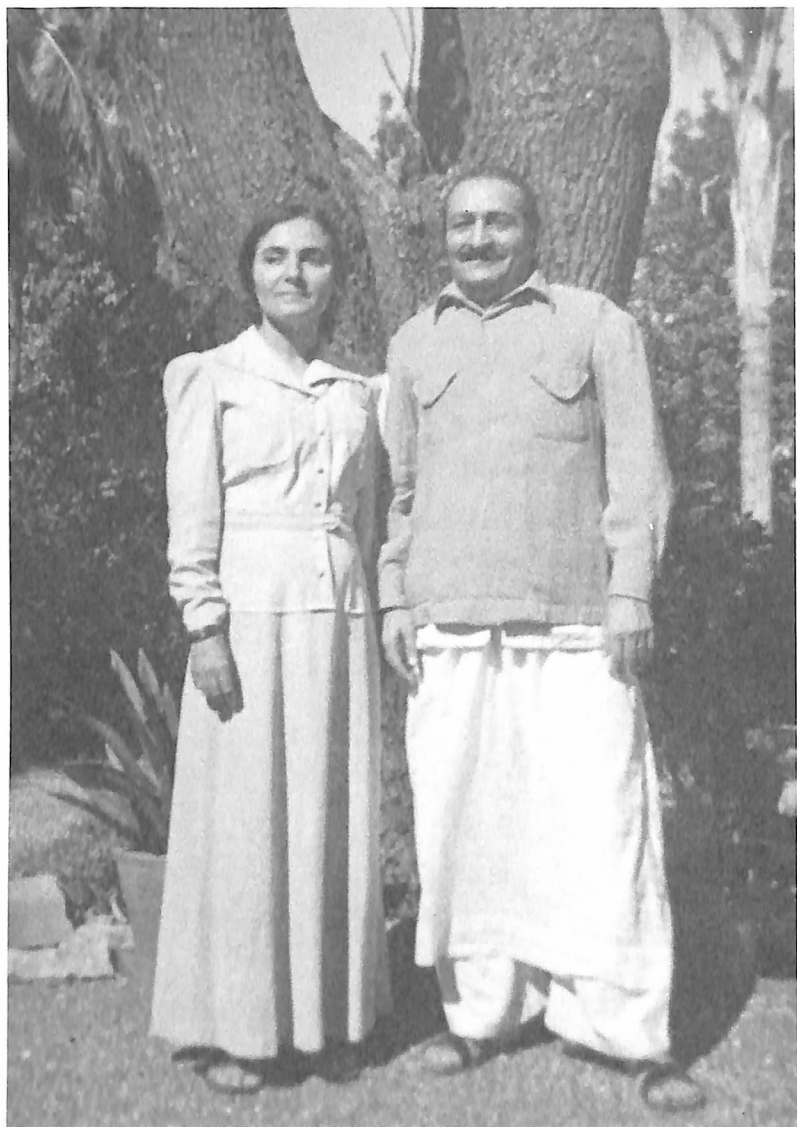


MEHERA J. IRANI

*The beloved
of the Beloved*



JANUARY 7, 1907 ~ MAY 20, 1989



*When the lover and the Beloved are one,
that is the end and the beginning.*

Meher Baba

Meherazad
25th May 1989

Dear Family,

A cable from Meherazad family dated 20th May 1989 carried the following news to Baba lovers round the world:

BELOVED AVATAR MEHER BABA HAS TAKEN
MEHERA HIS BELOVED UNTO HIMSELF ON 20
MAY 1989 MORNING STOP WHILE MEHERAS
BODY IS BEING BURIED NEXT TO SAMADHI
ON MEHERABAD HILL AS SPECIFIED BY BABA
THE LIGHT OF MEHERAS PURE SUPREME
LOVE FOR HER ONLY BELOVED WILL
FOREVER ILLUMINE THE EARTH AND THE
HEARTS OF HIS LOVERS EVERYWHERE

— MANI AND ALL MEHERAZAD FAMILY —

The report on Mehera's health sent to Kitty-Margaret-Jane on 9th May 1989 served as a prelude to the following account of Mehera's final days:

Years ago, a Baba lover from the States sent us a batch of Fortune cookies which had a Baba-saying enclosed in each one. The little pink slip in the cookie which Mehera picked said: "The more you think of Me, the more you will realise My love for you."

This message from the Beloved, preserved by Mehera in a decorative little china box all these years, serves as a fitting opening to this account of the last weeks of Mehera's most precious life on earth in the highest role of God's Avataric Advent as Meher Baba. For the more we think of the period of Mehera's illness, the more we realise Baba's love for her, Baba's tender compassion in veiling her suffering when most needed, His saving her from a prolonged illness as He carried her swiftly through the last crucial week when each day brought on a new and humiliating binding to her freedom of movement and self-expression. Except for the great sharing in Baba's car accident in America in 1952, Mehera had rarely undergone a physical suffering, and even a mild pain or upset was difficult

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for her to bear. And so it was hard for us, her Companions, to watch her go through this ordeal at such a pace, and we couldn't help questioning as to why He should allow it to happen this way! But we fully realised later that Beloved Baba had planned and timed this momentous event perfectly, in His perfect Love for His Mehera.

His speed in the final days was such that Dr. Goher and Baba lover doctors and nurses helping her, as well as all of us from Meherazad and Meherabad surrounding her, were unable to catch up with it or think over it calmly. But His speed was compassion in disguise, the more swiftly to gather Himself His beloved Mehera who had waited for Him for 20 years in bitter-sweet resignation to His Will.

Looking back we still cannot believe that so much happened so quickly at the last. In fact from the moment that a serious investigation was indicated, to the moment Mehera passed away from us, it was less than a week. On Sunday 14th we took Mehera to Poona for a C.T. Scan at the up-to-date Medinova Diagnostic Centre, where it was discovered that Mehera had a large growth in the brain, resembling a tubercular tumour. What astounded the doctors was the absence of any of the symptoms that go with such a growth pressing on the brain — they shook their heads in disbelief when told she hadn't even had a headache! The next Sunday, we were saying goodbye to Mehera on Meherabad Hill, laying garlands and nets of fragrant flowers on a mound of earth by the side of the Beloved's Samadhi, which covered the beautiful form of Baba's Beloved Mehera.

A song I only remember the title of, "In how many ways does my Beloved love me", sings in my heart as I recall the days and nights that Mehera lay in her bedroom surrounded by the group of women destined to serve her night and day at this time. Every moment was a witness that Baba was with her. We could all but see Baba's hand pass tenderly over her face to ease the moments of pain and acute discomfort during the final days when her physical condition required medicated saline drips, and nasal feeding, etc. Each time, after a moment of resistance or painful look on her face, she would ease off into the slumber of a child, her expression calm and sweet, far away with Baba. As Arnavaz remarked, Baba had put a veil over Mehera's consciousness, so that she was not wholly aware of what was happening. She knew that she was ill, and that to begin with she

could not be understood when she spoke and needed support to walk or stand — yet she seemed unaware of the enormity of all that was happening. Even when taken to Poona for the C.T. Scan, she accepted it calmly, knowing she had to go to the hospital for some purpose. She did not ask about it; she seemed a bit far away from all the events surrounding her, as if she was more and more with Baba and less and less with us. Mehera was never told that she had a tumour, but it broke our hearts. Later, it helped to soothe our bewilderment when we saw Baba's clear touch visible in one of the x-rays where the tumour appeared in the shape of a heart.

Just see how Baba had planned it all! The Medinova Diagnostic Centre in Poona where Mehera would have to be taken from Meherazad for the C.T. Scan was one that Goher and I had just visited while on our Poona holiday, at the invitation of Dr. Arvind Chopra, who wanted us to see the up-to-date place where he serves as consultant and to talk to some of the doctors and staff interested in hearing about Baba. We even saw a C.T. Scan being taken! So Goher knew exactly what it would involve when agreeing to take Mehera to Poona for the Scan. As I have said, the Scan showed a large growth in the brain, closely resembling tuberculosis. Full treatment for it was begun immediately, along with medication for a possible abscess. Mehera was dearly cooperative in taking the incessant medicines and tonics and pills, and without complaint submitted to the doctors' various tests and to all our nursing, but to make her take in enough nourishment became more and more difficult with time.

Mehera had never been a hearty eater, and all these years we would be constantly reminding her to please come to the table because if she wasn't hungry we were! So feeding her was one of our biggest problems during her illness, requiring much coaxing to make her accept some of the nutritious and delicious concoctions that Meheru made for her throughout the day. Later, before she was put on nasal feed, she was refusing even coconut water or buttermilk. Her gesture of refusal touched and delighted all who saw it: slightly turning her head away and raising her hand to hide her eyes, as though she could make the drink disappear by not looking at it!

But before all this happened, Baba had prepared for us a package of 3 happy weeks in Poona, the holiday that Mehera, Goher, Meheru, and myself took each year in April. It was only when we got

there that we realised how tired we were after the long period of the Pilgrim Season, and how much we needed this change from our unbroken routine of 9 months at Meherazad. And what a gem of a holiday He prepared for us! It was choreographed and conducted by Jangu and Gulnar (Baba's niece) along with others of the family, seeing to our every comfort and entertainment from dawn to night, sending us meals cooked by Perin for her Mehera-Radha and us, taking us for treats to the Sizzler and Ashok, and the Sagar Plaza with the glass elevator (lift) which Mehera much enjoyed riding in with us, arranging for a Victoria (horse-carriage) ride to Empress Gardens, "faluda" (a sweet drink) at the Badshah, and so on and on.

For our holiday, our favourite cottage in Poona Club was reserved for 3 weeks, and apart from our most popular relaxation of watching films on Video, we went for quiet walks in the old gardens where we used to go with Baba, visiting beloved Babajan's, and Guruprasad, and Meherjee's, and sharing old-time Baba memories at Eruch's home with his gracious mother and family; and the inevitable visit to BABA HOUSE where all the neighbouring Baba lovers came to honour Mehera and receive Baba's prasad from her. The Meher Kawwals, comprising of the Twins and the rest of the Alley gang, including children clapping to the music to their hearts' content, gave a resounding singing program. And all said they felt it to be the best of visits from Mehera, with Baba's presence pouring silently from her on all who had assembled in His Love.

An unexpectedly interesting visit we made during this holiday was (for the sake of a walk on its spacious verandah) to the Synagogue known to Indians as "Lal Deval" (Red Temple). We thought it remained as neglected as we had heard it to be in recent years since the exodus of Jews from India to Israel, and were surprised at the approach of a Jewish gentleman who opened the doors of the Synagogue for us, welcomed us inside and showed us round the lovely hall with its distinctive atmosphere and Presence. The Synagogue's redstone structure with the clock tower had served as a prominent landmark for Poona from before Baba's childhood days, and as a young boy Baba used to practice cycling in its grounds. During our summers in Poona Baba always pointed out the Red Temple to us whenever we drove past it.

Yet another unexpected outing was to the Poona School & Home for the Blind, where free education and housing is provided to

poor blind boys. Goher needed to get information about their sister school for blind girls, where she was keen to admit her little blind patient from Pimpalgaon, a 5-year-old girl who comes regularly to the Meher Free Dispensary at Meherazad and wins Goher's heart each time by her cute smile and bright JAI BABA with folded hands!

Mehera walked over with Meheru and me to some of the boys seen in the grounds, to praise the roses in the little garden they tended and to ask about themselves. As more boys joined them, it was obvious that now was their turn to ask questions. Mehera made it clear that we were Meher Baba people from Ahmednagar, and that as Meher Baba is God He will help them and that they must always remember Him during their exams and at all times. When Goher came out of the Superintendent's office, her hands were loaded with items made by the blind boys and available for sale at the school: sheets, dusters, and candles, some of which were later used for Mehera. How blessed are these children, and how significant that their candles were among those whose bright flames served to keep a continual vigil on Mehera's bed and in Baba's Room for 4 days after she left us.

And then there was that morning of shopping: our little visit to Kashmir House, and then to Bombay Dyeing to get material for curtains and cushion covers and Baba's gaadi cover. With her subtle sense of colour harmony, Mehera was always very particular about matching shades, and on this occasion once again we marvelled at her perfect choice. I relate these different facets of our holiday so you can see how normal was the range of Mehera's activities a few weeks before the serious condition of her health became evident.

Watching video films amused and interested Mehera a lot. Whenever we wished to awaken her from an extended nap, I would just turn on the TV and the start up noise which was like a steam engine would make Mehera sit up and walk over to watch what was coming on! Of course the most delightful video we saw was the "Frigolous Three" — our dear old-time companions Margaret, Kitty and Delia! And we couldn't get over the minor miracle of phone calls from Myrtle Beach to Poona Club! Kitty and Margaret talking from Myrtle Beach with Mehera, Meheru, Goher, and myself in our bedroom in Poona Club! Mehera spoke clearly on both calls, and happily Margaret's call was recorded — what turned out to be the last recording of Mehera's voice. Once again, Baba's timing was

perfect — Margaret and Kitty, both so dear to Mehera, were able to converse with her not long before she passed away.

Mehera always looked forward to the evening “ice cream” visits from Gulnar and Mehernaz, sometimes accompanied by Eruch’s sister Manu, on the private little lawn in front of our cottage. From here Mehera would watch at a distance the stream of people dressed in a variety of fashions and colours going in and out of the nearby library, or the large bullock cart rolling by with the regular load of ice for parties held at the Club. To the end of our stay, our ice cream sessions were followed by a regular little walk up and down the lawn before Arti. This was remembered by us with deep nostalgia on our return to Meherazad when we watched Mehera’s physical movements becoming speedily restricted day by day — from walking by herself to being supported by others more and more, from being helped down the steps to being practically lifted down, to using Beloved Baba’s little wheelchair for moving about indoors and for outdoors using the big one which we wheeled right into the TV room for a video session. She was ever happily ready to attend these film shows at any time — but by now we were not sure how much she took in.

Several times over the years I’ve heard Mehera relate how she told Baba she was getting forgetful, that she couldn’t remember where she had put this or that, or the things she had to do. Baba said to her, “Don’t worry. Remembering Me is what matters. It doesn’t matter what else you forget, as long as you remember Me.”

Remembering Baba was of course so natural for Mehera. But during this sickness, which we were first made aware of by the sudden and unnatural degree of her forgetfulness when she couldn’t remember our names and failed to name simple objects most familiar to her, her remembrance of Him was strong and clear as a Church bell, surfacing from her heart to reach all who were with her. Not only was her Beloved’s Name on her lips at every excuse, but she remembered every word of the Parvardigar Prayer and Bujave Nar Arti which we sang together in Baba’s Room for as long as she was able to be moved about in her little wheelchair*.

The mention of Baba’s Name or the sight of His pictures were

*Elizabeth had also used this Baba-chair when she was last at Meherazad, always referring to it as her throne.

reminders of Baba stories she had told others, and which were now being fed back to her by the ones tending to her. It was as food for her heart, which in turn refreshed and nourished her body as could be seen by the glowing expression of interest and pleasure on her face. Nothing else won such response from her. Every day Mehera would look through the book of Baba's beautiful photos: LOVE PERSONIFIED, kissing each picture, and caressing it with her gentle hand. She was only His and only for Him, to the end.

Before her health took the serious and dramatic turn which confined her to bed totally, there was a happy spell of quiet days with Mehera, when her intimate companionship was enjoyed by the dear group of Residents from Meherabad and Meher Nazar tending to her every need, while she sat for long periods in her usual armchair on the verandah. Her sense of humour and flashes of teasing often caught her companions off guard and dissolved them into laughter, while her gentle sweetness seemed to radiate from every pore of her being.

As therapy for her aphasia, speech lessons were instituted, and Mehera's one-pointed attention in trying to relearn simple words was very touching. As Heather describes it: "She would concentrate so fixedly on trying to say 'cup' and then come out with 'How extraordinary! I just can't get it!' In each attempt invariably the word she would get first would be 'Baba!' With tenacity, Mehera did manage to relearn a few simple words, which pleased her very much and she would look forward to her lessons. Many Baba lovers entertained Mehera at this time with their singing on tape. We played tapes of her favourite Baba songs, and also Indian favourites like Mirabai, Begum Akhtar, and others. Simple games like 'ludo' won giggles and smiles from her; and we would play animatedly, with Mehera taking her turn and watching the others' progress with much interest. In the evening, the trip across the garden to the TV room for TV sessions was a favourite event of the day — most favourite being the Arti sung together on the porch. Which is why at feeding time when we wished to arouse her from deep sleep we would resort to calling out "time for arti" — she always responded to it!

Later the picture kept changing quickly as though Baba was snapping His fingers to say "Hurry, hurry". A couple of instances will give you an idea of these startling changes in Mehera's

condition:

Dr. Goher, sick with anxiety and responsibility, was so relieved by Dr. Arvind Chopra's daily directions by phone and his personal visits from Poona. The morning of 16th May, Tuesday, was a surprisingly good one when Arvind arrived and Mehera greeted him with a charming smile and said, "I am happy to see you." That same evening, Mehera closed her eyes to all external objects for all time and did not open them again till the final moment when her Lord and Beloved came to receive her.

Two days later, on Thursday 18th morning, when our Poona team drove over, Mehera clearly responded to Gulnar's greeting with a sweet smile and slight raising of eyebrows, which showed us she was aware of what was going on around her. Whereas the same evening, when the welcome medical team from Bombay and Ahmednagar arrived to help care for Mehera — doctors and nurses who had been with Baba as children and closely associated with Him from the early years — Mehera was entering a light coma.

We strove to hold her back from slipping into a deep coma. I kept talking to her, pleading that she see us — "Mehera, open your eyes, Mehera darling please, open your eyes, see I am holding this beautiful picture of Baba before you." I would speak in Gujarati, and in Irani (Dari) which her much loved grandmother used to speak. But although a couple of times Mehera acknowledged my plea with the slightest movement of lips and brow, she did not open her eyes. As she would not or could not open them of her own volition, I tried to help her by lifting an eyelid, raising it with my little finger. Doing it to both the lids revealed eyes that were seeing but not looking at anything. When I let go of her delicate eyelids, they came down clumsily and haltingly over eyes now reserved for seeing only her Beloved, eyes which had thirsted too long for a sight of Him.

The night of Friday 19th gave some very anxious moments to the ones keeping vigil with her, but this fleeting experience did not in any way prepare us for what was to happen the following morning.

It began as a morning of "normal" activities. We heard no ringing of bells, felt no brushing of angel wings, to announce her dawning reunion with her Beloved that morning; but simply for a moment "Welcome to My World" bubbled over in my heart as I watched Mehera being given an alcohol rub and mild massage. Could I but see, He was surely standing beside her with open arms.

But we were not aware of the Moment's arrival until it was upon us. We were around Mehera, together singing the Beloved's Name as we often did. I was sitting by her side holding her hand, with the others of the women mandali close by. Through the waves of His Name-Song I could see the anguished face of Dr. Goher, and heard Dr. Meher Desai softly declare, "Her pulse is rapid and blood pressure is dropping." The Signal was clear — I pressed to Mehera's forehead her favourite picture of Baba, as well as His Sandals, while with one voice we all kept loudly singing Meher Baba, Meher Baba. And with one heart we decided that when the Moment arrived we would resonantly call out seven times "AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI."

With the great sense of urgency now upon us, we sent for our Meherazad men mandali to come over. They streamed in and stood with folded hands, joining the old faithful servants who were quietly gathered by the door, and Dr. Arvind whom Jangu had driven over from Poona in perfect time to be by Mehera during her last moments.

We who had shared in the miracle of Baba's love through Mehera, did not anticipate any unusual revelation to happen at the last. When it happened, it was as a brilliant flash of lightning that we were totally unprepared for!

Mehera was lying on her side, and my face was near to hers at the time. Suddenly, as though the shutters she had kept locked all these days were flung open, Mehera opened her eyes in a swift strong movement, completely and totally open, the circles of the irises fully in view. It was as if the heavens had opened to welcome Him. Her bright shining eyes had an unfathomable look in them, with a drop of moisture on the outer corners of both eyes, teardrops of joy. Each of us witnessing this powerful moment knew she was gazing on the beauty and glory of her Lord and Beloved.

Then she let the lids down with an amazing ease, took in a sharp breath, and nodded her head in two graceful movements like a queen making a regal adieu to the assembly.

Mehera had gone to Baba.

It was 9:45 in the morning of 20th May 1989.

"AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI" called out loudly seven times by us all, was a song to Mehera's Joy of Reunion, and a testimony to our tears of parting. In that fleeting moment, all her pain and stress, all her waiting and yearning, was wiped away by Him. From then

on, a gently happy smile adorned her face and joy streamed out from her slightly parted eyelids. This expression of her happiness was witnessed by all 'til our very last glimpse of her.

In the bedroom's privacy, Goher and I washed Mehera's body with rose water and dressed her in a dusky pink skirt and flowered blouse, framing her face with a soft mauve pink chiffon scarf. Mehera's smile reflected her ecstasy. Her face and hands took on the eternal youth of the Madonna as depicted in the holy images. She looked so young and sweet that I was reminded of the Mehera I knew at Nasik in 1932 —the year which began Mehera-Mani's continual companionship in a link unbroken for 57 years.

In Heather's words:

"Throughout the day, Mehera's body lay on her bed in her room, as Baba lovers from Ahmednagar, Poona, and nearby places came to pay their last homage. A most beautiful smile was on Mehera's face, an air of purity and deep serenity around her. The women mandali, whose grief can scarcely be imagined, received each one graciously — handling the situation with courage as they had when Baba passed away.

"It was Mehera's very strongly expressed wish that she not be photographed after she passed away. She wanted to be remembered as she was in life. I doubt if even a camera could have captured the radiance of her face in her last repose, the sublime peace and triumph of a supremely loved being!

"Ice coolers and fans kept the room cool throughout the day, despite the intense summer heat outside. Near sundown Mehera's body was transferred onto a stretcher and carried by a group of women to Baba's bedroom for a final darshan. Then she was carried across her garden to Mandali Hall, arriving there just at sundown, as the full moon was rising over the trees and bushes and flowers of her beloved Meherazad."

Mehera's stretcher was placed before Beloved Baba's Chair, and there her body rested till morning, surrounded by large blocks of ice which gave an ascetic touch, a feeling of the Himalayas reflecting her supreme purity.

A Baba lover recollects, "A number of Baba people had gathered and were sitting quietly around Mehera. My heart skipped a beat because to me she looked alive and present; not like someone sleep-

ing, but like someone resting fully awake with their eyes closed. Mani, Meheru, Goher, Arnavaz, Katie, were sitting by her side. Although in deep grief, they were generous to share with others an account of Mehera's last weeks. It was all so intimate, yet so informal, often there were tears but also there was laughter. Mehera seemed to be participating in all that happened. The vigil lasted all night, full and deep, like Amartithi at night. It will ever remain vivid in my memory."

The all-night vigil in Mandali Hall was like a darshan, filled with Baba's Presence, vibrating with His beloved Name sung together in varied tunes, as well as other songs loved by Mehera. And there were the still silences, when the sound of the whirring fans seemed to say: this is goodbye, goodbye, goodbye. But above all, it was a reminder of words given by God, Meher Baba: "It is all a going forward, forward, always a going forward."

I had taken some rose petals from the Beloved's Body as He lay in the crypt of His Samadhi at Meherabad in 1969. I had taken them for Mehera, and kept them with me all these years for just this moment in the galaxy of time. At one point during the vigil in Mandali Hall, I stepped forward and gently placed the rose petals near to Mehera's heart.

One of the close ones gazing at Mehera's face at the time, was overwhelmed with amazement to see it flush with happiness at the touch of these precious petals from her Beloved.

As 21st May dawned, so did our awareness that the time had come to prepare for Mehera's final journey to Meherabad. The men mandali were seeing to the many practical details involved in arranging for the funeral, and we continued to see to our various duties by Beloved Baba's help and grace. But when I try to review the consecutive events of that Morning, the screen of my memory is hazy. I'm therefore very thankful for the following report from Heather:

"It was 6:00 a.m. by the clock in Mandali Hall. The atmosphere was very solemn, the women mandali approaching Mehera one by one for a final caress, covering her hands and feet with kisses, and apparently asking her to convey their private messages to Baba. Mehera was suddenly Queen, and the occasion was of universal significance. Artis were sung to Baba. Mehera's body was transferred to her coffin, and covered with a lovely pink sari. Mani and Goher garlanded her with a garland of roses from Meherazad's rose

garden — which had been specially created for Mehera's pleasure of offering them to her Beloved at Prayer time in His Room each morning and evening.

“At 6:45 a.m. our caravan of 7 cars left Meherazad for Meherabad Hill. On the Hill were gathered about 100 lovers from distant places who were able to make it in time. The coffin was placed on the Sabha Mandap stage across from Baba's Samadhi, for the convenience of Baba lovers awaiting their turn to bow to Mehera. Wonderment showed on their faces as they gazed at Mehera. Still smiling with her lips and eyes, Mehera looked unbelievably beautiful, and we heard someone remark, ‘No artist or sculptor could ever capture such beauty.’

“From there Mehera was carried into the Beloved's Tomb and placed at the Feet of her Lord, to the exact place where she has bowed down a thousand times, while we recited Prayers and Arti. All around Mehera's form, Mani scattered some of the earth that had covered Beloved Baba's body in 1969, and was saved by her for the unknown day and moment which had now arrived.

“After this last obeisance, Mehera's coffin was carried outside to the colorful mandap (tent) shading the pit that was so lovingly dug and prepared to receive its most precious burden. Mehera's coffin, now a mound of fresh fragrant flowers from loved ones present and absent, was lowered in the grave next to the Beloved's Samadhi as specified by Him long ago, at His righthand as she had the privilege to be all her life. Shouts of AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI went out in waves and circled Meherabad Hill in a garland of obeisance from hearts round the world.

“The women mandali came forward to glimpse the coffin for the last time — no words can describe their love and grief. Some more of the earth that had been around Baba's dear body in 1969 was gently tossed upon it. It was the first earth to cover Mehera's coffin. Mani also found herself distributing pinches of it into eager hands so that most of them shared in showering this precious earth on her coffin in the grave, along with a shower of flowers in tribute to Mehera's great love for her Beloved, which God lovers will strive for and minstrels will sing of for timeless centuries.

“Not long afterward the men, women, and children were filling bucketfuls of earth from nearby mounds to pour into the grave. As the iron pans went from hand to hand, Baba's Twin nephews and

His 'Irani gang' from Poona and Bombay led the crowd in lively ghazals and songs. Everyone began singing as the many hearts and hands joined together in joyful, deepest remembrance of Baba's most loved Mehera. When the grave was finally filled and smoothed over with soft earth, the women mandali placed a sparkling fresh net of flowers over it. When their AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI rose to the skies, someone drew our attention to the time — 9:45 a.m. — exactly 24 hours to the minute from the time Mehera went to her Beloved the day before, on 20th May."

20th May 1989. A date made immortal in the lives of Baba lovers, to receive a permanent place in their hearts and calendars, and to be observed by Baba families, groups, and countries everywhere. On Indian calendars, 20th May was a red-letter day declaring a national holiday in honour of Buddha Purnima*, the day of Lord Buddha's birth, also said to be the day of His enlightenment and of His passing away. 20th May also happens to be the date of our Sister-companion Naja going to Baba seven years ago.

From past experience we find ourselves expecting special Baba-events to be marked by a shower of rain, or at least a sprinkle. There was no such outpouring from the skies on the momentous occasion of Mehera's funeral. The showers were of silent tears from the hearts of His World family, tears of love raining on us in a torrent of cables expressing joy for Mehera, sorrow for us. Many wished to rush over and be by our side at this time, but refrained at our request, respecting our need to be by ourselves for a while – till Meherazad welcomes His lovers from 1st July.

Our beginning this new phase of life without Mehera's physical companionship requires much adjustment and time, but we bow to His Will and we know that He will continue to conduct every act of His daily drama in our lives and to prompt us from behind the stage whenever we fumble. Truly, as He has repeatedly assured us, HE does His own work!

We also feel deeply for all Baba lovers who will miss seeing her, and the ones who did not see Baba in His physical form but received so much of Him through Mehera's companionship and love. One of them expresses it so well in a little picture card depicting Spring:

"Jai Baba! Our hearts are with you all during this time which

*"Purnima" means full moon.

now marks an end to a very precious period for those of us who never met Baba physically. We feel so grateful to Baba to have met His beloved Mehera and witness through her example how He ought to be loved. Thank-you Baba!"

In her message for you all, of last July, Mehera says:

"When each of you tries 100 percent to do as Baba wants He is surely near you helping you. To do so is often not easy, but with Baba's help it is not impossible. Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's advent on earth as man is to help us on our spiritual journey. Know that He does help and guide us on the path to the Goal, which is to Himself. And by offering us His Daaman to hold, Beloved Baba is making the journey so much easier for us. So hold fast to Meher's Daaman with both hands and love Him more and more."

And here's what Mehera says to her Beloved. During the 20 long years of absence from Him, Mehera sometimes expressed her love and longing for Him in lines scribbled on odd scraps of paper. They are variations of the same sweet refrain from her heart:

"O Baba my darling come to me – Come back to me sweet love. O how I miss you – When will I see you and hold you. I love you and I know you love me. My heart's love is all for you. I will be true to your love for me. Come, we'll be together for ever and ever."

The wish of a pure heart is fulfilled.

And just as the song of the Indian koyal (bird) heard on a summer's day heralds the coming of rain, Mehera's eternal reunion with her Beloved was proclaimed by several dreams a few days previously. These dreams were dreamt by Baba-folk in different parts of the world, but were fashioned from the same material, depicting the JOY of Mehera's sublime reunion with her Divine Beloved: Mehera radiant in a bridal gown, Mehera beside a flower-bedecked bridal car, Mehera seated among soft swirls of pink lace in some ethereal place, a voice announcing it is Mehera's wedding day, a big gathering of people celebrating the happy event, and so on.

We can imagine the celestial Celebration, the music and singing and dancing, unseen and unheard by us, but amazingly revealed by Hafiz, Baba's most favourite Persian poet. When two Baba lovers in the States had opened at random the book of Hafiz' ghazals on 13th May for a message about Mehera, they both independently arrived at

the same answer. The ghazal they opened to is entitled "Dance of Life", and signifies an outburst of Mehera's ecstasy, as would be expressed by clashes of joyous cymbals, singing of angels' choirs, and rapturous dancing in Nataraja's Court:

"DANCE OF LIFE"

"Waiting. Straining to hear – your voice
that I may rise
I am heaven's dove that from the earthly cage will rise.
If I am bid but to be your slave
I gladly shall foreswear
Dominion over worldly things as now I rise.
Let the rain fall from your cloud of grace,
oh Lord;
Before, to dust I would be changed – I rise.
Bring a minstrel to my grave and a bottle of good wine.
Your fragrant presence
Shall lift me dancing full of joy as I rise.
Hold high your lordly stature that I may see
You draw me nigh.
With clapping hands I leave this life, and I rise.
Though I am old yet in a night –
from your embrace
In Dawn's new light a youth will rise.
On the day that I die, a glimpse of you may I behold
and, as Hafiz,
From Life's desire leap into eternity, and I will rise!"*

AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI!

AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI!

AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maui", with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

*"Dance of Life," from *Hafez, Dance of Life*. © 1987 by Mage Publishers, Inc.

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