a moment that embraced eternity. As each placed his or her head on His feet, along with the garlands and babies they had brought with them, some bathing His feet with tears and kisses, He acknowledged their love with folded hands held to His breast or touched to His forehead. It was a profound gesture that brought to life the symbol: Mastery in Servitude. Smiling His Love on some, bowing His head to others, now asking after someone's health or work, now caressing the face of a child held aloft to Him, He was Father, Friend and Beloved to all. Those seated in the backmost rows were unable to see Him clearly in His chair. Baba did not forget them. So that they could have a clearer glimpse of Him, He would now and then stand up with the support of the mandali, and remain standing for some moments with arm raised in greeting and blessing. Every time this happened, a wave of joyous exclamations swelled and swept across the packed pandal. The first time that Baba thus stood up, the congregation stood up as one man, till it was explained that this was for the benefit of the ones in the rear and so Baba wished them all to remain seated. Lord of His lovers and Slave of their love, Baba was equally available to all. Here before the Highest of the High there were no distinctions of 'high' or 'low', of caste or colour, religion or social status. All differences being drowned in the ocean of His Love, the sole status of one and all was that they were lovers of God.

On the morning of 6th May, after the Arti was sung, Baba left the stage (as the dais was referred to) amidst a tumult of love-cheers from the standing multitude. It was the last darshan program — or so we thought! Pretty soon it was plain that there were yet some hundreds hungering for their share, including teenagers who had been in the middle of their school or college exams during the six days — thus daily we found the verandah of Guruprasad jammed with darshan-seekers. Baba allowed three more days of grace, during which He gave darshan to groups of lovers crowded into the mandali's hall, mornings and afternoons. He gave a special afternoon to the "workers" and "volunteers" — those of the Poona Centre who had shouldered the unenviable task of seeing to the innumerable details involved in this gigantic Darshan arrangement, and others from different places who served as guides and helpers during the gatherings.

And so one and all received of His Love which had drawn them to Him from far and near. Beloved Baba's message to them, read out on the first day in the Guruprasad pandal, said:



"I am happy to see you all; I am touched that many of you have come from distant parts at no small sacrifice to be in my presence for a few hours.

"Devotees spend their lifetime savings and even risk life itself in pilgrimages to bow down before God in forms sanctified by tradition. And their rewards are according to tradition.

"But you have journeyed to bow down before God who has taken human form because of love. And your reward will be according to love."

And now our thoughts turn inevitably to the next memorable event that the year 1965 will give birth to: the Sahavas meant exclusively for Baba's Western lovers. Apart from saying that it will take place end of December (most likely beginning from the 23rd), and almost certainly in Ahmednagar, Baba has not yet specified the plans or details concerning it. The next letter coming to you by end of August will carry the general outline of the Sahavas plan, filled in with whatever instructions and directions He wishes conveyed to you dear ones in regard to it. We leave with beloved Baba for Meherazad on 1st July. As Baba wishes to remain absolutely undisturbed, He directs that letters (from the East or the West), whether addressed to Him or to those residing with Him, must not be read to Him. Accordingly, we will be unable to attend to any correspondence received for Baba's attention. However, in case of emergency, you may send a cable addressed directly to: MEHERBABA, AHMEDNAGAR. And, I'm sure you do not need my reminder that the cables must be accompanied by reply-prepaid forms.

We will have unpacked and settled down in the old Meherazad routine just in time to meet another 10th of July, the 40th anniversary of His Silence. Baba's wishes for all His lovers everywhere who will observe the Day, are being sent out in a Circular issued from the Ahmednagar Office by Adi. I reproduce it here for the attention of you each of His Western family:

On the 10th of July 1965, the 40th anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete Silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th of July to midnight of the 10th of July, in accordance with the local time.

Those who, for practical reasons, find that it is not possible to observe silence for the 24 hours on Saturday the 10th of July 1965 should instead observe complete fast for twelve hours on that day, from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. During this fast nothing must be consumed—not even water. Those who are fasting for the 12 hours on July 10th, should also observe partial fast in the morning from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. by taking only one cup of tea or coffee, before beginning their complete fast at 8.00 a.m.

Baba sends His Love Blessing to each one of His lovers for the Silence Day.

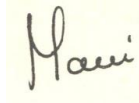
To wrap up this letter carrying beloved Baba's Love to you, there can be no material more substantial or beautiful than His message given to His lovers on May 3rd, 1965:

"This time of your being with me, I do not intend giving you a lot of words to exercise your minds. I want your minds to sleep so that your hearts may awaken to my love.

"You have had enough of words, I have had enough of words. It is not through words that I give what I have to give. In the silence of your perfect surrender, my love which is always silent can flow to you - to be yours always to keep and to share with those who seek me.

"When the Word of my Love breaks out of its silence and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that that is the Real Word you have been always longing to hear."

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Haei', is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the end of the signature line.

# *sixty-five/*

Meherazad, 3 August 1965.

Dearest Family,

JAI BABA to you from all at Meherazad.

We left Poona on the morning of 1st July, and after a non-stop drive reached here in excellent time. Even though the journey did not seem tiring for beloved Baba, the vibrations of the car (on stretches of road under repair) worsened the pain in His hip-joint considerably, and for days He was unable to put His weight on His feet. Now however, Baba tells us that the pain has lessened by 75%, and it rejoices our hearts to see Him move about the house at certain hours of the day, with the support of hand-crutches or just leaning on someone's arm. Nevertheless, His movements were confined to the house itself, upto the 1st of August when He resumed going over to the Mandali's hall as before. This one month's isolation within the seclusion of Meherazad could be outwardly construed as 'rest' for the sake of His health, but which more likely was for reasons of His work known alone to Him. Concerning the pain in His neck too, which was so agonizingly persistent before we left Poona, Baba tells us that it is now 50% better. And so, as Kitty Davy puts it, Baba was really speaking in our language when He stated that by the end of July His pain would be eased. We pray that the improvement keeps up in the following months as well! The Beloved says that if His health is to keep fit for the giving of His sahas\* to His Western lovers this December, He must remain undisturbed. I am bound therefore to remind you again of His wish that communication should be restricted only to cables sent in emergency and in reply to a cable received from Him.

The approaching Western Sahavas is given first place in our thoughts and energy. Hardly had we unpacked on our return from Poona, when Baba called Adi Sr. with Sarosh and Villoo (Khan Saheb Sarosh K. Irani and his charming wife Villoo) to Meherazad to discuss plans for the arrangements to be made by them in Ahmednagar for the 200 to 250 lovers coming from the U.S.A., Canada, England, Europe, Australia, Israel, Africa and other overseas countries for Baba's sahas. The bulk of this roughly calculated number will be made up by those coming from the U.S.A., most of whom are flying by a charter flight arrangement which was proposed by Dr. Harry Kenmore during his visit to Baba this May, and which is being speedily carried into effect by His approval and blessing. This charter flight from New York to Bombay and back offers a maximum of 142 seats at rates reduced to almost half the usual fare, and the fact that such an arrangement also enables as many as possible to travel together to India for the Sahavas has pleased Baba very much. It was heartwarming to hear from Harry of the immediate response to this charter flight plan, which in no time had the minimum quota of seats (132) booked and which by now appears to be stepping way over the maximum margin as well! Harry writes: "My dear Eruch, the wonderful response we've had to the arrangement should really do you all proud. There is a fever of intense anticipation and joy at this marvellous prospect of being with God for Christmas. This spontaneous avalanche of devotees yearning to be at home with their Beloved is a very heartening experience indeed, and I want to see them get there safely, cheaply, comfortably and quickly — if it be Baba's wish." As undoubtedly it

would be! Many who could not have otherwise afforded the trip are now able to make it with the low charter rates, earning and saving all they can while yearning and craving to be with the Beloved again. Delia deLeon from England writes after her recent visit to New York: "Particularly impressive was the fact that so many young people were being drawn closer to Baba — I was told of youngsters who were baby-sitting to earn the money for their fare."

Among the Western sahavasees coming in December will be a number of men and women who have not yet met Baba but are drawn very close to Him in the love He has awakened in their hearts thru His "old" lovers, and specially thru their work at the Baba-Booth in the New York World's Fair which has made it possible for a large number of people to hear about Baba who could not otherwise have had the chance. Our Kitty writes from Myrtle Beach: "Not a day goes by that some new and interesting person writes for further information which is usually the outcome of someone having casually come across the Universal Message in the Fair folder\*. So, apart from the actual Booth at the N.Y. Fair, the circumference of its influence has spread throughout the States." One devoted family, Barbara, Bob and Barry Fields of Wisconsin (U.S.A.) first heard of Baba thru Ruth Ringer at the N.Y. World's Fair. Eager that others in their State should have the good fortune to be awakened to His Love as they had, they have procured space for a Baba-booth at the Wisconsin State Fair which opens this month! And so the Beloved's message is passed on, form heart to heart .....

For the Western Sahavas in December 1965, Baba has decided on Ahmednagar — a town about 200 miles from Bombay, and 9 miles from Meherazad. The lovers will be housed and accommodated in Ahmednagar proper, and buses will be arranged for their travelling daily to Meherazad to be with beloved Baba from 9 in the morning to 12 noon. The actual sahavas will thus be held at Meherazad, for three hours daily, for seven days only — from the 23rd to the 29th of December. However, Baba would like all the Western sahavasees to leave Bombay together on the 21st and reach Ahmednagar by the same evening — Adi-Sarosh will make this travelling arrangement for the party by train (in first-class compartments) or by luxury buses. This will give them the whole of the 22nd to settle down in their allotted lodgings at Ahmednagar and have some respite after their long journey to be refreshed and ready for their first visit to the Beloved on 23rd morning. There can be no place more desirable to His lovers for having Baba's sahavas than Meherazad, which has been His abode since 1948. Set in a rural landscape it is an "oasis" in the midst of nowhere, conveying a unique atmosphere of peace; a place where Baba has been in Seclusion for long periods — a place blessed most with the physical presence of God.

The two outstanding problems to be faced in order to make the Sahavas project in Ahmednagar possible, are accommodation and water. Unless the rains come in generous abundance to this water-scarce town, the problem of water supply for the Sahavasees' stay will be more than an acute one. As for accommodation, there is not a single hotel in Ahmednagar that could be even remotely suitable for any Westerner to put up at; (one can go further and say there are no "hotels" for Easterners either!). During discussions of these and various other points with Adi-Sarosh-Villoo, they very understandably remarked that the question of rains was not in their hands! Baba smilingly replied "I will see to that; you see to the accommodation." Ideal for the purpose of accommodation would be, if available, a newly erected one-storeyed building affiliated to the government run Civil Hospital in Ahmednagar, partly to serve

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\* now printed also in French, Spanish and German, made possible by Ruth Ringer for free distribution at the Fair.

as living quarters for the nurses and partly as a future out-patients hospital unit. This big building alone would house about 200 Baba-lovers, and utmost efforts are being made to obtain it for the duration required. Sarosh-Adi have approached top government officials at Bombay and elsewhere in this matter, and are also working on alternative lodging suggestions in case this approach fails. But whichever it turns out to be, although the matter of bare housing is the main and foremost to be dealt with, there is an incredible amount of preparations to follow up in the providing of essential facilities: furnishing the place; procuring linen, servants, sundry provisions; arranging with some good caterers from Poona who can supply meals cooked Western fashion and at reasonable rates. But these of course are simply details which will be managed speedily and happily once the housing question is settled. However, as Viloo says, it means starting from scratch to "create" the equivalent of decent hotels that are simply non-existent in Ahmednagar! And this naturally adds up to the bill of expenses that will be incurred. After careful calculation it is proposed, and approved by the Beloved, to fix a~ amount of Rs. 500/-\* per person for the full ten days, from 21st thru 30th December - i.e. from the time you dear ones arrive at Bombay on 21st morning till you reach Bombay airport on 30th evening. This amount to be met by you (of Rs. 50/- per day) will include all expenses of your boarding and lodging at Ahmednagar, transport from Bombay to Ahmednagar and back to Bombay, daily transport from Ahmednagar to Meherazad, and also food arrangement at Poona enroute Ahmednagar and Bombay on 21st and 30th. In short, Sarosh-Adi will take charge of the Sahavas party and see to all arrangements from 21st morning till you reach Bombay on 30th evening - a total of 10 days. Please note that for His little lovers attending the December Sahavas, i.e. children of 12 years and under, the rate is fixed at half the amount mentioned above.

To meet the official requirements in the conducting of the project, the "Meher Baba Western Sahavas (December 1965) Reception Committee" has been formed. The Hon. Mr. T.S. Bharde, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislature, will serve as chairman; Khan Saheb Sarosh K. Irani as vice-chairman; Mrs. Viloo S. Irani as treasurer; Mr. Adi K. Irani as secretary; and Mr. K.G. Gune, Mr. K.R. Gajwani and Mr. S.R. Siganporia as members.

Here are some important points for your further attention:-

- 1) This December Western Sahavas is for Baba-lovers only — i.e. for those who are prompted by love for Baba to come to India for His sahavas. It is not meant for the merely interested or curious, who may be accommodating the Sahavas week in their plan to visit India for sightseeing or for the purpose of meeting "saints and masters".
- 2) Several Baba-lovers have asked if they can bring their children with them. Children of about 2 years and over, who can walk about independently, are permitted.
- 3) All those coming are expected to stay for the full period of the Sahavas of seven days.
- 4) Only those who can afford to make the trip, without risking health or job, should do so.
- 5) Baba wants you not to bring gifts for Him or for any of His people.

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NOTE: \*Approximate equivalent of Rs. 500: \$106.00; £ (Ster.) 38/-; £ (Aust.) 47/-.

- 6) Baba wants you dear ones to note carefully, that He wishes all financial dealings for and during your stay in India to be done strictly and legally through the medium of the bank.
- 7) December is one of our winter months, even though the winter in Ahmednagar is often too short or mild for our liking. Although the temperature drops to a marked degree after sunset, it can be quite warm during the midday hours. For your wardrobe I would therefore suggest light clothing but with sufficient woollen accessories (such as jacket, pull-over, stole etc.) which can be conveniently removed during the warm and sunny hours. And, as it can possibly be too sunny, a hat or sunshade is a necessary item.
- 8) Baba lays no restriction in the matter of food during your visit, whether it be non-vegetarian or otherwise.
- 9) You will be supplied (along with all the necessary linen) one blanket each. As this would not suffice when the nights are cold, you are requested to bring one blanket (or rug) with you for your use.
- 10) Ahmednagar does have electricity (although Meherazad has not). However, please include a flashlight (torch) in your luggage. Regarding any electrical equipment you may bring with you for use in Ahmednagar (such as shavers etc.) note that the voltage applicable is 220 - 230 Volts A.C.

Adi-Sarosh-Villoo need to know as early as possible the number of Baba-lovers who will be coming for the Western Sahavas in December. Those of you who have made your booking or are definitely planning to come, please fill in the form given at the end of this letter, and post it by Air to: Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar (M.S.), India.

ATTENTION U.S.A.: It is Baba's wish that those coming by the N.Y. Charter flight, should send their filled-in forms to Harry (Dr. Harry Kenmore, 121 West 72nd St., New York 23, N.Y.), and he will send them on to Adi in one lot.

The passing away of Charles B. Purdom, one of Baba's earliest followers in England, is a sad loss to the English Group, to His own family and to all of the Baba-family who had come to know him. He died on the 8th of July, from a heart attack following an operation for a gall-bladder ailment that he suffered from for some time. When the news reached us through Mollie Eve, beloved Baba sent the following message by cable:

MY DEAR CHARLES IS WITH ME AND HE IS BLESSED IN MY ETERNAL LOVE.  
 MY LOVE TO ANTONIA AND TO YOU ALL WHO SHARED WITH CHARLES HIS  
 SERVICE IN MY CAUSE.

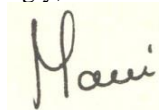
Dear Charles leaves behind him the finest memorial any man could have, in the form of his literary works for Baba, among them "The Perfect Master", "Man To God and God To Man", and "The God-Man" recently published. The amount of energy and love that he put into this last book can only be known to Baba, and perhaps to the few who knew him intimately. On the completion of the book Baba sent Charles Purdom a cable saying THE LOVE YOU HAVE PUT INTO WRITING GODMAN HAS MADE ME VERY HAPPY. And Delia deLeon writes: "Charles gave of himself unstintingly

in his work for Baba; and in spite of ill health these last few years he was determined to get The God-Man written — and in doing it, he drew so much closer to Baba and clearer in his understanding. We miss him sorely and are sad for ourselves, but rejoice because he is with BABA."

The departing of a dear pet is a heartache known well to the family it belongs to. Such heartache was experienced by the Meherazad family when Peter (the cocker spaniel), our beloved companion of over twelve years, died at Meherazad on July 8 after an incurable illness. Peter breathed his last in beloved Baba's presence, in His bedroom. A few minutes before the end, he feebly wagged his tail in happiness as Baba caressed him. Peter lay "in state" in Baba's room, till the pit was made ready for his burial in line with the seven mango trees of the Madras Mast. Baba had His handkerchief placed on Peter's body with the repeated injunction that it be buried with him exactly as it was. Beloved Baba told us how immeasurably blessed Peter was, for it was the first instance in His present Advent that anyone had thus breathed his last in His physical presence! Baba said that Peter will now take birth in a male human form, in just over a year, and will come to Him as a baby boy to be held in His arms and be cuddled by Him. Knowing all this, yet he is greatly missed by us and by his much loved pal and 'brother' Mastan. Baba says that even He, who is God and knows how truly blessed Peter is, misses Peter's presence as 'Peter'. Every day when we are with Baba, we find ourselves talking of this loyal little Baba-lover and are flooded with reminiscences of his gentle loving companionship, his clever playful pranks, his incredibly 'human' understanding, and above all his devotion to Baba. In his fragrant memory a Champak tree has been planted on his grave, and Baba has ordered a headstone to be placed bearing the words: BABA'S PET, PETER. This epitaph of three words bespeaks Peter's great good fortune in his dog-life with Baba and in the human-lives to come. The most priceless tribute he received from his Master, was when Baba said: "Peter deserves the good fortune that he has received."

Unless there is urgent news or directions to be conveyed to you dear ones regarding the Sahavas, I expect to send out the next letter in October. And may that letter be destined to carry the good news of further improvement in beloved Baba's health, of abundant rains having come to Ahmednagar, and of suitable accommodation obtained for the Westerners' Week with God.

Ever lovingly,



IMPORTANT: PLEASE SEE THE FORM GIVEN ON NEXT PAGE

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If you are coming to India for the MEHER BABA WESTERN SAHAVAS (December 1965),  
please fill in this slip and post it by airmail to:  
Adi K. Irani, King's Rd., Ahmednagar (M.S.) India.

If coming by the New York Charter flight, please send this to:  
Dr. Harry Kenmore, 121 West 72nd St., New York 23, N.Y.

NAME (in block letters) .....

ADDRESS, including Country (in block letters) .....

.....

Age ..... Nationality .....

Mode of Travel .....

Vegetarian food by special arrangement: YES? / NO?

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# *sixty-six/*

Meherazad, 8th September 1965.

Dearest Family,

On the 4th of September, beloved Baba sent the following cable for all His Western lovers, to Harry Kenmore, Elizabeth Patterson, Ivy Duce (U.S.A.) to Delia de Leon (England), to William Lepage and Denis OBrien (Australia), and to Adi Arjani (Pakistan):

INFORM ALL CONCERNED AT YOUR END I HAVE  
CANCELLED DECEMBER SAHAVAS STOP I KNOW HOW  
DISAPPOINTED MY LOVERS WILL BE BUT I ALSO  
KNOW MY LOVERS WILL ACCEPT MY DECISION  
WITH COMPLETE RESIGNATION TO MY WILL STOP  
WHAT I HAVE DECIDED IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
MY HEAVY BURDEN OF UNIVERSAL WORK AND  
SUFFERING AND IS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL STOP  
SOMETIME SOMEWHERE SOMEHOW I WILL MEET  
MY OLD AND NEW WESTERN LOVERS BEFORE I  
BREAK MY SILENCE MY LOVE AND BLESSING TO  
ALL MY LOVERS STOP CABLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

-MEHERBABA -

On the morning of the 4th September, seated in His armchair in the Mandali's hall, Baba declared to those present His decision to cancel the Western Sahavas that He had planned to hold at Meherazad from 23rd to 29th December 1965. There was a look of infinite fatigue and sorrow in His eyes as He announced this. Baba said (in gestures interpreted by Eruch): "The world situation is very bad, and growing worse daily. The pressure of my universal work is affecting my health tremendously, and the pain in my neck is beyond limit. It is the universal Cross that I bear. I have decided to cancel the Western Sahavas which was to be held this December. I do not in the least like cancelling the Sahavas, but I have to. I know what I am doing." He added, "Sometime, somewhere, somehow, I will meet my old and new Western lovers before I break my Silence."

Turning to Francis, Baba asked "Will this cancellation affect or lessen the love of my Western lovers?" With hardly any hesitation Francis replied

"I don't think so Baba. It would be a queer kind of love if it did". Adi's reply when Baba asked him was "They will of course be tremendously disappointed, but it is certain that they will accept your Will without question or doubt." Baba looked pleased at this, and said "I want no disturbance till November 1967. There will therefore NOT be any darshan for Easterners either before that time."

At the conclusion of that momentous morning's meeting, Baba gave a little anecdote which seemed amazingly appropriate to the unexpressed thought of some of us on the matter of this Cancellation. Baba said: "There was a Perfect Master who used to continually postpone the giving of God-realization to a disciple of his, always promising that he would definitely give it on such and such a day. At last the disciple got upset and said 'You who know everything O Master, why cannot you know the definite date of giving me God-realization?' And the Master replied 'The Perfect Master knows everything; He also knows Nothing; and he appears as if He does not know anything!'"

And this brought to my mind the Beloved's words uttered in a previous Avataric form to a dear disciple:

Not comprehending Me in my true Self;  
Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,  
Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,  
I am not seen by all; I am not known —  
Unborn and changeless — to the idle world.  
But I Arjuna! know all things which were,  
And all which are, and all which are to be,  
Albeit not one among them knoweth Me!

Baba kept the Sahavas machinery in motion everywhere until the announcement, and the Ahmednagar office was humming with the mounting momentum of work. The stage seemed all set for the first act of December's divine drama: The forms came — filled in with names of those who planned to attend from the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, England, France, Switzerland, Israel, Africa, Lebanon, Pakistan. The rains came — so that Ahmednagar, Meherazad and Meherabad have had enough rainfall to solve the acute water problem till next summer. And the official government sanction came, for occupation of the new hospital-unit building in Ahmednagar — Adi managed this most essential and difficult task with incredible perseverance and tact. But, as Baba's work includes both action and inaction, perhaps the most difficult part was destined for poor Sarosh who was laid up for weeks in a hospital in Bombay after a major operation, while champing at the bit to be back home and at work for the Sahavas. Soon after the cancellation was announced, we heard from Viloo that Sarosh is well enough to be able to return to Ahmednagar!

For us at Meherazad, beloved Baba's decision to cancel the Sahavas was not utterly unexpected. We felt the first breath of such a possibility when Baba had a cable sent to Dr. Harry Kenmore in August, telling him not to make any payment to Air India International Airways (as deposit for the Charter Flight agreement) without obtaining previous permission from Him. This was followed by a personal letter from Eruch, hinting that although it seemed improbable it was not impossible that Baba would yet cancel the Sahavas! Harry's reply to this was typical of him, and we had no doubt that it echoed the feelings of all His Western lovers. Harry said in his letter that there was an overflow of 48 Baba-lovers (in addition to the former charter flight capacity), bringing the total load to 190! He wrote: "The tension of expectancy and anticipation is

mounting daily. Oh, how all concerned are aching to go to Baba in December! Confirmations are pouring in and we have 182 signed up with money on the line. The whole endeavor has gone relatively smoothly .... You know Eruch, some people get more fun out of preparing for a picnic than they do on picnic day. But in this case it will be no picnic for those who are told it's all off!! ... But be assured without equivocation that Baba's wish and will in this matter, as in any matter in which He is concerned, will always be observed as He directs. On that you can bet your last pice! Nobody ain't gonna get nothin', not even nothin', unless the BOSS says so! For He am de General, de engineer, de major domo what runs this show jes' like all de other shows! What He decides is for our own best good. So let His will be done!!!" After the cancellation, Baba cabled Harry the following message:

I HAVE CANCELLED DECEMBER SAHAVAS I WANT YOU NOT TO FEEL  
DISAPPOINTED OR DISTURBED FOR I KNOW WHAT I AM DOING  
I ALSO KNOW HOW YOU AND ANNAROSA HAVE LABOURED AND  
DONE YOUR UTMOST TO MAKE POSSIBLE FOR LARGE NUMBER OF  
MY LOVERS TO SEE ME I AM VERY PLEASED AND PROUD OF YOU  
REMAIN HAPPILY RESIGNED TO MY WILL AND PLEASURE

It is the "doing one's utmost" as directed by Baba that really counts. As I had cause to write to a Baba-lover recently concerning a project dedicated in Baba's Love: "The result of any work we do in Baba's Cause is not measured by any achievement on our part, but by all that we have put of ourselves into the doing of it. Having worked hard and done our best at whatever we set out to do in His Love, the result will be as He wills it and would want it. Whereas we aim to achieve the one result we have worked on, He uses every step of our endeavour for manifold results through the actions and reactions that follow and are churned up." In the pattern unfolded by this cancellation, or the 'making and unmaking' of a plan proposed by the Beloved, we experience a warm familiarity. It is yet another instance where literally "God proposes and God disposes", and we know that nothing that is directed by Him is ever lost or wasted. We who have witnessed over the years the wondrous and manifold ways of Baba's working through the littlest thing set in motion by Him, feel no doubt that all the combined energy given out by each who laboured towards the December Sahavas, all the concentration centred on Baba in the planning of it, has been used by Him for His work. Our hearts humbly accept His decision, even though our minds cannot comprehend. But hasn't Baba said: "Do not try to understand me, for my depth is unfathomable. Just love me."!

And the calibre of His Western lovers' love for Him was most heartwarmingly felt in the answers received to Baba's cables sent out on 4th September. Beloved Baba was touched and pleased with these responses, and directs me to write to you His dear Western family, that:

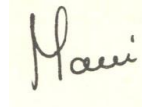
BABA WISHES EACH OF HIS WESTERN LOVERS,  
OLD AND NEW, YOUNG AND OLD, MEN WOMEN AND  
CHILDREN, TO WRITE ONE LETTER DIRECT TO HIM. \*

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\* Please note however, that none should expect a reply!  
Also, be sure to send your letter by Air.

Baba sends His Love and Blessing to you each.

ever lovingly,

A small, rectangular yellow sticky note with the word "Maui" written in a cursive, handwritten style in black ink.

# *sixty-seven/*

Meherazad 22nd November 1965.  
(date of posting)

Dearest Family,

This is begun on a Sunday morning, the music of the typewriter keys mingling with the choir of bird-song. Actually Sunday at Meherazad is little different from any other day of the week, except that all the clocks are wound, one can catch up with more work left over from the week, and the Sunday paper will have its page of comics and crossword that some of us enjoy. Time runs so fast it appears to stand still. It seems but 'yesterday' that the last letter was posted to you, with Baba's announcement of the December Sahavas cancellation. And yet much has happened in between, and much has not happened.

What has not happened is improvement in beloved Baba's pain. But then we think, could we really expect it when we know it is from the burden of His universal work. As one of the mandali remarked "It would seem that the universe has literally become a 'pain in the neck' for Him!" Some months ago, when Baba would sit up for long hours during the day without a break, we would plead with Him to rest His body more by lying down in bed to ease the neck condition as advised by our Dr. Ginde. Well, we asked for it. Now it makes us unhappy to see Him have to lie down for a number of hours, as sitting up for more than short stretches at a time aggravates the pain. Our prayer to God-Baba to help Baba-God in His self ordained suffering, could not be better expressed than in the words of a Baba-lover from Australia, a doctor. He wrote to Baba: "If an ordinary person like myself could express a wish affecting you, it would be that the time may not be far distant when you can partake more of the 'bliss' and less of the 'suffering' of Avatarhood."

Another thing that has not happened is rain. Since my last report of the rainfall, all we have had is occasional clouds — herds of clouds galloping across the sky with the wind in full chase. What had seemed a glorious beginning, turned out to be the sum total of the monsoon! The fields are turning out a scanty return for all the grains and work the farmers put into them in hopes of a bumper crop. Moreover, we've had one of the hottest Octobers we can remember, with the scorching sun rays sucking up what little moisture the earth might have retained from the early showers. Often of an evening, our old mehetrani (sweeper woman) would sing, in a voice having far more volume than tone, her rain-song: "Allah mia, give us rain; the cattle are hungry, the fields are dry; give rain O Protector of All." I can't help wondering how many of those whose livelihood is eked from the soil, have the patience, faith and courage to say "Thy Will be done"! To top it all, it seemed to us this year that the mosquitoes, ants, flies and midges were having a 'population explosion' too!

The tragedy of war has been brought closer home to us thru the violent outbreak over Kashmir. It has also proved the strength that lies in unity — and that such unity, alas, is achieved not in days of peace but in times of danger. Like family members who bicker amongst themselves and complain over the endless daily hardships but stand together when their home is attacked, the multi-racial multi-lingual and multi-religious inhabitants of India rose as one family to fight for their principles and land.

In this paradoxical age of "too much" and "never enough", the loudest cry is for peace, the greatest movement towards wars: war against countries, peaceful and otherwise; war against poverty and affluence, against hunger and obesity, disease and drug addiction, illiteracy and the abuse of science; crime and injustice; the ever-rising cost of living and dying; against death and the tidal wave of population; and above all war against War. How ironical it is that we must for ever fight to have peace. I'm reminded of the joke I read to beloved Baba the other day of the man from Texas who arrived at a small town and loudly announced over a drink at the bar: "I aim to have peace and quiet, even if I have to shoot everybody in town in order to get it"!

To view the world through the daily papers is like window-gazing into a store crammed with chaos, where greed and fear, hate and passions, are free for the taking; where there is never a shortage of floods, famines, earthquakes, wars and disasters of every kind; where Love and Truth are dusty commodities not easy of access, for few customers care to give the price for them. But there is hope and salvation too, for God has incarnated again to save us from ourselves. One can imagine these intermittent disturbances all over the world as being clouds of dust that rise up and choke us when God's broom is applied to the layers of darkness and ignorance of spirit, which must be swept off before we can realize His promise of "Peace on earth and goodwill among men". We dare not think of the final universal sweep-up that must come before He is revealed to all humanity!!! And in His divine compassion He must suffer with us and for us, knowing what a painful process this is for His children who cannot learn the easy way, who frantically strive for all manner of 'independence' without dependence on God. We read in a U.S.A. magazine, a prayer that says: "We have the conceit of strength; the arrogance of money; the vanity of knowledge; but none of these shall save us as they saved not the mighty empires of the past. Only a Man shall save us even as we have been saved before."

A great lover of Baba in Andhra, Koduri Krishna Rao, who erected "Mehersthan" (the Abode of Meher) on the banks of the river Godaveri in Kovvur, has come to his true abode in Baba. Koduri Krishna Rao passed away on 11th November from a heart attack. A fine distinguished person, undemonstrative and gentle by nature, he was one of the fortunate few whose very life was Baba's message of Love and Truth. MEHERSTHAN is the living monument of his silent love for his beloved Master — and he had his reward "according to love", as we can see from the personal message sent by beloved Baba to Krishnarao's wife and family who are wholly devoted to Baba:

"Your husband Koduri Krishnarao's love for Me and his service in the cause of the Avatar have made him immortal. Krishnarao now lives eternally in Me and is blissfully happy. I want you to be brave and to keep happy in Krishnarao's happiness. My Love Blessing to you and your dear children."

And His message to His Lovers in Andhra:

KODURI KRISHNARAO WAS ONE OF MY DEAREST LOVERS AND HAS COME  
TO REST ETERNALLY IN ME

- MEHERBABA -

The direct letters to Baba from you, his devoted Westerners, have wound their way from all parts of the world to flow into the Ocean of His heart. Beloved Baba placed a hand on His heart while indicating this message from Him to you:

"I am deeply touched by your love for me and your complete resignation to my will. You have made me happy. I give my Love and blessing to you each, my own."

Each letter is read out to Baba in full, and the enclosures (photographs or drawings) seen by Him. The letters were begun to be read out from 6th October, as wished by Him — a few every morning. They came from His lovers 'old' and 'new', from men, women and children of different ages, nationalities, religions and vocations in life — they came from His own. The little ones often chose crayons in shaping their offering to Baba — wild chicken-tracks or splashes of colour and the words laboriously scribbled: I LOVE BABA. Or drawings of their cat, dog, house, bird, of themselves, their mummy, daddy — all the things dear to them, to be shared with Him they love. Other children chose prose and poetry, their simple acceptance of Baba mirrored in every line, as is the moon in a clear pool of water. One five year old writes:

Dear Baba I love you very much. I wish I could see you. You are the best.

Another girl writes:

We went to see you in 1956 — I remember that very well. I was about 3 then. My brother and I sat on each knee and you gave us some fruit. I remember that as though it was yesterday. I remember I used to say your name until I fell asleep. Mommy said it was just like praying.

And this is what her twin brother had to say:

Thank you for granting all my prayers and thank you for all the things you have sent me through out the years. My Mother told me that you are all around us. I still remember the time I saw you in New York City and you gave me some grapes and kissed me and my sister on our head. Dear Baba why are there not signs of you around us? Lot of children ask me who is that a picture of and I say that picture is of the Great Man who lives in India named Meher Baba and they don't believe me because they can't see you or feel you. Now I ask you!

Another youngster writes:

Last Saturday I played in my first cricket match this season. I was a bit nervous when batting at first but I said 'Baba' to myself as the bowler commenced his run, then as he was about to deliver the ball I reminded myself to 'watch the ball'. After the first half hour I was all muddled up and was saying "Baba, watch the ball" and "Baba, keep your eye on the ball". I tried to imagine You were sitting watching the game and so I must play brightly. I was eventually run out, I must have forgotten to say "Baba" before starting to run!

A 4½ year old boy says:

I am next to Baba and Baba is next to me and loves me.

From a 9 year old girl comes:

Last time Uncle Reg was here we built a birds tray outside our window... Five Noisy Miners, two Butcher Birds and two Magpies come to feed. We say BABA! to all the birds ... I have written a poem for You:

Baba's face is a pearl  
Baba's eyes are sapphires  
Baba's lips are rubies' red  
I kiss those lips before I go to bed.

Words are like lanterns, meaningless and cluttering up space — until they are lighted. The words that came wrapped in these hundreds of letters to the Beloved from His Western lovers were gloriously alight with the flame of His Love, bathing us around Him in the glow of Baba's beauty reflected from them! They were indeed not "letters" — they were a prayer, a song, a longing, a cry, a thankfulness, a pledge, a confession, a personal chat with God, an outpouring, a sahas. Nearly every letter was simply an opening of the innermost door of the heart where He abides, and where perhaps the writer himself has dared not enter except to kneel before Him in love and gratitude. Like some stirring piece of music or song that haunts you long after you've heard it, snatches of these letters keep coming back to us through the day. I feel that to reproduce some of them here would not be violating the sacred privacy of these communications to the Divine Beloved, but rather the singing together of His Love, His "Arti". My problem is how to limit it to just a few of them. When at first I planned to give passages from selected letters, I didn't realize I would wind up by selecting from almost every letter! — but then they were most of them so utterly beautiful. To try to quote from them all would be a task as crazy as trying to cram an ocean into a tea cup! So, with Baba's permission, I give here passages from a few, that carry the thoughts and feelings expressed in the other letters to Baba from His Western lovers.

#### FROM AMONG THE MEN, THIS IS WHAT WAS WRITTEN BY

A distinguished writer and journalist:

Beloved Baba, you have told us that we may write one letter to you. This is a privilege we accept with joy, and we know that you will have your own way of sending us an answer ... None of us knows what your work on earth is, but we all understand that it is done for us at infinite cost in suffering on your part. So we send you our gratitude and love, which is only a reflection of your love for us, and we hope to see you in bodily form when you give the word.

A college boy:

Oh Baba, it is my prayer to live a life in your love as You would have me do and become a better individual for You. I cannot plead ignorance Baba, I know how I should live, for You have been explicit in your wishes. You must know how much I love you Baba, and that You are my life, so I know You will help me.

One who works in an Oil Company:

Oh Beloved Baba, the longing in our hearts — our love for you — can only be satisfied by your love for us. So fill us with your love Beloved Baba,



fill us full. Let us be so full of your Divine Love that it will flow from us into the lives of others.

A composer:

I am very thankful that you love me. With or without the December Sahavas I love you more than all other things ....

A boy in his teens:

Thank you for all the wonderful blessings You have given me. My heart seems to swell and tears of joy fall when I think of all the love You radiate. In words I cannot say what You already know I feel. You have said that it is Your Will for You to suffer dear Baba. Yet I wish the world would lighten Your heavy burden. Your suffering is a great monument to Your great love for us. Father you are kind, even as You suffer and work universally, to listen to all our words which are empty and small ... You as the Master make our lives more meaningful in every way. How many times have Your Westerners said "What would life be without Baba!!" The answer is unthinkable and only in nightmares do we ever dream it!

An interior decorator:

We would be rudderless without Your constant love and presence. Thank you for Your many blessings, Baba.

A surgeon:

My deepest love and devotion to You, Baba, and my heartfelt thanks to You for your love and for being the Rock on which I can make order out of chaos and purpose out of an otherwise purposeless world.

An industrial personnel consultant:

You are infinite Compassion, with You in mind and heart everything is possible; and nothing, except Your presence, is important. There is nothing to do except what You wish and what will please You. Whatever You decide is best. I would do anything for You, not just because I believe You are God, but because You are You, Love itself, infinite Suffering and infinite Compassion, for me, for us all, absolutely beautiful and true through and through. You have shown us love. You have shown us truth; You have given us so much, You have suffered for us Your children, constantly; been infinitely patient and loving in awakening us to what You would have us realize.

A young man in the publishing department:

.... hungrily I awaited another glimpse of Your divine Form, the effulgent warmth of Your ageless smile and most of all Your gentle Touch ... I know in my heart that you are the only reality, and my want is to obey and love You completely.

A retired electronics designer, who has taken up sculpturing Baba:

I am slowly proceeding with sculpture and sometimes in my imagination You are with me, Baba, in the image in front of me, and it is as though You play

games with me, perhaps saying "See? Am I not being very helpful?" If I say "No Baba", You look incredibly astonished, and say (with a twinkle) "No? How can this be?" ... Then sometimes Baba, by Your Love, and in spite of my ineptness, a little gleam, the smallest reflection of Your infinite beauty will appear like a miracle, and I am in tears before You. So that despair at my inadequacy is tempered by the knowledge that by Your grace anything is possible and that the result is according to Your will; and it is often banished by indescribable felicity in the endeavour to shape Your lovely hands and feet, Baba, and I think in Francis' simple words "How beautiful You are!"

A ballet dancer:

After much searching I finally heard of you through some dancer friends and Miss Craske. When we were allowed to come to Myrtle Beach in 1958 to be with you, how I wanted to love you; but when you were there I never had time to think about it ... The day you left and waved to us from the plane, I knew you were leaving but would always remain a part of me. How I would have loved a burst of glory at my discovery, but it was so simple as though it was something I knew already and had just forgotten.

One formerly associated with the author of 'In Search of Secret India':

The awakening that You have already implanted in me is Your gift for which I am, though unworthy, utterly grateful. And because I accept You as Lord God, dear Baba, it is this unworthiness which helped me to drown my disappointment over the cancellation of the December Sahavas. For who am I, a newcomer already invited once in Your Beautiful Presence, to enjoy a repetition of such an experience only three years later? Woe to me that my ignorance is already Your present pain and burden! .... We are not really denied Your sahavas for You have now permitted us to enjoy it through the different medium of writing to You, and for that we thank You. May an ever-widening circle of lovers enjoy Your sahavas in whatever form You may choose to bestow in the future. And may Your Love and Your compassion inspire us towards the only experience worth while — to settle as dust at Your Beloved Feet.

A doctor, who has not yet been in Baba's physical presence:

Oh Baba! how I need your wonderful healing Love. How I appreciate that I am being used as a channel for your love and healing and pray that I may become a clear channel until only You flow thru me and I no longer exist ... Help me my Father to love you more and more, that I may really live your message of Love and Truth. We (my wife and I) look forward to the day when we shall see you face to face and the day when we are fit to serve you properly. I am so happy that you have allowed me to know that once more You are here in physical form.

One who ran a gift-shop:

At last one can write these words knowing that they are really going to You after all these years; but now that the privilege is granted, I have no words to say — except to repeat Your name — Baba, Baba, Baba, Baba! Questions, words, requests? All are meaningless — only BABA counts.

A young man studying the sonar system to help the blind:

You who are closest to all, eternal companion, who are God on earth, the source of all light and truth, the only reality ... You who are my true self ... May I be open to Your Silent Voice, undistracted by the illusions which hide Your Supreme Reality. Awaken me to Your Constant Presence, to Your Divine Love which has no end. Awaken my eyes to see You in every person, in every form in all creation. Awaken my ears to Your Voice in every sound. Awaken my heart and mind, Beloved, to know that You are here!

A doctor, who has been with Baba a number of times:

It is enough to know that You are "the Kingdom, the Glory and the Power forevermore". And it matters not where or how one exists as long as it is in the knowing that You are Existence Itself! For, because You exist I exist ... Nothing exists BUT YOUR WILL!!!

FROM AMONG THE WOMEN, THIS IS WHAT WAS WRITTEN BY

A school girl:

Your love is more important to me than anything else on earth. Please be with me, Baba, and make me worthy of Your Love.

A 14 year old girl:

I think that your coming into my life has made a great change in everything ... All the things I shall do will contain a flicker of your love to each person affected. Sometimes I feel so unworthy of the things I have. Other times I find myself looking at what others have and asking myself why I don't have as much ... I would rather have nothing at all than lose you and all the beautiful things you stand for.

A secretary:

How do I write a letter to God, Who knows the beginning and the end and all in between, my past and future lives, and the present one so much better than I do. I can't tell you anything You don't know, and just thinking about You makes me cry ... and even with the tears there is a sense of joy and gratitude to know that God is Real, that there really is a God, that You are true and there is meaning and purpose to life and the whole of creation ... Thank You, Avatar Meher Baba, dear God, for being Real.

A ballet dancer:

Your great love for us fills our home and I feel that those who come here cannot but feel it too. You are everything in my life, my dancing, my child, my husband, my friends.

A nurse:

All my nursing skill is useless to aid You, for only by living according to Your teachings can I help to ease Your agony. It is very easy to love You; it is loving one's neighbour as one's self that is difficult. I do not

wish to tire You with a long letter but I must thank You for all the blessings You have seen fit to shower on me. I know I haven't deserved it, but I appreciate it so from all of me ...

An aspiring actress:

Thank you, Baba, for my many blessings, and for the greatest blessing of all — that of touching me with Your Love, for having been in Your Presence once, and for the promise that we shall see You again. I can imagine no more horrible existence than one without Your love and light to guide and sustain us in this midst of confusion. You are truly all — and I so desperately long to really live Your life of truth, love, purity and beauty ... If I have learned nothing else, I know that You are the only constancy in this transitory world. I love You so Baba — You are my need, courage, strength, discipline, hope ...

An elderly lady who met Baba many years ago in India:

Baba, you are indeed my whole existence, my life ... The hardships of ill-health I have shared with you in very truth, but your grace sustains and I am able to do things that many can scarce believe is done, and I can only say it is because I am ever in your holy presence day and night ... I have a circle of poor folk for whom I can do some needful help, so I am quite happy doing this kind of loving of my Beloved, and see you in everyone whose need is filled with the friendship I offer them in your Beloved Name.

One who longs to understand:

Dear Meher Baba, it is sad for me that I must use this one precious chance to write a letter at a time when I do not know who you are. The only way that I have seen your light is in the eyes of other people (who love you). I have had a great desire all my life to know God and to see his beauty in the life around me. You have brought so much goodness and beauty into the lives of my friends that I have received something of your nature from them ... It gives me a great deal of happiness to reach out this way to touch your hand even if I do not quite understand you.

A 'newcomer' into the radiance of His Love:

Oh Beloved Baba! you who know everything that is in my mind and heart, I sit here to write to you and I weep, and I don't know why I weep. Unless it is because I know I love you and I know how imperfect that love is. I wish it were so consuming a love I had that it would burn away all my desires, all my will, all my little self and leave only an empty shell to be completely filled with you.

Wife of an Airlines Vice-president (ret'd.):

Beloved Lord, it must be at least thirty-five years ago that I was first overwhelmed at the depths of Christ's love for man, and I am equally humbled now by that same love expressed through you. Here is the world tottering on the brink of self-destruction, and man's puny intellect can faintly imagine the suffering You are enduring to right it, yet in your infinite Compassion You have given your Western lovers the profound privilege of writing to You ... Your last promise, that You will meet Your Western lovers somehow somewhere before breaking your Silence, is a steady glow in my heart; yet even if that promise cannot be kept it will make no difference to my love for You.

Wife of an art teacher:

If I could sing like Hafiz I would be able to praise You, but my voice comes out cracked and impure. I kneel at Your feet and offer what poor gifts of love and service I have, not knowing even how to write to You, though my heart aches with longing ... It is spring, but the intoxicating call of the cuckoos does not ease my heart, for I shall not see You in December. We who have lived for this Meeting bow in Your Will and accept Your decision. I love You and want to serve You — nothing else matters.

One dealing in cosmetics:

Oh God in human form, beloved Christ! Let me be worthy of Your sufferings and pains. Let me be worthy of Your Love and Grace. Let me surrender to You: all lives that I have ever lived, all thoughts that I have ever thought, all acts that I have ever committed. Let my surrenderance to Your will be total and complete, regardless of any suffering it will inflict on me.

A dressmaker:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity to write to you and offer you once again my love and a rededication of myself and all that I am, to you my Divine Father ... I thank you for giving us all this chance to express a greater degree of resignation to Your will, and may the combined love of all your lovers help to lighten your stupendous burden in some small measure.

A housewife, whose husband and children are likewise devoted to Baba:

No words or sounds that I know could touch Your magnificence — no love I have felt could be worthy of the dust under Your feet. If it takes the love of Saint Francis to please You, I haven't much of a chance. But that which I have is all Yours, my Beloved. Oh, God, forgive me for being so little when You deserve so much, and let my small gift of love give You a fleeting moment of pleasure. I love you Baba with all my being.

Another young mother:

I remember our meeting in '56 — how incomprehensible that your frail form contains All. Yet I believe whatever you say and do, is so. And it makes me happy within that you let my heart know this transcendent Truth — to be friends with God! How great and wonderful and how appreciative I am dear Baba that you gave me this gift of awareness of Yourself in human form. So beautiful and joyous, I would like to express this beauty and joy in song, in dance, in word. I want to share the love, the greatness, the beauty of You with those I love ...

A housewife, awakened to Baba through a 'newcomer':

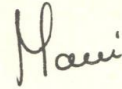
What does one say dear Baba, how does one express with mere words the inner faith and love you have awakened in us, how do we share with our loved ones and those around us the knowledge that this inner faith has always been and will always be there ... We have found our true selves at last, and tho we still find stumbling blocks it will be easier because You are with us.

An artist:

My Beloved Baba, there are no words ... Your silence for me is ever speaking in my heart. It is the greatest love song I know. For me, as yesterday today and tomorrow, you are always the Baba I love in whom I found life.

And now to switch over to the Meherazad reporter having the last word. To those who find this letter to be too lengthy, all I can say is: remember it could easily have been 20 pages! And to myself I say that perhaps it is better so, as the next letter is not expected to go out before February 1966. JAI BABA!

ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature appears to be 'Hau' or 'Hau' with a flourish.

Note: Those Western Baba-lovers who have not yet written their one direct letter to Baba, should do so in time for it to reach here latest by December end.

# *sixty-eight/*

Meherazad, 16th February 1966.

Dearest Family,

On hearing of Baba for the first time, a man from Venezuela wrote: "Welcome to Earth, O Meher Baba!". These simple words are the sweet refrain of many hearts, as another 25th of February comes forward to stand in testimony of God's love for us. For His 72nd Birthday, 25th February 1966, beloved Baba has given the following message:

BE COMPOSED IN THE REALITY OF MY LOVE  
FOR ALL CONFUSION AND DESPAIR IS YOUR OWN SHADOW  
WHICH WILL VANISH WHEN I SPEAK THE WORD.

This year the Beloved's birthday is being celebrated by His lovers on a scale that is not only grander, but immensely wider. This is but natural, for as one wrote: "It is our experience that as His manifestation draws near His Love finds expression in ever wider circumference, and day by day more and more people are drawn to the Light that is MEHER BABA." How well we realize this — for whereas some time ago we could comfortably cope with the letters, reports and publications received from Baba-Centres, now with the circle constantly expanding we can barely manage to go thru them, let alone attend to them as would befit His lovers' love!

With the opening of the new year welcoming His 72nd birthday, the number seventy-two has become the most important figure in the world of Baba-lovers, and many of the birthday programmes revolve round it. A number of Baba-Centres in India are observing a 72 day "Akhanda Nam Jap" (Non-stop repetition of Baba's Name), beginning from 5 o'clock in the morning of December 16, to be carried on till 5 in the morning of February 25th. This repetition of His beloved Name, night and day without a break, is carried out in shifts, at a place fixed for the purpose. As there seem not enough hours or days to accommodate all who participate, there are often as many as twenty Baba-lovers doing the Nam-Jap at a time! In Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere, a 72 day programme of Baba-gatherings held daily, in some places twice a day, is also in full swing. They are home gatherings and public gatherings, and each report received is crowned with the words: "How strongly is beloved Baba's presence felt by all who come!" And then there are the colourful Baba-processions that wind thru every lane and street of town or city to the blare of music joyously proclaiming the Advent of the Avatar, who reveals His message to mankind in the silence of His Love.

On the 25th of February, the morning curriculum for about 20,000 children in about 180 schools in Patherdi and its sub-district villages (in the district of Ahmednagar) is expected to be a unique one, as chalked out by Baba-lover V. R. Bade, lawyer and resident of Patherdi, in an official request sent out to all the school heads. The curriculum to be followed is: Beginning with the reciting of The Master's Prayer, it will be followed by the reading out of Baba's

birthday message and His message for children — Marathi translations of which will be allotted. The school teachers will then speak on the life and mission of Avatar Meher Baba, concluding with the reciting of the Prayer of Repentance and the entire assemblage calling out Baba's JAI. From the children's point of view no doubt the highlight of the programme will come at the last, when each will receive a packet of sweets as Baba's prasad (supplied by the Patherdi Baba-Centre) — and surely Baba's presence will be felt most at that time, for in the little ones' joy will be reflected His Love for them!

And so the lovers plan and prepare for the great day in united endeavor, bringing in the harvest of their faith and love for all to share, their field of expression varying to suit the creative climate of their surrounding. And as each toils towards this goal, it is perhaps with the conviction expressed by a young doctor in Iran, one of the indomitable Baba-workers, who writes: "It is my rock-firm belief that Baba does His own work as He has said. I believe that not I, nor you, nor anyone else is doing Baba's work. We are His tools, and He honours us by giving us the opportunity to serve Him."

Beloved Baba tells us that the pain in His neck is 25% better; and the pain in His hip-joint is not bothering Him, so that although He walks very little He does it with more ease. What nicer present than this can we hope to have for the birthday of the Birthless One! And what gift can we hope to give Him, other than a round-the-year one of obeying Him and loving Him more and more?

This 25th of February is a day of special significance in the calendar of nations too — the date set by the Tashkent Declaration for removal of all traces of the recent Indo-Pak fighting. May this fact bless the spirit of Tashkent to survive and strengthen. "Measure your mind's height by the shade it casts". India's late prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, that gentle self-effacing man who won the confidence and hearts of the people he served, proved his measure by the world-wide acclaim and respect he gained within 18 months of his leadership. Before two years had passed, leaders and dignitaries from all parts of the world were once again gathered on Indian soil to pay their homage and tribute to a great departed leader. "The sudden passing away of our Lal Bahadur Shastri took the breath out of the nation", as Eruch put it in his letter to Dr. Ram Ginde. Just before the prime minister left for Tashkent, our dear Dr. C. D. Deshmukh (of Nagpur) met him, told him of the Avatarhood of Meher Baba, and presented him with a copy of 'The Everything and The Nothing' along with 'The Master's Prayer'. Lal Bahadur Shastri expressed his assurance that he would read them, and allowed himself to be photographed with Dr. Deshmukh — in the picture we see Shastriji holding the Baba-literature in his hand. Baba said that Lal Bahadur was a fine man and a very good soul, and was blessed to have heard His Name and talked about Him with Deshmukh before leaving his physical body. The mandali were reminded how Baba had repeatedly expressed His concern over Lal Bahadur's health and heart condition ever since he left for Tashkent. On the morning when the mandali conveyed the news of the prime minister's death, Baba remarked:

Longfellow said: Come he slow or come he fast  
It's but death who comes at last.

and the poet Amir said: Man is born for his last day.

whereas Meher Baba says: None dies, and none knows to die.

The rare one who knows to die is never born again.



The dam put up for "no visits" during Baba's continuing seclusion, is expected to hold till November 1967 as was declared by Him. But once in a while, through a chink of His compassion, trickles some Baba-lover or the other who is granted a few minutes of His company — depending more on the occasion and circumstance than on His health and mood for it. Of these rare visitors to Meherazad, Robert Dreyfuss is outstanding in our memory because of the 'why' and 'how' of his journey to Baba. This 21 year old American came to India to attend the December Sahavas which was to be held for Baba's Western lovers, and not until he reached Poona did he learn that the Sahavas was cancelled! Robert left his home town of Boston (U.S.A.) in September 1965, availing himself of the students' economical plane service to England. From there, with a knapsack on his back, he walked and hitch-hiked his way to India — thru France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and making the final lap from Kuwait to Bombay by boat. This pilgrimage of three months ended on 16th November when he reached Meherazad. The first thing that came to my mind when I heard that he had come for the December Sahavas, was the story of the Tortoise and the Hare — while the hundreds who had planned to come by jet plane were halted at the starting point, this lucky 'tortoise', unaware that the race was called off, had plodded home to his goal! It was truly his "home-coming", he said, to The One he had found after deep heart-searching and book-worming thru masses of philosophical and theosophical writings. He did have the sahavas he came for, spending two days at Meherazad and endearing himself to the Meherazadians as one of the family. On both days he saw Baba, was embraced happily by Him, and received amply of His time and Love. The Beloved told him to return to the U.S.A., to his family and to the job he had left to come to India, which was that of looking after violent mental patients in a hospital in Boston. Baba gave Robert a message and a mission: "Go back to the U.S.A., spread my Love among others, particularly among the young and persuade them to desist from taking Drugs, for they are harmful — physically, mentally and spiritually."

In an age when individual liberty is prized above all achievements, the fast increasing number of drug-addicts forms an appalling chain of self-sought bondage! Even as these Drugs hold out an invitation to a fleeting sense of ecstasy, freedom or escape, they enslave the individual in greater binding. LSD, a highly potent 'mind-changing' drug differing from the opium derivatives and being used in the research of mental science, is said to "expand consciousness and alter one's personality for the better". In America it has become tragically popular among the young, used indiscriminately by any and many.

Robert is of a group of men and women (a number of them devoted to Baba) who have, with discrimination and spiritual aspirations, experimented with LSD. It seemed to them that their experiences tallied with the descriptions in "God Speaks" of the Subtle Planes. We gathered from his narration that the drug's effect is a temporary experience of piercing the veil of illusion and "a glimpse of Reality" — thus extending a dazzling promise of eventually leading one to the heights of Godhood. Baba was amused when He heard this, and said, "If God can be found thru the medium of any drug, God is not worthy of being God!" Baba was very pleased that Robert had stopped taking LSD, and told him to tell the others to do the same.

A former professor at Harvard University (U.S.A.) who has been scientifically exploring the higher possibilities of LSD and other psychedelic drugs, on hearing Baba's message of "No Drugs" sent thru Robert, wrote to Baba asking for His guidance. As Baba was moved to help this sincere seeker in clearing his

confusion, the reply indicated by Him was sent in a letter from Adi, excerpts of which I give here for the benefit of all whom it will help:

"No drug, whatever its great promise, can help one to attain the spiritual Goal. There is no short cut to the Goal except through the grace of the Perfect Master; and drugs, LSD more than others, give only a semblance of 'spiritual experience', a glimpse of a false Reality.

"The experience you elaborate in your letter and book are as far removed from Reality as is a mirage from water. No matter how much you pursue the mirage you will never reach water and the search for God through drugs must end in disillusionment. Meher Baba who knows the Way, who is the Way, cannot approve the continued pursuance of a method that not only must prove fruitless but leads away from the Path that leads to Reality.

"It is human, and therefore necessarily wrong-sighted, to view the result of the drug by its immediate relative effects — our inability to calculate its end result is beyond our human knowledge, and only the true Guide can point the way.

"To a few sincere seekers such as yourself, LSD may have served as a means to arouse that spiritual longing which has brought you into contact with Meher Baba, but once that purpose is served further ingestion would not only be harmful but have no point or purpose. Now your longing for Reality cannot be sustained by further use of drugs but only by your own love for the Perfect Master which is a reflection of His Love for you.

"You may feel LSD has made a 'better' man of you socially and personally. But one will be a better man through Love than one can ever be through drugs or any other artificial aid. And the best man is he who has surrendered himself to the Perfect Master irrespective of his personal or social standing.

"Meher Baba has pointed out that the experience derived through the drugs are experiences by one in the Gross World of the shadows of the subtle planes and are not continuous. The experiences of the Subtle Sphere by one on the subtle planes are continuous, but even these experiences are of Illusion for Reality is beyond them. And so, though LSD may lead one to feel a better man personally, the feeling of having had a glimpse of Reality may not only lull one into a false security but also will in the end derange one's mind. Although LSD is not an addiction forming drug one can become attached to the experiences arising from its use and one gets tempted to use it in increasing doses, again and again, in the hope of deeper and deeper experiences. But eventually this causes madness or death.

"Only the One who knows and experiences Reality, who is Reality, has the ability and authority to point out the false from the Real. Hence Meher Baba tells us who care to heed Him that the only Real Experience is to continuously see God within oneself as the Infinite Effulgent Ocean of Truth and then to become one with this Infinite Ocean and continuously experience Infinite Knowledge, Power, and Bliss."

How well Robert has carried Baba's message to the others, and how clearly it has been received by them, can be glimpsed from the response of a dear one in her letter to beloved Baba:

"Once there is a beloved, we breathe him'. You, the breath of so many, fill our lives and hasten us to the closeness to God for which we have yearned forever.

"Since you sent Bob Dreyfuss to connect us and to stop us from the drug delusion, you have become the most important reality in our lives. Your books fill our shelves, your pictures the walls, and your reality our dreams. We are doing our best to love and understand, believe and submit ... Obviously it is easier for some than others and you of course understand this best.

"We received the message that we should write to you and the opportunity is a blessing although it is difficult to figure out what to say to one who knows all. So I shall hope that between the breaths of the words you can feel the love coming from this side of the world .... I simply thank you for the awakening you have brought to all of us, bless you for your love, and transmit to you the deepest of my love which I realize is insignificant in its development but at this point is about all I have got to offer."

I'm tempted to mention another recent visit to Meherazad, because of the profound perception revealed in the words of a child. The visitor was seven year old Jayanti, son of a prosperous cloth merchant in Ahmednagar. The boy had not yet seen Baba but regularly attended the Centre and kept pestering Adi and the others to take him to Baba. And so one morning one of the Baba-workers coming to Meherazad brought him along. While Jayanti was with the mandali before being taken to the Beloved, Eruch asked him "Why do you want to see Baba?" "So that real faith may be born in me" the child replied. When asked "What do you hope to gain after having Faith?", he answered "I will find God." "And when you have found God, what will you do?" "I will love Him and serve Him" was the reply. We saw him hugging to his breast a bag of sweets that he had brought for Baba, and which he would not part from until he had personally placed them at Baba's feet. When he was taken to Baba he did not have to remove his shoes, in reverence to the Master — he had removed them before starting from Ahmednagar! Beloved Baba embraced him and caressed his cheeks, and told him how fortunate he was. With his large soft eyes on Baba, Jayanti nodded emphatically in agreement. When one of us asked him who it was that was seated before him, he answered simply "God". We said, "Well, now that you have seen Him, ask of Him what you will. What do you want of Him?" The boy gazed soulfully at God and answered "Love". Baba was pleased and delighted at this reply, and smilingly gestured "Granted"!

How many are there, when their turn comes, who prove wise or fortunate enough to ask of Him just that? But even this wanting of the highest boon is by the grace of the Beloved, and is (as Sant Mira says in her song) "a promise of many lives ago". Perhaps we will see the boon blossom in Jayanti's life, that he may "love and serve God" in this Avataric age. We have seen the blossoming of other buds blessed by His grace; a fair example being Naosherwan Nalawala of Dehra Dun (north India), a handsome youngster of about 19 years who is the editor of THE GLOW. "The Glow" is a registered quarterly newspaper devoted to enlightening the people of the God-Man's presence on earth and carrying the beloved name of Meher Baba to their ears and hearts. Born into a family that is whole-heartedly Baba's, Naosherwan was barely four when he sat

on Baba's lap, played with Him, and solemnly entertained Him as a "drummer" by vigorously drumming with his chubby little hands on the dining table. Now he drums away on the typewriter, and the music is the glowing effort he puts in THE GLOW born of His Love.

From the beginning of April beloved Baba along with the Meherazad family will be at Guruprasad, Poona, for three months. We are at the tail end of our short winter, and the thundering footsteps of summer can already be felt coming nearer. Soon the migratory birds will be flying back north to cooler climes, as we shall be preparing for our migration to Poona and its kinder summer. In the month of March the hustle of 'spring-cleaning' goes hand in hand with the bustle of packing, leaving less time for attending to the mail. Moreover, as the pattern of work keeps enlarging daily, it is difficult to fit it onto the limited material of time at our disposal, with barely scraps left over to cover personal needs! Please note that the rein on correspondence is being drawn in tighter. From April thru June, emergency cables may be addressed: MEHERBABA, GURUPRASAD, POONA (India).

The next letter will be going out to you in the month of May. This one I close with Baba's Love to you each dear one, and the Birthday Song for children composed by Francis:

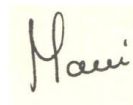
Glad are we in you, Dear Baba,  
Glad are we in your Birthday –  
That you in your loving Kindness  
Came on earth with us to stay.

Round the Earth your love is flowing  
As a river wide and deep,  
Making full and rich the harvest  
That each, at Time's end, will reap.

Th'light of New Day now is dawning  
As a heavenly flower rare,  
In its heart we are discerning  
Your Face, Baba, dear and fair.

Hear my song, Beloved Baba,  
That I sing on your Birthday –  
It's my pleading that you, Baba,  
In my heart forever stay.

Ever lovingly,



# *sixty-nine/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 10th June 1966.

Dearest Family,

It is over nine weeks now since Guruprasad awoke from its long winter sleep to the dawn of Baba's presence; and in a few weeks' time when Baba leaves Poona, it will curl up to sleep again until His return next year. Our stay here this summer has been a quiet one, in utter contrast to that of last year when Guruprasad was constantly humming with swarms of happy darshaners from far and near, and the massive May gathering of Baba's eastern lovers. But if the great influx of last year spoke resonantly of the love of His many lovers, their very absence this year is more eloquent - for it is in obedience to the Beloved's wish that none should visit Him except those whom He specifically calls for His work. It is said that love is silent but not dumb - and surely, obedience is the tongue with which it speaks! The other morning, while listening to some verses composed by Francis, Baba was in the mood to dictate a message in verse. Rapidly His fingers spelt out:

HE WHO SEEKS MY PLEASURE  
FINDS THE DIVINE TREASURE.

Among the very few whom beloved Baba was pleased to call for a visit was Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda, hostess of the Highest of the High during his stay in Poona. She maintains Guruprasad the year round, solely for Baba's three months' visit each summer. Every time when Baba tells her how happy He is at Guruprasad, He is saying how happy He is with her love for Him — and that is all dear Shantadevi asks for. Visits granted to a few of His other lovers, men and women, were as short as they were rare, lasting perhaps no more than a few seconds as measured by the clock. It was therefore quite surprising when one afternoon Baba called a meeting of His workers from the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre. Seated before Him, they discussed the progress and problems of their efforts to spread the Beloved's message to more and more people in and around Poona. More surprising for us was to see Baba looking so lively and radiant during the longish session — listening to them, encouraging them, admonishing them, counselling them. At a time like this it is as though the infinite tiredness we witness in His dear God-eyes is put aside and our hearts are warmed with the 'fire' of former days when His physical health served as a sturdier companion in bearing the strain of His universal burden. Missing from this meeting was one of His finest workers, Bapusahib Shinde, who died last December after a period of acute illness and suffering. Big and dependable, Bapusahib was a pillar of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, and a brother to all in need. He owned two Footwear stores, one of which served as the very first Baba-Centre in Poona many years ago, where weekly meetings were regularly held. There was a tremendous attendance at his funeral, and all footwear shops in Poona closed down for a day in his honour. This message that Baba sent to all His Centres, was: "Bapusahib Shinde has come to Me to rest in Me eternally. One of my

dearest lovers and workers Bapusahib served Me wholeheartedly and shared in my suffering." But I'm sure Bapusahib could have wished for no dearer tribute to his love and service for his beloved Master than Baba's words to the mandali: "I have lost Bapusahib Shinde; but he has found me."

More than anything else, the absence of the Bombay Baba-group that flocked to Poona every summer for a long stay (filling all available hotel space within walking distance of Guruprasad so as "to be nearer to Baba even if we are not permitted to visit Him") reminds us how strict His seclusion is this year. And there is the viewpoint of the hotel-wallahs too! One of them was heard to remark "Yearly we have two good seasons in Poona. One is Meher Baba season when we cater to the many followers of Meher Baba; the other is the racing season after June. This year we shall be missing our first season". Perhaps the Beloved has in store another Baba-season as glorious as the one of November 1962, for all the hearts that wait on tiptoe for His call, sometime, somewhere, after 1967.

This year the Birthday-season for His lovers everywhere was a rich and rewarding one indeed! If every place where beloved Baba's Birthday was celebrated — every city, town, village — were pinpointed with a light, the map of India would be as a starry sky. "Meher Pukar", the Hindi Baba-magazine, devoted three pages to listing the names of places all over India where the 72nd Birthday was observed in a special way — and even then we found that the list was far from complete! From reports and letters received, we had some idea of the immenseness of the Birthday programs held by His lovers this year. My problem is my inability to present it in a comprehensive sketch. Unlike the artist who can depict his subject with a few casual strokes of his brush, I find myself struggling with masses of fascinating detail, and despair at the thought of attempting to put it all on the canvas of a letter! If indeed these celebrations could be illustrated through the medium of a paint brush, the basic pattern would be similar to the previous Birthday programs, but appearing in much bolder relief and covering much more ground. And, running across it would be streaks of brilliant colour to mark the blossoming of a fresh idea, an unexpected achievement, a new opening for the longing of His lovers to carry the pollen of His Love to other hearts.

Take for instance the elocution competition held at the Model High School in Dahanu Road (a holiday resort in the district of Thana, near Bombay). Each pupil was granted three minutes' time to give a talk on Baba, and the prizes given were locketts and coloured pictures of Baba. The fact that this most unusual proposition received the consent and co-operation of the school authorities, and the keen interest shown by these students of different religions in learning about Baba, speaks much for the love of the Baba-family who launched the project — Mr. K.A. Zaiwala, his wife and children. Another inspiration of theirs made it possible for cinema-goers to receive the Beloved's Birthday message. Every evening, for a week, slides giving Baba's Message in English and in Gujerati were flashed on the screen of Chandra Talkies in Dahanu Road. An elocution competition for school children was also held at the Baba-Centre in Alamuru (Andhra State), arranged by His lovers during the Children's Meet. Attended by over 500 children, the competition was divided between the senior and junior classes, and embraced three subjects: Recitation of the Parvardigar Prayer; Talk on Baba: Songs on Baba. Many children from schools in and around Alamuru, coached in the subjects by their teachers, entered this unique compe-

tition and proudly carried off the prizes of books by and about Baba! All who participated went home with a photo of the Beloved.\*

To cite another instance, picture the furore caused at Jhansi (in northern India) when Pukar, the 'giant' in appearance and spirit, went into action and was completely bowled over by the results. Only recently settled at Jhansi, he was nevertheless determined to have a big Birthday function there, and rounding up the few Baba-lovers set out on his campaign a month ahead of time. Going from street to street, often from house to house, into the market places and the maze of by-lanes and back alleys, he boomed out the message "God is here on earth. The Avatar is amongst us. Cleanse your hearts. Be ready to receive Him. Scrub your homes, white-wash the walls, decorate your door-sills. The Avatar's Birthday is on 25th February — be ready, be ready." As it turned out, it was Pukar & Co. who were not ready for Baba's answer to their plea! On the Day, at the big grounds where the Birthday function was planned, they expected some hundreds to attend; hoped perhaps for a few hundred more. They were totally unprepared for the avalanche of men and women who came in their thousands, along with their children, to hear Avatar Meher Baba's message. It well-nigh caused a stampede amidst that mass of humanity, and dismay in the hearts of Baba's men. The arrangements were pitifully inadequate to control and direct such a colossal crowd, the lone mike failed at the crucial moment, and the thunder of Pukar's voice was lost in the storm about him. Then the inspiration came. Calling on Baba for help, Pukar jumped on to a chair on the dais, and rotating on it with arms held aloft he invited silence and order in the Name of the Avatar. The response to this mute gesture was incredible. In no time all were seated, the mike was working, the program began and went vigorously on into the early hours of the dawn! It was yet another revelation of Baba's presence whenever He is remembered whole-heartedly.

But not everywhere and by everyone can such a sweeping approach be made and carried off with success. However, there are as many ways to transmit His message to others as there are His lovers who have the will to do so. The spiritual soil and clime of every country are not equally favourable, and the fields that are snow-bound take longer to thaw to the sun of His Love. It warmed our hearts therefore, to perceive the first bright ray of conscious awakening in the continent of Africa. A Baba-lover in Uganda, T. S. Chowdhary, tells us that Baba's 72nd Birthday celebrated at his home (in Gulu, Uganda) was attended by 440 people — Europeans, Africans and Asians of various religions (Sikh, Muslim, Hindu). He writes "The aim of this celebration was that the name of Beloved Baba be made known to the people of this town." The swing of his aim appears to have carried beyond the immediate target, since an article on the Birthday was published in the 'Uganda Argus', a leading newspaper of that country. We gather that the program lasted for nearly two hours, included songs sung in praise of Beloved Baba, and the Parvardigar Prayer. Charts with sayings of Baba were put up, books on and by Baba were displayed. Mr. Chowdhary reports that just as they were about to recite the Prayer of Repentance "there was a sudden shower of grace", which caused some panic among the congregation seated in the Compound under the open sky. While reading this we were carried back into the delightful and nostalgic memory of the torrential shower of grace that poured from the skies during the East-West gathering in 1962, in the presence of the Beloved, immediately after the recitation of the Parvardigar Prayer by Dr. Harry Kenmore.

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\* The school curriculum for 180 schools as planned by the Patherdi Baba-lovers (mentioned in my last letter) was carried off with a success as tremendous as the project itself!

On the 25th, flashes of the Birthday programs were broadcast by All India Radio from a number of stations — Delhi, Nagpur, Baroda, Jabalpur, Bhopal, Raipur and others. The longest broadcast was that of the Dehra-Dun program, relayed from Lucknow station for half an hour! In many parts of India the celebrations were carried thru for 72 days, some planning it so that the 25th of February marked the 72nd day, some starting from the 25th to continue till 7th April. The variegated facets of these public Baba-programs had scope enough for different temperaments — the gay, the solemn, the artistic, the spontaneous. Catching up in popularity with Kavvali and Bhajans is the 'mushaira' — a meeting of poets who compose and recite verses in Urdu, woven round the theme line proposed for the occasion. A predominant motif of Birthday programs in the West is the showing of Baba-films — a most vibrant and moving form of being in His presence and 'sahavas'. Story-telling, ballad-singing, play-enacting, dance-dramas, all based on the life and work of Avatar Meher Baba, form an enchanting and integral part of the Birthday observance, specially in the state of Andhra. Another characteristic feature of that state is the magnificent Baba-processions conducted thru the streets, with a large (often life-size) picture of the Beloved enthroned on an elaborately adorned vehicle. The vehicle might be an ornate temple chariot, a country bullock-cart, a motor lorry, a horse buggy, a cycle rickshaw, just a white horse, or an elephant. Or, it might be a tractor, as was used by His lovers of Malikipuram to carry His message from village to village on the 25th, covering fourteen villages before nightfall. So massive were the daily celebrations held by His lovers in Masulipatnam, that it was not so much like having a 72 days' program for His 72nd Birthday as celebrating His Birthday seventy two times! Clothing and feeding the needy in Baba's Name, a gesture symbolic of the Compassionate Father's love for the poor, is observed every year by most Baba-Centres. Feeding the poor had a deeper significance this year in view of India's acute food shortage. One smallish place (in Andhra), intending to feed 500 poor people for which Baba-lovers contributed their share of rice, ended up by feeding three times as many! The report from this Meher Centre, Bheemunipatnam, says "...more lovers sent more rice, so that it added another 100 Kgs. (over 200 lbs.). Hence in all 1,500 people, including children, were fed by the Beloved."

The intellectual need of the knowledge-hungry was met thru the medium of Baba books and booklets printed and distributed by His lovers in the West and in the East. A.C.S. Chari of Calcutta has been remarkably active in this field. The Birthday booklet (in English) printed and published by him this year, entitled "The Uttering of The One Word", gives a dynamic dissertation on Baba's Silence by the Hon. Mr. Justice Mukharji, senior-most judge of Calcutta's High Court. Justice Mukharji's understanding of his subject, as well as his logical and lucid style of presentation, has made his article as appealing as it is outstanding. Brother Chari has done full justice to it by sending out numerous copies of the booklet to Baba-groups all over India and abroad, and the clamour for more has already pushed a reprint under way. As Chari informs us, a fair portion of the first edition went out in individual copies to the nation's leaders and to dignitaries and newspapers all over the country.

If every other place was so diligently occupied in giving out His message of Love, Meherazad was kept no less busy in receiving for Him the manifold messages of love that came in cables, telegrams and birthday cards from His lovers all over the world. These bedecked the Beloved's breakfast table on 25th morning, along with flowers from the garden, a big cake in the shape of a clock with its sugary hands pointing to the hour of 5, and the one lighted candle. For the Best Day of the year we were dressed in our best; the house was dressed up in flower garlands hung across every doorway, and gay 'chalk' patterns drawn



before every entrance. But apart from all the many Birthday gladnesses observed en famille, the really festive air that Meherazad wore was due entirely to the inspiration and labour of the Meherazad staff — the driver, the garden-boys, kitchen-boys, Kaka's boy, and mail-boys (who carry our mail back and forth from Ahmednagar). Pooling ideas, contributions and every spare moment of their time, they were seen to be making endless rows of paper decorations and flowers to cover the place with. With the use of the car battery they rigged up electricity to light up Baba's picture in the Hall and to work the loudspeaker equipment brought over from Pimpalgaon village along with a gramophone. And so it was that on the morning of 25th, right after we had called out AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI in unison at the stroke of 5, Baba's Arti was heard all over Meherazad — and just about all over the village for that matter! After the Arti, ghazal records were played over the loudspeaker, so that while Baba was having breakfast He was regaled with songs from His favourite singer, the queen of ghazals, Begum Akhtar. The pride of the Staff's achievement was the Main Hall, whose entire ceiling was covered with a gorgeous canopy of 'jasmine flowers', lights, and other artistic ornamentation. As Baba went over to the Hall to be with the mandali, the pink of His coat seemed to reflect the glow of His smile, and the many-coloured buntings fluttering overhead seemed to whisper: Happy Birthday Beloved Baba, Happy Birthday to You.

For several days Meherazad had the look of a country girl set ready for a party at Buckingham Palace. And yet, just before the 25th when a couple from Hyderabad paid an unexpected visit, they were much surprised and puzzled to find it all so 'quiet and simple'! They told the mandali "We came because we thought that if the Birthday programs going on everywhere are so grand, how much more so it must be at the 'source' where Beloved Baba is residing!" Eruch replied: "Although Baba is residing at Meherazad He is actually with all His lovers, presiding at His programs wherever they are held; that is why Baba sent them the message 'I shall be present among you all who gather in my Love'. Therefore you should hurry back to your home town, so as not to miss being in His presence"!

The next great occasion for Baba's family, eastern and western, is exactly a month away. Leaving Poona on 1st July, we shall be observing the 10th of July at Meherazad as usual. The Beloved's instructions to His lovers for the observance of the 41st anniversary of His Silence will be sent out by Adi in a circular to Easterners. And, it is reproduced here for you each of His dear Westerners. (Please note that no one is permitted to communicate here in regard to it — Baba's wishes are clear, and it is for those who love Him to carry them out).

ATTENTION

"On the 10th of July 1966, the 41st anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th of July to midnight of the 10th of July in accordance with local time.

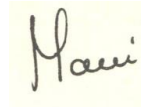
BABA WANTS ALL HIS LOVERS TO KNOW THAT THE FORTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HIS SILENCE IS A VERY IMPORTANT EVENT AND AS SUCH ALL HIS LOVERS SHOULD OBSERVE COMPLETE SILENCE FOR TWENTYFOUR HOURS ON THIS OCCASION.

Avatar Meher Baba has given the following message for the 41st anniversary of His Silence:

God's first Word was 'Who am I'.  
God's last Word is 'I am God'.  
And the Word that I the God-Man  
will utter soon will be the  
sound of my infinite Silence.

Avatar Meher Baba sends His Love and Blessing to each of His lovers."

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Meher'.

# *seventy/*

Meherazad, 10th September 1966.

Dearest Family,

"I pray to God so hard, but He never answers my prayers. I cannot understand why that should be? I thought God did not let anyone down!" This earnest appeal was put to Baba by the princess of an Indian state, who had stayed on in Ahmednagar for days in the hope of Baba granting her a moment's darshan — He did. And thus, as she might have realized, was her highest prayer answered! However, in replying to her, Baba said: "God not only does not let anyone down, God is constantly forgiving those who let Him down"! And how literally this may apply to us all who know and love God in Human form, who of our frailty let Him down time and again by our inability to give Him the unfaltering obedience He asks of us. The less our obedience, the more His burden. He carries the load of our lack; and even as He forgives us He helps us to love Him more ....

Even a small break in the garden fence, used by children going in and out at all times, can grow into a wide gap. And if the children are many, and — they bring more and more of their friends along, the master of the house will sooner or later put his foot down and have the fence repaired and reinforced. And so it has been with the Master of the Universe working at a universal job He alone can do, and wishing to remain undisturbed behind the fence of His Seclusion. It is of course the Beloved's own compassion that creates the break in the fence; but it is at the cost of His work as He tells us, and at the cost of His health as we can see — except when He calls someone for some reason. Of late we find that the customary seesaw of His physical health stays longer on the 'down' swing, no doubt with the force of His cervical pain. But while He may let the doctors do their best, He reveals that the cause of it is the growing weight of His work, the bearing of the world's pain. Since the 16th of last month Baba has put a complete stop to visitors. He makes it emphatically clear that He wants to remain undisturbed till end of 1967. He tells me to repeat here His oft-repeated wish — that unless Baba on His own sends for someone NONE SHOULD VISIT HIM OR ASK TO VISIT HIM BEFORE END OF 1967.

"Your Pleasure is my Treasure". These words came in the lines of a telegram to Baba, from the fullness of a heart that is filled with Baba. They came from Rick Chapman, an American who received his A.B. from Harvard College (U.S.A.) this June and was awarded a year's Fulbright teaching scholarship to India. One of the fine young group newly awakened to Baba, Rick is undoubtedly a Baba-lover of ancient vintage, having that quality of loving which is seasoned thru many a lifetime of searching. Now in India since three months, Rick patiently awaited His call. As he wrote, "Baba's orders to me have been not to come to Him until He Himself calls. I will of course obey His Perfect Will." Baba called, getting him to Meherazad thru the last opening, on the final day before visiting was completely stopped. For Rick the visit was a home-coming in the deepest sense, for us a family reunion in the truest sense. As for his experience of the few timeless minutes he spent with Baba, we caught a glimpse of it thru his letter to one of the mandali: "Still reeling, I am completely

unable to express my happiness at meeting my true Beloved. That God disposed of His own proposal and allowed me to stay close to Him for several of His smiles and a thorough soaking in His Love — this is nothing that can properly be spoken of by one who can see Baba only as He really isn't. And if a glimpse of Him through eyes that cannot see can give such joy — who then could He be but God Himself!" To another he wrote: "Only with Baba's direct support could I walk into and out of the most important event of my life. The secret of it is that there is no sense of walking out of my meeting with Him, but rather He walks with me. How could one bear to meet God, and leave Him?" Rick's personal letter to Baba was like a mirror held in the Beloved's hand — it reflected so much of His beauty! Writing of his work in Ahmedabad, where the Fulbright project has placed him, he says: "In the months to come, my major outward role will be as teacher of English at H.K. Arts College (Ahmedabad). My teaching method is peculiar — instead of the usual short stories and poems, I am free to have my students read pamphlets of Your discourses: "The Seven Realities", "Universal Message", "Meher Baba on Love", and so on. Their essays, through which they practice writing English, will concern these discourses. Only You could have arranged such a scheme, which makes my work so enjoyable to me and so profitable to the students."

The more we see Baba withdrawing from outward activity, the more Baba activity is evident wherever we turn. The more the veil of seclusion hides Him from the eyes of His lovers, the more He is revealed in the hearts of those unaware of Him. From all sides 'new' ones wander into the kingdom of Baba's Love, lay down their load of doubts and desires at His feet and take hold of His daaman in firm conviction and surrender. Across the U.S.A. — from Ivy Duce on the west coast to Fred-Ella Winterfeldt on the east — those conducting Baba-groups write how busy they are kept with this sudden inflow of people who have 'discovered' Baba, men and women who in turn lead others from the fog of shadow-chasing frustrations into the clarity and sanity of the God-Man's Love. One such discoverer writes from Boston: "Oh how Baba has been working in the past few months in this part of the country — the numbers of people He has been drawing to Himself in the most extraordinary ways! Baba continues to dazzle us with one coincidence after another whereby people are brought to hear to Him .... His chain reaction of Love is really reaching 'critical mass'! The explosions of joy keep popping up as someone — it seems almost everyday — hears about Baba and knows that the search has ended." As we think of these many who have not even met Baba as yet but who are so utterly devoted and dedicated to Him in love and service, we shake our heads and exclaim: It is inconceivable! Baba smiles and says, "It is because I am God."

As the time of His manifestation draws closer and Baba tells His lovers to spread His message of Love, the door one knocks on in His Name opens in response, sometimes before the hand can be raised to knock. We learn that we have simply to learn to become the submissive channel for His wish, and whatever be the form or material we supply of our capacity He will do His work thru it and will seek out His own. We have been keenly aware of this while following the public activities of the band of newly blossomed Baba-lovers who have launched an anti-LSD project in the U.S.A. since the last few months — Baba's 'Boston Force' as we refer to them. With their academic qualifications and their previous intensive experience with psychedelic drugs, these young men and women are the perfect means to the anti-LSD end. In size they are a small body, for so large a number in the LSD field — as is the sheepdog, who is directed by his master to turn the flock away from a path he knows will lead to danger. Already their

efforts have reaped spectacular results, and Baba's message\* and Name have penetrated to masses through various openings: lectures; interviews; radio shows; talks at Harvard University, at LSD Conferences, to large audiences and to small groups; brochures mailed individually to thousands; letter to college newspapers throughout the U.S.A.; letters and articles published by magazines and newspapers printed in America and round the world, such as Time, Newsweek, The Saturday Evening Post, Globe, Colorado Daily, New Society, and The Christian Science Monitor. Baba's statements on LSD appeared with dynamic prominence in last month's August 7 issue of the Boston Sunday GLOBE Magazine (distributed with the Sunday paper to over 600,000 people in the Boston area), in an article entitled "GOD and LSD" by Allan Cohen\*\*, one of the Baba-boys propelling the project. Allan writes to Adi: "If we weren't aware that Baba does everything, we would have been incredulous! .... We can only once again marvel at the way Baba works, and makes possible the improbable to spread His divine Message". In another letter he says "It is joyfully obvious that Baba is behind us. A prime example is my enclosure ... an editorial by The Christian Science Monitor based on our letter to the colleges. This newspaper is printed all over the world and is widely respected as one of the best papers in the world." The editorial by The Christian Science Monitor, woven round quotes from Baba's pronouncements on LSD, ends with the editor's remark: "In all the babble of controversy over LSD, this seems to us to constitute an eminently sane appraisal."

Constructively harnessed, the power of the press can serve to enlighten humanity and educate the multitude. What higher service could it render to mankind, what greater education impart, than awareness of the God-Man's presence on earth, of the rhyme and reason of existence, of The Word to come from the infinity of His silence! The "Sunday Guardian" of Trinidad, West Indies, used its voice and popularity to let its readers, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, know 'the story of Meher Baba' in a splendid article specially written for the paper by Louis Agostini (formerly of Trinidad, now living in U.S.A.). Louis and his wife Vivian (a distinguished sculptress devoted to Baba) saw beloved Baba for the first time in 1962 at the East-West gathering in Poona. Ever since his search ended in Baba, Louis longed to share the wonder and glory of His find with his family and people back home, and laboured towards this aim with the patience and care one gives to a dearly cherished purpose. At one time closely associated with Paul Brunton, Louis Agostini found added significance in the Sunday Guardian's acceptance of his article on Baba. As he expressed it in his letter to Adi: "It is very strange to reflect that the very paper which a few years ago refused to print Brunton's article on karma which was considered controversial, should open its columns to a story of greater mind-shattering dimension."

As time goes on we find more and more Indian newspapers opening their columns to Avatar Meher Baba's message to mankind — carrying it in different languages to the people of different tongues. Take for instance the Marathi weekly magazine of Nagpur, "Chavhata", born twenty one years ago and serving

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\* See sixty-eighth family letter, dated February 1966.

\*\* Allan Y Cohen, Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, a Teaching Fellow in Social Relations at Harvard University (U.S.A.) and Director of Research for Potentials Inc., a psychological consulting firm; he was closely associated with the early psychedelic research of Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary.

as a solid political organ. This paper now regularly devotes prime place in its pages to beloved Baba — giving (in Marathi) His messages and discourses, and reports of occasions such as His Birthday and Silence anniversary. At first this sudden appearance of a spiritual note clearly heard above the political voice of the paper, brought from some of its readers caustic criticism in letters to the editor, Mr. B. N. Savji. One letter concluded flatly that "Chavhata" was no longer worth-while reading. The editor replied that on the contrary the purely material fare the paper had served to its readers all these years had not been 'worth-while', whereas now that it offered material worthy of the highest regard and attention Chavhata was truly worthwhile reading! Mr. Savji printed in his paper the letter from the reader along with his reply — and that aroused a round of applause from readers agreeing with the editor. This is hardly surprising in a city whose most distinguished newspapers like the "Hitwada" and the "Nagpur Times" have been among the earliest to give the public an awareness of the Avatar's presence in our Age. And with the growing of years these widely read papers are seen to be assigning more space in their pages, with growing frequency and prominence, to Baba-news. For this their reporters are present at every Baba-occasion in Nagpur, while their Sunday pages often carry Beloved Baba's message in articles by His lovers.

"Kaiser-E-Hind" I cannot cite simply as an 'instance' — it appears no less than one of the miracles Baba says He never performs. A widely respected Gujerati news-weekly established eighty-four years ago in the reign of Queen Victoria, Kaiser-E-Hind remains a household byword to the Zoroastrian community (Parsis and Iranis), circulating to over 380 cities and towns in India and abroad. But whereas once it was instrumental in circulating articles about Baba that were controversial and denunciatory, it is now instrumental in carrying Beloved Baba's message of Love and Truth to the Zoroastrians. Whereas once its pages were eagerly scanned for views against Baba, they are now as eagerly scanned for news about Baba. I do not say by all, or for the same reason; for there are not only the many yet unawakened non-believers, there are still some orthodox disbelievers who now and then raise their voice in protest — a voice lost in the rising gale of His glory. But the proportion of believers that is growing so largely among the Parsis and Iranis, can be fully appreciated only by the early Zoroastrian followers of Baba. To witness the children and grandchildren of some of the old fanatic disbelievers (who used to persecute and harass the family and the early followers of Baba) bowing down to Baba in devotion, to hear their voice the loudest in crying out His JAI, to see them in the forefront as Baba-lovers and Baba-workers, is to witness the miracle of a dead log of wood sprouting tender leaves and fragrant blossoms. And as we see more and more Parsis and Iranis joining the rank of Baba's followers, we think of what Baba once said concerning the Zoroastrians: "They will come; finally they will all come to Me, in full belief and faith. Not a single one will be left out." And so without doubt there will follow many a Zoroastrian newspaper spreading Baba's Message in time to come. We congratulate Kaiser-E-Hind for having the foresight and good fortune to be the foremost to do so! In its issue of 24th April of this year, a full page covered the subject of Baba's Silence — with Baba's photo in the heart of it, and in large outstanding print the heading: MEHER BABA — "THE WORD".

On the 10th of July this year, hundreds of thousands of tongues were silent for twenty-four hours. They belonged to hundreds of thousands of men, women and children all over the world who love Baba and were observing their Beloved's forty-first silence anniversary by observing complete silence as wished by Him. The youngest in age to observe the 24-hour silence was five year old Mehernaz,

Baba's great-niece living in Poona; the oldest was ninety-six year old Ruth White (Baba's 'Soldier' as He calls her since her visit to Him in Poona in 1962) who lives with Elizabeth and Kitty at His beautiful Center in Myrtle Beach, U.S.A. During the Silence Anniversary week, the Center at Myrtle Beach was as filled with Baba's lovers as it is at all times filled with Baba's Love. As Elizabeth put it, it was 101% full! Every nook and corner of the Center's cabins were crammed with the happy pilgrims who had journeyed from different parts of the U.S.A. to spend Silence Day at the place where three glorious times Baba had given His sahavas to His Western family — the place born of His Love, the place which He has said will one day serve as a Universal Center.

In India it is not uncommon for Baba-people to publicly celebrate every significant occasion stemming from the life and love of Avatar Meher Baba, often for days on end. They are held publicly in various parts of the country, at various times of the year, and for various lengths of time. In fact, at the rate the round of these Baba-celebrations is expanding, before very long it might meet in a complete circle of all-year-round celebrations being held at some place or another, on some occasion or another! And the 10th of July — a date of momentous significance in the life and destiny of our Earth and all who are blessed to be on it at this Avataric time — is the occasion for His lovers to let the people of Earth hear of His Silence. They have been doing so. All over the East public celebrations have been ushering in the forty-second year of His Silence. In the West, the public celebration held in New York by "Avatar Meher Baba's New York Devotees" to commemorate the occasion of Beloved Baba's forty-first anniversary of Silence, was the first of its kind. Held on 16th July at the Barbizon-Plaza Theatre under the chairmanship of Dr. Harry Kenmore, it was a grand event, a magnificent Baba-evening shared by hundreds. The impressive two-hour program included a Baba-movie, talks about Baba and His Silence, and special songs with audience participation. The reports we received from those who were present glowed with the joy and wonder of that unforgettable evening. Beloved Baba was indeed present with them, as He said He would be in the message he cabled to Harry for the occasion. In summing up their experience of the evening, one of them wrote: "As the talks and singing progressed, wave upon wave of Baba's Love swept over us all .... and by the end of the program we all felt that our need of a 'recharge' had been fulfilled in a wonderful way!"

Baba tells us He has come to release the flood of Truth; that it will be released when He breaks His Silence. We can imagine His Silence as the Dam that is holding in this full and absolute flood, this stupendous conservation of Truth force, that must not be released before the time of His giving is right, which will be when the season of our receiving is ripe. And as the moment draws near and the growing decades of time that the Dam of His Silence has endured press on it with increasing urgency, we see the strain telling upon His physical health. We recall His telling us at different times and in different words how difficult it is NOT to reveal Himself; and we realize to what perfection He wears the guise of imperfection, that we might one day be perfect in Him.

Some of the close disciples, men and women, who were with the Beloved at the time His Silence began, look back over the distance of forty-one years and tell us of what their memories can still perceive with undimmed clarity. They tell us how, shortly before the end of June 1925, Baba told them of His decision to observe a long period of silence. He said it would commence on 1st July, but later He moved the date to 10th July, where it was to stay thru the many years and phases of their life lived with Baba. But they were not to know that at the time, for Baba declared He would observe Silence for ONE YEAR. This decision of

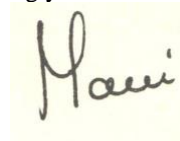
Baba, as the various sudden and unexpected decisions they had known Him make, the disciples accepted unquestioningly, unwonderingly. Theirs was not to question why... This was their Lord's wish and that was enough for them. Their concern was to meticulously carry out His orders and the many daily duties entrusted by Him to each, for no lapse of discipline or obedience would be brooked by Baba, who was unceasingly the Master as He was unreservedly the Friend. Their personal reactions however, were interesting and differing. When Baba told the men that He would break His Silence at the end of one year, after which He would "come out into the open" (manifest in the world) and bring an end to all that was Illusory, some interpreted it to literally mean that after the period of one year there would be no more need for any worldly possessions of any kind. Rustom (who periodically visited his home and parents at Ahmednagar as wished by Baba) went so far as to plead with his family and friends to get rid of their earthly goods, and himself gave away all his personal belongings that were at home — including his expensive suits (which, incidentally, he was to find himself in crucial need of when Baba sent him to England for His work in 1927).

The reaction of the women disciples was as womanly as it was heartwarmingly understandable. They just could not bring themselves to believe that Baba would keep complete and absolute silence for the duration of one whole year; that for twelve long months He would not utter a single word, when they knew speech to flow from Him with the continuity and sparkle of a clear mountain stream! All thru the day they would hear His voice in the mercurial splendour of a hundred moods — conversing, commanding, singing, laughing, discoursing, reprimanding, joking, story-telling, teasing, reminiscing .... It was incredible to imagine that Baba would clang shut the gates of His oral eloquence and keep them locked for twelve months. And so they said among themselves: "At the most, He will keep silence for one month". The last they heard of His beautiful voice was on the eve of His Silence when He said to them: "Hear well my voice; you will not hear it for a long time". That was four hundred and ninety-four months ago.

Recently the Beloved has been telling us not so much of the close-at-hand breaking of His Silence, but of the monumental change that will come about on earth when He does so. One morning while we were sitting at breakfast with Baba, and a humming bird was hovering before a window-pane in ecstasy of its own reflection, we got to talking of His Silence. Illustrating for us the completeness of the transformation that will take place in the world after He breaks His Silence, Baba cupped His left hand loosely over His right as though He were holding a big ball, and then with a deft movement brought His right hand over His left in an absolute turnover of the imaginary ball's position. "Upside down", one of us interpreted. With a half-smile Baba gestured "Right side up"!

JAI BABA!

Ever lovingly

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed on the page below the text "Ever lovingly".



# *seventy-one/*

Meherazad, 14 December 1966

Dearest Family,

It was in December of 1956 that the first 'family letter' came out, born of Baba's Love for His Western family. That was ten years and seventy letters ago. As I dust the files of these letters and thumb through their mass of pages I wonder how many words they contain. I recall Francis Goldney, when he was at Meherazad\*, tirelessly typing away long letters and articles all day, at the end of which he would beamingly tell us the exact number of words he had typed! Having neither his astounding energy nor patience, I couldn't ever hope to tackle the mountain of words made by the family letters over the years. But I do look in wonder at this wordy "mountain" and know it would be a rubble-heap were it not held together by the might of Baba's Love, were it not covered with the tender grass of His mercy and bearing the life-giving springs of His words. As Baba has told us, only "words that proceed from the Source of Truth have real meaning."

Direct from the Source come the following words. The message was specially dictated by Beloved Baba for His lovers to receive through this Family-letter:

Desires and longings are the root cause of all suffering.

The only 'Real Desire is to see God, and the only Real Longing is to become one with God.

This Real Desire and Longing frees one from the bondage of birth and death. Other desires and longings bind one with ignorance.

To desire the Real Desire and to long for the Real Longing you need my Grace; and you cannot have that until you surrender all other desires and longings to me.

Your love for me will help you to surrender these desires and longings; and my Love for you will help you to desire the Real Desire and long for the Real Longing which are by my Grace.

- MEHER BABA -

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\* Lt.-Col. F. P. Goldney (rtd.), Baba-lover in Faroe Islands, who stayed at Meherazad for a number of days in 1957.

We take in the words and we think we understand what they mean. But words of Real Meaning are not meant to be understood, they are meant to be lived; and only with the breath of His Love can we live them. Isn't that why our merciful Beloved has told us: "My depth is unfathomable. Don't try to understand me. Just love me." So, loving Him is our first step, next step, and every step. And love must walk hand in hand with obedience, for their separation adds to His pain. Naturally His most difficult wish for His lovers to obey is the wish that none should seek to visit Him, and this is where some of His Eastern lovers fail miserably. Baba made it so clear that He wishes to remain undisturbed till the end of November 1967 — undisturbed by visitors; yet they came, and still more came, pleading to see Him. When the disturbance reached its limit, Baba ordered three big boards with His wish painted on them in big clear letters in three languages (Hindi, Marathi and English) to be put up where they would be distinctly visible. The words on them are:

AVATAR MEHER BABA HAS STOPPED SEEING  
AND GIVING DARSHAN TO ANYONE

- By Order -

The boards have been placed on the old caravan of the New Life, and Baba has told us to take them with us to Poona for His summer stay at Guruprasad from April through June 1967. In the meantime three more of the same boards have been put up along the Meherazad road where it forks to the Mandali's quarters. There they stand, the three silent sentinels, and we have sometimes seen some visitor standing before them with hands reverently joined, bowing literally to His Wish!

As Creation revolves round the pivot that is God-Man, our days revolve round the Pain that is in His neck. We are kept constantly occupied with the daily chores and various Baba-given duties that outspan our limited circle of time. But our actions are as satellites round our deep awareness of His silent pain which increases and decreases in volume but is never silent. Companion to our awareness of His pain is the awareness of our helplessness to help Him who is simply here to help us. The only thing that can help is our love. And above all Mehera, His best-loved, can help best. The ones who feel most helpless are the Baba-lover doctors who are privileged to serve Him: Dr. Ram Ginde (eminent neurosurgeon, of Bombay)\* who has put all his skill and heart into the treating of Baba's cervical condition; and Dr. Goher who is one of us at Meherazad, and is personal physician to Baba. Here's what Dr. Ram Ginde says in his letter to Goher: "I got news about Beloved Baba's neck pain from brother Adi who was with us a day before I left for Delhi, and your letter

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\* Director of neurology dept. in Sir J.J. group of Hospitals, Bombay. The President of India has just made him Honorary Surgeon Captain in the India Navy, as a tribute to his work on naval casualties in last year's Inda-Pak conflict.

confirms the same. He also said that you are much worried. I am also in the same predicament. Whatever I know from the knowledge of His cervical condition, I have tried to do in all sincerity. But I must admit, as I have admitted before, my utter failure in regard to relieving Beloved Baba's pain. I plead quite helpless in treating Him who is as powerful as, nay more powerful than, an ocean and as helpless as a kitten at one and the same time. I can only ask His forgiveness." Baba smiled with love when He heard the letter, and immediately told Eruch to write and tell Ram not to be worried, but to remember that he is very dear to Baba, that the root cause of Baba's pain is not physical but universal, and that it will leave Him only in His time.

Baba says: "NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL TO UNDERSTAND  
THAT I AM GOD IN HUMAN FORM."

The cloak of Human-ness that God puts on for our human sakes is the highest revelation of His God-ness. Time and time again God manifests His glory to man in the supreme image of the God-Man. In the silence of suffering assumed by the Infinite in finite Form, God tells His creation: "I love you". So that we may love Him as He loves us, He gives us His supremest Blessing in disguise, walking as Man among men, taking on our human-ness which hides His glory from the eyes of the many and reveals it in the hearts of the few. One of my unforgettable moments of sharing in such revelation was at the East-West gathering. A charming and accomplished woman had accompanied her husband across thousands of miles to see Baba for the first time. Nevertheless she had come not prepared to accept Him as the Avatar. After she met Baba, I heard her say with dazed wonder shining through her tears: "Never did I dream I would look into a man's eyes and know without a doubt that I looked at God!"

Although she had His darshan through His beloved eyes, she was given it in her heart — as He has given it to many who have yet to see His human Form. And with the ascending of His Love's Sun, more and more new lovers are caught in Its rays. "The most touching thing about some of our new young men is to see them light up with Baba's Love", writes Ivy Duce from California. And one of these "new young men" in his first letter to Baba tells Him:

"It's only been about one month now that I have loved you.  
Before, my life was a shambles; now, there is new life.  
I am content with the reality of Your Love. My desire  
is to do only what you want me to do. My hope is to  
become only what you want me to become."

As simple as that. Too painfully simple for Intellect, the giant, to swallow. As a Perfect Master has said: "Thousands of pundits and crores of intellectuals may argue and analyse, but God's business God alone knows."

And God's business is working like nobody's business in the land of Baba's parents, IRAN, as we learn thru letters received from Baba's Centres in Teheran, Shiraz, Yezd. From these letters in Persian, Aloba (of the mandali at Meherazad)

translates passages for us into English. 'Aloba' is the nickname bestowed on Ali Akbar Shapur Zaman at the start of the New Life, and he is the one who is carrying on Baba-correspondence with Iran. Put together, these passages we share from letters of Baba's Iranian lovers make an intoxicating bouquet filled with the wonder of His Love — the only kind of bouquet to offer the One who is Love. It is made of profound personal experiences, of men and women (both Zoroastrian and Mohammedan) risen overnight from unbelief to belief, of manifestations of the unique ways in which Baba has awakened them in Love and 'ashakened' them in Work. The materially influential among the newly awakened are using their resources to help spread His message in Iran. One of the results of this is that Baba-books, Baba-magazines, Baba-folders (and even the family-letter) are coming out for the first time in Persian, printed and distributed by the thousands! To us it all appears so sudden. What had but a short time ago seemed a gentle breeze blowing from His ocean, is undoubtedly gathering the strength of a storm! And His workers in Iran watch His doing with no less amazement — as we see from this passage translated into English by Aloba from a letter of Mr. Kalantari, secretary of Baba's Centre in Teheran:

"... in short dear Shapurzaman, I don't know whether Hazrat Meher Baba does His work in other parts of the world in the same speed and magnitude as He does here in Iran?! It seems that Baba has put His foot on the accelerator of His works here, and if it goes on in the same speed and fastness, after a year several thousands of people will leave their homes and start on their feet crossing deserts and mountains and will appear in India for the ZIARAT (pilgrimage) of HAZRAT MEHER BABA. What can one do, this is the will and desire of the LORD of the world!"

Every moment of God's being on earth as Man is a giving of Himself, and oceanic outpouring of Love and blessing, a Service to the countless selves in bubble-bondage. How immeasurably blessed then are all things and beings that serve the God-Man, in some way or another, knowingly and unknowingly — those drawn by His grace up-river to the Source in undeviating purpose, and those swept by the winds of compassion into the current of His Avataric life. Often has Baba recalled with love some service rendered to Him as from man to man — an occurrence that has recurred infinite times. To single out an instance, take the Sikh farmer in north India. Seeing some wayfarers seated under the shade of a tree on the outskirts of his village, the farmer silently watched from some distance and then walked away to his hut. After a time he returned with a jar full of butter-milk and a stack of freshly baked maize-bread, and lovingly placed them before the man and his companions under the tree. The men of course were Baba (travelling incognito) and His disciples, taking a much needed respite amid their long weary search for a Mast who had so far eluded all their efforts to find him. That simple refreshing meal offered spontaneously in love was relished as a banquet by the One who is hungry for nothing but love.

At times the breath of Baba's reminiscing lifts the curtain on men and moments associated with His boyhood years. Among the dearly remembered, stands an old lady who made a habit of giving Him sweets despite her husband's objections. This Parsi couple owned and ran a small shop of aerated waters

(soft drinks) not far from St. Vincent's, the school attended by Merwan\* (as Baba was called); and every time that Merwan visited the shop, usually taking some friends along, the good woman doled out sweets by the handful. Whenever the husband was there he would prevent this by excitedly ordering the boys out of the place — while from behind the expanse of his back she would gesticulate in frantic pantomime to let Merwan know they could come round by the back door! Baba recalls the boyish delight of those backdoor treats of soft-drinks and sweets given by the woman with the soft heart where Merwan had a special corner.

From the Beloved's teenage remembering we've caught many a humorous moment sparkling in the glow of His smile. One is the incident of the portly gentleman with a passion for drink, who did not want his acquaintances to know he imbibed liquor as it was against the tenets of his religion. He would make his visits to the public house with elaborate care, sneaking in furtively by the back entrance that led from a quiet alleyway. After an interval of time, filled to the brim with liquor and the courage that comes from the bottle, he was ready to challenge the world and would boldly stride out from the front doors into the bustling street for all to see! The place was not far from the shop of Baba's father, and this indomitable character was seen repeating his performance of cowardice and courage every day!

In the cast of characters made immortal by Baba's remembrance, perhaps the most fascinating is the hunchback of Lonavla — a Muslim and a superb raconteur who regaled Merwan with tales of old. Baba's uncle had a teashop in Lonavla\*\*, and this grand old teller of tales was its regular visitor. Inevitably he was also its biggest attraction. The customers would urge and press him for a story, and would ply him with tea and cigars throughout the recital. Baba tells us that he and the others would sit round the hunchback far into the night, listening enthralled to his tales of adventure and fantasy; tales that were as fabulously rich in substance as they were in length — customarily a single story covered a week of evenings!

Merwan's fondness for fiction included detective stories. I was delighted to learn from one of Baba's earliest disciples, Ramju Abdulla (author of "Sobs and Throbs"), that one of the first things that drew his heart to Baba was the bond of their having shared a common enthusiasm for that incredible detective Sexton Blake! As a boy, side by side with works of great poets and masters of literature in English and Persian, Merwan was an ardent reader of Sexton Blake magazines and of books by Edgar Wallace. Even now, sharing as He does in our human-ness — and unspeakably dignifying it — He is not beyond the reach of fiction writers' yarns, and at times listens to them. A single book can take quite a number of days to finish, for He allows only a short time at a stretch for its reading out to Him (by one of us, for Baba has stopped both writing and reading since many years). Rex Stout, Agatha Christie and Carter Dickson (with their inimitable detectives), P.G. Wodehouse (with his celebrated humour) and J.R.R. Tolkien (with his 'hobbits' and dwarves and their symbolic journey) are among the favoured ones whose works have offered some relaxation to Him in His

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\* short for Meherwan

\*\* between Poona and Bombay.

infinite tiredness. Baba has said "Creation is really a mighty joke, but the laugh is at my own expense — and now the jest is proving a burden on my chest". And so they too have served Him, all the authors whose stories have served to entertain the Author of Creation's Story and helped ease to some extent the strain of His universal burden. Could we but say as much!

What's in a name? Everything, when it is HIS Name! Kabir says: "Ram's (Avatar's) Name is yours for the looting; loot all you can while you can before Time and Body pass away."

In Time's dreary desert, Avatar-time is Spring-time when each moment of God-loving and God-remembering may conceive a lifetime's yield of God-nearing in our journey to Him. And yet how often we let our moments lie like blossoms in the dust, trampled under the feet of our busy-ness, scattered by the winds of carelessness, unheeded by eyes turned to selfness. And in His compassion, that unimaginable unlimited compassion, Baba our beloved Avatar reminds us "Remember Me".

Every day there is some cry of distress from some lover or another, coming in a cable or telegram from some part of the world or the other, calling out to Baba for His divine help. And the telegrams and cables going out in reply invariably carry His message to this effect:

THE REMEDY FOR ALL ILLS IS TO REMEMBER ME  
CONSTANTLY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY

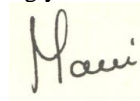
- MEHERBABA -

In telling us this He tells us He is with us; that when we are with Him our worrying melts, and we can be with Him only in wholehearted remembrance.

But even while groping through the dark moments of our dreaming in Illusion, we may miss that first moment of full remembrance. And here the Baba-reminders are His little lovers who see Him with heart-lamps unclouded with worries. Like the five year old boy crossing from U.S.A. to Germany by plane reminding his air-frightened mother "Baba is holding the plane in His hands". Like the little girl in Australia running first to Baba's picture to tell Him there was a bush fire raging close to the house. Like the six year old in Bombay whose father had a bad accident, and, coming up to the scene with her shocked mother, crying out "Mummy don't be worried, don't be nervous, remember Baba, keep saying BABA". Like —well, like many others. Oh when will we grow up to be as a child in vision, that we may never lose sight of His nearness to us! When will we remember Him in His way? Beloved Baba says:

"YOU WILL COME TO REMEMBER ME WHOLEHEARTEDLY  
AS YOU REMEMBER YOURSELF LESS AND LESS."

Ever lovingly,



Attention: THE AWAKENER is the only Baba-magazine in the West, launched over thirteen years ago by Phyllis Frederick. Never a sturdy craft financially, it has sailed bravely through the years carrying the Beloved's Message. All these years Warren Healy, the man at the oars, has worked singlehanded at his little press in the basement of his house, bringing out "The Awakener", bringing out Baba's messages in a hundred different colours of His Love.

Now dear Warren has to take a rest, since the very severe heart-attack he recently suffered. His heart warns him to rest, his doctors tell him to rest, and above all his Most Wondrous One (as he calls Baba) orders him to rest. So "The Awakener" finds itself in low waters and needs all Baba-loving hands to push it through following issues which will be printed by a commercial printer. Its editor will-welcome all the help you can contribute towards this. Please write direct to the Editor: Filis Frederick, 424-A 36th St., Manhattan Beach, California 90266 (U.S.A.).

*seventy-two/*

Meherazad, 8th February 1967.

Dearest Family,

JAI BABA to you from us all at Meherazad on this crisp winter's morning in the month of Our Lord, the 73rd February since the still awaited 'Second Coming' came to pass. When the Avatar has brought all religions together "like beads on one string," then surely every religion will recognize the Second Coming as being in fact the Recurrent Returning of the same Compassionate One!

AVATAR MEHER BABA'S MESSAGE

Given for the Occasion of His 73rd Birthday

on 25th February 1967

"BIRTHS AND DEATHS ARE ILLUSORY PHENOMENA.

ONE REALLY DIES WHEN ONE IS BORN TO LIVE AS GOD,

THE ETERNAL WHO IS BEYOND BOTH BIRTH AND DEATH."

A circular carrying the above message has been sent out by Adi to all in the East, and they have also been informed that Baba lovingly permits all His lovers to celebrate His 73rd Birthday. Adi adds "Those who wish to celebrate Baba's Birthday should proceed with the preparations and celebrate it in a manner befitting to the Avatar.

In many places here the Birthday plans have started rolling since the 15th of December, and we feel the vibrations and hear the happy rumbling as they progress in their march of 73 days towards the Greatest Day on Earth. As Eruch described it in his letter to Harry Kenmore: "Every day is being celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm as a part of the birthday festivity which will end on B-Day on 25th February 1967. All this activity to celebrate the Birthday of the Birthless One! Well, this is necessary too to remind us all of our births and deaths, and to give vent to our exuberance in the knowledge of having the Ancient One once again among us." Apart from daily programs channelling His Message to the people at large, a number of His Centres are carrying out continuous BABA-Name repetition throughout the 73 days up to the hour of 5:00 a.m. on 25th February. Moreover, Baba's birth-time of 5:00 a.m. is obviously Baba-time on any day of the year for His lovers in India, as we were delighted to observe on invitation cards sent out by some of them on marriage occasions in the family. These very attractive Wedding cards not only had (as usual) Baba's picture printed on them, in colour and in gold, but the time fixed for the weddings was 5 o'clock in the morning! I wonder if by setting this precedent they have set the clock for Posterity to time all happy occasions by this auspicious hour!

At Beloved Baba's express wish, the following announcement was given in the Eastern circular and is given here for His Western family. Baba wants you to pay close attention to it:



Please note very carefully:-

Avatar Meher Baba will be in Poona from 1st April to the end of June 1967. As usual, Baba will stay at 'Guruprasad', 24 Bund Road, Poona-1.

Baba wishes all His lovers to be informed that He wants to remain completely undisturbed till the end of 1967. He will not give darshan to His lovers and will not see visitors till after 1967.

After 1967 Baba will Himself announce when He will give darshan to His lovers. Therefore Baba wants His lovers not to come to Him of their own accord before His announcement is circulated.

During His stay at Guruprasad in Poona for the three months (April thru June 1967) Baba will see only those whom He has called, or will specifically call, for His work.

I once said to a woman who was feeling miserable at leaving Baba and not knowing when she would see Him again: "Baba is with you, wherever you go." Her retort was "What do you know about it — you are with Him all the time." There was nothing I could say to that! And any comment from me in reference to the above declaration of Baba's wish might not ring true either. It is of course between Baba and His lovers — HE knows what they can take, He knows what they can give, and He asks of them no less.

As I sit typing this in the 'office' on the verandah and peer over my glasses into the garden beyond, I see the tailor-bird vigorously taking a bath on water-sprinkled Lily leaves; the robin pecking with immodest speed at crumbs put out for the birds; and the dove carrying a twig to his mate in the rafter where she sits serenely on her incredible nest of half a dozen twigs sprawling over the beam. Above the song of birds and familiar sounds of household activities, I hear Eruch's voice coming from the Hall. He is reading out to Baba some important correspondence in English (as Bhau does in Hindi and Aloba in Persian) during the short time the Beloved allows for it while He is with the Mandli every morning. This consists mainly of cables and telegrams; and then (if time and Baba permit) some selected letters relating to His work. While Baba listens to letters reporting the work He does thru His workers, He expresses pleasure and praise for the part His workers play in the doing of His work! On their part, it is clear that in every move and behind every 'coincidence' they see Baba's beautiful hand, moving faster than they can keep up with. This is how Don Stevens and Allen Cohen, speaking for the vital force of America's youth, put it in their letters to us:

Don says: "One of the most exciting aspects of Baba's movement towards the day of His manifestation has been the manner in which He has been leading young people to us (Sufism Reoriented). Then, to see the bond of inner relationship which springs up between them and Baba, to see its strength, and the extraordinary results it produces, is perhaps the greatest succession of miracles I have been allowed to witness. I stand in awe of what I see. At the heart of what each of them seems to need desperately is a sense of meaning. Then they need a sense of support. Both they get from Baba. I've kept my fingers crossed, wondering how this could go on encompassing new individuals, and sustaining those who had already found this new way. And yet, month after month, it has gone on."

Allen says: "Interest and familiarity with Baba's Name has been rising at a rapid rate .... Unquestionably, Baba's tempo in the U.S. is speeding up spectacularly — word of the Beloved has quickened the hearts of many who have been yearning for they knew not what. He seems to be reaping a harvest of ripe souls with the ancient tools of love and inspiration. And even the infinitesimal part of His management of the 'Love Farm' which I see, leaves me in wonderment and awe of His seemingly incredible Mastery of its technology, administration and most minute detail! JAI BABA!!"

If it is surprising to find this great 'speeding up' in the U.S.A. where Baba's following has always been bigger than the rest of the West put together, it is surely astonishing to see the rise of Baba-interest in countries like Germany and Austria where He was scarcely known! This has come about thru the longing of Hilde Halpern to bring the word of Baba to the people of her native land. "I bless your effort to spread my Love and Wisdom in your mother tongue," the Beloved told her in 1960 when she was in America and had just published her book 'Liebe Und Weisheit' (Love and Wisdom) giving Baba's messages and discourses in German. For some years now she and her family have been in Munich and Vienna, and her desire to spread Baba's word is being fulfilled beyond her expectations — she is finding more openings and possibilities than can be handled, more seeking and response than can be imagined. In an early letter Hilde had written: "The people here are very eager, and truly thirsty for Baba, but they do not yet know and they cannot yet discriminate. They have had so little help that they turn overjoyed to every 'guru', 'saint', 'teacher', to anybody with a message, in the hope that at last there might be somebody who could help them!" Baba surely sent Hilde to help them, and at first practically sent them to her door thru an avenue of unexpected contacts and remarkable coincidences, to look for Him. Against domestic and other odds that would have overwhelmed a lesser lover, with very limited time on the one hand and unlimited material on the other, she and her daughter Maria went steadily ahead with Baba's grace. Soon Hilde was giving talks at educational and cultural organizations where she was invited to speak on Baba; showing coloured movies of Baba with touching response from the audience; giving Baba-material in German magazines; having large size photos of Baba displayed alongside her book in a bookshop; tape recording her talk for some occasion when not able to attend in person; and above all developing individual interest among the most promising ones who are now in turn helping to spread His message. At present Hilde is invited to give a Baba-evening for 'The Seekers', a group that has weekly lectures on esoteric subjects, mostly related to Christ. Having the choice of a Friday evening, it is natural that she should think of 24th February so as to make a "big Birthday celebration" of the Baba-evening where the people will meet Baba through His lovers. "But," writes Hilde, "If only I could give you a picture of how very many people in Vienna are eager to meet Baba personally, and not just through us!" It was one of the letters read to Baba.

Even if no letter is fitted into the morning's reading-out period, every cable and telegram received is read out to Him. This makes it a massive overtime proceeding during the week of the Beloved's Birthday, when the green light is on and the rush of telegraphic traffic to and from Meherazad exceeds all limits of time! The Avatar's previous birthdays too, open the way for our love to greet Him. Baba lovers for whom Christmas time is Baba-Jesus time, sent their love in cables and in cards, individually and in groups, to "The One who started Christmas" (as Filis Frederick puts it). Beloved Baba wishes this letter to carry His Love to each one. All cables were heard by Him, all cards seen by Him. The spirit that urged His lovers to send Him their love-greeting at Christmas was expressed by the Fields family of Wisconsin (U.S.) in a simple line. On their beautiful Christmas card from 'Bob Barbara and Barry', was the inscription:

TO MEHER BABA WHO FOR US IS THE CHRIST.

This letter is going out sooner than expected, so that Baba's Birthday message reaches all of you in good time. The next letter will be in June.

Another thing not expected was my having to speak of Ramjoo Abdulla so soon after my mention of him in the last letter. Then it was in reference to his first coming to Baba, now it is to tell you of his final coming to Baba. On this 11th of January (1967), at the age of 67, Ramju passed away from heart failure. Beloved Baba had this message telegraphed to the family: MY VERY DEAR RAMJOO HAS COME TO ME TO REST ETERNALLY IN ME. Baba also sent Adi immediately to Satara to convey His Love and message personally to Ramju's family members who are devoted to Baba. They related to Adi how during the final days Ramju continually repeated Baba's Name, with a string of beads to help him do so without a lapse. In the last moments when he was too feeble to hold the beads, his fingers were still moving by themselves in rhythm with the movement of his lips!

Besides a number of chronic ailments, for years dear Ramju suffered incessantly from severe asthma which made breathing a painful labour for him at all times, and finally affected his heart. None of this he allowed to get in the way of his labouring in his beloved Master's service to the end. Two days before he died, he called his close ones to him and spoke of Baba in the light of his knowledge: ".....space is the image of Reality and time is the reflection of that image..... it is impossible for both light and shadow to co-exist .... Meher Baba is the personification of that Infinite Light." As Ramju's last moments were wholly absorbed in remembrance and love for Baba, so were the years of his life since following "the personification of that Infinite Light."

Being of the very early disciples, having an unusual flair for narration and an uncanny memory for details, Ramju was a walking treasury of Baba-anecdotes. He was also among the very few who received letters from Baba in His own handwriting, signed MERWAN. From some of these letters, written to "Dear Ramju" from "Merwan" in 1925 and 1926, I quote some lines that I know Ramju would want to share with others, not so much in his memory as in homage to Baba's Love for His own — lines that are a timeless discourse to all His lovers:

"I am always with you internally."

"I love you as my own self."

"Have no anxiety about any matter."

"Be brave it will all pass away!"

"I have taken it to myself to make you see Truth in future."

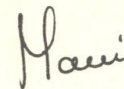
"All's well, you have me! Hang maya and all its  
illusionary playings."

I wish us all a Happy 1967 in the words of our Fred and Ella Winterfeldt. Surely Fredella have taken the words right from every Baba-lover's heart!

"All Praise, all Glory, all Thanks to Beloved Baba.

May our every breath and thought, our every action,  
our whole being with all our love, be His in 1967  
and in eternity. HAPPY NEW BABA-YEAR!"

Ever lovingly,



NOTE: In view of probable disruption in Telegraphic service all over the country from the 21st of this month, it is advisable for those sending Birthday cables to the Beloved, to do so in advance.

Also please remember that the cable address is simply two words:  
MEHERBABA AHMEDNAGAR (India). Although this has been made clear in several previous letters, some lovers still send their cables addressed at length, sometimes stretching it to a dozen words!

# *seventy-three/*

Guruprasad Poona, 1st June 1967.

Dearest Family,

Two thirds of our Guruprasad stay is over, with four weeks left to departure time. We arrived here on the morning of April 2nd, the usual odd procession on wheels starting from Meherazad soon after breakfast: the large truck carrying all personal and household stuff (including bicycles and liftchair), the hired Station-wagon and the De Soto accommodating most of the Meherazad family, and Dr. Donkin's new Wolseley carrying Beloved Baba and some of us. As good to look at as to drive in, the Wolseley glided over the rough roads like a drake on a lake. During the drive Baba repeatedly remarked how comfortable He felt, and told Donk to be here with his car on 1st July to drive Him back to Meherazad.

The first thing Baba did on stepping into Guruprasad was something we have not seen Him do for umpteen years — taking a brisk walk up and down its long verandah, His hand on the arm of one of the mandali who was having quite a job keeping in step with Him! Others, usually snail-walking behind Baba, were comparatively running. It made me remember the time we told Harry Kenmore how in bygone days Baba used to walk so fast that the mandali had to run after Him, and Harry had promptly punned "Well, they're still running after Him!" Now, I thought, they are beginning to do so literally again.

Each morning and afternoon we have seen the Beloved striding the length of the marble tiled verandah, to and from the mandali's hall. Added to our joy at seeing Him walk like this is seeing the pleasure it gives Him, when at the end of a stride He may ask with a delighted smile "How do I walk?!" Just as He asked Dr. Ram Ginde when he was here in April, called by Baba "for five minutes" specially to see Him walking. And Ram's reply shone from his beaming face with that eloquence which makes words look pale before it. How Baba appeared to him during his fifty minutes with Baba, Dr. Ginde expressed in his letter to Eruch:

"Beloved Baba looked a picture of radiant health with bright shining eyes, rosy cheeks, exuding joy and happiness. He did not seem to have much pain in His neck and His movements were relatively free and spontaneous. His gait was strong. I have never seen Him walk like that before; one stretch and back along the verandah was enough to make me breathe heavily. It was really a unique and thrilling experience."

If Beloved Baba appeared in such glowing health and radiance to Dr. Ginde, that's how He appeared to us. But that is not to say we see Him always in this light, as we do when His radiance is turned on full for those whom He calls for a while. For us who see Him all the time, He often keeps the shade down or we could be dazzled into forgetfulness of His humanity. Baba made a statement on this one morning recently in Meherazad when He was seated with His mandali. Baba said: "I am both divine and human. Those who live with me feel more of my humanity than my divinity. Those whom I permit to come and see me for a while see more of my divinity than my humanity. All my intimate lovers whether living with me or away from me will, in the end, experience my divinity."

Baba's sudden decision to call Dr. Ginde when He did, was explained by His remark: "Later I may not be walking so fast". We were to remember that casual remark some weeks later, when Baba strained a muscle in His back which made movement painful. But although the back considerably slowed down His pace Baba continued the daily verandah walks, until it became too painful to take a step. Then the little wheel-chair was unpacked and put into service again after its long holiday — the chair sent by His 'Big Ben' (Dr. Ben Hayman) by Air from U.S.A. three years ago. Last two summers Baba used it all the time, but this year it was out of sight and out of mind till the back strain made its use imperative for a while.

The cervical collar too has been hardly in use this summer. With the temperature up to 109 F. during May, we didn't dare imagine the discomfort it would have meant for Baba if the collar had to be on longer! Happily, substantial improvement in the neck pain made this unnecessary. Some time ago in Meherazad, when there were darshan-seekers in spite of Baba's repeated announcement that He is in seclusion and none must ask to see Him, Baba said "Only my lovers' love can help the pain in my neck, it can ease only when my seclusion is undisturbed". We can see that even if we learn our lesson the hard way, hard for Him, His Patience and Love help us in the end to learn it well. Now the love of His lovers has indeed begun to help by keeping His seclusion undisturbed. And although this applies to His lovers everywhere, at the moment it applies most to His lovers in Poona. For them the Beloved's darshan is touchingly close, yet they have not let a breath of their longing stir the quiet of His seclusion! And this final period of His seclusion is the most important, as Baba disclosed before we left for Poona. He said that His universal work is mounting to peak intensity and for five months He will have to undergo much suffering, after which we should be prepared to witness "great changes".

The family letter is invariably read to Beloved Baba before it is posted. When He heard the completed draft of this letter, Baba expressed concern over His lovers being anxious to know whether He is now walking about as before. He therefore told me to add this message from Him to you all:

"My lovers need not worry, because I have started walking fast again; but my mental and spiritual suffering will end only when I break my silence."

For us Easter time has long been associated with Guruprasad time, but this year it was a month ahead by the calendar and we were at Meherazad. On Easter Sunday morning in Meherazad there was a surprise 'visit' from two outstanding artistes who entertained the Beloved with songs on the air. While Baba was breakfasting we turned on the radio as usual for some music He would enjoy. We tuned in to 'The Voice of America Breakfast Show', and there was Marion Anderson singing: He's Got The Whole World in His Hands! Her superb voice rolled out the words in the stillness of His presence as though she were there before Him, singing to Him alone. Next we switched over to Poona and there was Begum Akhtar in voice form; and it might well have been that she was singing to Baba in person as she had done in the past, singing with her heart in her voice and love's tears coursing down her cheeks.....

Easter is an eternal occasion in the lives of Baba-lovers as they witness in themselves and in others the daily miracle of resurrection of His Love. For us Easter is God submitting Himself to be earthbound that we may rise from the tomb of our selfhood to life in His Godhood. The rejoicing of Easter is symbolic of our rebirth in Him. And if tradition-wise the Easter chicks may be said to symbolize the joy of 'coming to life', Baba-wise they would surely symbolize the hearts hatched in His Love. Well, the Avatar's Chicken Farm is already showing signs of flourishing, and from what Baba indicates the time is near ripening for a population-explosion of "Baba-chicks" all over the world!

One resurrected heart\* wrote three Easters ago:

"It is little more than a year since we (my wife and I) became followers of the living Avatar. I remember reading Baba's words 'Love me more and more', wondering what that meant. But now I realize that it is very easy to love Him more and more, for Baba does more and more fill our lives.

"We learned about Meher Baba at Easter time, Easter has always been for me a time of inner upliftment and awakening to my own for the most part dormant exultation in God. Though I have never followed the rituals of Christianity, at Easter the meaning of Christ becomes ever more clear. This Easter my horizon and my sunrise is Meher Baba who fulfills every sense of the meaning of the resurrection and the light."

I kept telling myself my mind was made up — there would be no report on Baba's Birthday celebrations observed this year in East or West — it had been a big enough job last year and I didn't have the courage to tackle this year's giant with my pen. I determined to skip over the subject and touch no Birthday items, only to find it would have to be a high leap if the New York item was to be passed over, since it had unexpectedly turned into a world item! On 25th February in New York there was once again a big program arranged at the Barbizon Plaza Theatre by the 'Society for Avatar Meher Baba' celebrating the Beloved's 73rd Birthday. And this entire program of two hours' duration was taped live on the spot, and broadcast next day via shortwave over RNYW (Radio New York Worldwide) to more than a hundred countries throughout the world. Radio New York Worldwide received U.S. government's permission to beam directly to India for the occasion, and the 'Sunday Hindusthan Standard' of Calcutta notified its public of this Baba-broadcast under marked headlines: RADIO NEW YORK HONOURS MEHER BABA. All Baba Centers and lovers who could be informed at rush notice sat glued to their radios hours ahead of scheduled time, including the mandali at Meherazad. And even if others were unable to make contact, the special beam directed from hearts gathered at Barbizon Plaza Theatre reached Meherazad! Despite atmospheric disturbances and overlapping stations we caught clear snatches

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\* Lynn Ott, U.S.A.

of the Birthday program: part of a speech, a song, a comment. "Beloved Baba" were the first words that burst through the barrier of babble from bordering stations: the last words we heard were "Happy Birthday Baba!". To Station RNYW goes the unique honour of broadcasting worldwide the Avatar's name. To the Society for Avatar Meher Baba, to its chairman Dr. Harry Kenmore who is entrusted by Baba to carry out two public celebrations each year in New York, to each and all His workers and lovers whose individual contributions make this possible, goes the reward of Beloved Baba's pleasure. Here is the text of Baba's cable to Harry Kenmore:

"I am very happy with New York celebrations of my Birthday. I send my Love to all who selflessly contribute to my Birthday celebrations and Silence anniversaries, thus making it possible for you to fulfill my wish for these events to be publicly celebrated each year in New York."

Close at hand is another Silence Anniversary. For the 'Society for Avatar Meher Baba' it means another public program in New York as wished by Baba; for the lovers it means another opportunity to give their full response in order to make it a worthy public event.

Some time back we read somewhere a quote from someone who said that if God wishes to make another world the material is ready — the first one too was made out of chaos! Well, with all the unbelievable chaos and misery of our world the material is obviously not yet ready for God to make 'another world' in the mould of His Compassion — but it must be nearly ready, for God-Baba tells us "Have patience; the time is drawing near, very near". And if in the world's throes we read signs of God's nearing manifestation, those who 'read the stars' also appear to be given some indication of it. A Baba-lover in Agra came across some significant items in an Astrological Magazine and sent us the text for our interest. The magazine's January 1964 issue predicted: "The weapons manufactured by the ace scientists of the white races will be made ineffective by the attempts of three chief heads by meditation among the obstinate people. This will be done to save the world from destruction, by a terrific sound made by a Superman ... The Superman will wander in Mute Silence." In another column it said: "Aldo Lavagnini, a Mexican astrologer, predicted some time back the appearance of a great World Teacher, a Divine Incarnation, during a third world war or shortly after it." And in the Astrological Magazine's December ('64) issue appeared the following: "As Saturn is now in Aquarius, we may expect the arrival of Universal Man or Viswa-Guru. He will ultimately bring Peace to this earth ... The suffering humanity is praying heart and soul for his early arrival".

If star gazers could look under their noses, and earth wanderers recognize Who is in their midst, they would know that humanity's prayer was heard and answered before it was uttered. The pity is that humanity has not heard the answer to its prayer!

Even as the Avatar hides His Reality behind the veil of our ignorance, He hides His Silence behind the clamour of our words. Never has the world



seemed more word-crazy than it is now, our minds never so deafened by discordant jangle of words coined in man's base metal. How then can we hope to hear the sublime ring of HIS words when He drops them in our midst — words that we let roll away to the corners of our minds or collect in pages of books. And because we have not really heard the words Beloved Baba has given us we ask Him for more, and yet again for more, while He gives us a gentle reminder "If my Silence cannot speak, of what avail words?"

From what He tells us, we will hear His Silence only when He breaks it. The Master Fiddler is here to repair and tune the heartstrings of mankind before He can play the Avataric score, and the world shall dance to the Tune of His making when He gives THE WORD, Hazrat Babajan, who awakened Baba to His Godhood, said of Him: "My beloved Meher! My Son! Some day the whole world will call out 'Meher, Meher', all the trees will cry out 'Meher', all the birds will sing 'Meher'.

And Beloved Baba, what does He say will happen when He breaks His Silence? Baba says:

"THAT WHICH HAS NEVER HAPPENED WILL HAPPEN WHEN I BREAK MY SILENCE."

Baba's instructions to His lovers for the 42nd anniversary of His silence, will be sent out by Adi to all in the East in a Circular issued on 10th June, I give it here as wished by Baba for His Western family's information and attention:

On the 10th of July 1967, the 42nd Anniversary of His Silence, Avatar Meher Baba wishes all who love and obey Him and all who would want to do so, to observe complete Silence for 24 hours beginning from midnight of the 9th July to midnight of the 10th July, in accordance with local time,

Those who, for practical reasons, find that it is not possible to observe silence for the 24 hours on Monday the 10th of July 1967 should instead observe complete fast for twelve hours on that day, from 8.00 a.m, to 8.00 p.m. During this fast nothing must be consumed -- not even water. Those who are fasting for the 12 hours on July 10th, should also observe partial fast on the morning of the 10th by only taking one cup of tea or coffee (with or without milk) between arising and 8.00 a.m, Baba sends His Love Blessing to each one of His lovers for the Silence Day.

The Circular has a postscript Note from Adi given according to Baba's wish. Beloved Baba directs me to reproduce it here in full, for you all dear ones to know and bear in mind:

"Note: As Avatar Meher Baba wants to remain absolutely undisturbed, He directs me to inform all His followers, lovers and workers that He will not attend to any correspondence other than emergency telegrams and cables, and very important letters concerning Baba-work directly, and none should write any more letters to me here or to members of the mandali resident with Him regarding their personal affairs or the affairs of others.

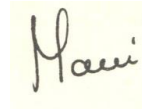
"In case of emergency a reply-paid telegram or cable (fully prepaid for reply) may be sent addressed to: MEHERBABA, AHMEDNAGAR.

"Baba also wishes all His lovers to note that He will not give darshan to them and will not see any visitors till after 1967. After 1967 Baba will Himself announce when He will give darshan to His lovers. Therefore Baba wants none of His lovers to come to Him of their own accord for His darshan before His announcement is circulated.

"I request the group-heads of all Avatar Meher Baba Centres to inform all concerned about this matter.

"Avatar Meher Baba and Mandali will leave Guruprasad, Poona, for Meherazad, Ahmednagar, on July 1st, 1967."

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Meheri'.

# *seventy-four/*

Meherazad, 1st September 1967.

Dearest Family,

Greetings to you in Baba's Love, from your Meherazad family.

Our sojourn at Guruprasad concluded in the manner it had begun — with beloved Baba taking a brisk walk on its verandah. But whereas the walk on our first morning was witnessed by the few who were with Him, on the last two days at Guruprasad the witnesses were many more — men, women and children of the intimate group of Baba-lovers in Poona, whom Baba had allowed to come just to see Him walk. They stood in rows along both sides of the entire verandah; women and children on 1st July, men on the 2nd morning. Smiling and radiant Baba emerged from His room and walked through the rows of His lovers, striding past them in the 'twinkling of an eye', filling their hearts with wonder and joy. They who had never expected to see Baba walk as in the old days, could not help calling it 'a miracle!' When Baba heard of this He said it was not a miracle; what His lovers had witnessed was the fulfilment of His words, for He had said "I will walk as before". Baba added that the time is near ripening when we will witness the fulfilment of all that He has said, for nothing can be fruitless that comes from Him. As He had told us years ago: "Whatever I have said must and will come true. My words can never be in vain, When it appears otherwise it is due to your ignorance and lack of patience." Even as He had said some two thousand years ago: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

We left Poona on the morning of 2nd July, reaching Meherazad well before noon. To return to Meherazad is to be greeted with twin emotions — not identical. One emotion says "Look what we missed!" The other says "Look what we escaped!" The first one is on feeling anew the incomparable atmosphere and quiet beauty of Meherazad which is Home to us. The other is on seeing around us the scars left by a ravaging summer, and realizing anew the invaluable function of Guruprasad which is Haven to us during the hottest months. Among the Meherazad trees that died this April from the shrivelling blast of a heat-wave, were three of the seven 'mastwala' mango trees which stood as tender reminders of a Mast's gift of mangoes to Baba — Baba had sucked the mangoes and had the stones planted. That many other trees survived despite our well-water being down to saucer level, the Pimpalgaon lake bone dry, and Ahmednagar's water situation as substantial as a ghost in daytime, was due to desperate salvage attempts by Padri — he cares for Meherazad in our absence. Then a month later, at a spot just a few feet away from the stricken mango trees lining the field, there came forth water; clear soft water from a depth of 83 feet, water that transfused life into the animal and vegetable kingdom of Meherazad — the Bore-Well project, carried out as directed by Baba—, was a sweet success! This striking of precious water here seemed an omen for plenty of it all round, as the widespread rains in July showed. After years we experienced the delight of a real monsoon and the unfamiliar emotion of longing for the sun! In several other parts of India the blessing poured down too bountifully, submerging places, putting rivers in spate, pushing Poona onto front pages of national papers as she barely escaped another flood like the one she had in 1961. By mid August it looked as though the rainfall had spent itself out, and its feeble efforts since then have renewed the farmers' anxiety.

Meanwhile, the Meherazad garden and landscape wear a contented smile. No more is the earth around us naked, it is dressed in a hundred shades of green. From the window of His room Baba likes to see the colourful patch of garden where the robins play hopscotch, and the east hills whose crusty features have softened with a veil of grass that turns to velvet in the evening light.

Morning and afternoon Beloved Baba goes over to the Mandali's hall, and is with His men (mandali) for a number of hours. The hours that His mandali spend daily in His company, follow the lines of a pattern drawn up by Baba in minutest detail. The sameness of the daily procedure continues for quite some time, until it appears to set and harden. Then unexpectedly the expected happens; suddenly Baba declares some major change or specific variation in the settled routine, precisely as He finds it necessary for the next stage of His Work. The last time when this happened was about three weeks after we returned from Poona. One morning Baba announced to us that from the 21st of July to the 21st of November, He would be in much stricter seclusion. He said the Time for His manifestation was drawing very close, and proportionately His universal work was greatly intensified and had to be carried out without disturbance. He told us that He would not attend to any correspondence during these four months, and that none must visit Meherazad unless when on His own He calls anyone for His work. Accordingly, we do not read correspondence to Him; nor does anyone visit here without being called. Apart from these two variations, the rest of the Meherazad activities go on as usual.

Baba has also announced that He will step out of seclusion one morning before November, for three hours only. He will do this in order to wash the feet of twenty-one lepers, men and women, who will be brought from Ahmednagar to Meherazad for this purpose. After washing their feet and bowing down to them, the Beloved will give to each one of them some wearing-apparel or material that will serve to clothe the recipient's body. And with this tangible prasad will be the unseen gift of the Avatar's blessing, His unbounded Love that heals all pain of ignorance, that melts away sanskaras of lifetimes — the Gift from the Only Giver, given in silence. Many a time Baba has bathed the lepers — "beautiful souls in ugly cages" as He once said of them — and bowed down to them. This time it will be from His Seclusion. Baba has not yet fixed the day. His coming out for this work with the lepers will not mean the end of His seclusion. It will mean only a 'stepping out' for the duration of three hours, after which He will resume His strict seclusion.

Only those who have been directed to make arrangements for this leper-work are to be present at Meherazad on the day. However, an exception has been made for certain individuals who are concerned with the completing of a film being made by Louis van Gasteren, a film-maker of Holland. In response to Louis van Gasteren's earnest request to film Baba, Baba has granted him permission to be present during the three hours when He will step out of seclusion, and to film Baba during His work with the lepers.

From Mr. van Gasteren's letter to Adi we get an idea of the uncommon theme of this 35mm colour film he is making: "Nema Aviona Za Zagreb", which he expects to show throughout the world. It is a film which does not confine itself to a story, but reveals glimpses of the poignancy of human experiences, of joy and sorrow, birth and death, of things happening on both sides of the globe — on which is Meher Baba, The Avatar. Mr. van Gasteren writes: "The appearance of the Avatar in my film is more than functional, it is necessary, to give all the other happenings and sequences the final and right dimension. Now you will understand how happy I am with the Avatar's permission."

This making of a film with Baba to be seen round the world, is an endeavour initiated by Baba's brother Jal, who has worked hard towards it for a long time, pleading for Baba's permission again and again. The reward of Jal's endeavour is in sight, for at last the Beloved has given His permission for such a filming. Louis van Gasteren, in concluding his letter to Adi, spoke of the impact that the Avatar's Message had on him. He wrote, "I tell you frankly that the first time I heard of Baba, the line HE LOVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER LOVE YOURSELF struck me, struck me through the New York cab driver Irwin Luck, struck me since Robert Dreyfuss entered my house with Baba's photograph. It became a line used many times a day within the circle of my friends."

"MEHER BABA IS LOVE". These words are a constant experience in the lives of His lovers. It is a line that has become His lovers' life line. It is now also the title of a Book that has been recently published, a book for children from 4 to 100 years of age, a book whose every word and picture goes to show just that: Meher Baba Is Love! Its pages are filled with beautiful pictures: Baba with children, Baba with animals, Baba with birds, Baba and Mehera with the calves that years later accompanied us in the New Life. It has enchanting colour drawings of animals, birds, trees, flowers, insects, fish, who confide to each other the secret of Baba's Love! Every line is alight with love and twinkles with humour. "Meher Baba Is Love"\* is the result of team work by members of the Baba-Family in Miami (Florida, U.S.A.) — sharing idea, labour, expense, as they share the love of Meher Baba, who is Love. It fills the long-felt need for a book that His little ones will understand, that ALL His children will love. The first copy reached Meherazad before the stricter Seclusion began, and Baba's cable to Adah Shifrin said: "Your book Meher Baba Is Love has made me very happy, your labour of love has touched me, It will delight children young and old and draw them closer to me. I send my Love and blessing to you Shifrins Sargents, Bondys, Forbes, and all who helped bring the book out."

Milestones are for the travellers, not for the Way. Another 10th July milestone tells us we have come to the 42nd year of beloved Baba's silence — His immeasurable silence which we measure by the distance our time-vehicle has crossed. And as we travel we are joined by more and more companions who have heard of the Way and realize it is the One they had been wandering through many a by-lane in search of. They in turn call out to others who might hear and heed them. And Baba tells us that whatever we would do to proclaim His Message to others we should do it now; that the Time for the breaking of His Silence is fast approaching, and when He gives The Word there will not be the need for His lovers to give His Message to the world — the breaking of His Silence will proclaim to the world the manifestation of God on earth.

Till we come to the moment when He releases The Word that will shatter our deafness, our voices are raised to speak of His Silence that all may hear us. And when among us there are voices that the people recognize and flock to listen to, our hearts are gladdened. Such voices were heard at a number of places this year, at public meetings held by Avatar Meher Baba Centres to mark the 42nd anniversary of the Beloved's Silence:

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\* Please note that the price of the book is \$2.00, and may be ordered through group-heads or directly from Mrs. Ann Forbes, 3340 N.W. 99th St., Miami, Florida 33147, U.S.A.

In Bombay the meeting was presided over by its Sheriff, Mr. H. H. Ismail, J.P. In Calcutta it was Mr. Justice P. B. Mukherji, senior Judge of the Calcutta High Court, who presided. His speech, a fine treatise on 'The Eloquence of Silence' has been printed in booklet form by Chari.\* The meeting at Dacca, capital of East Pakistan, was presided over by Mr. Justice S. M. Murshed, Chief Justice of the High Court of East Pakistan. His speech appeared in full in the 'Morning News', Dacca's standard paper, which reported the function under the heading "Glowing Tributes to Meher Baba". Adi and Dolly Arjani, who arranged the program, reported: "The Hall was packed to capacity, comprising all communities." Similarly worded was the telegram from Minoos Kharas: " .... audience comprising all communities including Catholic nuns." He was referring to the well attended meeting held in Karachi, presided over by Mr. B. S. Rustomjee, Ex-Principal of the Parsee Boys School.

The Vice President of India, Shri V. V. Giri, inaugurated the function held in the capital of India — at the Community Hall in New Delhi on 9th July. The form of Shri Giri's address was as unique as it was apt to the Occasion he was honouring — he inaugurated the program in silence! Going up to Beloved Baba's portrait he garlanded it with reverence. The audience packed the hall, with the overflow filling the verandah. They listened with absorbed interest to the speakers: to Shri C. M. Poonacha, Minister for Railways, who was chairman; to Dr. M. Channa Reddy, Minister for Steel, Mines and Metals, who was guest of honour; to Shri Thirumala Rao, M.P.; and to Shri Amar Singh Saigal, M.P., who recited the Master's Prayer. Wasdeo Kain said in his report: The inauguration was done in silence by the Vice President garlanding the picture of dear Baba. Dr. Channa Reddy, Shri Poonacha and Shri Thirumala Rao spoke very well; the audience was impressed by their talks, and loudly cheered when Baba's message and Love Blessing were conveyed to them. The hall rang with Jai, Jai, of Avatar Meher Baba.\*\*

Magnificent was the program held at Bahadurgarh (Haryana), about 15 miles from Delhi, arranged by T. D. Verma and other Baba-lovers in Delhi. Although held in August, it marked the completion of forty two years of Baba's Silence. Part of the program was a remarkable procession of some seven to eight thousand people through the main roads of Bahadurgarh. The function was inaugurated by Shri V.K.R.V. Rao, Minister for Transport and Shipping, and attended by a huge gathering. The most unexpected and welcome guest at the function was the sun! This sunny day was the first break in the torrential rainfall that for days lashed Delhi and its neighbourhood, breaching roads and bridges, and provoking the Jumna river to roaring heights of danger. Due to the rains the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Shri K. K. Shah, was held up and could not make it to Bahadurgarh to participate as intended. Those managing the program were deeply anxious over its success in the face of the rain's fury. But deeper was their faith that said "It is all in Beloved Baba's hands — we have

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\* free copies can be had from: Shri A.C.S. Chari, Advocate; Komala Vilas 73 Rashbehari Ave.,  
Calcutta-26, India.

\*\* Shri W. D. Kain's full reports of the Delhi and Bahadurgarh programs appear in "DIVYA VANI", the English monthly Baba-magazine printed in India (address: The Meher Vihar Trust, 3-6-441, 5th St., Himayatnagar, Hyderabad (A. P.), India,

done our best, He will do the rest." Beloved Baba responded — His smile was reflected in the sun that shone over Bahadurgarh and blessed their efforts to success. All India Radio, reporting on highlights of the week 'Around the Capital' spoke of the program, and relayed part of Shri V.K.R.V. Rao's splendid speech and of a Baba-bhajan sung by the women group.

As a ship crossing the vast ocean, the Time has been coming steadily nearer and is now near enough to be visible, a dot on the horizon. We cannot define its shape, we cannot fathom its speed, but we can clearly see it approach in the light of Baba's words given us in the past. Of the many things Baba said, was: "As the time for my Manifestation draws close it will draw in more people to me, and my Message will go out to more and more people and spread round the world. Among the many who will recognize my Divinity, will be leaders and prominent personalities who will join my followers in publicly declaring my Message of Love and Truth." All this we see coming to pass, gathering speed and momentum day by day, place by place. His lovers are taking His Message to every field of opportunity, for the breath of His Love to blow on it and carry it far and wide. Fast multiplying are opportunities in the field of radio and television, and these brain-products of Science are communicating with growing frequency the Heart-message of God to men. Take these instances:

In a three months' report on Baba-work in the San Francisco Bay area, carried out among the great youth-force of America, Allan Cohen lists no less than four radio interviews and five television shows! Rick Chapman, or Moochewala (his Indian name meaning 'one with a moustache'), since his return to the United States from India in May, has been ceaselessly busy "telling the Americans about the Truth which Baba alone is", often through radio and television interview, Reporting his activities, Rick wrote from various places. I quote from some of his letters that illustrate how the air waves are carrying word of The Avatar and spreading it to the masses. His report from Denver says:

"Dear Beloved Baba, What a night last night was! From midnight until six in the morning, your Moochewala was talking to Denver people over the radio about The Only One — which, as only You know, is You! This kind of radio program is called a 'talk show', where the radio broadcaster, sometimes with a guest, talks about some current topic or issue over the air. After talking for an hour or so, the broadcaster will invite telephone calls from the listeners, so that they can discuss the topic with the broadcaster or with the guest. These telephone calls are part of the radio program and are broadcast over the air as they take place. Every kind of person called in after hearing me talk about You — from narrowly orthodox Christians to people genuinely interested in discovering about You. It was a challenge to try to answer each person in a way understandable to him, and a great joy to have so much time to talk freely about my secret Beloved."

(Later). "In these past few weeks in Denver, I have had the chance to appear on four radio programs and to talk with a number of people individually. There is not more than a handful of actual lovers in this area that I know about, but many persons have become interested in reading and finding out more about the living God in human form."

Rick writes about Boston: "One night I was on a 'talk show' in Boston — a program on which Allan had previously appeared — and on the whim of the broadcaster (inspired by the Whim of the Avatar!) he called up Allan in Berkeley and had him participate in the show for almost an hour by long distance telephone! Two other radio interviews took place in Boston. The necessity of using the

'hot topic' of LSD as a channel for talking about You had almost completely vanished — the interviewer urged me to tell about You at length. Finally, part of an hour-long television show was filmed while the key personality in the show asked me questions about You."

(Later). "Since I last wrote You in New York, You have stirred up a real storm of action. After returning to New York from Myrtle Beach, Chapel Hill and Hampton, I had a half-hour radio interview discussing You and Your views on LSD. I was told that the interview, which was taped, would not be broadcast until July, but the station played it that very night (May 19) and the following morning .... This unexpected broadcast was perfectly timed, since many people who heard the program came to the public talk which was arranged two days later in the heart of New York's bohemia .... "

New York also scooped a nation-wide Air triumph through the "Society for Avatar Meher Baba", who produced and broadcast a half hour program marking the forty-second anniversary of Baba's Silence. The broadcast was relayed over eight stations in the U.S.A., filling all Baba-lovers who heard it with joy. A number of them expressed it in their letters, describing the program as "wonderful", "splendid", saying "we would like to hear it again and again." Directed by Harry Kenmore and Annarosa Karrasch, it was a concerted production, unique in the fact that a number of Baba-lovers from different parts of U.S.A. joined their voices to it. Each of them spoke for 2 to 3 minutes about Baba, and their tape-recorded talks were played between the Commentator's superb prelude and the finale of Harry's recital of 'Meher Baba's Universal Message'. It was thrilling to hear their voices in the hall at Meherazad, when the tape of the program sent by Harry was played before Baba on the morning of 10th July.

All the more heartwarming because it was unexpected, was a radio program in Paris which carried the Beloved's Name to the people of France. Anita Vieillard, one of the very early group of His lovers, wrote to Mehera in a recent letter from Paris: "Dearest Mehera, you will all be pleased to know that I spoke on the French Radio. They gave 3 programs during 3 weeks. It was all on India, with some French ambassadors, philosophers etc. talking. In the interview I spoke on Baba. They found my talk so interesting that they opened the talks with my interview being the first! You can imagine what a joy it was for me! It is the first time I spoke on the Radio. I was questioned on India, for the talks were all connected with India. Krishnamurti also spoke in French, he came last. I can't give you all the names of the people as I don't know them; they all have to do with culture and spiritual search. I was questioned on my Being in India. I spoke on our Baba. I also spoke of the incredible atmosphere one felt during the 'arti' with Baba standing in our midst. I hope I was able to give a bit of all the wonders He has given us all!"

But if this first opening in French reserve has been such a happy surprise, what has been happening in 'the Land of the Southern Cross' is astounding. A few months ago Baba called Bill LePage from Australia for a two weeks' stay at Meherazad. Soon after his return he found that every wall that had prevented him from spreading Baba's Message now had a door which opened to the sound of His Name! One contact he made, a hard-headed young journalist, Mike Agostini, led to the first radio and T.V. interviews in Australia on beloved Baba. In a letter dated 19th June, Bill wrote: "The possibilities coming from the contact are already staggering. He (Mike) not only has newspaper contacts but also T.V. and radio ones. He has already approached A.B.C. and said



to the national show, 'I have a sane, rational, normal man who says that God is on earth now', and the producer has expressed interest and asked for the submission of definite details for an interview between Mike and myself. He also approached newspapers, again with good reception, and has planned a lengthy radio interview with me after the T.V. show."

All this happened within the space of a month. On the front page of "The Australian" (a daily national newspaper) dated July 6, 1967, this intimation appeared under the prominent heading of 'THE MAN WHO SAYS HE IS GOD': "Meher Baba says he is God. And, although he works no miracles and has lived for more than 70 years in relative obscurity, millions of people around the world believe him. This extraordinary man and one of his leading Australian disciples are described by M. G. Agostini in 'The Australian' on Saturday." The article appeared as announced, followed by letters from other Australian Baba-lovers in later issues. Then on 17th July, Bill wrote:

"Beloved Baba, You and I appeared on television last night in a program shown throughout Australia! It was not for long Baba, but at least two photos of You were shown and I was interviewed for about 10 minutes. (I took the photos on the chance that I could show them, and the T.V. people were keen on the idea). I wasn't nervous, a bit anxious to do a good job, and very happy that You were going to be seen and talked about. I didn't really have a feeling of happiness with the radio interviews, I think I was too anxious about doing You justice, but they were satisfactory and I had relaxed by the time of the T.V. interview. I did not watch the T.V. program, but the family said it was very good .... I am writing this in the office, and a few moments ago rang a company where the telephonist knows me. As soon as I spoke to her she said 'Oh! I saw you on T.V.' She was with her family, and they all were most interested. This is an example of what has been happening since the article appeared in the newspapers, and since the radio interviews. Businessmen have rung me, neighbours are talking about it, there have been letters and phone-calls to the newspaper and radio stations; friends of friends have been talking about the interview — even though they did not know me. I am amazed at the number of people who listen to the radio, and who listen to interviews. After the T.V. interview, the interviewer who is one of Australia's best-known interviewers, asked me to speak on one of his radio programs, which I am doing next Wednesday — he asked me without prompting. Two business-men who rang me said they found the interview excellent, hoped there would be many more of them, and one of them has asked me to his home to meet some of his friends .... Another T.V. interview will be done shortly, but the date has not been decided. It appears all round that something really has started in making You known here, but now I must give thought to making 'the something started' grow."

Now Bill is occupied in plans to keep alive the interest that this recent publicity has aroused, fanning it vigorously with whatever comes to hand, knowing Baba will do the rest. I like the way Bill put it, in his letter to Baba: "I am determined not to let this opportunity for publicity die away, and also to be more provocative in my interviews. You have given me teeth, and with Your 'go ahead' message, I am prepared and very willing to nip the ankles of fellow Australians until they are thoroughly aware of You"!

A country where awareness of Baba has been brought to people from all over the world, is Canada. It has done this within the last few months, in its role of host to the world while celebrating the 100th year of its nationhood. It continues to do so, through Montreal's EXPO 67, the colossal International Exhibition where the height of man's ingenuity and skill have been challenged

and met, where the art and culture of over sixty countries is housed and displayed. Its spectacular array of pavilions are as members of the world-family gathered round the Montreal table, where the fare is rich in thought and vision, where the exchange of ideas and inspiration is brilliant.

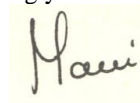
And what the Indian pavilion has to offer among its ancient and modern contribution, to palates unfamiliar with the simple ingredients of Truth, is a taste of the highest purpose of man's existence. In its literary section it has books on and by Meher Baba, reportedly the only books on spirituality so far seen at the pavilion — they are displayed in a separate compartment of the rotating glass case where books are accommodated. On its Information counter it has "Meher Baba's Universal Message", in large quantities that are replenished daily, for thousands of copies are taken by visitors to the pavilion every day. These Universal Message folders are given free, in Baba's Love. Another touch of Baba's Love: the space given to Baba-material was given free — not a cent was charged, when space was being rented at \$100 per square foot! Catherine Draper, who has laboured most over this project, wrote from Montreal: "So far 'Meher Baba's Universal Message' is the only free pamphlet I have seen offered at the pavilion. This fact plus the superb location gives the appearance of an endorsement on the part of the India Government. Mr. K. S. Luthra (India's representative at the India Pavilion) chose to have them placed on the Information Desk instead of with the books. This is truly a coup-de-grace, for every person who enters the pavilion files past the Information desk. Mr. Luthra told me the public is picking up the Universal Message at the rate of 10,000 per week. I phoned Kitty (Myrtle Beach) for another shipment immediately..." The shipment was soon exhausted, and a reprint rushed under way. Catherine writes: "Kitty may have told you that they raised funds for us to have another 100,000 copies of the Message printed here in Montreal. And 25,000 of these have already been taken! I don't yet know the exact number which the Kashoutys shipped here, but estimate there were 50,000. Expo-goers have taken all of these, plus 10,000 French ones we had, plus the 25,000 mentioned above. Thus, at the Fair's halfway mark, about 85,000 of the Universal Message have been taken."

For His followers in Canada, this Baba-blessed opportunity given to their country is a dream come true, a prayer answered. "It is beyond my wildest dream" writes Catherine Draper. Stella DuFresne writes: "I prayed to Baba for all the years I know Him to help my natal country Canada — now I can say that He has answered my prayer, by having His Universal Message at the Expo..."

Meher Baba's Universal Message at the Expo — a drop of Reality in an ocean of illusory grandeur, the Drop that swallows the ocean — reaches out to all creation, and declares:

"I veil myself from man by his own curtain of ignorance, and manifest my Glory to a few. My present Avataric Form is the last Incarnation of this cycle of time, hence my Manifestation will be the greatest. When I break my Silence the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive of it."

Ever lovingly

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Meher", is written on a small yellow rectangular piece of paper.

# *seventy-five/*

Meherazad, 7th October 1967

Dearest Family,

As wished by Beloved Baba, a special Circular has been issued by Adi and sent to all in the East. Baba wants the Circular to reach all of His Western family. I reproduce it here for you dear ones:

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Issued on 1st October 1967

Avatar Meher Baba wishes all His lovers to know that His Seclusion will not end on 21st November this year, but will continue until the 25th of February 1968.

Meher Baba says that the fate of the universe hangs on His Seclusion, and the redemption of mankind depends upon His Manifestation, and He wants to remain absolutely undisturbed; and so under no circumstances should anyone try to see Him unless He Himself calls anyone specially for work, or until He Himself announces that He will give darshan to His lovers.

It should carefully be noted that the restriction on correspondence continues. Baba will not attend to any correspondence, including cables and wires. Also, none should write to me or to members of the resident Mandali regarding their personal affairs or the affairs of others.

After 25th February 1968 Baba will announce when He will see His lovers. Meanwhile, no one should come of his own accord to see Him — but should await Baba's own announcement.

Adi K. Irani

King's Road  
Ahmednagar (M.S.)  
India

Disciple & Secretary  
Avatar Meher Baba

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Note: Avatar Meher Baba lovingly permits all His lovers to celebrate His 74th Birthday on 25th February 1968 at the Meher Baba Centres or otherwise publicly. Those who wish to celebrate Baba's Birthday should do so without expecting another intimation. As His 74th Birthday coincides with His coming out of Seclusion, it should be an occasion of great rejoicing.\*

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\* We gather that Baba-Centers are already shaping plans for the Birthday, and no doubt Harry Kenmore is straining at the leash to go all out on another public celebration!

Perhaps the Beloved's stretching His Seclusion limit to three more months will cause disappointment in the hearts of His lovers. Or, perhaps the lines of a mystic poet will voice their feelings: "Since I have been to the funeral of my desires, I live by the breath of Your desire." Wistfully we realize that until we can reach this sublime state of living we must remain wanting in that love which Baba wants from us, and which He alone can inflame in us! We realize too that loving us as He does, He places our need above our wants. Knowing our real need, which He has come to fulfil, He tells us: "Want what I want."

Having to send out this Circular-letter, I might as well make it a regular family-letter and chat on home news. As always there is a crowd of things to say; choosing from them is the head-scratching part of it. Half the time I find myself looking out into the garden, watching the bulbuls and robins pecking away at the bird-dish and feeding their chicks, or splashing boisterously in the water bowls laid out each morn. As I sit typing this I can see scores of butterflies hovering about the clumps of flowers that light up the garden in brilliant flashes. This time there appear to be so many butterflies, perhaps because there are so many flowers. The shrubs and bushes are richer in blossom this year than usual. Even the 'Christ's Cradle', the large and fragrant cactus flower that blossoms only for a night, outdid last year's count. As many as forty blossomed on the vine in a single night -- a breathtaking sight at midnight when these ethereally white flowers open to their fullest, decorating the arch of the cactus like a festoon of wax lotuses. However, the prize for profusion must go to the jasmine. Day in and day out the jasmine shrubs have been studded thickly with flowers like stars in a green sky, filling the air with their perfume. To make room for more, these milky flowers come down at night and spread like a carpet to welcome the morning. Later, before the gardener's broom can sweep them away, some are seen escaping with the morning breeze to the most unlikely parts of the grounds, or form a trail on the path where the Beloved's 'palanquin' must pass on His way to the mandali.

Among those awaiting Baba's coming each morning to the mandali's hall, is a newcomer whose devotion to the Master is glaringly evident. The moment he hears the whistle which summons the boys with the lift-chair for Baba, this ardent lover sits with his nose glued to the door of the hall, waiting for His arrival, making impatient noises if he is not let in soon enough. Baba has named him Rammu (Rum-moo), and not only tolerates such puppy-love but seems very pleased with it. Rammu is a Baba-pet literally, a multi-breed pup of about two months, who wandered in from the village in search of food and found a home with God. When he first came around, this stray starveling looked all limbs and eyes — a miniature Twiggy of the canine world. But with Baba's inveterate habit of overfeeding pets Rammu is filling out fast, except for his stringy tail that he twirls about in the most intricate loops when he is petted or fed by Baba. We had feared the reception he would get from Baba's old and beloved pet Mastan, a huge half-mastiff who has been with us for eleven years; but we need not have worried. Their relationship was clear from their first conversation — Rammu greeted the veteran with excited barks, Mastan replied with an enormous yawn!

While papers reported floods in many places, we were praying for rainfall. For over a month it was like being on an island — too much water around, none here. With outspread arms the expectant fields pleaded in vain for rain, but the sun glared at them fiercely and straying clouds paid no heed — until the

evening of 20th September. Then the clouds gathered thick and fast and soon were weeping softly over the land's plight. Before long they broke down completely and poured copiously for days till both Meherazad and Meherabad were saturated, and prayers had to be switched over to sunshine! Looking back it seemed to us that the Beloved had held up the skyburst until after the filmmaker from Holland had completed his filming by the afternoon of 20th September, the last day left open to him to visit Baba. As I described it in my letter to Elizabeth Patterson, Myrtle Beach:

"..... Two days after I posted my letter to you (of 12th Sept.), Adi received a cable from Louis van Gasteren in Holland, saying he was arriving in Bombay with his film crew on 17th and coming to Ahmednagar on 19th for the filming. The time limit given by Baba was 20th September, so you can see what a close shave it was! All the same, as he did keep faith with Baba's word and made it in the given time, Baba gave His permission happily. Baba called Louis to Meherazad at 9 o'clock on 19th morning to see Him for five minutes, and also to look over the site for next day's filming. Starting very early from Poona with his crew and accompanied by Jal he arrived on time and was taken in to see Baba. Baba gave him 40 minutes instead of 5, and some very beautiful explanations in that time — and by that time he had really begun to love Baba. One could say that he came for his own film and stayed for Baba's film; for he later confessed that his intention had been to film a few hundred feet, but now he was determined to take in as much as he could for the world to know of Baba through his film. As Eruch later remarked, Louis met the mandali as a film-maker and parted as a brother. Jan and Peter, the two boys who accompanied him as cameraman and sound man were equally in love with Baba at first sight, and became as members of the family during their two visits. The Meherazad family found Louis a most unassuming and congenial person, sincere and earnest, painstaking in his work, and not just a film-maker but a real artist. However, all these qualities would appear as ciphers were it not for the unit of his newborn love for Baba that makes them add up to a fine figure. Louis put consideration for Baba's comfort and wishes before his filming convenience every time. At one point when some alteration had to be made to suit Baba, Louis assured Him with a spacious gesture of his arms, "We will adjust it Baba, it will be no problem, don't worry." With a marked twinkle Baba said to those present, 'My only worry is that I cannot worry'!

"From his talks with Eruch and Francis, Louis got a much better understanding of Baba's role in his film; and Francis' powerful explanation of why Baba cannot be compared to any other personality no matter how great he might be in the world, impressed him deeply and cleared up a lot of things in his mind.

"Admiring their efficiency at the filming which took place on 20th September at Meherazad, Baba said "Louis and his men know their job." That became clear to all who watched them work with their beautiful cameras and latest accessory equipment. The film is to be in colour and equipped with sound. They filmed beloved Baba washing the feet of the lepers — seven lepers, He finally decided. They filmed Baba in the garden against the luscious bougainvilia vines, and Baba discoursing under the shade of the twin 'babul' trees which stand in the field with the Seclusion Hill in the background. They filmed the Meherazad scene, including a sunset from top of Seclusion Hill. And they visited Meherabad and filmed that place of Baba's also.

"During their two days at Ahmednagar, Louis and his party were guests of Sarosh and Villoo as wished by Baba. So was Shri Jagat Murari, Principal of The Film Institute of India and friend of Louis. But it was not because of this that Baba permitted him to be present at the filming; it was because of his love for Baba — he and his wife have become devoted to Baba since the day Jal brought them to see Him at Guruprasad two years ago. Jagat Murari wants to have a Documentary on Baba made and released throughout India some day, and with this in mind he brought along his group of film-boys and Shri Gopalan (Professor of Cinematography) to take what shots they could of Baba at Meherazad — they bagged quite a fair amount. Jagat Murari cancelled an important engagement in Bombay to rush home to Poona and on to Ahmednagar to be in time at Meherazad on the 20th — Baba said He was very happy that he came.

"I must put down beloved Baba's remarks on Louis van Gasteren's visit and the film he came to make. On the morning after Louis' departure Baba said to the mandali:

'I felt happy with Louis van Gasteren not only because he is an artist but because he has a good heart. He was impressed very much by my Love, as were his two assistants. Louis is a genius in his art. Because of this, and because of his love for me, I cooperated 100% and he made the most of this opportunity.' Referring to the filming done under the 'babul', Baba said, 'To me it was like again giving a sermon on the Mount. In the two days that Louis spent here and at Meherabad, I could see that he came to understand a bit about me, and he expressed his love for me by speech and action. I know that he will try his best to have the film shown all over the world. He worked at it with all his heart, and I cooperated with all my heart. So this must bear good results.'"

Among the gems that Louis received from Baba, was the following discourse. On his first day's visit, Baba said to him:

"I am alone even when surrounded by thousands of people because I see only myself in them all.

"As for you, if you were in the Himalayas you would not be alone even there because thousands of thoughts and desires would be your constant companions."

In the stillness of Baba's seclusion we are kept moving fast, in time with the work carried on everywhere by those clearing the way for His manifestation. "I haven't got time" is an oft used sentence in the five languages spoken at Meherazad. The other day when Baba again referred to the Time fast approaching, Eruch's delightful rejoinder was, "While you say the Time is coming fast, we find that time is fast receding from us — we never seem to catch up with it!" It is so with His workers everywhere. The work itself is no different — doing what each can with given opportunity and capacity to share with others what one has received from Him. The difference is in the multiplication, as more and more individuals are linked in awareness of His Love and seek to know more and more of Him from His people. The individuals in turn set out to make their fellowmen aware of what they're missing, and the ones who catch on enliven yet others — so the branches spread and flourish wondrously. To the 'old' lovers

the quick response of the 'new' ones often appears amazing. Commenting on the rising stream of college folk (from Chapel Hill, Durham, Atlanta and elsewhere) perpetually inflowing to Myrtle Beach Center, Kitty Davy writes: "The search amongst the students is great, men specially, quite a few of whom are Jews. These young people seem to have so little difficulty in accepting Baba!" Ivy Duce on the west coast reports the same surge of youth-interest in Baba, and to cope with the consequent need for Baba-literature, Sufism Reoriented are reprinting a number of books.\* Perhaps it is not so strange that these offspring of the Avataric Age are ready to receive Him; perhaps their living has been a waiting for this moment of His Call from one direction or another. Letters from many newly awakened testify to this. As a 26 year old from Fresno, California, said in his letter to Baba: "It is as if my whole life consisted of a series of steps in Your direction."

My last report on Baba-work was woven on the radio and television loom, with the various threads of information that came to hand. But although the design was shown in detail, I now find that the motif was far from complete! The pattern described with Rick Chapman's letters turned out to be just a border, while the dominant piece was working out in U.S.A. even as I was composing my report. In his letter of August 25, Moochewala described to his Beloved the work done in Los Angeles with help of Filis Frederick and of Nick Lamprino who made superb arrangements for the radio and TV appearances. Rick said:

"Opportunities in Los Angeles have been extraordinary. On August 19th Allan (Cohen) and I appeared on a radio program for two hours which reaches a million persons in this area. On August 22 we taped a radio interview with Joe Pyne, whose show is nationally syndicated and reaches several million. The following day we participated in his television show, which reaches about fifty million across the nation — and not a drop of cynical venom for which the show is famous appeared during our interview. He asked about Your Silence, why You keep it, what You predict for the future of humanity, whether You claim to be like Jesus and Buddha, whether You have disciples like Jesus did; and the rest of the show was occupied with Your views on LSD and drugs in general."

He also mentioned an interesting incident that took place during the show: "Remarkably, a snake charmer was the guest on the show just preceding our appearance, and before we appeared Joe Pyne and both a boa constrictor and a dove in his hand. A hippie who had been called up to defend LSD before the camera, fainted with a strange shaking while he was talking."

Following it up in his letter of 13th September, Moochewala says: "By now the Joe Pyne TV show has appeared both in Los Angeles and in New York. It will follow a syndicated schedule around the country, appearing one week in one major city, the next week in another."

In the same letter Rick covers the rest of the happenings during the Los Angeles visit, showing that in Baba's bounty opportunities are not given, they are poured! Here are some excerpts from it:

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\* GOD SPEAKS, LISTEN HUMANITY, and the DISCOURSES —the original set of Discourses, economically bound in three volumes, now under print.

"The two and a half weeks which Allan and I spent in Los Angeles were extraordinary. One contact begat another until soon we were hard-pressed to keep up with the various opportunities we had while we were there.... Before two weeks elapsed, we were guests on radio shows of almost every conceivable format: afternoon talk shows, all-night talk shows, special interest interviews, one program aimed specially at the youth and the hippies; and finally a show on which it was possible to talk at length about You with a man who was responsive and knowledgeable and curious, asking about Your life, Silence, and the significance of Your Avatarhood to the people at large .... One rare thing: the interviewers and broadcasters of almost every program Allan and I appeared on became visibly intrigued, sometimes deeply interested in You. Stan Bohrman, of the first show we did, asked us out to dinner that first night and over to his home several times — full of questions. Stan helped us to get in touch with Eliot Mintz whose night-time show is very popular with young people and hippies, and Dona Sadock who produces the Eliot Mintz show and has her own program called Gemini, on which Allan and I appeared a total of four times. As for our final show with Peter Bergman, who is interested in Sufism and who will soon be making a film in the Middle East, he read through most of The Everything and the Nothing\* before we appeared on his show, and he read the first discourse from that book over the air!

"Last Sunday (the 10th) I gave a talk, and another comes up next Sunday, to study groups connected with the Association for Research and Enlightenment. These people base their search for Christ-consciousness on the psychic readings made by Edgar Cayce, an American clairvoyant in the earlier part of the century. These people seem unusually responsive, eager to read and hear more."

This last item of news was of special interest to me, as I had just been reading the book on Edgar Cayce, "The Sleeping Prophet", sent by Ivy. Edgar Cayce, who died in 1945, is referred to as the sleeping prophet because his amazing revelations and predictions were made while he lay in a trancelike sleep state, in answer to questions from people in all walks of life. One of the most striking passages in the book relates to the Avatar's advent "in this day and generation." Cayce foretold the coming of great holocausts and earth changes before the new era begins. When he was asked "How should we regard those changes that do come about?", he answered: "What is needed most in the earth today? That the sons of man be warned that the day of the Lord is near at hand, and that those who are unfaithful must meet themselves in those things which come to pass in their experience." Asked what boded the day of the Lord is near at hand, he said: "That as has been promised through the prophets and the sages of old, the time and half-time, has been and is being fulfilled in this day and generation, and that soon there will again appear in the earth that One through whom many will be called to meet those preparing the way for His day in the earth." And when would this implied Second Coming materialize? "When those that are His have made the way clear for him. Don't think there will not be trouble, but those who put their trust wholly in the Lord will not come up missing, but will find conditions, someway and somehow, much to be thankful for."

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\* Published in Australia by "Meher House Publications."



Years ago Mike Loftus sent me a copy of "Cosmopolitan", a monthly magazine published in New York, which contained an article headed: IF CHRIST WALKED THE EARTH TODAY, wherein ten noted Christian thinkers expressed their views as to what they think it would be like if indeed Christ walked the earth today. For us who have the advantage of knowing He IS among us, it is both interesting and amusing to check their individual theories, with the facts as we know them. It is also revealing to see how close to the mark some of them make it in some of their speculations. I quote here a few passages for your interest.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale: "In the event of such return I am sure many would recognize and follow Him. There were a few such spiritually perceptive souls in Judea and Galilee. There would be many more this time."

Dr. Ralph W. Sockman: "What would people think of Him and His message? The sublime purity and perfection of Christ's character will always impress those who stop long enough to ponder. But many in our power-mad age would look upon Him as an idealist whose principles will not work. They would dismiss His doctrine of universal love as too good for this world of cruel realities. It takes time and much trying to discover how tough true love is. Those who gave themselves to Christ's way of life, as the first disciples did, would find its supreme worth. .... Christ would not feel at home in many of the churches erected in His name, because they have allowed ecclesiasticism and worldliness to destroy the simplicity and sincerity of His original gospel. But though Christ's judgements on our society would be stern, I cannot think of Christ returning as an angry judge .... His would be the judgements of love and the methods of love, for God is love."

Dr. George N. Shuster: "If Christ were to appear amongst us today! I fancy He would have to spend a great deal of time concealing Himself from reporters, television scouts and similar folk. The report that He had changed water into wine would crowd summit conferences off the front page..... Therefore I believe He would come quietly and that His miracles would be in the form of spiritual and mental healing, for which there is so insatiable a need. There would be black and white men among His disciples. Certainly those who elected to follow Him would have to give up precisely the things which so many of us covet: more money than we need, bigger cars, mink coats, and chances to be hypocrites and get by with the pretense. But there would be a good many people around who would feel His presence and thank God for His companionship."

Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell: "It is doubtful that Christ would introduce any new teaching beyond that which He set forth during His first advent. There would be no necessity for such additions since His principles are ageless and timeless. His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, from which alone we have the right to infer the brotherhood of man, is itself sufficient to provide a firm bases on which to build enduring peace and goodwill towards men."

Dr. Billy Graham: "He would perpetrate no social revolution, but would bring about an inner revolution of the heart. He would tell men that their greatest enemies are within: greed, pride, selfishness, and lust for power. He would rebuke them for harboured prejudices, hatreds, and intolerances. He would tell them that they should love each other as their heavenly Father loves them..... Little children would respond to His compassion, for they have a way of knowing who loves them sincerely."

Aldous Huxley: "In the twentieth century things would be very different. There would be newsreels, press interviews, television appearances, pocket book biographies, articles in the Sunday supplements."

Prof. Richard Sullivan: "If Christ — and I don't mean a 'good' historical figure but God and Son, Second Person of the Holy Trinity, incarnate as man — appeared among us today, I suppose that we would respond in pretty much the same way that people have responded these past two thousand years. We haven't changed much .... Yet, because of the time we've had to ponder His sharing our two-legged human nature, thus unspeakably dignifying it, and because of His sacramental presence, I think that if He appeared today more of us would believe, love, and adore Him ....

"In His first entrance into history as man, Our Lord did not seem concerned with passing judgement on any of the highly considerable civilizations of His times. He was quite obviously concerned with people — or rather, with persons. He was divinely preoccupied with the minds and hearts and wills of individual human beings, each of whom He left quite free to adore, to revile, or to be indifferent. Such things as ancestry, profession, colour, social standing, credit rating, or current creed seem not to have interested Him at all.

"If a caterpillar were to speculate, seriously and in print, upon the effects of radiation on the wings of future moths, it would be a creature much less presumptuous and unknowing than a man speculating upon the ways of God. But — as, figuratively, a caterpillar who has been asked some questions — I suppose that if in a sudden hypothetical visitation Christ came to us today He would be no more inclined to judge our civilization than He was before; but I am sure His unimaginably believable love would still go to every last one of us ....

"One day He is to come to judge us each as separate yet commingled persons. But if He came today I think it might be not to judge but to enliven in us, in the mystery of faith, the oldest act of adoration, which is sacrifice, an act of love and of prayer. He shared our nature at Bethlehem not to judge but to uplift us, inexpressibly, in His own sacrifice later upon Calvary. I do not think His love, God's love, changes its direction, in time or out of it."

As it happens, some of the above quoted philosophers and scholars were sent a copy of 'God Speaks' and other literature on Baba, but were unable to respond. Although equipped with vast and sincere foresight, they were not granted the insight to recognize Him when He is here, nor the good fortune of many an unlettered person who is blessed to know Him.

This letter is getting to be too long a chat, but now I don't expect to be dropping in again till January, unless Baba has a message for you before then — one never knows with The One who knows all! Before ending it, I must tell you of the letter received from the Principal of St. Vincent's High School, Poona, asking Baba for a message to the school. Rev. R. D'Souza wrote:

"Your Holiness,

On the occasion of the Centenary of St. Vincent's High School, it is an

honour to remember that you once were a student in this Institution. It would be a great pleasure to have you present at the Inter Faith Thanksgiving Service , which we will celebrate on October 2nd (1967) at 9 a.m.

The school will be honoured by a message from you on this occasion."

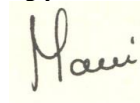
For its 100th birthday, the school that is blessed for all time to have been attended by Him at one time, received the following message from Beloved Baba:

"Schools help sincere students to equip themselves with knowledge and to become worthy citizens of society. And those students are wise who take full advantage of educational institutions and their facilities.

"But this knowledge is not the be-all and end-all of learning. And there comes a time when one longs to reach the Source of knowledge. The journey to this Source can only be undertaken when one learns to love in all simplicity and honesty the One whom the pride of intellect veils.

"When mind soars in pursuit of the things conceived in space, it pursues emptiness; but when man dives deep within himself he experiences the fullness of existence."

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Haei", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the printed text "Ever lovingly,".

# *seventy-six/*

Meherazad, 25th January 1968

Dearest Family,

A BABAFULL 1968 to all of us!

"I can wish me no wishes, for naught but Your wish is.

May Your wish be my wish — let that be my wishes."

An old prayer dressed up in a new year, the prayer of all lovers whose world is BABA, who strive to be less of self, the more to be full of Him.

With the stepping in of the new year, we find a quick stepping up of Baba's seclusion work, not so much by what we can perceive as by what we can dare to conceive. Baba says "You can only see what you see me doing outwardly, but I am continually working on all planes of consciousness at the same time. As my manifestation time is closing in, the pressure of my work is tremendous. You cannot have an iota of an idea of it." We can, however, faintly imagine it from what His infinite tiredness reveals to us; watch it in the cauldron of world chaos that is boiling over; see it in the dawn of His Love rising gloriously over new horizons every day. But all that is happening is nothing compared to what will happen, Beloved Baba tells us. To help us imagine the measure of difference between the "is" and "will", Baba compared the small height of the Seclusion Hill at Meherazad to the awesome stature of Mount Everest!

We do not need to see what the year holds, we need only to hold fast to the Seer. All we have to do, Baba tells us, is to hold on to Him with unshakable faith and love — all who are attached to Him, whether deserving or otherwise, are bound to reach the goal. He gave the simple illustration of a goods train: every wagon that is linked to the Engine, whether it contains gold or rubble, gets borne to the Terminus. But many are the jolts and distractions along this journey with God, and He has to keep warning us "hold fast — hold fast" as He pulls us along. He has provided us with the means to hold fast. He has given us the love that feeds our faith. Faith is like a lighted lamp, it shines only in the dark. And while its brightness is proof of darkness, its light reveals His grace that keeps it burning.

Those who deprive themselves of the light of God's grace by their blind unbelief, are nevertheless never deprived of His compassion. Baba recently commented to the mandali: "Jesus said 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' I say 'Father have pity on them for they know not what will happen.'" To His lovers, Baba says: "I alone Am. Remember me wholeheartedly. Repeat my name constantly. I am with you." Over and over again His lovers experience the sublime truth of His being the Slave of the love of His lovers. With every wholehearted call of BABA!, His reply I AM HERE materializes. He is with each one at all times, but asks us to wake Him up with remembrance. He says, "I am in each heart but I am sleeping there. It is my old, old habit. In order to awaken me you should always call out to me, saying 'Baba, Baba, Baba'"

continuously. Then I, who am in your heart, will not find any pleasure in remaining asleep. Let alone sleep, I shall not find time even to doze!"

With the clamour of a myriad hearts calling out BABA BABA with one voice, Baba couldn't have enjoyed a wink of sleep during the earthquake India experienced last month! Classified as a shock of major intensity, it rocked most of the western coast in the predawn hours of December 11. Ahmednagar and Meherabad-Meherazad too were severely shaken — it was like having a 50 second ride on a roaring dragon running under the earth. It wiped out the township of Koynanagar that lay near its epicentre, but spared the mighty Koyna Dam which supplies electricity to the state of Maharashtra! That the many cities involved were also spared, seemed as incredible as the quake itself. Newspapers quoted experts saying that the quake could have wrecked Bombay, Poona and other cities of Maharashtra had it lasted half a minute longer. But though not wrecked, the cities were badly rocked, throwing the people into an hysteria of panic and bewilderment. While crowds ran out shouting into the dark streets, Baba families kept to their homes in the shelter of His Presence, all members (from grandparents to toddlers) calling out His Name in unison — such is the real "arti" sung to the Beloved! The populace too was violently jolted into remembrance of God. The morning after, churches were crowded to overflowing; while the candles that were offered in thanksgiving and prayer were enough to have lit up the sky. The 'Poona Herald' reported, "Even the diehard people who never looked up to heaven are praying!" The milder tremors that kept following daily for weeks (and even now are felt occasionally) kept on serving as reminders. In the 'mail-bag' column of a newspaper, a reader's letter said, "Yes sir, tremor is the talk of the town, and we know not how long it will last. But this less than a minute's shock has taught us the lesson of our lifetime: how petty is man, how pettier his possessions. It has made man meeker and brought him nearer to his Maker."

There is another kind of shake-up taking place in India at this time, not an earthquake but an 'earthwake'. It is caused by Baba Centres who are holding a continual round of public meetings, every day for seventy-four days, in celebration of His 74th Birthday. And we can imagine what it must be like in Andhra, a state which have over a hundred and fifty Avatar Meher Baba centres! "These people would dive into the ocean if they could tell the fishes about Baba!", a Meherazadian once remarked. The remark was made quite some time ago, when lovers of Baba in the regions of Hamirpur and Andhra (in north and south India) were pioneering areas of narrow prejudice and over-crowded tradition, ringing out His Message from the rooftop of every occasion. Since then, with each year the peals have grown in number and strength, Baba Centres everywhere joining in, so that now a carillon of His Name delights our hearts' ears. A powerful note was played last year by the Baba Stalls that His lovers put up at Fairs and Exhibitions held in India: at Bombay, Poona and Nagpur in Maharashtra; at Jabalpur in M.P.; at Hyderabad and Rajahmundry in Andhra. This last was during the two-week Pushkaram. festival, a colossal affair where millions of Hindu pilgrims come from all over India for a dip in the sacred river Godavari. As reported by Dr. Dhanapathy Rao, president of the 'Avatar Meher Baba Andhra Centre, Kakinada', "Almost all the pilgrims, comprising all walks of life, rich and poor, young and old, were attracted to the Stall." And then there were the actual Baba Fairs, held in northern and central states: at Dehra Dun, Nauranga, Hamirpur, Khandarka, Bagda. The district of Hamirpur virtually becomes a Baba-Fair ground at a special time of year. There the lovers don't wait for public Fairs to have stall in — they make their own Fairs to celebrate every visit of

their Beloved! There every place that is blessed by Baba's visit is a Baba Centre, where they hold the "Meher Mela" (Meher Fair) every year: at Meher Dham in Nauranga, Meher Astana in Mahewa, Meher Puri in Hamirpur town. Thousands of people from all distances come by all manner of transport to take part in the feasts of gaiety and God. No lover has returned from a Meher Mela in Hamirpur District without being drenched with the Baba-atmosphere that reigns there, where entire villages are Baba-villages in love, where every man women and child greets each other at meeting and parting with "JAI BABA"!

Delhi too has a special date with itself, in remembrance of the first public darshan that Beloved Baba gave there in December of 1952. Its eleventh commemoration was observed last month at a Public Meeting in New Delhi, with a number of M.P.s and cabinet ministers of the Central Government among the large attendance. Inaugurating, presiding and speaking were the Minister for Irrigation and Power, Dr. K.L. Rao; the Minister for Steel, Mines and Metals, Dr. M. Channa Reddy; and the Minister for Education, Dr. Triguna Sen; each garlanding the Beloved's portrait before his speech, each speaking on the need for mankind to receive and follow Baba's Message, to awaken to His Love.

"AVATAR MEHER BABA THE AWAKENER." Over a million pairs of lips uttered these words in the course of a few weeks, in an environment of gaiety and hubub that could hardly be described as spiritual. But "as surely as His Name is a prayer, where it be spoken is a church." The church in this instance was the huge open space of the 'Cross Maidan' in Bombay city, where the International Tourist Fair was held from October end to mid December 1967. Presenting a typical blend of the ancient and modern, inseparable profiles of India's image, the Fair proved a very fair attraction for Bombay's teeming populace and for visitors from other parts. Many spectacular stalls, national and foreign, featured art, culture, trade, industry. Dramas and dances, films and fashion shows, and a wide variety of fun and entertainment, figured largely. Painstakingly the Fair organisers had taken into account the educational and recreational need of the people, while utterly ignoring their most urgent need — the spiritual! But then, neither had they taken into account the Baba-lovers of Bombay who set their hearts on getting a foothold in the Fair grounds to serve the Avatar's Message to the people. Against fantastic odds, their perseverance succeeded. And so it was that the huge cosmopolitan crowds surging on the Cross Maidan every evening (from about 5 in the afternoon till 1 o'clock in the morning) came by the Baba Stall, looking up at the big name-board that read AVATAR MEHER BABA THE AWAKENER, looking in at the beautiful full-length colour portrait of Beloved Baba facing them. Most of the lookers entered, while the remaining passed on after reading aloud His Name and staring at His portrait.

It all began a month before the Fair was to open, when Sorabjee Signanporia (of the Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre) read out the last family-letter at the Centre's meeting. Struck by Baba's message "now is the time to spread my Message," Sorabjee felt it was high time for Bombay to bestir itself. Calling an urgent meeting of Baba-lovers, he put forward his suggestion of acquiring a stall at the I.T.F. (International Tourist Fair) as their golden opportunity to give Baba's Message to the multitude. He hoped for encouragement from them. What he was unprepared for was the immediate and staggering response and enthusiasm with which the idea was caught up and started rolling! With Nariman and Arnavaaz Dadachanji taking the lead, contributions were pledged, ideas put forth, plans sketched, problems measured. In no time all shoulders got to the yoke in a fine piece of teamwork. But although plans and work raced ahead, they

could not start! Obtaining a suitable stall, or at least ground space for the building of a stall, was the king-size obstacle. At the "last minute" it was hurdled, solely through the influence and persistence of Dr. Ram Ginde, to whom the authorities in charge did not like saying 'no', and who would not take 'no' for an answer! Take one step in His direction and He will take ten steps towards you to help. The 750 square feet of ground space that was finally obtained was not just suitable, it was the most ideally situated imaginable. Facing the central imposing structure of the Government of India pavilion and next to Air India booth, no Fair goer could miss it!

Creating of the Stall and mass printing of Baba literature were items that seemed too big to be covered by the fragment of time they now had in hand. It was done, and done superbly. The Bombay group was like a race horse that had long been nodding at the post, but at the first sharp prod had started off at a full gallop, winning with flying colours! The Baba Stall was, in the words of Burjor Mehta from Ahmednagar "Simple as God, and so grand." The credit for its elegance and beauty goes mainly to dear Arnavaz, who worked herself to a frazzle over the myriad details of planning and decor, helped by others of the large Dadachanji clan who are wholly a Baba clan in the deepest devoted sense. As one fair Dadachanji member wrote not long ago, "We heard someone remark that 'the Dadachanjis eat, drink and breathe BABA'; and Oh! how satisfying and wonderful it is, only the Dadachanjis know!" Jim Mistry took up the printing reins. Jim's biggest joy is to have his modest printing press, Mekda Corp., work in the cause of his Beloved — and never had Jim worked 'Mekda' so hard and fast as now! The "Universal Message" in English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujerati, printed by the hundred thousand for giving free to Stall visitors, was ready on time. So was the priceless little book "Who is Meher Baba?" planned by Arnavaz, sold at a very nominal price.

The grain of Sorabjee's idea multiplied into a granary of accomplishment when the lovers manned the Stall, prepared with answers to the variety of questions expected from those whom the Beloved would draw.\* What the volunteers had least anticipated was the overwhelming attendance and interest that kept up through the weeks, from the day the Fair was inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not visit any stall, but rode round the grounds in an open jeep. As the jeep neared the Baba Stall, our Kishinchand Gajwani went up and drew her attention to the name-board "Avatar Meher Baba The Awakener." She responded with quick interest, reading out the Name and bowing with deep reverence to the Beloved's portrait as the jeep drove by. Some days after that Jim wrote to Eruch, "What is happening today at the Baba Stall is a tremendous mass enquiry and awareness of Baba. Waves upon waves of humanity surging into the Stall are carrying away some literature free or paid for. The 'Universal Message' in all languages is being gobbled up very fast and we'll keep printing more. I once timed a count of the people entering the Stall at the rate of 30 a minute — easily 10 to 12 thousand a day. Bombay lovers will henceforth walk tall — I hope Beloved Baba permits them to do so for some time at least!"

I'm sure Baba's smile glowed warmest on the little visitors who flocked to the Stall between 4 and 5 in the evening, the schoolchildren's hour. They would sweep in like a merry tornado, trailing clouds of dust, bubbling with exclamations and questions, determined to see everything, eager for their copy

of the Universal Message, surrounding Baba's portrait and wanting to know which country He was Raja of! When told He was the Maharaja of the universe, they would stand before Him with joined hands and pray "Baba, please help us pass in our exams."

As Sorabjee said, by Beloved Baba's grace the location of the Stall was such that hardly a few unlucky ones missed seeing it. When Baba sent a telegraphic message expressing His happiness with Dr. Ram Ginde's success in procuring the Stall space in such a good location, His dear Ram replied:

I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR WIRE. STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS ARE YOUR WAYS WHICH WE IN OUR IGNORANCE DO NOT UNDERSTAND. THE BABA STALL AT THE I.T.F. IS PART OF YOUR OWN PLAN WHICH MATERIALIZED THROUGH YOUR OWN INSPIRATION AND GUIDANCE TO YOUR LOVERS, AN EXPRESSION OF YOUR INFINITE AND ABIDING LOVE FOR ALL OF YOUR CREATION. JAI BABA.

In attempting to report Baba-work on the Overseas front, I don't know where to start or stop! Whereas the apostles of Jesus preached to hundreds in the crowded market-place, those of today's Avatar are reaching millions by television and radio. In the U.S.A. they're doing it so frequently, I feel I'd need a computer to keep count and track of all the shows and their sequels! Among the more recent televised talks on Baba was the Joe Franklyn show in New York, where two million viewers could see the Beloved's picture (on the book, "The Everything and The Nothing"), and hear about Him at length from Judge Henry Kashouty of Virginia, a speaker of outstanding calibre. Next Henry appeared on the Allen Burke show, arranged with the help of Adele McCuen and other lovers in New York, a show that was taped and later shown in other States. The Sequel? I'll quote Kitty Davy's letter of Dec. 19th, from Myrtle Beach: "We're surrounded by mail.\* Nearly 300 letters to date have arrived at the Center since the weekend— all requiring answers plus the Universal Message and book lists! And all the result of Henry Kashouty's talk on Allan Burke's show. Henry tells me that this show retaped goes over the States also. How much love Baba must have poured out through Henry that people could write as they did! Many tuned in only the last 15 minutes of the show and yet were spell-bound, impelled to listen, to believe, to write. Not one letter was scoffing, disbelieving, cynical or ironic; all long to hear as soon as possible more, more, more about Baba!" As Dr. Allan Cohen, himself a stalwart Baba-speaker over the air, put the situation in U.S. in a letter to Adi: "It certainly is happening fast! In Baba-Love, what used to be astounding is now commonplace and the chain reaction of His Truth is exploding incredibly quickly .... Baba is awakening the Americans to Him on all fronts. The 'minor miracles' (of newly tuned hearts) are daily occurrences. The point is passed where we can even keep up with news of broken hearts Baba-renewed, of seekers finding Him, and of He ferreting out places and people in which His Love-seed is implanted .... "

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\* On the show, Mr. Burke gave the address of the Baba Center in Myrtle Beach.



How often have we seen that no matter what the seed is wrapped in — LSD, art, business, pleasure — the covering soon melts and desire is transferred to the Object. A delightful instance of this, was recently given in a letter to Francis from Bill LePage of Sydney (Australia). Resolutely and confidently Bill is going about Baba's business of igniting sparks in as many hearts as can be reached — in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart — through newspaper articles, radio and television interviews, public meetings, Baba-films, group-talks. Commenting on a recent extensive trip, Bill wrote, "Everywhere I turned I found keen interest and responsiveness, and fresh contacts kept arising unexpectedly and leading to others .... During the talk (at Melbourne public meeting) you could have heard a pin drop the whole time, and after the film very good constructive questions .... The radio interview (at Adelaide) I've told you about. The interviewer helped me get two newspaper interviews .... It is interesting that even hardened worldly men like journalists are responding to Beloved 'Baba.'" Bill's work as an industrial personnel consultant takes him to various state capitals, and so his business walks hand in hand with work for Baba, who always walks many steps ahead! Regarding the Company that he did work for in Adelaide, Bill wrote, "The men were far more interested in talking to me about Baba than about business. They all took introductory booklets, and wanted me to arrange another business trip with the directors so that we could continue to talk about Baba! One also wanted me to give a talk at his business-men's club .... "

There is surely nothing more hardened than the orthodox shell of a religion, and it is wonderful to see Baba's Love penetrating the hearts of religious teachers and preachers. This miracle is often witnessed by Baba-lovers in Iran, where mullahs and tutors of Koranic doctrine are awakening the Muslim community to the divinity of Meher Baba. Jehangir Mehrabanpur, a doctor of medicine practising in Shiraz, is one of the main Baba-workers in Iran. He and his pretty wife were among the Iranian group that came to India in 1965 for Beloved Baba's darshan. In one of his letters to Ali Akbar (Aloba) the young doctor spoke of Sadruddin Mahalatti, a professor at Shiraz University who is a celebrated exponent of the Koran and holds regular Koranic meetings at various places. When one such meeting took place at the home of Haji Mohamed Saleky, a prominent businessman who is devoted to Baba, it was but natural that Dr. Jehangir was invited to attend. Dr. Jehangir did more than that — he managed to give a showing of a Baba-film to this imposing gathering of businessmen, scholars and mullahs, who had met to discuss the Koran! But more surprising was the effect it had on one and all of the audience. Their reaction to seeing Baba on the screen was reflected in varying shades of wonder, amazement, interest, reverence, and love. On Prof. Mahalatti the impact was deep. He has since seen Baba three times in a vision, and now concerns himself with awakening Shirazis to Baba's Love. Writing a letter to Baba, he began it with: "O High Status One! O Parvardigar!"

For lack of room I cite just one other instance, reported by Khodabakhsh Kalantary, a Baba-worker in Tehran. It concerns Mohamed Sayeedi, a Mullah who is a Baba-lover. Along with his Baba-lover friend Mohamed Ali Fanayee, he went about declaring to the people the divinity of Meher Baba "the God-personified." Such apparent heresy from a representative of Islam roused a furor of angry protest amongst Muslims he was addressing at Rasht; they lodged a complaint against him and had him arrested! When Mohamed Sayeedi's case was brought to court, he was found 'Not Guilty' and was 'honourably acquitted'.

The judge who tried him happened to be well acquainted with Sufic writings, and summing up the case he told the court that it was not an offense to declare the Godhood of an individual, as it was possible for man to realize God. He said that if people had no belief in this it was because their knowledge and understanding had not advanced enough for it, but that as a judge he could not refute what he accepted to be an irrefutable fact!

In an age of speed and automation, when a modern city's life is like a spinning top that holds up simply by the force of its crazy tempo, when it pulsates in its wheels, there can hardly be a better conductor of the Avatar's message than a city bus. This occurred to Girard Brilliant of New York; and converting the thought into action he had it rolling along the streets of over a dozen cities! In his 'Meher Baba's Lovers Newsletter' of Nov. 20, 1967, issued from the 'Meher Baba Workshop' in New York, Girard told us, "A quote from Baba's discourse THE NEW HUMANITY: 'Love is essentially self-communicative..' has been accepted by the Traveller's Time, 880 Third Ave., New York 10022, to be placed in the buses of more than a dozen of the largest cities." Soon after that came Ella Winterfeldt's letter saying "Have just heard from dear Margaret (Craske) that the saying of BABA, with HIS BELOVED NAME, is now appearing in all city buses! It is nicely placed above the bus windows, and is ever, ever so lovely!"

At about the same time, another unprecedented and lovely happening was taking place in North Carolina, in the field of art. As a character in an E. Wallace thriller said, "Art is me second 'eart.'" And when such a worthy twain belong wholly to Beloved Baba, it can add up to something quite extraordinary. It did in the case of Lynn Ott, an American artist of whom Hugo Munsterberg, Professor of Art History at the State University of New York, has said: "Combining in his work the freedom of brushwork characteristic of the School of New York with the deeply moving human content derived from an earlier tradition, Lynn Ott creates paintings of rare beauty and great sensitivity." From the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, where he lives at 'Sheriar Gate House' with his wife Phyllis (herself an artist) and children, Lyn's art and heart have produced a number of very beautiful paintings of Baba, paintings that were recently exhibited at the Other Ear Gallery in Chapel Hill, N. C. Named "IMAGE OF THE GOD-MAN — Avatar Of Our Age," it was the first complete exhibition of Baba paintings held in America or anywhere else! Arranged entirely by the young Baba-group there, the showing was from Oct. 28 to Nov. 21 (1967). Lyn wrote: "I feel it appropriate that Chapel Hill should be the place for this exhibition to be shown. Chapel Hill is the place in the West right now where interest and love for Meher Baba has erupted on a momentous scale. In Chapel Hill love for Baba is literally spilling out on the streets, and I am proud and glad to be able to lend my work for the advancement of Baba's work in that beautiful and brand new Baba Center."

Youth today is a spicy dish of paradoxes. Impregnably individualistic and unreservedly congenial, steeped in the artificial and scorning the spurious, serenely self-confident and warring with self-complacency, rebellious of restraint and willing to relinquish all for an ideal, shunning security and seeking certainty, it is drifting to an Aim. Not content with the ready-made ideology of an older generation, the young are passionately resolved to cut out their own pattern of idealism. Driven by a sense of urgency they are restless

and impatient, they want what they want to happen fast; to happen NOW. Is it surprising then that they should be the readier to receive the now Avatar, the quicker to discern the Pearl amongst the pebbles of the human shore, the keener to share their Find with others? And yet we are amazed each time we see it happening in one light or another, reflecting individuals or groups or crowds. Using the language of youth, and with the force of their deep conviction and personal experience, Baba's young lovers are slowly turning the student world towards the Sun of Baba's Love. University campuses are becoming gathering places for Baba meetings. On the Berkeley Campus of the University of California regular meetings are held by a young Baba-group called "Meher Baba League" which was formed by Paula Gordon and Peter Brookes of Sufism Reoriented. They read from Baba's writings, give talks to University crowds, hand out Baba-literature, show Baba-films. And now we hear that some of the students have started a branch of the Meher Baba League at the San Francisco State College! Baba's young ones are decidedly on the move, stirring up the laggards wherever they go. England's youth has at last begun to wake up too. The beginning is represented by a heartwarming bunch of artists, musicians, students, who have fallen in love with Baba; who keep bringing their friends, and friends' friends, and friends of their friends' friends, to hear of Baba from His older lovers. Delia de Leon (of the earliest Baba Group in England) writes about it: "What a stirring up is taking place! I feel I have plunged into a whirlpool of young people. What is amazing is their natural understanding of Him without wordy explanations, the way they seem to know and accept Him. It is wonderful!"

And so the Beloved's minstrels in many lands, East and West, in different tongues and in different tunes, sing of Him. His Love is their music, their hearts His instrument.

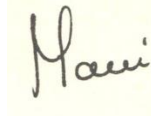
At Meherazad Baba's bard, Francis, sings to Him the songs he makes for Him — songs in which the words tell of the lover's delight in the Beloved and of the difficulties which the lover experiences, in which the melodies so fit the words that the flavour of the words is fully brought out. Many a song he weaves for Him from the sunbeams of His Love, that the burden of his songs may ease the Beloved's burden to the extent of each refrain. And at the end of each song Baba tells him, beaming with pleasure, "This one is the best you have done Francis — this time you have surpassed' yourself!" Here is but one of the many "best" songs that Francis has sung to Him:

A thousand times I've said: What a beloved you are!  
A thousand times I've fled from your glances Meher –  
Only to return to the shelter of your smile.  
    Certainty is mine — yet never can I be sure  
    Save of one thing: one day I will arrive at Nowhere,  
    And you will be everywhere. And I shall sing.

On that glad day of Grace when my song has become one note –  
The pure note of your Name, the heavens will tremble  
And blush with shame because they caused me to dissemble  
Before you, beloved Meher.

A thousand times in joy I have set out for your door  
Hoping you would employ my hands to sweep your floor –  
Only to find that you had spread a feast for me.  
Certainty is mine — yet never can I be sure  
Save on one thing: one day I will arrive at Nowhere,  
And you will be everywhere. And I shall sing.

Ever lovingly,



P.S. An earlier circular announced Beloved Baba's permission to His lovers to publicly celebrate His 74th Birthday. Now He has made it clear that He wishes His Centers, in the East and in the West, to go all out in celebrating this Birthday on a big scale. Baba is pleased that many of them have planned to do so; and that Harry Kenmore, with the help and co-operation of other lovers, is working to make this year's Birthday celebration in New York a unique public celebration.

NOTE: The next letter is expected to be sent in May or June, from Guruprasad, Poona, where Baba and the Meherazad family spend three months of summer each year from April through June.

#### IMPORTANT

Just before this letter was posted, Beloved Baba directed a circular to be issued by Adi for the Easterners and given here by me for the Westerners. The Circular is as follows:-

Avatar Meher Baba wishes all His lovers to know that His Seclusion which was to continue until the 25th of February 1968 will continue until the 25th of March 1968, when he will complete His Seclusion.

Baba wants His lovers to know that by this date the phase of His universal work in Seclusion will end, and that there will be no further Seclusions.

Baba wants all His lovers to realize what He has said before, that the fate of the universe hangs on His Seclusion and the redemption of mankind depends on His Manifestation. He says that His having prolonged His universal work in Seclusion is an act of His divine Compassion and Love preceding His Manifestation.

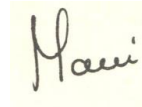
To help Him in this work, Baba wants all His lovers to recite once daily the Master's Prayer (O Parvardigar) and the Prayer of Repentance, individually

or collectively, from the time they receive this Circular until the 25th of March 1968. And, also to observe complete silence for 24 hours from midnight of 16th March to midnight of 17th March 1968.

Baba wants to remain absolutely undisturbed till the 25th of March 1968. Therefore under no circumstances should anyone try to visit Him unless He Himself calls anyone specially for work. It should carefully be noted that the restriction on correspondence will continue and should be strictly observed.

Until such time when Baba announces that He will see His lovers or give darshan to them, no one should come of his own accord to see Him but should patiently and in Baba's Love await Baba's own announcement.

Baba wishes all His lovers, Easterners and Westerners, to keep in mind that they must not come for His darshan before His announcement is circulated.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow sticky note. The signature appears to be 'Hani' or 'Hani' with a flourish.

Meherazad, 1st March 1968\*

Dearest Family,

Beloved Baba has given a message that He wishes all His lovers to receive. It is being circulated by Adi to all in the East, and given here by me for all in the West.

The following message is from Avatar Meher Baba to His lovers, given from His Seclusion.

I want all my lovers to know that my Seclusion will not end on 25th March 1968. My Seclusion will have to be prolonged for two months because the work that I am doing in seclusion cannot be completed before the 21st of May 1968. My Seclusion which was to end on 25th March 1968 will therefore have to continue until the 21st of May 1968. This is unavoidable.

None can have the least idea of the immensity of the work that I am doing in this seclusion. The only hint I can give is that compared with the work I do in seclusion all the important work of the world put together is completely insignificant. Although for me the burden of my work is crushing, the result of my work will be intensely felt by all people in the world.

I want all to bear in mind that what I have declared in my Birthday Message will come to pass — the only difference being that what was to happen soon aft~25th March 1968 will now happen soon after 21st of May 1968.

I repeat, something great will happen that has never happened before. But now it will not be until soon after 21st of May 1968.

I also repeat that the fate of the universe hangs on my Seclusion and the redemption of mankind depends upon my Manifestation.

All I ask of my lovers is to help me to complete my work by 21st of May 1968, so that by this date my universal work in seclusion will end and there will be no need for further seclusions.

To help me in this work, I want all my lovers to continue to recite once daily the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance, individually or collectively, until the 21st of May 1968; and also to observe complete silence for twenty-four hours on Sunday the 19th of May 1968 — i.e. from midnight of 18th May to midnight of 19th May. (On this day, the Prayers should not be recited aloud, but prayed silently). Consequently, the silence on Sunday the 17th March should not be observed.

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\* A special message from Beloved Baba.

I stress that I wish to remain absolutely undisturbed till the 21st of May 1968. Under no circumstances should any one try to visit me. If I want any one specially for work I will call him. The restriction on correspondence that I have imposed, must continue and be strictly observed.

Until such time when I announce that I will see my lovers or give darshan to them, no one should come of his own accord, but should patiently and in my love await my announcement.

- MEHER BABA -

\* \* \* \* \*

Please circulate the above message from Beloved Baba as early as possible to all concerned in your contact.

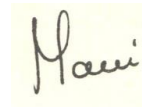
PLEASE NOTE VERY CAREFULLY:

Baba wishes all His lovers, Easterners and Westerners, to keep in mind that He wants to remain completely undisturbed and that they must not come for His darshan before His announcement is circulated.

Baba will be in Poona from April to the end of June 1968. As usual Baba will stay at "Guruprasad", 24 Bund Road, Poona-1.

While at Guruprasad, His work in seclusion will continue uninterrupted and therefore He wants to remain completely undisturbed during His stay there.

Ever lovingly,



# *seventy-seven/*

Guruprasad, Poona, 12th May 1968

Dearest Family,

The month of May has come. Into the world of Baba-lovers it has come with a gale of promise, stirring hope in all hearts, bringing to the surface the question in all minds: Will Baba see His lovers after 21st May? Only Baba has the answer. And Baba, the Beloved, the All Knowing, Infinitely Knowing, the Knower of all minds and hearts, gives this message to all His lovers:

"I know how you feel. I know your love. I know the agony of your longing to see me. I know what I am doing and what I have to do. I know when the time will be right for you to see me, and at that time I will call you. Until that time comes, until I announce that I will see my lovers, I want you all to be patient, to wait with complete trust in my word, with complete faith in my Love for you, with complete obedience to my wishes. Until I announce that I will give my darshan to my lovers, none of you must try to come, none of you must ask to come, none of you must come. Whether I am at Guruprasad or at Meherazad, you will receive my announcement through a circular; and until such a circular is sent out you must all wait in perfect obedience to my wish.

"I am happy with your love for me which makes you proclaim to the world my message of Love and Truth. I am happy with your obedience which has helped me in my work for the universe. I am with you. I give my Love to you."

More and more we hear of lovers who travel about from place to place, often in groups, telling all men about God on earth, giving His Message to the masses. And we see the Beloved's smile reflected in their love-efforts as long as they are kept unclouded by the breath of disobedience. Never must the lovers be so busy telling the people about Baba, that they can fail to listen to what Baba tells them! This is not impossible, for in love we are children and Baba tells us that Love is no child's play. Take the instance of a group in India's northern province — some two dozen lovers, mostly new ones, who came to Poona with the determination to have Baba's darshan in spite of Baba repeatedly saying that none must come. Their longing to see Him moved them to 'demand' His darshan by staging a silent rally outside the gates of Guruprasad! It fell to the lot of Poona veterans to convince them that this was not love's way, that we who are given the grace to love Him cannot ask for the right to disobey. When at last they left to continue their tour of spreading Baba's Message they were no doubt sadder at heart, but infinitely wiser we hope!

"Obedience is a gift from Master to man." It is the means we are given to express our love, the means by which our love may be tested and strengthened. A line from one of Baba's favourite ghazals says: "Every step I take in Your Love, is a test of my love for You." Obedience is a flight of steps that alone lead to His Darshan, steps that we must climb of our own effort. But He is always beside us, holding our hand, helping us on to Himself.

In the West there are countless new lovers of Baba, men and women who have given Him their love and their obedience, who have yet to see Him and who silently long to see Him. Sometimes this longing escapes in words, touching



the hearts of those who catch it. When a new young lover wrote of separation's pain and his longing to see Beloved Baba, it moved Francis to write to him in reply, a beautiful reply which I quote here in part:

"We all, dear Bob, are in the same boat. We have entangled ourselves with a Beloved we cannot measure — who is the Ocean of our dropness; a Beloved whom we cannot see — who is the sun of our match-flames; a Beloved whom we cannot feel — whatever our hands touch is not Him.

"Those of us who live with Him are no better off than those who, because of His order, live away. No doubt you think that we are immeasurably more fortunate than you: you have not yet even seen Him physically, while we see Him every day. But we do not see Him whom we desire to see. We are as far away from Him as you are; our separation is as vast as yours.

"The only way out of our plight is to become perfect in waiting. Let others become perfect in whatever quality they wish; let us become perfect in waiting until our Beloved has the Whim to end our separation. And, in the meanwhile, busy ourselves in His service, telling all we can about the fact of His being here, about the fact that He loves us more than we can ever love ourselves.

"Wait, and work. Wait in obedience to His word and will; work because one has to fill in the days of waiting. Obedience is greater than love. So beloved Baba has told us over and over again."

We will be at Guruprasad for eleven days longer than our usual limit of stay, for Baba has decided to leave Poona for Meherazad on the 12th of July, The favourable weather in Poona has helped to make Baba's work easier. Even April, our hottest month, has been cool and pleasant for the most part. Perhaps the weather has also contributed toward His health which has kept well on the whole, despite the familiar fluctuations. Now we see Him looking so well and radiant, moving with such a swift stride that the mandali have a hard time keeping up with Him. Now we see Him weighed down and so infinitely tired, that they move along at snail's pace to keep in step with Him. Baba tells us that these ups and downs in His physical health are caused by the shifting pressures of His universal work.

As I sit typing on the palatial verandah of Guruprasad, I can see a fraction of the city's life coursing along the Bund Road a little distance from where we are. There is the ceaseless criss-cross of pedestrians, cyclists, buses, cars, taxis, scooters, jingling horse carriages, rumbling bullock carts, peddlers' hand carts, droning auto-rickshaws (which we call bumble-bees), backfiring motorcycles, and trucks and lorries that thunder by them all. This current of movement and sound sweeping past us all day, is a storm when compared with the stillness which abides within Guruprasad: no visitor steps in, none of us who are with Baba step out; absolute quiet is maintained during the hours when Baba does His work in the solitude of His room, so that we practically speak in whispers and move about on tiptoe. No matter how loud the cacophany of traffic from the road, the roar of a plane overhead, the piercing cheep-cheep of sparrows right at His door, the least sound from any of us near His room would

disturb Baba in His work. The quiet prevailing in Guruprasad is a continuation from Meherazad. Thus in effect, except for the change of environment, we are still at Meherazad! A letter I wrote shortly before we came to Poona, tells how it was at Meherazad: "While I'm writing this Beloved Baba is sitting in the Hall, alone, for the special work He does every morning and afternoon, when we must not make the least noise. During these hours of utter quiet it is startling to hear a crow caw, or the sudden rattling of a window when the wind comes up. To walk on the gravel paths by the Hall is like walking on eggshells; and as a sneeze from dear old Baidul is a threat to the sound barrier at any time, he is made to sit a good distance away under the mango tree. While we go about our daily chores 'fast fast' as usual, we are constantly reminding one another "softly, softly". And when these soundless sessions are over and we are again with Baba, another kind of quiet is maintained: no correspondence can be read to Him, no questions asked, no argument or excuses offered in carrying out the smallest of His day to day orders, no cause given for the least disturbance — so fragile is the container of His momentous seclusion. But strong is the love and obedience of His lovers helping to keep it intact, for Beloved Baba informs us from time to time: 'My work is being done very satisfactorily'."

The lovers in Poona have helped supremely in this, temptingly close as they are to the place where their Master resides. One of them wrote to Adi, "Just that our Beloved will be in Poona, is the greatest thing for us. We are content to breathe in the air charged with His presence and fill our lungs to bursting point!" He could've been speaking for them all, so united has been their resolve to help by not approaching Guruprasad in any manner. How the children too have been no less aware of the strict seclusion can be imagined from an amusing incident that concerns Merwan, Baba's three year old grand-nephew living in Poona. It happened a few days after we arrived at Guruprasad. Merwan was out for a walk with his daddy, Jehangir Sukhadwala, when they came across a dead crow lying on the road. Inevitably the toddler's volley of questions began: "What is this?" "A crow" said daddy. "What's the matter with it?" "It has been shot." "Why doesn't it move?" "Because it is dead and gone." "Where has it gone?" "It has gone to Baba." At this, Merwan halted in his tracks and excitedly demanded, "What?! When Baba is in Seclusion? How come a crow can go to Baba and I can't?" I'm still wondering how daddy managed to get out of that!

What with literally a hundred and one passenger buses throughout Poona carrying Baba's picture and His message given by the 'Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre', and the Poona press coming out in a rash of Baba-news, the mandali have had to be vigilant for possible inquirers and seekers. The Marathi papers gave the two recent Circulars in complete or condensed form. "Poona Herald", the English daily, gave condensed versions and topped them with eye-catching headlines. It gave the latest Circular declaring the continuing of Avatar Meher Baba's Seclusion until the 21st of May 1968, with the heading: CALAMITY DATE POSTPONED! — thus inadvertently conveying a sense of the Avatar's compassion for all. On the other hand the "Free Press" of Bombay, publishing the item in its 'Talk of the town' column, headlined it: COMING CATASTROPHE! Although Baba has never actually referred to the "something great" as a calamity or a catastrophe, the newspapers' interpretation is a natural one, reflecting the world's condition which not only makes it easy for people to anticipate

disaster but makes it a dreaded conclusion. Knowing it is all in the hands of the Compassionate Father, whichever way we look at it we see it as nothing less than a Blessing. But no matter how it is interpreted, how far we stretch our guesses as to the form the Blessing will assume, we are bound to fall short of the mark because Baba tells us it will be something that has never happened before. As He said to His mandali a few days after we arrived here:

"That which is to happen after 21st May 1968, will be something great, something that has never happened before, something that will not happen again for billions and billions of years."

Baba further remarked that the 'something great' will happen of a sudden, not in developing stages. People will go about their daily affairs unaware till the moment of its happening.

On the morning of 20th February, the day Baba told us of His decision to continue the Seclusion till 21st May, an extraordinary thing happened at Meherazad. A large monkey, black faced and long limbed, appeared as it were from nowhere and was seen sitting on the goldmohur tree by the house just as Baba entered His room on returning from the mandali. This lone monkey was obviously an exile from its tribe. At sight of it there was an excited chorus of suggestions from us women: "Shoo it away or its commotion will disturb Baba"; "leave it alone it will go away"; "give it a banana it must be hungry"; "don't go too near it's sure to attack"; "keep away or you'll frighten the poor thing". As it turned out, each suggestion was followed, beginning with the banana offering placed discreetly on the roof so as not to scare it. That didn't improve relations. 'The poor thing' gnashed its teeth and furiously shook the branches, using the same brand of contempt for all friendly moves. In the end we decided to try the "leave it alone" formula, ignoring Monkey completely. Nothing could have been worse, as we soon found out. After an hour of peaceful indifference, Monkey suddenly went mad. Leaping on to the main house, it jumped about with astounding speed and force, from roof to roof, of rooms on both floors, sending tiles flying and crashing. The climax of this swift crescendo of sound and fury, came when Monkey leapt down from the topmost point of the house on to Baba's room below with a tremendous crash and impact. Baba was resting in His room at the time, and the mandali members who were with Him said they felt the ceiling would cave in! After that of course the "shoo away" operation was immediately put into effect — a fantastic chase involving more than a dozen Meherazadians waving bamboos, brooms, branches, umbrellas, round and round the compound as Monkey dodged from treetop to treetop, roof to roof. It was not far to sunset time before Monkey made up its mind to give up, making for the village of Pimpalgaon about a mile away. There, as we heard the villagers tell, it settled down quietly for over a month before vanishing as suddenly as it had appeared.

Interesting as this Monkey episode is, ordinarily it might not have been given space here. What makes it profoundly news worthy is Beloved Baba's comments after it was over. Baba said that the havoc played by the monkey on the roof of His room on the day He had decided to lengthen the Seclusion, was deeply significant to His work and that which is to happen after 21st May.

After this, it was natural for us not to dismiss as 'coincidence' a couple of incidents that made a tailpiece to the Monkey chapter. One was, that just two mornings prior to our arrival in Poona a large black-faced monkey visited Baba House in Poona, the house where Baba's brother Beheram lives with his family, where Beloved Baba lived as a youth. As reported by His niece Gulnar, the monkey settled down on the roof of Baba's Room. It sat there for quite a while, seeming content and very much at home, enjoying the fruits it found on trees in the patio of the house. Then it loped off gracefully over the network of neighbouring rooftops, and has not been seen around since then. The other incident relates to the Irani New Year, 'Jamshedi Navroz', which falls on 21st March when day and night are of equal length. Signifying the season of Spring and a day of thanksgiving, Jamshedi Navroz is believed to be Persia's most ancient festival dating back to over 10,000 years, and is observed with much rejoicing in the home of every Irani. The turn of each new year is worked out with astronomical precision: the exact time it will begin to turn, the colour it will signify, the form of animal it will symbolically assume. And this year, Navroz has assumed the form of a Monkey! This is predicted to indicate a lot of world trouble and chaos in the current year.

Predictions from astrologers, clairvoyants and the like, make irresistible reading in magazines and Sunday papers everywhere. What news space is not devoted to violence and disasters, seems devoted to the predicting of worse to follow. Amid the black clouds of these many forecasts, it is refreshing to see a brilliant star heralding hope for the world, as seen through the eyes of Mir Bashir, renowned palmist of London. The 'Poona Herald' of 7th March 1968 gives Mr. Bashir's prediction under the heading: A NEW PROPHET TO COME SOON.

It goes on to say, "Mir Bashir, the internationally known palmist clairvoyant, who claims Indian princes and British politicians and other prominent people among his clientele, has made an important announcement on the eve of a pilgrimage to Mecca. Mir Bashir said:

'While I shall devote myself to the religious significance of the haj, I am hoping that I shall experience something specially significant relating to the coming of a great personage of tremendous spiritual stature.

'For many years I have been seeing signs in the hands of countless people I have met in all parts of the world, that there will be a great awakening — a great spiritual regeneration coinciding with the appearance of this personage. I have seen the signs most often in the hands of children.'

He predicted that the arrival of the 'person' would have great global impact on people of all faiths."

Signs hidden in countless hands and revealed to countless hearts, they point to Beloved Baba's words: "The whole world will come to know who I am when I break my Silence." Baba has also said that "The fortunate ones are they who know me now, before I manifest universally." Many years ago, when His Silence was in its teens, Baba told His disciples (to the effect) that "Now I am like a Lion that is caged — people come to see it and admire it, can afford to trifle with the majesty of its power, are indifferent or ignorant of its might.

But none would be left in ignorance or doubt were the lion to spring from its cage! When I come out of my Silence, my Divine Identity will be manifest to all, my Glory will reveal itself, the impact of my Love will be felt universally."

The number of 'fortunate ones' is growing every day, everywhere, along with their longing to spread His word. In U.S.A., as a letter informs us, "Beloved Baba's Message is moving like an avalanche. There are Baba Groups coming into existence everywhere, especially those formed by University students, most brilliant and loving young people who are taking Baba spontaneously into their hearts and lives." The more His Family grows, the more frequently we receive a 'birth announcement' telling us of yet another Baba Group or Baba Centre born in some part of some country. Round the world, the rejoicers of Avatar Meher Baba's 74th Birthday represented many countries, many religions. "People of various faiths" figured conspicuously in reports from Iran, Pakistan, Africa, and Centres in other Eastern countries. In multi-religioned India they figured in celebrations everywhere. They were there among the 30,000 at Ahmednagar who took part in the six-hour procession winding through the maze of streets to the accompaniment of music, dancing and fireworks; they were there in the mammoth processions at Nagpur, Kanpur, Dehra Dun, Masulipatam, and in the more intimate ones at other places; they were there at Bombay's function presided over by a renowned cricketer; at Poona's function presided over by the Speaker of Maharashtra's legislative assembly; at Delhi's function led by three Ministers of the Central Government. Everywhere, in gatherings and processions, at entertainments and Prayers, at bhajan-singing and feast-giving to the poor in His Name, they were there — people of various faiths, of various communities, from various walks of life, rejoicing in the birth of the birthless One. The message that Baba sent to His lovers on the Day, was:

ON THIS MY APPARENT PHYSICAL BIRTHDAY  
I SEND MY HOMAGE AND OBEISANCE TO MY LOVERS  
WHO LIVE FOR ME AND WOULD IF ORDERED DIE FOR ME.

All that His lovers in the West and East put into making this Birthday an occasion 'befitting to the Avatar' could be added up to the one word: BABA. And the result, whether judged in size or form, can be simply called colossal. It certainly cannot be put into the nutshell of a letter, nor will I try. One refrain heard in most of the reports was "We wished it would go on and on, that the Day would never end." A child was heard to ask his mother "Why can't we have Baba's Birthday every day?" Well, many lovers in India did just that. In the states of Andhra, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, a fair number of Baba's Centres publicly celebrated the Birthday for 74 days, some keeping it up for over a 100 days!

But if the universal celebrating of the 74th Birthday is properly described as gigantic, it was not a giant that sprang up overnight to honour the Occasion. It was a structure made up of 365 days and built with the love and energy of His lovers, a culmination of their labours in bearing His Message to all peoples at all times of the year. And with the impetus of the rising body of His new lovers, His Message is being borne over every land, spreading so swiftly that it is difficult to focus on any single area of progress to report on! As an impartial editor put it in a recent publication, "the world is on the threshold of a new BABA ERA".

Until some years ago, finding a mention of Baba in the press was as unexpected as coming across a daisy in a field of withered grass. Now the daisies are dotted all over the field, springing up in the toughest patches. Around this Birthday time more than a few Indian papers and magazines printed news of Baba. Those in Marathi (language of Maharashtra) covered pages with His messages, circulars, biography, articles by His lovers, and reports of His Birthday celebration — including some of the most notably conservative papers! When I remarked to a Maharashtrian Baba-lover that this was surely a surprise, he said that the more correct word would be a 'miracle'. Birthday time is also a favourite time for His lovers to present a fresh bouquet of Baba-material in various languages: books, booklets, folders, pamphlets, posters, cards. Among the rare flowers of this year's offering is 'Dari Be Sooye Abadiyyat' (Door To Eternity), an extremely well printed book published by Baba-lovers of Teheran and Shiraz, Iran. Written by Dr. Jehangir Meherabanpur, it is the first book of its kind in Persian, giving the life and works and discourses of Meher Baba and having colour portraits of Him. Of the five thousand that were printed, the lovers sent individual copies to all the religious heads of Iran.

Throughout the vast background of India's spiritual history there have been rishis, maharishis, yogis, mahayogis, mahatmas, gurus, sants, sadhus, and the like. India still abounds with them. Like the shells swept ashore when the Tide comes in, at Avataric times they appear in profusion. A few among them are genuine. I recall how, when we were watching a conglomeration of 8,000 of them at Benares in 1939, Baba turned to us and gestured, "Of these 8,000, only 8 are real." False and real, wherever they are found, whatever their titles and claims, they are folds of the veil that help the Avatar hide Himself from us. As such, their stirring and billowing out into public prominence at the present, shows that the moment is nearing for the Avatar to emerge from behind the veil and reveal Himself. But in the meantime, lest we get involved in these folds that veil Reality, Beloved Baba again and again reminds us and warns us to keep away from any and all of them.

As in the market of drugs, the wares of maharishis, mahatmas and others, offer many palliatives that give one a feeling of relief from pain of material problems, that deaden one's sense of frustration or boredom. But when the momentary effect wears off, the ghosts rise again and loom bigger than ever. Only the Divine Surgeon — the God Man, Perfect Master — can remove the root of all symptoms. The average searcher finds the sugar-coated palliatives easy to swallow — they lull him gently into the belief that they are a cure, they add to his false sense of security, they do not remove the burden that he groans under and hates to part with, and the price to his ego is cheap. Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters who brought about the present Avatar's advent, said shortly before she dropped her body, "It is time for me to leave now — work is over — must close shop." A devotee protested, 'Do not say that Babajan, we need you with us.' With a quizzical look Babajan said: "Nobody wants my wares — nobody can afford the price — I've turned the goods over to the Proprietor." And right now, while the Proprietor has the Shop's doors wide open for all, how many who enter can yet afford the 'price'? We may yet walk in and ask the Highest of the High for material boons worthy of a ten-cent store — like walking into the biggest jewellers and asking for a packet of pins. Of course we can have our pins, for God-Shop is All-Complete and there are all things for all customers. Once in a while comes one who recognizes the Jewel and is prepared

to denude himself of his 'self' for its possession, to eventually discover that it is only by the grace and mercy of the 'Shop Keeper' that he can attain the Gem of no price. How immeasurable our good fortune that the Shop Keeper of our time is Mercy Incarnate, as even His Name reveals either way we look at it: MEHER means compassion or grace; REHEM means mercy. All He asks of us is all of our imperfect love, from which may be born perfect obedience and perfect patience.

Over and over again Baba tells His lovers: I AM WITH YOU. His lovers are given the opportunity to realize this more and more, as attested by them. It is as if the farther He goes into seclusion the nearer He is to His lovers, the more they remember and feel and experience that He is with them!

One morning the mail brought a postcard from a very young Baba-lover in Jabalpur, a boy named Raju. In a laborious scrawl Raju had written in English:

Dear Baba

on 25 Feb I took part in your  
birthday celebration. I gave a small speech:-

Baba is our Father  
Baba is our Mother  
Baba is our Brother  
Baba is our Sister

But

Baba is my dear Friend  
because He plays with me  
He eats with me  
He sleeps with me  
He walks with me

He always with me.

Reading my letter through I find that it is as usual a surprisingly long letter. And as usual I assure myself it is better this way, in case the next letter is much delayed or too short. For the lazy ones, however few, who might glide across the central expanse of this letter, the messages of utmost importance are placed at both ends of the letter where none can miss them.

#### BABA'S MESSAGE TO HIS LOVERS:

"I want all my lovers to continue reciting the Parvardigar Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance every day till the 9th of July 1968. On the 10th of July,

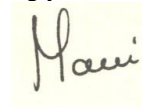
the 43rd anniversary of my Silence, I want all my lovers to observe complete silence for twenty four hours, from midnight of 9th July to midnight of 10th July 1968."

Please note that Baba has given no option of a fast for those who may find it impractical to observe silence. His lovers know what their Beloved's wish is, and it is left to them how they can manage to carry it out. None must write concerning it to any of us here or at the Ahmednagar office.

Moreover, Baba desires the present restriction on correspondence to continue as now and be more strictly observed. The "more strictly" applies mainly to those of His lovers in India who have been increasingly forgetful of the restriction and have lapsed into pre-restriction letter writing.

To those who receive this letter before 19th May, I would like to make it clear that apart from the silence on 10th July the silence to be observed on Sunday the 19th of May (as per Circular sent out in March) stands good.

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Hau', is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the signature line of the letter.



# *seventy-eight/*

Meherazad, 9th September 1968.

Dearest Family,

By the many calendars at Meherazad and other gentler reminders, I know that you are waiting to receive this letter. I, too, have been waiting to write it, waiting till I might capture the only news that you are waiting to receive: that Baba has announced He will give Darshan. But alas, this much wooed announcement continues to elude, appearing joyfully close at hand and painfully out of reach, seemingly near but far off as the horizon. While the world of Baba-lovers is suspended in the vacuum of a breathless waiting, while the lovers yearn for His smile and strain for His call, Beloved Baba gives no indication yet as to when they will see Him. He tells them:

BE PATIENT. WAIT IN MY LOVE. THOSE WHO WAIT FOR ME  
NEVER WAIT IN VAIN. YOU WILL SEE ME, BUT WAIT TILL I CALL.  
HOLD ON TO MY DAAMAN — AND WAIT FOR MY CALL.

The 21st of May 1968 marked both an end and a beginning — end of the interminable seclusion (when Baba secluded Himself from seeing His lovers), and beginning of a period referred to as 'exclusion' (when His lovers are excluded from seeing Him). In short, on May 21 Baba came out of Seclusion and stepped into Exclusion without a change of the restrictions that covered the former. And, we understand from Him, this period of exclusion is the threshold leading to Inclusion, the time that will include all to His darshan!

The Work that walked hand in hand with the seclusion, did not stop when the seclusion did — it went on till the end of July. "How I kept it going over the last stretch to its completion, I alone know!" Baba told us. He said, "You cannot have a seed of an idea how crushing the pressure was, for it is beyond human understanding. On the final day my body felt as though it had been through a wringer." We had at least some measure of visual evidence of the impact borne by the body, when He looked so infinitely tired after the work. And we had occasional crumbs for our imagination, when He was in the mood to let fall some remark on some angle of the work. From one of these we learnt what a labour it was for Baba, during these specific hours daily when He worked entirely away from the gross plane, to retain the link with His physical body. He had to take great pains, He said, to keep the thread-fine link from snapping! Another absorbing remark fell on another angle. It was at one of those times when we begged Him to be less neglectful of His health, to go slower by working less hours, and Baba said: "That would mean once again prolonging the Work and postponing the date of its conclusion. If now I allow that to happen, it will indefinitely postpone the result and set it on a different course."! And so He kept working on, while WE were in Poona and for weeks after we returned on 1st July to Meherazad.

While the universal Master slaved for His creation, we struggled to be worthy slaves to His wishes. With all the bans and restrictions on visitors and correspondence, we were yet unable to punch a hole in our work-lined days for a breath of idle leisure. We were occupied as ever, doing the endless little nothings that are everything when they are done at the Master's bidding. There wasn't much difference in the duties allotted usually to each. The difference was in the mettle of our obedience, obedience that was constantly tested and sharpened against our thousand weaknesses. Baba does not mow down one's shortcomings — He often makes them serve one in serving Him. When He accepts the 'all' that we surrender to Him, He accepts the myriad weaknesses that bind us and makes them serve Him for our release. In His hands, our chains become reins. How often have we seen this transformation! As a single instance, take the inordinate inquisitiveness that is part of our Baidul's nature, a weak point that exasperates those around him. That weak point became his strong point in serving his Master, in his years of arduous service as an expert Mast-hunter. Baidul's nosy nature was an indispensable asset in ferreting out from inconceivable sources, the whereabouts and history of masts (God-intoxicated ones of the Path) whom Baba wished to contact during His many Mast-tours — information that often was jealously guarded by the masts' devotees! And so, in diverse ways, He lets our imperfections serve His perfect plan. As Baba once remarked to the disciples around Him, with a twinkle that He could not hide, "You are all nothing but broken-down furniture. But, it is I who have selected you, so you must be what I want."

It was on Tuesday the 30th of July 1968, that the Work was concluded. On that evening Beloved Baba declared:

MY WORK IS DONE. IT IS COMPLETED 100% TO MY SATISFACTION.  
THE RESULT OF THIS WORK WILL ALSO BE 100% AND WILL  
MANIFEST FROM THE END OF SEPTEMBER.

At the time when we crossed the date-line of May 21, we barely glanced at it. But later when we looked back and saw it receding rapidly, we were surprised to see that it had raised no dust storm from agitated minds. Beloved Baba's statement that something great will happen soon after 21st May had filtered through newspapers to the public's ear. So it was hardly surprising that a number of His lovers were apprehensive about being questioned and challenged by individuals they met, and armed themselves with answers. But when they were questioned, as sure enough they were and still continue to be — by friends, neighbours, acquaintances, strangers — they found themselves disarmed, for the question most often put to the lovers was the same one that the lovers were asking themselves: "When will Meher Baba give darshan?"!!!

The greatest event for Baba-lovers is being with Baba. In their heart-scales no event can weigh more. Knowing their longing, as only the Beloved can who suffers His separation in them, Baba says: "I know that they are impatient to see me. And what about me? I also am impatient for them to see me. But the time has yet not come — so my lovers and I, we must wait a while longer."

With the expectancy rising higher, the impatience sometimes spills over, specially from the Western sea of His young lovers whose eyes thirst for their first glimpse of Him. To be nearer to His abode when His call comes, a number of these young ones have hitch-hiked from America, and from France and Australia. Some have hung on to the outskirts, waiting out their vigil close to Delhi and managing to renew their visas again and again. Some have come up to the threshold, to Adi's office at Ahmednagar. Each one's longing, conveyed in a letter to Adi, reached Baba. Each one received from Baba a message and instructions. The message was a treasure of His Love, the instructions were a test of their love. One and all proved true lovers. Rubbed against the Beloved's flint-hard instructions to return home without seeing Him, to wait till He calls them, their love was not found wanting. They carried out the instructions, not just on the whole but in each part. We old-timers bow down to these young ones' love that has the strength to bow down to His will so completely. To give a breath of the agony of longing and obedience that came in all their letters, I quote from one boy's letter. J.P., waiting in Delhi since many months, wrote in reply to Adi's advice to return to U.S.: "My heart has been so long set on seeing Beloved Baba that it won't listen to reason. I have been longing to proceed south to be nearer to Baba. Leaving India, turning even my physical back on Him, is beyond my powers at this point. But I am not saying I won't go home or can't go home or that I wish in any way to go against Beloved Baba's wishes. I wish to do exactly what Baba wishes me to do. If it is His Will that I return, then I have faith that it will be revealed to me and that Baba will help me carry out His Will. Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!"

If the longing of His lovers is mounting, so is their number. In East and West, the number has grown to such an extent that we cannot imagine the next Darshan being arranged on the lines of any gathering or sahasas held in the past. We wonder how it is going to be managed when Baba's call bursts the dam of waiting to let His lovers in! But there is an old saying "When God tells you to ride, He will provide a horse." When the Beloved calls, His lovers will be shown the way. At times we find that in answer to their call, some are shown the way to His darshan within them. As we have come to know over the years, such experience is not so very rare among newly awakened ones — and quite a few times it has happened to individuals who had never heard of Baba! Each time we come to know of someone having received His darshan inwardly, we are reawakened to the fact that He is everywhere. Take the instance that was mentioned in a letter received by Jal from James Taylor, one of the Baba-boys in the U.S.A.: "The other day a recent vintage Baba-lover in Berkeley told us that he and a friend had planned to go to India to see Baba. They were going to write to Adi to that effect, when one night Baba gave them His loving Presence internally ... they were so overwhelmed by His shower of Love ... they now know He is everywhere."

Some others He has called to Himself in eternal darshan. They lived for Him and now live in Him, for Beloved Baba tells us:

THOSE WHO LOVE ME NEVER DIE. THEY LIVE IN ME ETERNALLY. Baba also says:  
NO ONE COMES AND NO ONE GOES, AND NONE KNOWS HAPPINESS OR WOES.

The occasion that gave birth to this rhyme was a cable recently received from His dear lovers Adi & Dolly Arjani of Pakistan, conveying news of the fatal accident to His teen-age lover, their son Fareedoon. Every now and then we receive a telegram or a cable, from inland or overseas, informing us that some lover and worker of Baba has dropped his or her body — the body that housed His Love-flame and served as a beacon for others. Within two months, two of His beloved and dedicated workers in the U.S.A. — Beryl Williams, and Warren Healy — have come to Him. So also has His stalwart worker in England, Douglas Eve. "Beryl was and is mine for ever." "Warren's love for me was unique." "Douglas is eternally blessed." These are the first words we received from Beloved Baba when the cables concerning their passing away were read to Him — words from the Eternal Source — undying testimony of their love for Him, of His Love for them.

For the world, while oblivious of it, the greatest event is when God visits the earth as Man. Of all the planets in all the galaxies among all the universes, Earth alone is where this miracle happens, again and again. But when it happens, poor Earth is unconscious; it is like a king who is crowned in his sleep and misses his coronation. The God-Man (Avatar) visits the Earth when it is dark in pain and sorrow. He comes in the dead of night, and only a few see Him by the light of His Love and follow Him in adoration. The Dawn comes after He leaves, and with it comes the growing awakening, the remorse, the agonized waiting for His return, the resolution not to miss Him the next time ... many a 'next time' slipping through many a worn out resolution ... until, at last, that time is here. It is in this time, now! This God-visit is to be different. Our Earth-world will not be left asleep in darkness. The Compassionate One will shake it awake, and it will witness His Love's rising in the dawn of His Word. All the world, our God-Man tells us, will know Him when He breaks open His silence and gives to it The Word.

Already we see it is different this time. In bygone Advents it was after the God-Man dropped His body that His faithfuls set out with His message across and over the lands, brought out books on His teachings and life, made pilgrimages to the places where His feet had walked, set up houses of worship in His name and service. In the present Advent, all of this is being done now — all this and much more, while God is among us in the Man-form of Meher Baba.

Meher Baba's Message-carriers, His "workers", starting out in handfuls are now moving on in landfuls. They are a continually expanding body covering many lands, its thousand limbs moving forward with a swiftness that astonishes them. As a reporter, I find it more bewildering than astonishing. It is not possible any more to keep up with the agility of each limb, one can only follow the movement of the whole! Phrases in the reports that come in, phrases like the ones I am quoting here, give an idea of the course His Love is taking in different lands (Australia): "... the flow and movement of beloved Baba in Australia is quickening, the root structure is strengthening and spreading." (England): "It is amazing how Baba has brought things about — His work is indeed speeding up, and there is an extraordinary sense of urgency!" (Iran): "In the Love of beloved Hazrat Meherbaba, Muslims and Zoroastrians get together, work together, eat together, as children of the

One Father, as members of His ever growing Persian family — what can one call this except a miracle?" (U.S.A.): "There is a growing sense of Baba-consolidation and a firming of deeper love and commitment in more and more individuals, while the general public is becoming more familiar with the Name of the Highest of the High." ..... "The many new lovers that are cropping up in all places in every corner of the United States, are clearly the Beloved's children in the Beloved's family." We see many countries coming to life, part by part, with Baba's Love-touch. The world is like a huge mansion at night, and window after window lights up as the switch is turned on in each room. The latest window we see lit up in His brilliance is the state of Texas in U.S.A., where a Baba-group has formed — a sturdy young group of boys and girls who have set out to proclaim His Message through "HEMISFAIR 68" being held in San Antonio, Texas. A group newly born, whose first step is a stride!

The books on and by Meher Baba, so far published, are over a hundred. Avatar Meher Baba Centres are all over the world — the 'houses of worship' that have the fragrance of His living presence — trees in bloom, not pressed flowers from the pages of a past. Each Baba Centre, the product of the joint love of His lovers, is christened with His Name combined with its birthplace or some expression of the lovers' love-fancy. His Name is woven into their personal lives too, as when naming their home and children. For example, place-names: Meher Cottage, Meher House, Meher Manzil (abode), Meher Astana (threshold). And, personal names: Meher-prasad (boon), Meher-kumar (son), Meher-prem (love), Meher-jyoti (flame), Meher-dil (heart), and so on. As there are many young lovers by the name of Meherwan (or Merwan), in our conversations we refer to them by their parents, like 'Rhoda's Meherwan' or 'Gaimai's Meherwan' or 'Burjor's Merwan'! In Satara we knew a Christian carpenter who named his first grandson after Baba, We were so proud to hear that, so happy to see the bonny baby boy — and so startled to hear grandma calling him 'Meherbaba'! It took quite a bit of gentle persuasion to convince the family that this was not the way to do it, that the name should simply be Meherwan. Either they could not remember or pronounce the name properly, but a happy compromise was reached and the boy was named Meherban (associated in their minds with 'meherbanee', an Indian word for 'thanks').

The Beloved's Name is not confined to heart and home. It often enters His lovers' business or public interests. Today, in different parts of India, there are private businesses and public establishments that are registered under these names: Meher Pharmacy, Meher Tea Shop, Meher Foundry, Meher Agencies, Meher Cloth Shop, Meher Dispensary, Meher Farm, Meher Park, Meher Market, Meher Cafe, Meher Nagar (township), Meher Puri (housing colony), Meher Vihar, Meher Academy and Tutorial College, Meher Poultry Farm, Meher Gardens — and perhaps others that I am not aware of. And now there is to be a Meher Cinema! Being constructed in Agra (near Delhi) by His devoted Krishna Prasad family, the 'MEHER' Cinema will be equipped for showing 70 mm films, the first of its kind in the U.P. (northern India). Lastly, I must mention one locality named after Him which was not named by His lovers, but by a governmental body. In Poona, the locality where Baba's childhood home is situated, the section with the alleys where Baba played as Meherwan, was officially named "Meher Moholla" by the Board of Poona Cantonement a number of years ago.

This Advent, this God-Man era, is indeed different!

In a message to His lovers, Beloved Baba said:

"Love makes the Formless and Infinite become enformed and finite as the God-Han among men. Love me more and more because for the sake of Love I have come among you."

Baba tells us to love Him more and more, for to love Him is to love our Self. He has come to awaken us to the knowledge of what Love means, for we have forgotten. We have forgotten to love our neighbours because we have forgotten to love our selves — else, there would be no room in us for the greed and hatred and jealousy and fear that is lording over men and nations. When Baba refers to the world and its affairs, His fingers form a cup-like hollow circle denoting a Zero — the nonentity that points to the Entity, the illusion that is the clue to Reality. Smilingly, Beloved Baba also refers to it as a Potato. Surely, we tell ourselves, He has a rotten potato on His hands at the moment, with a lot of cutting and cleaning out to do! But He is being infinitely patient, as He was telling the mandali a few days ago. Baba said: "Of all my Advents, in the present one I am exercising my patience to the utmost!"

Since the Beloved completed His work on 30th July, we receive more of His company. Every morning and afternoon He spends some hours in the Hall with His men. Before settling in the chair, Baba takes a walk up and down the Hall, with dear Kaka waddling beside Him like a protective hen. This touches and delights Baba. Kaka also provides a variety of light-hearted entertainment every day, with some act of merriment, or with his many mispronunciations of names and words that he cannot re-member. Undaunted by his loss of memory for the commonly used words, Kaka has practically invented a new language which he speaks with supreme confidence and relish. A further touch of jollity is added when Francis gives his own translation of the Kaka-language. More than once Baba has said, "While everybody adds to my burden, Kaka removes a fraction of it!" When Baba leaves the Hall, it is at the time appointed by Himself. No matter how keenly He may appear to attend to discussions that come up or listen to articles and news items that are read out, He never fails to keep an eye on the wall clock. Baba's punctiliousness in the matter of time has always amazed us. But, as one lover put it: the Eternal One, having bound Himself in Time, observes the minute rules of the game! Although Baba does not give spiritual discourses or explanations on these days, the mandali receive an occasional pearl from the ocean of His whim. This is sometimes in the shape of a rhyme. Among the ones received in the last two months, are the following.

One morning in July, His fingers moving rapidly to spell out words read by Eruch, Beloved Baba said:

"GOD ALWAYS EXISTED  
GOD WILL ALWAYS EXIST.  
HE IS NEVER CHANGING, EVER THE SAME—  
AND ILLUSION IS HIS ETERNAL GAME."

This one was given by Baba in August:

"EVERLASTING, NEVER ENDING  
NEVER CHANGING, EVER THE SAME  
AND HIS ONENESS IN ITS FULLNESS  
PLAYS IN MANYNESS HIS GAME. "

At another time, His fingers spelt out:

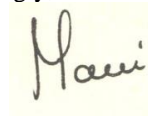
"Coming, Coming, Coming — CAME:

One of the mandali said it sounded like the auctioneer's call in reverse!  
With a smile in His eyes, Baba said: "None of you can know what it means."  
A few days later Beloved Baba added on another line, making it:

"COMING, COMING, COMING -- CAME:  
I AM TIRED OF THE ILLUSION GAME."

!!! Jai Baba!

Lovingly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maai", is written on a small, rectangular yellow sticky note. The note is placed over the word "Lovingly,".

# *seventy-nine/*

Meherazad, 1st November 1968.

Dearest Family,

This unexpected letter following on the heels of the last one, is a momentous messenger carrying momentous tidings: the announcement from Beloved Baba for which His lovers have been waiting, waiting, waiting. That which seemed so far away such a short while ago, is now so close and large that the years of waiting appear small beside it. The first hint Baba gave us of it, was scarcely a month before His announcement was finalised and formulated in a Circular to reach all His lovers. The Circular, issued on 1st November 1968, is being sent out by Adi to all lovers in the East, and given here by me for all lovers in the West:-

On the 13th October some local workers and a few from other places were called to Meherazad to hear this new circular (Life Circular No. 70) informing Avatar Meher Baba's lovers all over the world of His decision to give them His darshan next year from 10th April to 10th June in Poona.

Baba said: "No doubt you people and my lovers everywhere have been wondering why, when my period of intense Work in seclusion has finished, I have still not allowed my lovers to see me.

"The strain of that 18 months' Work was tremendous. I used to sit alone in my room for some hours each day while complete silence was imposed on the mandali and no one of them was permitted to enter the room, during those hours every day. The strain was not in the work itself although I was working on all planes of consciousness, but in keeping my link with the gross plane. To keep this link I had to continuously hammer my right thigh with my fist. Now, although my health is good, and I would like to fulfill immediately the longing of my lovers to come to me — many to see me for the first time — it will yet take some time for all traces of the strain to disappear and for me to be 100% fit to see them all; and so because of this, and for practical considerations also, I have decided to give my darshan only to my lovers but not to the general public.

"This is the time for my lovers. The time for the world's crowds to come to me will be when I break my Silence and Manifest my Divinity.

"The 1962 East-West Gathering was nothing compared with what this Gathering will be. For while I was working intensely in seclusion, my worker-lovers all over the world were intensely active telling the world about me, and my Message is spreading in many parts of the West now as a forest fire before a strong wind — as it had already done in many areas of India.

"I will give my darshan daily for two hours in the morning and for two hours in the afternoon to small numbers up to 500 (Five hundred) at a time, but I will not see any of my lovers individually or give private interviews, for it would not be possible. This is my part of the bargain. How the lovers come to Poona and are accommodated will be the concern of each one who comes."

\* \* \* \* \*



The following is the text of the Circular (Life Circular No. 70) which is issued and being sent out to all lovers of Avatar Meher Baba as directed by Him.

All lovers of Avatar Meher Baba in the East and the West, are eagerly awaiting word from Him regarding His giving His darshan "sometime, somewhere, somehow".

Avatar Meher Baba now declares that He will give darshan to His lovers, BUT only on the terms laid down by Him in this Circular.

#### CONDITIONS for DARSHAN

of

AVATAR MEHER BABA

10th April — 10th June 1969

- 1) Baba will give His darshan in Poona, for a fixed number of hours each day, from April 10 to June 10, 1969.
- 2) The Darshan will be in the central hall of Guruprasad bungalow at 24 Bund Garden Road, Poona -1. (India).
- 3) The Darshan will be strictly for his lovers, old and new, Eastern and Western. IT WILL NOT BE AN OPEN DARSHAN FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.
- 4) Baba will give His darshan daily for two hours in the morning to Westerners and for two hours in the afternoon to Easterners separately. Morning hours will be from 9 to 11 A.M. Afternoon hours will be from 2 to 4 P.M.
- 5) a) The two hours in the morning will be exclusively for His lovers from the West from 9 to 11 A.M. up to 10th June.  
b) The two hours in the afternoon will be for His lovers in the East, including Pakistan, Iran and Africa. None of these lovers should come to Guruprasad in the morning or wait at the gate in the morning for their time of Darshan in the afternoon, from 2 to 4 P.M. up to 29th May.
- 6) The lovers from the West should stay in Poona for not more than a week. They may see Baba only FOUR times during their one week's stay in Poona.
- 7) The lovers from Pakistan, Iran and Africa should stay in Poona for not more than four days. They should see Baba only TWICE during their four days' stay in Poona.
- 8) Lovers coming from anywhere in India should stay in Poona for not more than three days. They should see Baba only ONCE during their three days' stay in Poona.

- 9) Lovers residing in Poona should see Baba only ONCE during the Darshan period.
- 10) Baba will not see any one individually.
- 11) Baba will NOT give any private interviews, and no one should ask Baba for any advice or directive on their personal affairs, group activities or spiritual matters.
- 12) Group-heads may introduce new lovers to Baba. For the purpose of identity of Baba-lovers and to prevent infiltration of the public, group-heads of zonal centres should devise and issue tokens to all in their zone coming to Poona for the Darshan.
- 13) As the Darshan will be given solely in the Hall of Guruprasad bungalow, only a limited number of lovers can be accommodated at a time. Hence the Eastern lovers are divided into zones, and each zonal group must abide by the date allotted to it. The term "Eastern lovers" includes those coming from Pakistan, Iran and Africa, and they must keep to the dates fixed for their seeing Baba and arrive in Poona accordingly.

To enable all of them to have Baba's darshan, particular dates have been fixed for particular groups in the particular zones. Group-heads in their respective zones should divide the number of Baba-lovers in their zone into one or two or more groups according to the number of groups each zone contains, as follows:

<u>ZONES Afternoon hours from 2 to 4 P.M.</u>	<u>GROUPS</u>	<u>1969</u>
a) POONA (and suburbs and Panshet) .....	Group I ---	10th April
	Group II --	11th April
	Group III -	12th April
b) BOMBAY (and Parel Village and suburbs .....	Group I ---	13th April
	Group II --	14th April
	Group III -	15th April
c) GUJERAT .....	Group I ---	16th April
d) PAKISTAN .....(for TWO days) .....	..	17th and 18th April
e) HAMIRPUR (and Jalaun Dist. only) .....	Group I ---	19th April
	Group II --	20th April
	Group III -	22nd April
	Group IV--	23rd April
f) UTTAR PRADESH (Kanpur, Jhansi, Varanasi ) (Dehra Dun, Agra, Lucknow) (Allahabad, Saharanpur, ) (Sultanpur, Mokimpur, ) (Aligarh, Mathura, ) (Roorkee, etc.	Group I ---	25th April
	Group II --	26th April
	Group III -	27th April
g) DELHI, KASHMIR, W. BENGAL, HARYANA ) PUNJAB, BIHAR, ORISSA .....	Group I ---	29th April
	Group II --	30th April
	Group III -	1st May

h) NAGPUR (and Saoner and rest of Maharashtra ) (State. .... ) )	Group I --- 3rd May Group II -- 4th May Group III - 5th May
i) MADHYA PRADESH (Jabalpur, Raipur, ) (Bilaspur, Bhopal, ) (Indore, etc ..... )	Group I --- 7th May Group II -- 8th May Group III - 9th May
j) ANDHRA PRADESH (Srikakulam, Vizagapatnam ) (and East Godavri Dists.....) )	Group I ---11th May Group II --12th May Group III -13th May
k) ANDHRA PRADESH (West Godavri Dist..... ) )	Group I ---15th May Group II --16th May
l) ANDHRA PRADESH (Krishna Dist..... ) )	Group I ---18th May Group II --19th May
m) ANDHRA PRADESH (Guntur Dist. .... ) )	Group I--- 21st May Group II--22nd May
n) ANDHRA PRADESH (Hyderabad, Secunderabad, ) (and rest of Andhra, Madras,) (and Kerala States )	Group I---24th May Group II--25th May Group III-26th May
o) IRAN AND AFRICA .....(for TWO days) ..... )	.. 28th and 29th May
p) AHMEDNAGAR DIST. (Patherdi, Kup, Bhaloni, Pimpalgaon, Arangaon, etc.) (Baba will fix the dates of these places later.)	

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- 14) Western lovers should try and spread out their arrivals in Poona over the two months of the Darshan period. This is in view of the shortage of good hotels and accommodation suited to Western needs, and to help avoid crowding in Guruprasad Hall at darshan time.
- 15) Baba wants all His lovers, both Eastern and Western, to return home directly on leaving Poona after seeing Him. Therefore, any who plan to do sightseeing in India or outside of India should do so before coming to Poona.
- 16) Only those who can afford to make the trip for His darshan should do so, and it must be on their own responsibility in all respects and without risk to health or livelihood.
- 17) No one from abroad should come for Baba's darshan without guaranteed passage for their return home soon after the week's stay in Poona.
- 18) Baba wants all of His lovers coming for His darshan from overseas, to transact their financial dealings through the Indian banks and authorised agents according to the law of the country.

- 19) Baba does not wish any of His lovers to bring gifts for Him or for any of His people.
- 20) No one should seek or expect to receive any special permission or instructions from Baba about coming for His darshan. Any lover who wishes to come, and who can afford to come, and who is well enough in health to come, is free to do so. Each one visiting Poona for Baba's darshan must understand that he or she comes on his or her own responsibility in every respect.
- 21) Baba does not wish His lovers to write to anyone at Meherazad, or to Adi K. Irani, on any problems or queries regarding their visit to Poona for the Darshan.
- 22) Baba wants all His Eastern lovers visiting Poona for His darshan to make their own arrangements as regards conveyance, stay, food and other personal comforts. These arrangements must be seen to by individuals or their own group-heads concerned without seeking the least aid from Meherazad Mandali or from Adi and his office.
- 23) Western lovers may seek help in fixing hotel accommodation for their stay in Poona from Meherjee who has been appointed to this task by Baba. For this, the individual Western lovers should intimate Meherjee by a short letter as soon as passage has been booked, informing him of date of arrive in Poona and duration of stay in Poona, with his or her full name and address given in clear block letters. Please note his home address: Meherjee Karkaria, Meher Villa, Salisbury Park Road, Poona -1, India. Cable address is: WHITECLOUD, Poona, (India).
- 24) As appointed by Baba, His brother Jal will be in charge as general assistant and guide to the Western lovers during their stay in Poona. Taking the help of some Eastern lovers, Jal will, on request, assist in arranging transport to and from Guruprasad or a sightseeing drive of Baba- places in Poona for the Western lovers who wish it.  
  
(To facilitate arrangement for transport to and from Guruprasad, the Western lovers should also intimate Jal, after passage has been booked, their date of arrival in Poona and duration of stay in Poona, giving full name and address in clear block letters. Address: Jal S. Irani, Meher Moholla, 765 Dastur Meher Road, Camp Poona -1, India).
- 25) Baba says that those who want to come and cannot come to Poona for His darshan should not feel upset or disheartened but remain resigned to His Love knowing that "sometime, somewhere, somehow" His darshan is assured to them also.
- 26) Baba wants the present restriction on correspondence to continue as now and be MORE STRICTLY OBSERVED.

Kindly share all the information given in this Circular with all lovers of Avatar Meher Baba in your sphere of Baba-work. Please NOTE that this Circular is NOT meant for the GENERAL PUBLIC as Baba has made it quite clear that this

DARSHAN is ONLY FOR HIS LOVERS old and new.

\* \* \* \* \*

The above Circular was read out to those gathered before Baba at Meherazad on 13th October. Among them was Baba's beloved 'Child', Kishinchand Gajwani, called from Bombay along with Sorabjee Sigantoria -- the twins in His service, as Baba has always referred to them. On the 16th, at his home in Bombay, right after his morning prayer and worship before the Beloved's picture, our Kishinchand Gajwani passed away from sudden heart failure. In the message that was cabled to the Gajwani family, Baba said:

My child Kishinchand Gajwani was fortunate to see me physically just before his coming to me for eternal rest in my divine Bliss. His deep love for and faith in me has made his whole family blessed.

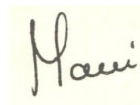
I'm wondering how to shape the ending of this letter. Happily no comments are needed to frame such a letter as this one, nor would they stand up before the dazzling content of the Circular. The light of Beloved Baba's message will set aglow the hearts of His lovers who can come to Poona to be in His presence, and of His lovers who cannot come but have His presence in their hearts in the eternal assurance of His Love.

At the darshan-discussion gathering in Meherazad, Beloved Baba said:

"I have been saying: the Time is near,  
it is fast approaching, it is close at hand,  
Today I say: the Time has come. Remember this!"

JAI BABA!

Ever lovingly,



# *eighty/*

Meherazad, 26th January 1969.

Dearest Family,

A prosperous 1969 to all of us — prosperous in the wealth of Baba's Love which thrives on poverty of the lover's self!

We stand on the last step of the 1960's, arms laden with gifts of His Compassion, hearts singing in tune with these lines from a lover in the West:

Amidst the holiday conventions of giving and receiving gifts, more and more hearts are rejoicing in the only Real Gift.

God has given Himself of His Creation.

The glory of this Gift is that the joy of receiving is the joy of giving. Receiving the Beloved means giving Him love. Giving Him love means receiving His Love. Receiving the Love of the Beloved means sharing it with all. Sharing Beloved's Love means receiving Him in all.

O God, most Beloved Baba, may we show our gratitude for Your supreme Gift of Yourself by receiving Your Love and giving Your Love and living Your Message of Love in our lives.

Although 1969 begins with clouded skies — the clouds of personal trials and tribulations in the lives of a number of His close ones, the clouds of world-wide disunity and violence — for His lovers there is the resplendent silver lining promising fulfilment of the long longed-for darshan of their Beloved. Even through the great cloud of Baba's health, there is a small soft light shining. I wrote to Fredella some days ago: "Beloved Baba's health has not been at all good for some time, from the tremendous strain of His Seclusion work. And although the extreme anaemia (which a recent routine test showed) has been promptly remedied, His physical condition is very weak. Goher and the other doctors strongly feel there should be a thorough check-up done. As this is not possible at Meherazad-Ahmednagar, we're trying to persuade Baba to make an early move to have it done in Poona. We are hoping He will agree."

Baba did NOT agree. He refuses moving to Poona before the usual date, which is about the end of March, in time for the Darshan beginning 10th April. Baba says that the pressure of His universal burden reflects upon His body; and as the strain of His work in Seclusion was severe, the effect on His body is consequently severe — but though the effect is human the cause is divine, and it is therefore in His hands. We get fleeting glimpses of this, at moments

when unaccountably He looks more well and glowing than one in the pink of health. Indeed, in the light of recent tests made, the doctors are much puzzled and amazed by certain favourable factors that are contrary to all rules of medical science!

Baba tells us that He is both God and Man. Seeing Him undergo sickness and accidents and suffering, are stark reminders that He is Man, that He has said: "I have taken on the form of Man to take on the suffering of man." And when, tending to His body to the utmost of our ability we feel over-anxious or worried, He reminds us: "Don't forget I am God. I know all. Simply do as I say." We bow to His Will.

I did not expect to write to you before February. What actually launches this letter on its course round the world at this time, is another circular just issued by Adi — Life Circular No. 71, which I give here for all of His Western family:

Beloved Avatar Meher Baba wishes all His lovers to know that His three years of intense work has shattered His health.

In spite of this He has invited His lovers from all over the world to come to Him for His darshan next summer, for it is the time for them to come to Him and receive His Love.

It is the time; and the place, Guruprasad, Poona has been fixed.

But with the present condition of His health, how beloved Baba will give His darshan to the thousands who will come, yet remains to be determined; but it will be. He will give His darshan.

This darshan, Baba says, will be the last given in Silence — the last before He speaks His world-renewing Word of words.

- NOTE: 1) No one should write, telegraph or cable for Baba's blessings for persons or events or programs, but remain content in the knowledge that His blessings are continually with His lovers. No such communications will be conveyed to Baba and so cannot be acknowledged.
- 2) No one should attempt to see Baba until 10th April onwards in accordance with Avatar Meher Baba's conditions printed in Life Circular No. 70 dated 1st November 1968.
- 3) No one should write to Baba or to the resident mandali and Adi about problems of Baba-work or conduct of Centres, or of inquiry about Baba's health, as time and circumstance will not permit our attention.

4) Change of postal and telegraphic address only should be communicated to Adi.

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Remarking on this last darshan to be given in Silence, Baba said it will not only be last but it will be unparalleled. This he tells us from His omniscience. But viewed even from our angle it appears so, when we compare it with just the figures of past darshans. Taking a single point: At the one week of East-West Gathering held in Poona in 1962, the total number of His lovers from overseas was less than 200. For this 1969 Darshan of eight weeks' duration, in the first week alone, the number of Western lovers expected is 250 -- the limit laid down for each week! It is astonishing but not surprising, for His Family has grown massively in the last few years. His children have waited long for this homecoming, and now that the way is open they are toiling towards the means. Baba's Moochewalla (Rick Chapman, U.S.A.), directed to write to Him, wrote after receiving the last Family-letter:

"The latest Family Letter has made a tremendous impact on the Family of Your lovers, who have so long been so eager for a glimpse of their Beloved. While most Western lovers look with awe at the love of Your Eastern lovers, many of whom will journey long distances at great hardship to see You, only once, they seem to give no second thought to the prospect of settling down to five months of hard working and tight saving to fly to India for a mere week, and that at knowing they will see none of the 'sights' in India. Powerful evidence of the love in so many of these new lovers, who have their sights on One Sight only and will do anything they can for a few moments with their eternal Beloved.

"May we all come to You, dear Baba, with our hearts in our hands, with no expectation and no purpose except to be totally resigned to Your Perfect Will of Love, to obey You down to the last thread of the Daaman, to take Your Love with us in our hearts to every corner of the world, as evidence that the Christ has come."

There are the many who know the Christ has come, and adore Him; the many who know but cannot believe; the many who do not know and await Him; and those who sit on the fence, waiting. Not so long ago Baba said to a sincere visitor: "I am the Expected One who will also be the Accepted One while I am yet in this body. All will know me when I manifest, but those who know and love me now are the really fortunate." That in this Advent the privilege of accepting the Expected One will not be left to History, but given to the people of today's world, is witnessed by us constantly. Among the most recent happenings that testify to this, is the public and official cognizance given to the place where He was born. As one who heard reports of it remarked: That the AVATAR is honoured in His lifetime and in His hometown, honoured not only by the people but by the People's Government — this is surely unique!

On a wall of one of the cottage-wards standing in the grounds of the Sassoon General Hospitals in Poona, is a marble slab with these words engraved on it in English and Marathi: "AVATAR MEHER BABA WAS BORN IN SASSOON GENERAL



HOSPITALS on 25th February 1894." Sanction to install this marble inscription was given telegraphically by the Government of Maharashtra. Its unveiling, done by the deputy Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, was attended by dignitaries and staff of the Hospital, by representatives of the Press, and of course by lovers of Baba. This was on 9th December 1968 — it was the second honouring of the place honoured by our Beloved's birth. The first, inaugurated by the Dean of the Sassoon Hospitals, was on 1st December 1968 — the first of the ten days when the Hospital was celebrating its 100th year. On that day, Baba-lovers from all parts of Poona assembled in the Auditorium of the B. J. Medical College (adjoining Sassoon Hospital) where the Parvardigar and Repentance prayers were recited, speeches made by some of His lovers from different parts of India, a Baba-film shown, and the Arti sung. A proud day for the assembly of Baba's lovers, particularly for His brother Jal who was responsible for the idea and labour of bringing about these unique events that mark an Event of universal importance.

Adi, who played a chief role on both occasions, has given a detailed account in the Christmas issue of 'Divya Vani'. English and vernacular newspapers also recorded the events in words and pictures — some went as far as to give pictures of Baba, of His parents, and of the maternity cottage where He was born. A number of papers, which surprisingly included the Times Of India, published this message given by Baba for the occasion of the hospital's centenary:

I GIVE MY BLESSINGS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
MEDICAL AND WORKER STAFF OF THIS HOSPITAL  
IN WHICH I, THE DELIVERER OF THE WORLD,  
WAS DELIVERED TO THE WORLD.  
-MEHER BABA-

The message was in response to a letter from Prof. Dr. G. S. Mutalik, Organizing Secretary for the Centenary celebrations of the Sassoon General Hospitals, asking for His blessings on the occasion.

In 1894, before the expansion of the hospital had begun, the main building with its adjoining cottages and private wards was known as the David Sassoon Hospital. The wall that now bears the marble engraving shows the ward where seventy-five years ago a sixteen year old girl named Shireen gave birth to the God-Child. His birth was heralded by a strangely prophetic dream which the young mother had the night before He was born. Sheriar, the father, on hearing his wife's dream had exclaimed "Shireen, you do not know Who this Child is that is to be born unto us!" I might add here, that even now when Baba speaks of His father, He says "There was none like him. It was because of him that I was born as his child."

Dreams and visions — beloved Baba discourages us from attaching importance to them, for all life is a dreaming that the Soul must go through before awaking to Reality. But dreams and visions are also His servants who may serve to awaken hearts to His Love. Over the years, as we have known from personal

recountings and letters, a number of individuals who are Baba-lovers were first awakened to Baba through a vision of Him. Of late we've been hearing of such episodes more often, which is what inspires me to touch on the subject and to give this small selection of accounts heard at different times:

The following experience, as narrated to us by Eruch's family, was had by a woman living in Aden. A staunch and pious Zoroastrian, she had heard of Baba but refused to entertain the preposterous idea that He could be the same as Lord Zoroaster (the Christ)! One morning, while she was praying before a framed portrait of Zoroaster, she saw the picture fade away before her eyes and in its place appeared a Face she had never seen before — it wore an expression of ineffable love, and hair that was down to the shoulders of a brown fur coat. For a long time she believed it to have been a vision of St. Peter, until one day she saw a picture of Baba in the home of a dear friend in India, a head study that seemed to her a replica of her vision — and then she knew that it was Meher Baba she had seen in Zoroaster's picture! She and her family are devoted Baba-lovers.

Another instance is of a woman in U.S.A. who hadn't even heard of Baba. She was lying critically ill in hospital, when she saw the form of a man approach her bedside. He was dressed in a soft white robe, bathed in a light that was dazzling but cool. Smiling with love, He bent down and placed a hand on her brow that soothed her to sleep. Years later she came across a picture of Baba in some magazine, and recognized her Visitor of the hospital! As far as I recall, this was related to us by Norina (Princess Matchabelli) during the years she was with us in the ashram at Meherabad.

Among the very recent we have heard of, is the experience of a man in Bombay, a Parsi who denied and challenged Baba's divinity whenever he heard his acquaintances and friends talk about Him. One night, in an agonizingly vivid dream, he saw a sky overcast with dark clouds. While he was gazing up, a great light shot out from the clouds like a big sun, from which a figure emerged walking towards him. Dazed, the man moved forward and kneeling before the figure he bowed his head to the ground and cried out "Meher Baba, forgive me for all that I have said about you; it was said in my ignorance. O forgive me!" The Figure then bent over him and caressed his back for a long while, until he felt his back was beginning to bleed. Looking up he found himself alone, and woke up. His wife related this dream to a Baba-lover family she visited in Ahmednagar. Understandably, both man and wife are very keen to have Baba's darshan. They have been asked to await April.

This last I quote from a letter to Baba received last month from a man in U.S.A., a complete stranger to us till now who addressed the cover of his letter so incorrectly that it's a marvel it reached us! As the letter was personal I omit his name, but I feel sure he will understand my wanting to share its heartwarming contents with the rest of the Baba Family. Beginning his letter to Baba with "Excuse my ignorance, I do not know how to address you properly", he writes on:

"I am sure that you know about me, and that what I will tell you is not new for you. After much reflection and hesitation I have decided to communicate first with you, since from what you will read you will see that I have some justification. I have been in the U.S.A. since 1967. I was born in .... ,

Bulgaria, where for 23 years I experienced all the horrors and difficulties that people have who are characterized as enemies of the state. In addition, I was accused of having taken part in sabotage ..... Later it was proved that I was innocent, but that did not ease my situation.

"I first quite tangibly observed help from 'invisible helpers'; when escaping, they conducted me together with my wife across the frontier in daytime, at 2:30 on a bright sunny day through wire entanglements, among mines and heavily armed guards. When I arrived in U.S. I began to work, but on July 19 I fell down the stairs and my spinal column was injured and my left arm atrophied. I was immediately operated. Two months later my wife underwent a very complicated operation for a tumour. Medical care here may be the finest in the world, but at the same time it is terribly expensive ..... A few days ago I was told that I would soon have to undergo the same operation again. This was truly a great trial for me. Then unexpectedly there occurred what is actually the subject of this letter. I don't know whether to call it a miracle or a vision, and if I had not been fully conscious I would not have believed it myself.

"During the night of November 26-27 I was awakened by a strange noise; the next moment the room was filled with a blinding light, in the center of which I saw a completely normal human figure, which pronounced in pure Bulgarian: 'DO NOT FEAR. DO YOU RECOGNIZE ME?'

'Yes' I answered mechanically, 'YOU ARE MEHER BABA'.

"I must confess that I had known nothing about the bearer of that name although it is true that about four months ago I merely heard it pronounced, without any other details. What led me to answer immediately thus I can still not understand.

"The human figure with a kind glance and meek words continued: 'BELIEVE FIRMLY, I SHALL HELP YOU.'

"It became dark again; I heard the same strange noise, which also awakened my wife. She found me in a state of feverish excitement which lasted two days — like a frenzy or trance. All this impels me to seek a means to get in touch with you. I now already believe deeply that you will help me. I will joyfully wait to receive your instructions. My greatest hope is, if I can, to be of service to you.

Yours sincerely,  
.....

And so another lover is born, from the womb of suffering into a life of His Love. In replying to his letter, Adi conveyed this from beloved Baba: "Meher Baba wants you to know that your sufferings have brought you to Him .... He says that He has been with you in your dark hours, and will continue to be with you and help you if you hold firmly to Him."

This does not always imply that Baba removes our material sufferings, but when His Love is our strength they are lighter to bear. A man, badly

crippled, once wrote to Baba: For fourteen years I have been confined to a wheel chair. Since a year I have come to know of you, and believe in you. I am still confined to my chair, but it is not the same any more because you are with me. Now I not only can bear my affliction without bitterness, I know it to be the tool that prepared me to receive your Love."

I don't know when the next letter will be going out, but at least I know it cannot be before the Darshan in Guruprasad — unless of course another Circular causes a premature delivery like this one! Although this letter is pretty long it is not complete, in that it fails to include a report of the work that Baba's lover-workers in the East and West are doing in reaching out His Love to others. But this is not because there is little to report, it is because there is too much! And even that is but a part of the whole, for what we know of is what we gather from stray reports and printed matter (invitations to Baba-gatherings, News letters, posters and cards with the Beloved's pictures and sayings, pamphlets from the various Meher Baba Information outlets); and from what we see through the windows of regular Baba-magazines that store the precious grains of words and works relating to Him: "The Awakener" and "The Glow" and "Divya Vani" (in English), "Meher Pukar" (in Hindi), and "Avatar Meher" (in Telegu). In recent issues, through an account given by May Lundquist we have shared the joy and glory of an unprecedented Baba-procession in this year's Warana Spring Festival of Australia; and of the dynamic visit to England by (Dr.) Allan Cohen who crashed barriers of official and human reserve, reaching His Message to the people through radio and television, bringing the Beloved closer to His growing family of young lovers. We only wish more accounts, as well written, were sent in to the editors of Baba-magazines by lovers in different countries for all the Family to feast on.

In this happy Birthday season welcoming Meher Year 75, which has begun with a number of His Centres observing seventy-five days of celebration of His Birthday, the Baba-magazines will have a bumper crop I'm sure. But they are waiting, as His lovers are, for the touch that will give life to the fields of their endeavours in loving and serving Him — a message from the Beloved. Beloved Baba has given the message. I convey it here; please circulate it among all His lovers in your locality before the 25th of February:

AVATAR MEHER BABA'S MESSAGE

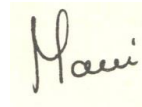
on the occasion of

His 75th Birthday -- 25th February, 1969

TO LOVE ME FOR WHAT I MAY GIVE YOU IS NOT LOVING ME AT ALL.  
TO SACRIFICE ANYTHING IN MY CAUSE TO GAIN SOMETHING FOR  
YOURSELF IS LIKE A BLIND MAN SACRIFICING HIS EYES FOR SIGHT.  
I AM THE DIVINE BELOVED WORTHY OF BEING LOVED BECAUSE I AM  
LOVE. HE WHO LOVES ME BECAUSE OF THIS WILL BE BLESSED WITH  
UNLIMITED SIGHT AND WILL SEE ME AS I AM

-MEHER BABA-

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Meher".

# *eighty-one/*

Meherazad, 14th March 1969.

Dearest Family,

"Although I am present everywhere eternally in my formless Infinite state, from time to time I take form. This taking of the form and leaving it is termed my physical birth and death. In this sense I am born and (in this sense) I die when my universal work is finished."

- MEHER BABA -

On 30th July 1968, Baba said:

"My work is done. It is completed 100% to my satisfaction."

Two weeks after this, Baba remarked that there were a few touches He had to give to His completed work before releasing it and setting it in motion.

On 13th October 1968, Baba said:

"Today I say: THE TIME HAS COME. Remember this!"

On 30th January 1969, Baba reminded us, saying to a visiting doctor:

"My Time has come."

On 31st January 1969, news went out from Adi's office to Baba's lovers all over the world:

AVATAR MEHER BABA DROPPED HIS PHYSICAL BODY AT TWELVE NOON  
31 JANUARY AT MEHERAZAD TO LIVE ETERNALLY IN THE HEARTS  
OF ALL HIS LOVERS. BELOVED BABA'S BODY WILL BE INTERRED  
AT MEHERABAD ARANGAON ON 1 FEBRUARY AT 10 A.M. IN THE TOMB  
HE HAD ORDERED TO BE BUILT LONG AGO.

Most Baba-lovers' first reaction to this news was utter disbelief — they could not believe it. Some thought a prankster had wired them false news in Adi's name, and they frantically wired back 'Please confirm news'. Ironically, a message confirming the news was wrongly relayed in some instances and

complicated matters. Adi and his small staff were busy night and day coping with phone calls and telegrams to and from inland and overseas. Disbelief at the news was followed by shock and anguish — many thousands of individuals felt orphaned by this Event. They longed to rush to Meherabad to pay their last respects to the beloved body of the Ancient One. Lovers from Bombay and Poona and other parts of Maharashtra state got there long before sunrise. Lovers from distant states in India entreated us to postpone interment till they could reach Meherabad. The declared time of interment — February 1, 10 a.m. — caused confusion, deterring many from starting out as they thought they would be too late. But many, regardless of this, came from different parts of India and from abroad, to lay their heads at the threshold of the place where rested the body of their Beloved. And they found that even at the last their Beloved obliged them, that He was indeed the slave of the love of His lovers. For seven days Beloved Baba lay in the open crypt of the Tomb, His face softly radiant, looking as though He were simply asleep. For seven days and nights Baba gave His silent darshan to thousands of His lovers, gave His darshan "reclining" as He had said He would do. It was Darshan indeed — an unforgettable week of Darshan on Meherabad Hill where His lovers thronged to bow down at His feet, offer Him garlands of roses, songs of praise, tears of love. As they filed out after having His darshan in the Tomb, many a lover was heard exclaiming: "Oh, how beautiful He looks! How young He looks!" We saw Baba shining from their tear-drowned eyes, Baba who said "I am Love". Language was no problem, just "Baba" "Baba" "Baba" was complete exchange for hearts eloquent with His Love. The breath that stirred this gathering of lovers of various religions and tongues, was not so much a sighing of 'Come, let us weep together' but a crying of 'Come, let us adore Him!'

Meherabad\*, down-the-hill and up-the-hill, Baba's first headquarters created by Him in 1922, was for many years the stage of His divine play as God-Man. There unfolded the scenes of His activities with the early disciples, with the boys of Prem Ashram and Babajan School, with the masts and the mad, the poor, the lepers, the sick, the villagers and the untouchables. There on Meherabad Hill is the Tomb which Baba had ordered to be built for the burying of His body when He dropped it — the Tomb in which He stayed in seclusion twice, once for a period of six months. (When it was built in 1927 it had an ordinary tin roof; in 1938 this was replaced by the dome as it now stands, and its interior painted with pictures by the Swiss artist Helen Dahm.) Since 1944 when Baba moved to Meherazad\*\*, His second abode where He has stayed longer than at any other place, Meherabad gradually 'retired'. Except for the glorious periods of sahasas and darshan, the last of which was held on 10th July 1958, it stayed in retirement — basking in the glory of its past, waiting for a visit

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\* Meher-abad ('abad' meaning prosperous), on the outskirts of Arangaon village, is five miles south of Ahmednagar.

\*\* Meher-azad ('azad' meaning free), outside Pimpalgaon-Malvi village, is nine miles north of Ahmednagar.

from the Master, peering dimly into the future that would fulfil His words: "Meherabad will one day become the greatest place of pilgrimage on earth."

The 'future' began at sunset on the 31st of January 1969, when we placed the body of our Beloved in the Tomb on Meherabad Hill. Overnight Meherabad was transformed from an isolated retreat into a crowded pilgrimage-ground. It swarmed with people, buses, cycles, taxis, cars, tongas, bullock carts. Padri, who has looked after the place all these years, had a tough job trying to accommodate the hourly growing number of lovers. Every foot of indoor and outdoor space was used for their camping in during those days and nights. A 'Meher Baba Restaurant' sprang up by the roadside; and a signpost pointed to the footpath leading to the Hill. A railway track runs between upper and lower Meherabad, and trains obliged by stopping there to disgorge their load of lovers from Bombay and Andhra. Throughout the seven days, and for days after, we could hear passing trains give a long whistle as they went by the Hill — the drivers were saluting the Avatar of the Age.

Meherabad has no electricity, but there was enough light. There was God's lantern lighting the way for His pilgrims — the full moon shone in a clear sky during the entire Week. Neon lights blazed around the Tomb, shining with the love of His lovers of Vijayawada (Andhra) who had a generator installed and working all night throughout the Week and after. Crowded at all times was the improvised shade put up near the Tomb to shelter His lovers from the blistering sun. Outside the Tomb's east window is a stone platform where the Prem Ashram boys often gathered to hear the discourses the Beloved gave them through the window, at the time when He was there in seclusion and did not step out. Now the platform was serving as a stage for groups of Baba-bhajan singers from Arangaon village, Ahmednagar, Poona, Bombay, Nizamabad, Navsari, Andhra State, and other places. The singing and music went on from evening till four in the morning, and we thought of the smiling remark the Beloved had made on His return from His Andhra tour years ago: "My lovers sang outside my window all night while I rested." They were doing the same thing now.

None wanted to leave Meherabad until the Beloved's body was interred. None could say when this would be. The time of 10 a.m. on February 1 as first declared, was based on medical advice that as the body was not embalmed the interment could not be delayed longer than 20 hours, even though surrounded by a border of ice-blocks as arranged. Mehera and I felt that the Beloved Himself would give an indication of when it should be done, that as long as His dear body remained fresh and lovely we would not have it covered up. Even after a week it was not found necessary to place the covering! But as Baba had told us on the last day, the morning of 31st January, that after seven days He would be 100% free (from suffering, as we interpreted His hand gestures to mean), we took that as an indication. And so, seven days after the Event, at 12.15 noon on Friday the 7th of February 1969, the interment took place amid thousands of voices singing His glorious Name and resonant cries of AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!!!

For all the lovers physically absent and eager to know details about the Beloved's dropping His body, a written account of the facts was among the tasks of first importance. Francis took it over and did a wonderful job. The account was circulated by Adi to all in India and abroad. I reproduce it here:



2nd Day, 50th Week, Meher Year 74

This is the true account of Avatar Meher Baba's dropping His body, according to the resident mandali.

The three years of intense work in seclusion had had an untold effect upon His body, and a faint reflection of this on us caused a deep depression among us. But beloved Baba warned us that this was disobeying His order to be always cheerful of His presence. And he quoted, as He had many times over the years, Hafiz's couplet: "Befitting a fortunate slave carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what."

On 13th October 1968 Baba told us that He would give His darshan to all His lovers all over the world from 10th April to 10th June 1969. Considering His physical condition we were apprehensive of His body standing such a strain. But He said, "It will be easy for me to give my lovers my darshan, so you are not to feel concerned about it. I will give darshan reclining and that will be no strain on my body. It will be different from all previous darshans and it will be the last in silence. Although I will be reclining I will be very strong. My physical condition now is because of my work, but by then my work will be complete and my exultation will be great. A very poor man winning a rich lottery can become so excited over his fortune that he collapses and dies. My fortune will be in my work being finished and in the knowledge of its certain results; but my exultation will not cause my collapse — it will be my glory."

Despite these assurances, Baba's health became worse. But the symptoms were completely confusing to the doctors we called from Poona and Bombay. His blood urea was so high that the doctors said usually an ordinary man in such a condition would go into a coma, but there was not even the least sign of mental confusion or the faintest trace of uremic odour. Similarly, when muscular spasms were occurring, when a specialist from Bombay examined Him He asked why he had been called, because there were no symptoms at all — Baba's condition was quite normal.

Outwardly, to our eyes, Baba's condition deteriorated still further, and we wanted to take Him to Poona so that further tests could be carried out, but He refused to go and warned us that we should not try and take Him against His wish. He said, "If you want me to drop my body now, then take me to Poona. My condition has no medical grounds at all; it is due purely to the strain of my work. Do not call the doctors again until I tell you." And so, helpless before His will, we had to obey His will.

Over the last days Baba's body manifested severe spasms, and He told us, "This is my crucifixion." Two days before He dropped His body He told us to call the doctors. The one from Poona came the next morning and said he could do nothing until further tests were done so that a definite diagnosis could be arrived at; and this could only be done if Baba went to Poona. Baba said to him, "My time has come."

The next day the doctor from Bombay came, and also one from Ahmednagar. By the time they arrived a great spasm shook His body, the pulse rate fell to nothing, and breathing ceased. This was at 12.15 p.m. At 12 noon He had been joking with us about all the medicines He had been given.

In the evening we brought His body to Meherabad. The sun was setting and the moon was rising as we placed it in the tomb for His lovers to take His darshan, fulfilling beloved Baba's word that He would give His darshan reclining.

\* \* \*

Of the Meherazad men and women mandali who accompanied His body on that unbelievable journey to Meherabad, the role of Baba's beloved Mehera was the hardest. But she played it supremely, surrendering the anguish of her heart to the wish of her Beloved who had asked her to "Keep courage". And even now, through her overwhelming pain of separation from Him, He helps her to keep courage.

Although we started out from Meherazad on that Friday evening with hearts numbed and empty, our hands had been kept occupied in doing the things that the Beloved would want us to do. In the midst of many practical details that Eruch was seeing to, he reminded me to take along our gramophone and the record of 'Begin the Beguine'. Eruch said that Baba had told him, many times over the years, to play this song by His side when He dropped His body. And so on that night of 31st January, and the next day, seven times I played the song of Begin the Beguine by His side — at first in the Cabin where His body rested for a while and later in the Tomb. And while the song played, it seemed to convey to us His message that this was not an end but the beginning — the beginning of His completed work bearing fruit. A day before dropping the body, even while the movement of His fingers brought on a renewed spasm, Baba told us, "All this, all that I have been through all along, has been a preparation for the Word — for just the One Word!" And with a quizzical smile He added "Just imagine!"

Being wiser after the Event, we now see deeper significance in the message that beloved Baba had dictated on 17th January 1968, His message for the 43rd anniversary of His Silence to be released on 10th July 1968. It was not released, and Baba did not have any other message sent out in its place. Feeling that perhaps it was meant to be released now, I give it here:

DIVINE FATHER HELP YOUR BELOVED SON TO CARRY OUT  
ALL YOUR WORK THIS YEAR, FOR JULY OF THIS YEAR WILL  
MARK THE LAST YEAR OF HIS SILENCE.

- MEHER BABA -

The Silence of Meher Baba — as unheard, as un-understood, as unfathomable, as ever. And as ever, more than ever, His lovers talk about His Silence. They ask themselves, so that they might answer the sceptics: Has the Silence been unbroken? Has the Silence been broken and not been heard? Baba said He will break His Silence while in the body — which body does it mean? Did He mean His universal body? Will the breaking of His Silence be manifest in the shape of events to come, rather than in Sound form? A hundred questions, having as many answers as there are lovers. Not only had each lover his or her answer, each lover is an answer. That the questions don't question the breaking of His Silence, but simply seek to know 'when' and 'how', is enough answer for the sceptics of the world. In His lovers' unwavering faith and love, Baba's Silence is heard continuously.

The 10th of July, a day for the world to observe in honour of the Silence observed by God as Man for men. As beloved Baba had wished His lovers to observe silence (without the option of a fast) for twenty-four hours on 10th July of last year, 1968, so we feel that all His lovers must observe silence from midnight of July 9 to midnight of July 10 of this year, 1969 — and for all years to come. There will not be any circular going out in regard to this — please do not expect or await any.

Meher Year 75 was celebrated by His lovers everywhere. Never was the Beloved's presence felt as much as it was on this 75th anniversary of His Birth, felt by His lovers and by the people who witnessed its celebration. The scale on which it was celebrated is not in measure to the size and shape of the celebration — although in many instances these were tremendous by any standard — but to the force of love that moved it. It was as though the dam of past prejudices and problems had burst, and Baba's Love went out to all. This was very evident in the Birthday activities of many Baba-Centres, including Ahmednagar and Poona.

It is customary in India to give a "bhandara", a feast for the poor, in the name of a Master. On this 25th of February, the Baba-Centre at Ahmednagar gave a massive bhandara in beloved Baba's Name. Some twenty thousand people, from Ahmednagar city and neighbouring villages, came to the Centre that Day and had their fill of the feast which continued for twelve hours! They feasted on the delicious food prepared and served by the lovers, they feasted on His Name that rang to the skies in 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai', they feasted on His Love that brought them there. The citizens of Poona had a feast of another kind. Their eyes had never feasted on such a sight as greeted them on the streets of Poona on that evening of February 25. They were witnessing the Baba-procession planned by Baba's Centre in Poona. It was a jubilant procession of 2000 men, women and children, starting from the Centre at 7 o'clock and winding through the streets of the city for nearly four hours, streets that were lined thick with spectators who outnumbered the procession! People crowded the windows and balconies of their homes, watching the Beloved's lifesize portrait riding in a four-horse chariot decked with flowers and lights, listening to the accompanying music and bhajans, fascinated by the 'lejhim' danced by groups of men, amazed that Meher Baba's lovers were even now celebrating His Birthday. One young group of lovers who spontaneously joined in the dancing, consisted of Iranis including Baba's twin nephews. They danced

non-stop, danced rapturously as though intoxicated, as Ramakrishnan later told us. Eruch's brother Meherwan wrote: "At every crossroad the procession stopped while the lejhim was danced, and traffic came to a halt in all directions, while shouts of 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai' continually rent the air. By the end, we had all shouted ourselves hoarse!"

This is the spirit in which His lovers at many places, in the East and West, celebrated their Beloved's 75th Birth Day. The lovers of Andhra continued their daily celebration for 75 days without a break — Baba could drop His body, but He could not drop out of their hearts! "In short", as Eruch wrote in a letter, "it is obvious that the lovers of Baba believe that Baba is in their midst, although His physical presence is out of sight. He seems to have come into their hearts more forcefully than ever before. They feel His presence without seeing Him, and I can quite believe that, because I too feel that way. Although I miss Him, I feel His presence without seeing Him — the same as when Baba used to send me away on some errand, He being where He was."

Baba's presence was felt very much by us on the 25th. Meherazad celebrated the Day as usual — the decorations, the birthday cake with the one candle for the One Beloved, all of us calling out 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai' at the stroke of 5 in the morning; then the Arti, the Prayers, the Birthday song, the gramophone music played over a loud-speaker hired from the village. We had a dear guest with us that day: Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda. One unusual item was our visit to Meherabad, to Beloved Baba at the Tomb. There we witnessed His lovers of Arangaon celebrating His Day. All night they sang songs composed for Him, all morning they played their drums and cymbals while they danced for Him — we never saw such exultant and rhythmic dancing! The whole village seemed to have turned up for Baba's darshan. Young and old, in tatters and in finery, the villagers came up the Hill and filed into the Tomb for Baba's darshan. On the stone floor at His feet they placed their heads in obeisance, and taught their children to do the same (sometimes with the help of a firm hand on their heads). The garlands of jasmine and roses piling up beside Him, were a fragrant reminder of His words: "I will give Darshan in silence."

On an earlier visit to Meherabad, a visitor asked me whether we felt that Baba's dropping the body at this time had been a 'miscalculation' on His part. The answer was an emphatic NO. It is we who hadn't reckoned for it, were completely unprepared, taken entirely unawares. And yet, looking back, we find that beloved Baba had prepared us, had given us many hints that now stand out glaringly in the light of the Event. But what He had disclosed with one hand, He had covered with the other. As for instance, on the morning of that Friday the 31st of January (1969) Baba said to us, "Today is my crucifixion". But several times in the past He had said, "Christ was crucified once. I am crucified daily." In November (1968) Baba told a visitor to Meherazad, "Come again in the month of July. Don't wait for me to call you; come without being called." We assumed it was His way of assuring the lover that his coming would not be postponed. Long before the Darshan circular went out, Baba casually remarked that soon when He started giving His darshan to His lovers, it would not be for a limited period but for all time. We interpreted this in different ways. Whenever some lovers came to Meherazad hoping to see Him, Baba sent them word "Come for my darshan in Poona — I will not be in seclusion then."

Just before the last family letter went out, Eruch pointed out to Baba that (considering the condition of His health) if He wished to cancel the approaching Darshan it was yet possible to do so. Baba smiled and said "No, it is not to be cancelled. I will give my Darshan to my lovers. I will give it on my own terms."

And we find that many of His lovers in the East and West\*, those who had planned to come to Poona for the Darshan, are going ahead with their plans, honouring His invitation to them which said:

"... how beloved Baba will give His darshan to the thousands who will come, yet remains to be determined; but it will be. He will give His darshan. This darshan, Baba says, will be the last given in Silence — the last before He speaks His world-renewing Word of words."

In response to the lovers' wish to come to Poona for the Darshan, Adi had sent out this intimation to all concerned on February 8:

DESPITE BABA'S PHYSICAL ABSENCE THOSE LOVERS WHO DESIRE TO VISIT GURUPRASAD POONA TO HONOUR BABA'S INVITATION FOR DARSHAN UP TO TENTH JUNE CAN STILL COME ABIDING STRICTLY TO THE SCHEDULED DATES AND CONDITIONS AS PER FAMILY LETTER DATED FIRST NOVEMBER. JOURNEY WILL NOW INCLUDE HALF DAY VISIT TO MEHERABAD TO PAY HOMAGE AT BABA'S TOMB. AFTER TENTH JUNE ANYONE CAN MAKE PILGRIMAGE TO POONA AND BABA'S TOMB INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE MADE ON ONE'S OWN. INFORM ALL CONCERNED YOUR AREA. JAIBABA.

The Meherazad mandali too, men and women, will be going to Poona for the Darshan. As usual, from April beginning till June end, we will be at: Guruprasad, 24 Bund Road, Poona-1.

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\* Each Western lover coming to Poona, please remember to bring a wide-brimmed hat to protect you from the Indian summer sun; and a flash-light for use when electricity fails (or is turned off during thunderstorms in May and June).

Often has Baba told us, "I am not this body that you see". Now we cannot see that which He was not, that which made God's infinite Love and Compassion tangible to us, that which was our constant companion. Often have we written to His many lovers who were physically absent from Him, "Beloved Baba is with you every moment. Baba says He is with His lovers always." Now the Meherazad mandali are learning to live these words, while occupied in the daily routine of duties which continue as before. Of the mandali at Meherazad (women mandali: Mehera, Mani, Goher, Naja, Meheroo, Rano; men mandali: Eruch, Pendu, Bhau, Francis, Aloba, Kaikobad, Kaka, Baidul), Kaka is no longer with us.

Twenty seven days after the Beloved dropped His body, His very dear Kaka passed away from heart failure and was buried at Meherazad as was Baba's wish. Kaka's passing away was sudden and swift, while he was resting in his easy-chair outside his room. Moments before, he was pottering about the compound in his endearing "hobbit" manner. Kaka has had a damaged heart for years, and his continuing to live so actively was a constant amazement to Goher and the other doctors. It was as if Kaka had willed himself to live for as long as he could serve his beloved Master — which he did to the last. Even on 30th January he had made Baba 'laugh' with his usual daily entertainment, lightened Baba's burden as he had always done. The evening before he left us, Kaka repeatedly and forcefully declared what he had been telling us for days: "Baba has not gone away. Baba will come, will come. Remember, remember. Baba will come! Kaka says so. Remember!" We remember.

All the dear letters and cables that the Meherazad family has received from the Beloved's world Family, are a testimony to His IS-ness. They make it clear that for Baba's lovers Baba is and always will be. In fact it seems that Baba is with His lovers more than ever; that the jolt of the Event has thrown them closer in the unity of His Love, bound them firmer in their resolve to live His Message. Beloved Baba completed His Work. Now the lovers have work to do. As Francis said in a cable to Australia, "Let us now begin the real work of loving Him as He should be loved."

That the Beloved's lovers are testifying to His Presence is not surprising. But we find strangers doing so too — men and women who had not known of Baba, who were simply acquainted with His Name! Several individuals tell of having seen Baba since He dropped the body, and personally recounted their experiences to Baba's lovers who have recounted them to us. The first we heard of was the experience of a Zoroastrian High Priest — he had known of Baba and revered Him, but had neither love nor belief. As told by him, Baba appeared to him in the early hours of the morning of the Event. He saw Baba, a bright light round His head, riding speedily past him on a white horse and saying "I am going to my Manzil (destination)." Overpowered by this vision, the priest felt compelled to visit Meherabad. There he asked permission to enter the Tomb and pray for a while. After doing this, he went down the steps of the crypt and took Baba's darshan by reverently touching His feet — an unprecedented act on the part of a Zoroastrian priest! On the final day too he had a glimpse of the Beloved's compassion. After leaving the Tomb, the priest felt drawn to take yet another look at Baba, and jostled his way back through the crowd. But however much he craned over the solid front row of lovers' shoulders, he could not see into the crypt. Then, all of a sudden,

Baba's face appeared to his vision! The priest says that Baba actually raised His head and smiled at him, and then gradually reclined again.

Since then we have heard the experiences of a number of people in different parts of India. A few days ago when Nana Kher came from Nagpur, he told us how beloved Baba had been seen within the last month by three different citizens of Nagpur residing in different localities. Visiting the Baba-Centre in Nagpur for the first time, each of the three had related his and her experience, declaring that "Meher Baba is not dead. Meher Baba can never die. Meher Baba is alive. We have seen Him, seen Him in the body." These persons were not lovers of Baba, they were not even acquainted with lovers of Baba. Their only contact with Baba was that they had at some time heard the name of Meher Baba. This is a sketch of their accounts as heard by me:

On 3rd February (1969), a clerk working in a Sales Tax department, was sitting in his bedroom before starting out for the office. While seated there, he saw a jeep approach and stop by his front door. From it he saw Baba step out with a few other men, stopping to converse with them for a while. The clerk also saw and heard some people standing around the jeep calling out "Meher Baba has come", and instantly he bowed down with reverence and love that surged over him. Just then Baba turned His face towards him and smiled. The clerk says that he was fully awake at the time; that until this scene before his eyes disappeared, he took it to be an actual occurrence.

The second man who had a similar experience, is a deputy collector. An ardent devotee of Lord Rama, he daily meditated before Rama's picture and recited Sanskrit couplets which invoke Rama's protection and guidance. On the 7th of February, while he was doing this, he was confronted by a blinding light. Opening his eyes he saw a man before him, a man whom he instinctively recognized as Meher Baba. Filled with a happiness he had never experienced, he gazed adoringly at Baba. This went on for over an hour, during which Baba appeared in various garbs and headgears — now in a sadra, now in Western suit, now in a kafni, now wearing a scarf, now a fez cap. It continued even after his wife interrupted by coming in to remind him that it was long past supper time. Although she managed to coax him away for a while, when he returned Baba was again with him for nearly two hours more. It amazed him to learn that his wife had not seen Baba when she had entered the room, had seen no one in the room beside her husband! This deputy collector now tells others, "Meher Baba is the Avatar — He was Rama, He is Meher Baba. He is the one and the same Avatar. He is, and always will be."

A middle-aged housewife was the third person — she had come across Baba's name in some booklet, years ago. Recounting her experience she said that on 25th February she had been busy all day attending to a sick relative. Returning home, she tried to catch up on her neglected household chores and started at the sink. Being fond of devotional singing, she sang while she washed the dishes. Suddenly the room lighted up with a dazzling light. She turned to see what had caused it, and beheld a smiling figure reclining on a tiger skin, the right hand forming the sign that means "Good!" Instinctively she knew that this was Meher Baba. Bathed in a bliss she didn't know could exist, she bowed low before Him. She felt inspired to compose a song for Him, and wrote it down then and there — a song that touched the hearts of Baba's lovers to whom she presented it at the Centre. There at the Centre she saw

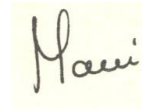
the picture of beloved Baba that is exactly as He had appeared to her at her home. She had never set eyes on it before, nor on any other picture of the Beloved.

Hearing of these and other experiences had by other people, makes us feel that perhaps, in a way, the Darshan has begun. If so, it seems that Baba is starting from the fringe of the outermost circle and that His lovers' turn will follow. Recently a lover asked me if any of us had had any extraordinary experience since the Event, whether Baba had appeared to any of the mandali in a Vision. Perhaps he was startled at my reply that "Nowadays Baba does not appear even in our dreams". I went on to tell him what the Beloved had explained long ago, giving us the simile of a lighted lantern placed on the floor. While the lantern sheds light all over the room, the circle close to its base is in shadow. Beloved Baba had said: "When I give my close circle that which I have to give, it will be the real thing." As again Baba said, in His last message to His lovers:

"I AM THE DIVINE BELOVED WORTHY OF BEING LOVED  
BECAUSE I AM LOVE. HE WHO LOVES ME BECAUSE OF THIS  
WILL BE BLESSED WITH UNLIMITED SIGHT AND WILL  
SEE ME AS I AM."

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

Ever lovingly,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Meher'.



# *eighty-two/*

Meherazad, 26th August 1969.

Dearest Family,

JAI BABA to you from all your brothers and sisters at Meherazad. We returned from Poona on July 1, as we have done each year with Baba. And I am writing to you dear ones as I have been doing each time on our return, but I find it is not the same. To write an account of what has most occupied our days and hearts, means to make a word picture of the indescribable Darshan — and what word colours can paint that Master-piece, what can I recount that you yourselves have not experienced or shared from personal accounts? At best I can make it a chat, a thinking aloud, a reminiscing on behalf of dear Mehera, all men and women Mandali, lovers, workers, volunteers — each of us who was privileged to share with many of you the Beloved's darshan given on His terms, at the time and place appointed by Him: Guruprasad, Poona, from 10th April to 10th June 1969. It goes out to every one of you who was at the Darshan in heart, for not all could be present in person. Some could not make it due to binding commitments or ill health, or lack of funds; some sacrificed their coming so as to make it possible for others — these too have deeply shared in the Darshan. And some had planned to come and could have come, but missed their appointment with God — this too is surely His Will.

You who came, honouring God-Man's invitation, accepting His terms without knowing what they were, not expecting anything or not knowing what to expect, you received more than you could contain. That which you received, we saw it flow over from your eyes reflecting His beloved image. We heard it flow over from your lips making His Name resound wherever you went. In buses, on your way to Baba places, at railway stations, at aerodromes, wherever you started from and wherever you got down, your cries of AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI rang out His victory! Never had Poona such plentiful showers of His Name, never had such numbers of visitors from foreign lands poured into its hotels at a time — and in the middle of summer too, when foreign residents usually leave to seek the cool air of hill-stations! Your call of 'Jai Baba' wherever and whenever you greeted a lover, on or across the streets and in shops or hotels, was so familiar to hotel staff and taxi drivers and shop keepers and railway porters that they refer to you as the JAI BABAs. To the glorious history of Guruprasad you added a unique chapter. It made its gracious owner, Maharani Shantadevi who never missed a Darshan held there in the past, remark to Mehera at parting: "Baba did not let His lovers down. This was indeed a Darshan of Darshans!"

From the first day, when over 200 of you came from the west coast of U.S.A., you set the tone and tempo that made the Darshan months an unbroken symphony. Morning after morning when you arrived to keep your date with God, our hearts thrilled to see the long line of buses and cars bringing you through the gates and down the driveway of Guruprasad amidst your thunderous cries of AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI! Sweet music of His Name that pierced our hearts every time we heard it, that soaked into the very walls and lofty ceiling of Guruprasad Hall which you filled each day. That His Presence was so powerfully felt by you and us, that our Beloved gave so much of Himself during those two months, remains an experience that only His Silence can contain. Shallow word-platters cannot hold it. Just as one of you said in your letter after Darshan, "I am striving to write the unwriteable, because it is not possible to say what Love I was the receiver of."

Nor is it possible for the receivers to fully realize it, not yet. Parched tree-beds thirsting for water, you were filled with His grace-rain and sparkled in the sunshine of His darshan. And your hearts said in wonder and in fear "This cannot be true! Oh, will it last?" On the surface it cannot last, if it is to be lasting. The water is for the roots. It must soak deep into the earth to reach the heart of the tree, for its beauty to be made known to all men by the strength of its limbs and the richness of its leaves, by the fragrance of its flowers and the sweetness of its fruits. For this the Divine Gardener prepares the beds. He labours to make the hardened earth receptive, hoeing it thoroughly with the prongs of His Compassion. It hurts at the time and we cry out in pain, but He suffers it for our sakes, He allows us to endure it in the knowledge that nothing endures except His Love.

Men, women, children, you represented His family in miniature; a model that He created for building of the world Baba Family. You came from many lands across oceans; you came by charter flights, group flights, independently, by ship, over land, and hitch-hiking. Blessed is every country whence His lovers came from and returned to, even when it was a single lover. Our record file shows the overseas countries and the numbers of lovers coming from them, as follows:

U.S.A.: 562, Australia: 47, England: 17, France: 4,  
Switzerland: 2, Germany: 2, Lebanon: 2, Israel: 1, Hawaii: 3,  
Hong Kong: 1, Taiwan: 1, So. Korea: 1, Philippines: 2, Africa: 3,  
Iran: 10, Pakistan: 37.

Total : 695. (men: 349, women: 320, children: 26)

Rivers and streams answering the Ocean's call, you crossed much rough ground and rocky obstacles to bring yourselves to Him. For many of you an impassable mountain was the problem of money, as few could afford the expense of such a distant journey. You scrimped and saved and toiled arduously; you borrowed, to work harder on your return and repay the loans; you sold whatever you possibly or impossibly could, sometimes the very means of your livelihood! You came to Poona to return straight home. Your trip to the Ancient One promised no glamour of India's ancient features. You did not come to see such wondrous things as the Taj Mahal or the Golden Temple or the Himalayas — the wonder of Baba's Love engulfed them all. Your sight was trained on Guruprasad where your Beloved was awaiting you, as He said He would be. Your sightseeing was Baba-places in Poona, Meherazad, Meherabad, Ahmednagar. You denied yourselves many a shopping temptation in order to spend more on books and photos and lockets of Baba, and to contribute towards the Avatar Meher Baba Trust (Ahmednagar). You learnt and sang Baba-bhajans. To sing out His Message in more and more forms of music, you took with you so many Indian instruments — sitars, tablas, dholaks, bells, flutes — that the music shops in Poona ran out of stock, and one owner said he did four years' business in two months! Over sixty sitars accompanied the 156 lovers on the last charter flight; and when a volunteer expressed concern over the problem of space, the answer was "There's always room for more music"!

Beloved Baba told you not to bring Him gifts. The time for toy-gifts was over, now nothing less than the gift of your self would do for the Highest of the High. Being rich in His Love, you brought Him the offering that He had gifted to you. You brought Him your heart filled with His Name, pouring it out to Him in song and poetry, touching His Heart that He opened for you, bathing His feet with

your tears of love, winning His smile with your performances. You entertained Him superbly with plays of spiritual content and wondrous humour, with musical concerts and puppet shows, with delightful skits and jokes. We heard many instruments play *Begin The Beguine*, many voices sing the *Arti* in English.\* You brought all kinds of instruments with you to regale Him with music: guitar, violin, banjo, flute, recorder, trombone, saxophone. Although there was not much room for words in your hearts and ours, how beautifully you spoke of His Love in the language of music, the language that helps to make His Silence heard!

We thank our Beloved for His gift of the Family.  
We bow down to His Love for you.  
We bow down to your love for Him.

At this banquet which the Beloved had spread for the Family homecoming, He surprised us with all manner of gifts. At His table we saw the perfect merging of all shades of religion and colour. To see His family contain equally as many Christians as Jews, to see His beauty shine equally from a dark or fair face, was to see the oneness of Baba's Love which never asks for uniformity — it asks only for unity. Over and over Baba had said that this Darshan was to be only for His lovers, old and new. It was not for strangers. So it was in fact, as it was figuratively. The lovers appeared to have no room in their hearts for any 'strangers' that had been there before. These strangers that our Beloved shies from, got drowned in a drop of His wine. At His table we witnessed the miracle of words coming to life. 'Family' became a reality; 'darshan' an experience. We of the mandali who had taken part in many a darshan without being part of it, we found ourselves having His darshan a thousand times over — receiving it with each lover who knelt before the Chair on which God's man-form had sat to receive thousands in the past, with each dear head that bowed in adoration or obeisance at the feet of the Unseen Beloved. In you younger ones, His "Boys and Girls" who formed the main body of this gathering, in you we heard the first strains of His 'New Life' song. From His Ocean you brought to us a breath of the New Humanity which will awaken a dead world to His Life. You who carried His Message from heart to heart and land to land, who did not see His Man-form because of your complete obedience to His command to wait till He called, of you Baba often spoke with the glowing pride of a Father and the touching love of a Mother. By making Baba's pleasure your treasure, you made Him say of you: "They who sacrifice their longing to obedience of my word, they will receive the more." To us it seems that already you received more, else you would not be the stalwart Message bearers He chose you to be and come for your first darshan of Him after He dropped the Form you had waited to see! "All merciful and eternally benevolent", our Beloved is indeed as bountiful as He is beautiful.

This Darshan was "darshan of darshans" as much for the eighty percent who had not seen or embraced the God-Man's form, as it was for the rest of you who had done so. Heart-language made this glowingly evident, tongue-language attested to it. We overheard a twelve year old who was here for her first darshan, happy eyes shining through a veil of tears, telling herself in an intense whisper "Am I glad I came, Oh boy am I glad!!" A young couple said to us at parting "Baba has dipped us in such divine colours, we will never be the same again!" And an old-timer, a doctor who came with his family from the U.S.A., remarked more than once "Had I not come, it would have been the saddest mistake of my life!" Again and again we heard the joyous refrain, in different words, from different lips, in the voice of the 'new'

and the 'old'. Though most of you were of the Now Age, many ages from 7 to 99 were represented. There were a number of children, and there would have been more if Baba had not restricted their age to 7. Actually however, there were more — but not visibly. By far the youngest of all, these invisible lovers came in their mothers' wombs — and each group was blessed with several of them! The oldest among you was Baba's courageous "soldier" from Myrtle Beach Center, Ruth White who celebrated her 100th birthday a few days after the Darshan! We salute you dear Ruth in beloved Baba's Love, loyally you have served the Cause of your Master. A hundred times JAI BABA to you!

Addressing you all on your arrival in Guruprasad, Francis faithfully expressed the Mandali's feeling when he spoke these lines:

"Who but the Beloved of Beloveds, could speak his Word silently in your hearts and make you come from across the world to take his darshan, to bow down to him in your hearts? Such a thing has never happened before. I have been at Mass-darshans where tens of thousands came and bowed down to his Man-form. But to come thousands of miles to bow down to him in one's own heart, that is of an entirely different order of devotion.

"Why has beloved Baba given you people this extraordinary privilege? Because he required a few to do what the many, what everyone, must eventually do: journey across the world of illusion to take darshan of him in their hearts. What a Beloved is our Beloved; what a mighty Beloved."

You had the Beloved's darshan. And you had His sahavas, seated for hours before Him in Guruprasad, communing with Him in silence and in speech. Often you crowded the Hall, yet you were never a crowd to us. It was not a sea of faces we saw, but so many shining drops in His Ocean. Every face we dearly remember, and every name we know, but we're not always able to put the right two together! This makes us wish we had asked you each to leave with us a photograph of yourself (a spare passport picture perhaps), to cherish along with Darshan thoughts and feelings that you left for us in the Pink Book — so called because of its pink sheets that have captured some of your heart-rays from His Love-sun. In the privacy of an unoccupied hour, one or the other of the mandali opens it and basks in the warmth of these rays which melt the illusion of separation and reveal His abiding presence. Where reams could not express the Darshan your lines have done it, and I'm tempted to steal some for this letter. But it's impossible to choose from so much beauty, so I've picked these few passages somewhat at random (quoting without giving names):

To say we received Baba's Love is the least we can say. I can't imagine any of us, the new lovers, even those fortunate ones who had been with Baba before, having any idea what Baba's Darshan would be like. It was enough to drown even the best swimmer!

The memory of the past five days will live with me for the next 700 years!

I really feel that now I actually know that Meher Baba is Love.

To travel half way round this gross globe to be with you Baba, has filled my heart with love of you Beloved Baba and the Mandali and the whole world.

Dear Baba, thank you for showing your true self, that of Love. Without your physical form, all I can see is your Love. Before visiting you in Poona it was all words, now it is Living Baba, not just talking Baba.

Baba said He would be very strong during Darshan. His weight of Love and mercy descended on me, shattering in a short time the wall I built around my soul. He loves us very much.

By His grace through many lives I am once again at my Blessed Master's feet, caressed by His touch, breathing the roses of His presence. His perfume is everywhere.

Never did I suspect that Baba, not in his physical form, would have such a tremendous impact on me!

You my Meher Baba, are truly Love itself.

This Darshan has made me feel Baba as I have never felt Him before. His Love, His Glory, His Suffering and Bliss, His Humour, and more; but most of all His Love. We return with a most precious treasure to be shared with those who could not come, that they too may have Meher Baba's Darshan in their own hearts.

At Darshan I began to feel the Beloved's personal special humanness, through all of you. Before He was overpoweringly God and Christ; now He is infinitely more, being our beautiful Baba, the man, our friend. Every day He is more God, more a 'mighty Beloved' ..... and every day more Man, more specially Meher Baba. I remember on the third day of Darshan, Baba was so close and full of love that every time I heard His Name or saw His Picture I just cried, it was so incredible — for He is the only One, the Only one in my life, and He has come and let us know of Him .....

Beloved Baba, my Truth and Beauty, ..... We came thinking to say Farewell, but found ourselves saying Hail! for there You were shining from every radiant face ....

I have received all I had expected; moreover, I received more and more as, through all the wonderful experiences, I grew more and more. In fact I see no end in sight to the growing and receiving!

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You Beloved Baba, for fulfilling Your great promises: 'sometime, somewhere, somehow' ...

It is one's heart that recognizes the Divine Beloved and not the mind. There is nothing to figure out; only to experience. Divine Love is Divine Humour. Meher Baba is greater than God.

We had to come here to know that God is EVERYWHERE — Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

Meher Baba has kept His promise, he has given me more than I have asked for. Meher Baba has given me a deep inner conviction that He is God, and a feeling of contented peace that has made it possible to fulfil his command: Don't worry.

My concept of Avatar Meher Baba: Baba is all that he claims to be. In the measurable future the universe will bow to him as the Deliverer from the world of dreams.

He is called Avatar and God of which I do not know. But if God was to come to Earth for his children I think BABA would fit the bill. If BABA is God, then God must be quite a guy ..... Meher is Compassion. BABA is CHRIST, MOHAMMED, BUDDHA, ZOROASTER, RAMA, KRISHNA. But most of all he is BABA. BABA is a person who will take one by the hand and lead him to his very own self.

Beloved Baba's universal work is totally beyond me. But the effect of His working, awakening of the Heart, is already evident in the conviction of many many young people who have had no physical contact with Him. This magnificent Darshan of Beloved Baba's revealed the beginnings of His only real miracle.

Dear Beloved One, ... I visited your side in your Meherabad tomb and in your immortal Guruprasad, not in grief or sorrow that you chose to leave me behind but in love and adoration that I have been loved by the God of Gods in earth-life. I will wait for you dear Baba. I will wait for union with you the Great Love in human form and beyond all forms. You are the only one worthy of love. I offer myself to you. Come dear Lord when your sweet will wishes.

On the pink sheets and in your letters that followed, you also express such dear praise for all that you received from us at this Darshan. And it makes us wonder if you will ever know what we received from you! What it meant to us to be with you in the Beloved's overwhelming presence — to see Him in your eyes, to embrace Him in your arms, to mingle our love's tears and laughter with yours, to welcome Him in you! You brought Baba with you and He was already here to receive you, you took Him with you and He is as ever with us — such is the profound God-humour that makes life's joke bearable. We remember teasing you for taking so much of Baba with you, telling some of you at parting "Isn't it lucky Baba is the Ocean, or we'd have little left of Him to hold to us!"

A heartfelt of Ocean is a tremendous thing to carry, and with it one carries a responsibility as big. When beloved Baba told you to go back after Darshan without sightseeing on the way, He entrusted you with taking His Love as direct as possible to the shores it was destined for. "Use us Baba, use us in whatever way you use us" one of you said in a poem to Him. Using you as precious receptacles to carry His Love to various specific points, Baba was sending out His 'prasad' to the world in general. That prasad which is as inexhaustible as it is invisible, He gave to you to have and to hold and to share — to give to whomever you can, wherever you are. That you are doing your part, true to the trust the Beloved has reposed in all His lovers, is clear in letters received after Darshan. And that He always helps you to do it, even does it Himself without your knowing, is clear in lines such as these (from different lovers):

"It is incredible how souls who were previously unconscious of Baba or unready to hear of Him, have opened up since our return from the unparalleled Darshan!"

"There is now a readiness to hear of the Beloved, a desire to know more about Him, that is beyond belief!"

"Baba is having people jump out of the woodwork seeking information about His Avatarhood!"

"It is amazing how beloved Baba is opening doors, and wonderful how He often works without even using anyone!"

"Day by day His lovers grow in strength and number here."

So hungry were our hearts for Baba's nearness, that the Darshan fare we feasted on for a solid two months did not tire us. Daily we savoured the diverse forms of heart-worship offered to Him: in the mornings by His lovers from the West, in the afternoons by His lovers from the East. Only the forms varied, the substance of course was the same. Love cannot be different when the Beloved is the same One and Only.

Although countwise the Eastern darshanees were at times disappointing, lovewise they often added up so high that small pools of lovers appeared as big lakes — such as the groups from Kanpur, Dehra Dun, Nizamabad, Gujerat. The lovers from Hamirpur district and Andhra state made us realize once more why Baba spoke of them with such love, calling them His "heart and head". They filled and overfilled Guruprasad on appointed days. They came by special train, and they came crammed in special buses that carried Baba's picture and Name on the outside and His seven-coloured flag on top. The women brought their little ones with them, including babies just a month old. The children's voices were loudest when Baba-bhajans were sung, and babes in arms sometimes joined in with their gusty cries. At one time even a bark joined in, for an Andhraite lover had brought along her pet dog, a pretty white pomeranian, "for Baba's darshan!"

The five hundred lovers that were to come by special train from Guntur district (state of Andhra) for darshan on 21st May, could not do so because of floods that breached rail tracks, broke down bridges, and made roads impassable for weeks. Finally about sixty of them managed to make it by bus on 10th June, the last day of Darshan. It seemed ironical that some from nearby places failed to come, while these lovers who were ready to travel such a greater distance were hindered by a whim of Nature — or so it seemed. The lovers of Guntur accepted it as the whim of their Beloved, His Will that rules their lives, and they bowed to it.

The Eastern lovers entertained Baba invariably with songs, sometimes accompanying them with solo dances. Men danced with great fervour, intoxicated with the music of His Name. Women who by tradition would veil their faces, unveiled and danced gently for the Beloved. Groups of Indian lovers coming from many parts of India, sang the Beloved's praise and victory in many languages: Hindi, Marathi, Gujerati, Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Telegu. We had never before heard Baba's JAI sung in such a fascinating variety of compositions. It mattered little if one didn't understand the language, the theme of the songs was His Name and His Jai. The entire wording of a song, sung in a catchy tune, was simply 'Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai'. Another composition, born of His lovers in the north, was a conversation piece, a question-and-answer exchange between speaker and audience. A solo voice asking, and a

stentorian chorus replying, it runs something like this:

"Who is the Avatar of the Age?" :	"MEHER BABA"
"Who is the Protector of the poor and the weak?" :	"MEHER BABA"
"Who is the Lord of the universe?" :	"MEHER BABA"
"Who is the Beloved of our hearts?" :	"MEHER BABA"

#### AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI ""

In November when Baba casually remarked to His mandali "In March you all march to Poona", it appeared no more than a delightful pun. Much later, when we asked ourselves whether Baba would want us to go to Guruprasad as usual, we realized that He had provided us with the answer. So on March 30 we marched to Poona, our minds bare of expectation, our hearts a desert. Three months later when we left Poona, the desert had changed to a dazzling expanse of flowers which had sprung up in the merciful downpour of His Darshan — it had been a time of Spring for His many lovers, and we had shared in the miracle. Returning from Poona we saw its reflection in the earth around us: in the rain-saturated fields; in the newly born pastures; in the replenished wells; in the grass-covered Seclusion Hill where sheep graze; in the blossoming garden of Meherazad; in the waters of Pimpalgaon Lake reservoir overflowing its bank — a thing that had not happened since November of 1962 when the East-West gathering took place. And most of all we saw it in the transformation on Meherabad Hill: its sun-scorched surface is now a mantle of cool green, its trees and bushes which looked like spiky brooms are now dressed in rich brocade of leaf and flower. This resurrection seems to speak to us of the Beloved's life-giving grace which His children are to receive. This year's bounteous rain seems to symbolize the Beloved's bounty which is to flow into mankind's parched heart.

Now, back at Meherazad, I speak only for the Meherazad family. And first of all we want to say to you: All that has come to us in your letters, letters so filled with Love of Baba, so full of dear concern for our well-being, has gone deep into our hearts that hold you very close. That you have expected no letter in reply, at times even requesting us not to reply, is a measure of your love and understanding which makes us better aware of the depth of our relationship as Baba-Family. Not that we haven't always replied; the dove of Baba's Love has carried many a message to you on wings of silence! It is only the pen that is lazy or too heavy to lift. Moreover, time has not slackened its pressure. Baba is keeping us busy as ever — busy with household duties, and busiest with different aspects of work related directly to Him. His holding the reins as tightly as ever, is one of the things which most reveals His presence. He reveals it in so many ways. And the more the Beloved's presence is revealed, the more we miss Him!

Beloved Baba's presence fills each part and particle of Meherazad. Every room where He sat or slept in, every piece of furniture that He used, every article of clothing that He wore, the paths and ground that He walked on, the trees and flowers that he admired, the birds that He inquired after in dear concern, the Hill where He sat in seclusion, the books that He enjoyed having read out, the records of songs



which He liked to listen to on the old gramophone — each object unveils His beloved presence. So it is not that we grieve for His absence from us, but for our separation from His form — the exquisite garment which wrapped our hearts so fully that we desired nothing else. God-realization was not our concern. Striving to realize God's Love expressed through the garment worn and suffered for His creation, was enough to occupy lifetimes. Since He has put aside His garment, we realize it more and more. His every act of grace and compassion that is recalled, every form of His suffering that is remembered, adds a little to our realizing it. Our growing realization of His Love is a large part of our pain of separation. Baba referred to His beloved Mehera as His 'Radha'. And at times when her tears flow for Baba, her Lord Krishna, I remind her that this separation is but another tune played on His divine flute, for her life to dance to it as perfectly as it had done to the sweet music of His physical presence.

To have what one wants, is to have everything. To us, being with Baba was everything — and we had it. Staying with God and sharing His humanness was such completeness for us that it has left nothing besides to want for. We're not looking for any happenings to manifest. We are simply waiting — waiting for His Will to manifest in whatever forms He may choose, that we might keep on carrying it out with our imperfect obedience and His perfect grace. Many of you dear ones are doing this without having to wait, for you have not depended solely on His personal directions as we have. Seeing your service and obedience to your Beloved, independent of a sight or touch of the garment which clothed His Godhood, makes us realize that you have received from Him something which we lack — something we envy. We will have to labour to acquire that which He gave to you so freely, since He has "taken the doll out of our hands, and now we face the ocean."\*

As Eruch puts it: "The God-Man has dropped the mask that He had put on to play His Divine Game, so that He can be seen as He really is. But only by His Grace can we see Him as He really is, and only true surrender to His Will can accomplish this."

For this His lovers have to keep their sight unfogged by a breath of doubt, keep it focussed on His Reality without distraction from the antics of the mind. On several occasions last year, while seated with His men mandali in Meherazad hall, Baba quoted this line from Sant Tukaram: "Be still and remain a witness to whatever that happens." It means to leave all to our Beloved, in perfect stillness of faith. One who turns his head in every direction, looking for answers to questions that crowd into the mind, is missing the Answer that comes from His Silence. The Beloved's humiliation does not lie in the fact that He has not broken His Silence as we understood it, but in the tragedy that we have not understood it. The Avatar's eternal humiliation is that His Word falls on a deaf world, which receives the reverberations of its utterance a long time after from the few who have picked it up. Just as the harvest of a crop is for the many and the toilers in the field are few, so His glorification is shared by the masses and His humiliation is witnessed by a few. And like the toilers who see the crop's glory hidden in their toil, blessed are the few who see, in His humiliation, the glorification which is to come!

So much has been said of the Silence of Meher Baba. And so much has been written of what Baba said about His Silence, that I don't remember whether this

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\* from poem to Baba by Craig San Roque (England)

statement, made by Baba a number of years ago, has appeared in print. The statement was prompted by the remark of a visitor who said something about silence being golden. Baba said:

"I am silent. My Silence is not merely an observing of silence. My Silence has a purpose behind it. When I break it, all will know. The breaking of my Silence will be as forceful as thousands of atom bombs exploding together."

In October of 1968 Baba said that before His manifestation some three of His intimate Mandali will pass away. The first one turned out to be dear Kaka, and the second is Dr. William Donkin. We called him Don, short for Donkin because when one of us first asked his name he replied "Donkin". That was exactly thirty years ago, when this young and brilliant English medic left his family and country to stay with Meher Baba "till the end" as he said at the time — and as he has said many a time since, whenever Baba suggested that he was free to return to England at any time he wished. On the 9th of this month, Don passed away of a heart attack. It was as sudden as it was unexpected. On Wednesday he had tea with Dr. Harry Kenmore, one of Baba's intimate mandali who has come to stay for a month at Meherazad according to Baba's order given to him last November. On Saturday Baba took His dear disciple Don to Him, gathered him up swiftly and gently to His God-Heart where His loved ones belong. Don's body lies buried at lower Meherabad, nearby the graves of Baba's stalwart disciple Gustadji and the great mast Ali Shah — an honour befitting one who gave his all to The One who was his all in all.

In the world of Baba-lovers Dr. William Donkin is remembered best as author of that profound treatise, *THE WAYFARERS* — the rare gem unearthed by Don's painstaking labour and shaped by his perfection-seeking mind. Among our many dear remembrances of Don, dearest is his unwavering fidelity of His Master whom he served 'to the end', sticking by Baba through the roughest years of our life with Baba. Don was the only Western disciple chosen to accompany Baba in the New Life as one of His 'Companions'. And now Don has started out on his true new Life. To the Mandali it means the loss of a very dear brother.

Another very close and dear lover whom the Beloved has taken to Him, is Dr. Ben Hayman of Texas, U.S.A, Baba referred to Him as His "Big Ben", because of his big love for Baba. But Ben never 'chimed out' his love, it was as silent as it was big, expressing itself in tremendous services rendered silently to the Beloved. He never missed a visit to beloved Baba, either in Myrtle Beach or in India, and he was present also at the Eastern Darshan held in Poona at Guruprasad in 1965. Ben shared many smiles and jokes with Baba — his gentle humour served as an added link between him and his Master. When seated before Baba among a gathering of lovers, his eyes would sometimes appear half closed — and immediately Baba would snap His beautiful fingers, to say teasingly, "Wake up Ben! don't fall asleep! Now that dear Big Ben is asleep to us, he is awake to the Beloved for all time.

In the last part of January beloved Baba repeatedly told us: "Simply do as I say, whatever it may be, for I know what I am doing." On the 31st, (January 1969), Baba had one of the men mandali bring into His bedroom the big board on which His favourite saying of Hafiz is printed in Persian and English. For years this board hung on the wall of the Mandali's hall, and Baba often made Aloha read the saying to lovers who visited Meherazad. And so it is this saying of Hafiz which was our Beloved's message for us on the last day:

BEFITTING A FORTUNATE SLAVE CARRY OUT EVERY COMMAND  
OF THE MASTER WITHOUT ANY QUESTION OF WHY AND WHAT.  
ABOUT WHAT YOU HEAR FROM THE MASTER NEVER SAY IT IS WRONG  
BECAUSE MY DEAR THE FAULT LIES IN YOUR OWN INCAPACITY  
TO UNDERSTAND HIM.

I AM SLAVE OF MY MASTER WHO HAS RELEASED ME FROM IGNORANCE;  
WHATEVER MY MASTER DOES IS FOR THE HIGHEST BENEFIT TO ALL  
CONCERNED.

- HAFIZ -

As the Time drew nearer, beloved Baba warned His lovers more often: "Hold on to my daaman — do not let it slip away under any circumstance." Now, when the daaman appears invisible, is the time to hold on as never before. Now the "umbrella" has begun to revolve, and time will spin it faster and faster. Drops that are settled on its surface, clinging to the glossy material of promises, are bound to shake off. Drops that surrender their selfness get soaked into the heart of the substance and become part of the fabric. This is what is really meant by holding on to Baba's daaman; to get so absorbed in it that there is nothing of one's self left to hold on with; to live so completely as He wills that one lives as His Will. And what else is there worthy of being lived, when one lives for Baba, for God?

How often has Baba stated: "I AM GOD. Remember that!" For His lovers, to remember Baba is to remember that. But they find that their compassionate Beloved still gives them a reminder now and then, in different shapes of events that happen in their daily lives. Sometimes a reminder is heard from the lips of a baby. A lover in Vijayawada (Andhra state) testifies to this in his letter of March 12, 1969:

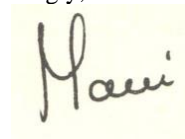
My youngest daughter aged 2 years and 3 months, suddenly got  
up from sleep at about 1.15 in the night of March 10, and  
five times uttered clearly:

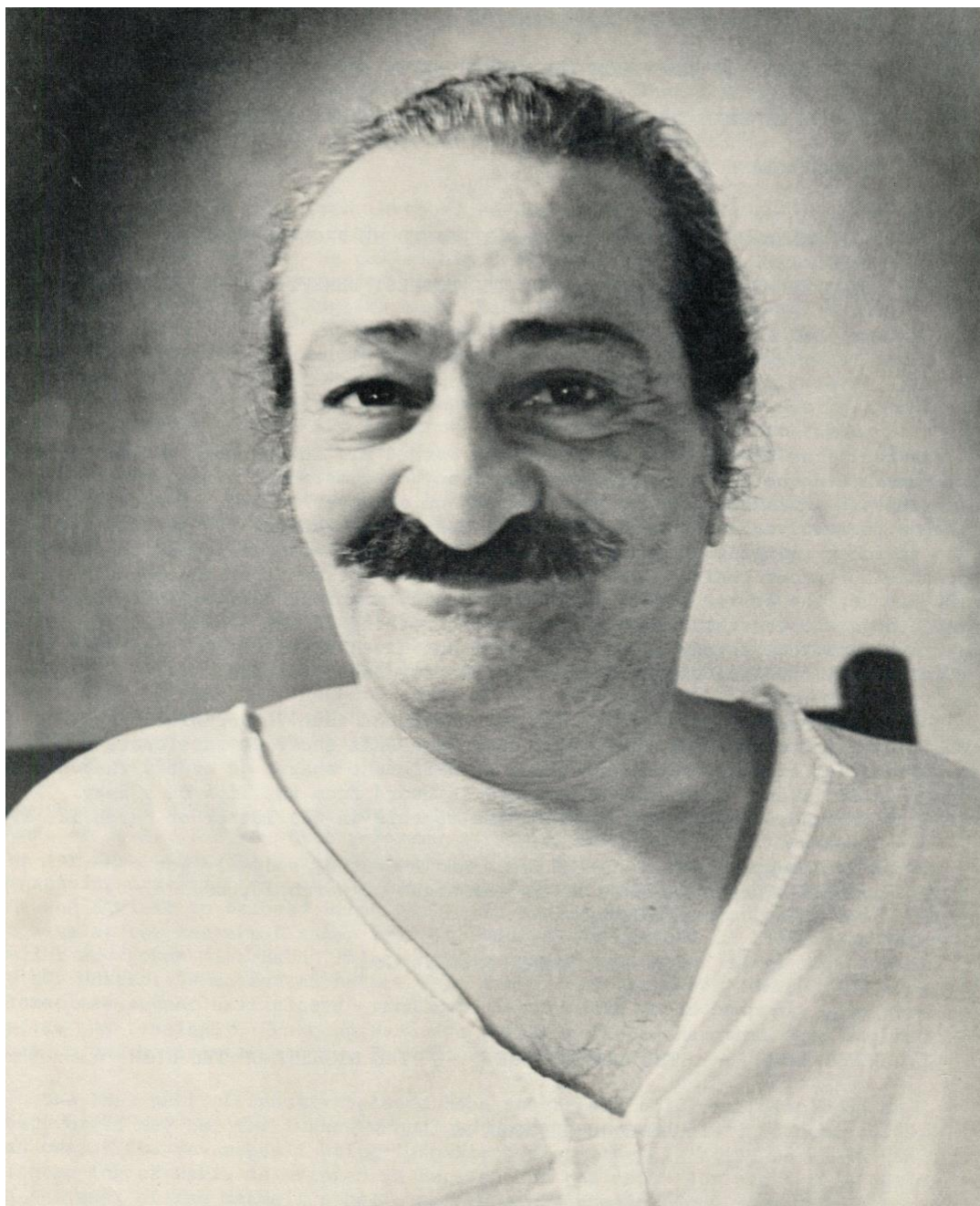
"Meher Baba is God."

JAI MEHER BABA - THE ANCIENT ONE - THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI !!!

Ever lovingly,





# *Life Sketch/*

## **AVATAR MEHER BABA**

(1894-1969)

Merwan Sheriar Irani known as Meher Baba, was born in Poona, India, on February 25, 1894, of Persian parents. His father, Sheriar Irani, was of Zoroastrian faith and a true seeker of God. Merwan went to a Christian high school in Poona and later attended Deccan College. In 1913 while still in college, a momentous event occurred in his life ... the meeting with Hazrat Babajan, an ancient Mohammedan woman and one of the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Babajan gave him God-Realization and made him aware of his high spiritual destiny.

Eventually he was drawn to seek out another Perfect Master, Upasni Maharaj, a Hindu who lived in Sakori. During the next seven years Maharaj gave Merwan "Gnosis" or Divine Knowledge. Thus Merwan attained spiritual Perfection. His spiritual mission began in 1921 when he drew together his first close disciples. It was these early disciples who gave him the name Meher Baba, which means "Compassionate Father".

After years of intensive training of his disciples, Meher Baba established a colony near Ahmednagar that is called Meherabad. Here the Master's work embraced a free school where spiritual training was stressed, a free hospital and dispensary, and shelters for the poor. No distinction was made between the high castes and the Untouchables; all mingled in common fellowship through the inspiration of the Master. To his disciples at Meherabad, who were of different castes and creeds, he gave a training of moral discipline, love for God, spiritual understanding and selfless service.

Meher Baba told his disciples that from July 10, 1925 he would observe Silence. Since that day he has maintained this Silence throughout the years. His many spiritual discourses and messages have been dictated by means of an alphabet board. Much later the Master discontinued the use of the board and reduced all communication to hand gestures unique in expressiveness and understandable to many.

Meher Baba has traveled to the Western world six times, first in 1931, when he contacted his early Western disciples. His last visit to America was in 1958 when he and his disciples stayed at the Center established for his work at Myrtle Beach, S. C.

In India as many as one hundred thousand people have come in one day to seek his Darshan, or blessing; from all over the world there are those who journey to spend a few days, even a single day, in his presence.

An important part of Meher Baba's work through the years has been to personally contact and to serve, hundreds of those known in India as "masts." These are advanced pilgrims on the spiritual path who have become spiritually intoxicated from direct awareness of God. For this work he has traveled many thousands of miles to remote places throughout India and Ceylon. Other vital work has been the washing of the lepers, the washing of the feet of thousands of poor and the distribution of grain and cloth to the destitute.

Meher Baba asserts that he is the same Ancient One, come again to redeem man from his bondage of ignorance and to guide him to realize his true Self which is God. Meher Baba is acknowledged by his many followers all over the world as the Avatar of the Age.

# *More about Meher Baba/*

Readers who wish to know more about the life and work of Meher Baba are referred to the following:

**The Perfect Master** by Charles Purdom. Williams and Norgate, 1937; republished by Sheriar Press, 1975. The first book about Meher Baba ever published in the West, with a wealth of information about Baba's early years through 1937.

**Avatar** by Jean Adriel. J. F. Rowny Press, 1947; republished by John F. Kennedy University Press, 1971. A personal narrative and biography of Meher Baba's life through 1943 by one of his early Western followers.

**The Wayfarers** by William Donkin. Meher Publications, 1948; republished by Sufism Reoriented, 1969. An extraordinary account of Meher Baba's work with the "masts" or God-Mad.

**God Speaks** by Meher Baba. Dodd, Mead & Co., 1955, 1973. A monumental work which takes the reader deeply into the structure and purpose of creation. The entire journey of the soul through evolution, the experiences of the seven planes of consciousness, the functioning of the spiritual hierarchy and the trio-nature of God are all explained in a fashion that interrelates the teachings of the world's great mystical and religious traditions.

**Listen, Humanity** by Meher Baba, narrated and edited by D. E. Stevens. Harper & Row, 1957. Particularly appealing as an introductory book, it opens with a narrative description of an intimate love gathering of Baba and his eastern lovers in 1955, then continues with several discourses by Baba on such subjects as death and immortality, war, love and the spiritual path.

**The God-Man** by Charles Purdom. George Allen and Unwin, 1964; republished by Sheriar Press, 1971. The most complete and authoritative biography of Meher Baba yet published, covering Baba's life through 1962. Includes an interpretation of his silence and spiritual teaching.

**The Beloved** by Naosherwan Anzar. Sheriar Press, 1974. A carefully interwoven combination of text and pictorial material. Many remarkable photographs (over 150 in all) provide a fascinating visual record of the entire span of Meher Baba's life.

**Much Silence** by Tom and Dorothy Hopkinson. Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975. An excellent informal biography, with a five-chapter introduction to Meher Baba's teachings.

**Tales from the New Life** narrated by Eruch, Mehera, Mani and Meheru. The Beguine Library, 1976. Told by four of Meher Baba's closest disciples, this collection of tales recreates the atmosphere and panorama of Meher Baba's remarkable New Life period (Oct. 16, 1949 - Feb. 16, 1952). The stories are transcribed directly from informal, taped conversations and genuinely capture the flavor of personal life with the Avatar during this rigorous and unique phase of Baba's life.

There are many books available by and about Meher Baba.  
For a booklist and further information write to:

Sheriar Press  
P.O. Drawer 1519  
North Myrtle Beach  
South Carolina 29582

Print Edition Text	Online Edition Text	Page Number	Paragraph No.	Line Number
abstension	abstention	2	6	1
ocured	occurred	7	5	1
gorth	forth	11	2	6
irridescant	iridescent	17	1	1
breadth	breath	24	4	3
forsee	foresee	31	2	6
therin	therein	31	3	4
cradel	cradle	32	2	8
repoied	replied	36	6	7
very	vary	44	3	2
scent	scene	51	1	5
noncommittal	noncommittal	64	1	3
instalments	installments	67	2	2
compaion	companion	75	5	9
playright	playwright	81	3	2
distrubing	disturbing	97	2	9
murners	murmurs	104	4	7
hairbreath	hairbreadth	107	1	1
cooly	coolly	119	1	6
acceded	acceded	120	2	1
descents	descends	124	3	4
distrophy	dystrophy	124	3	8
merly	merely	124	5	3
satue	statue	129	5	5
clothers	clothes	137	3	3
spirts	spirits	137	4	3
emphastic-ally	emphatically	140	2	2
rendevouz	rendezvous	147	1	7
pilgramage	pilgrimage	160	3	14
hyprocrisy	hypocrisy	165	1	7
oweners'	owners'	169	3	3

annointed	anonted	169	4	6
esconsed	esconced	170	5	4
privelege	privilege	176	1	3
accomo- dation	accommo- dation	181	2	1
ent	sent	190	3	3
wlecome	welcome	191	1	10
compatment	compartment	203	2	9
startingly	startlingly	219	1	11
sepaks	speaks	254	4	5
varigated	variegated	256	1	5
murcurial	mercurial	264	2	5
alows	allows	273	6	7
infinitesmal	infinitesimal	274	2	4
severly	severely	301	2	4
serenly	serenely	306	4	2
decidely	decidedly	307	1	12
arguement	argument	314	1	11
remainders	reminders	335	2	2
occurring	occurring	345	4	5