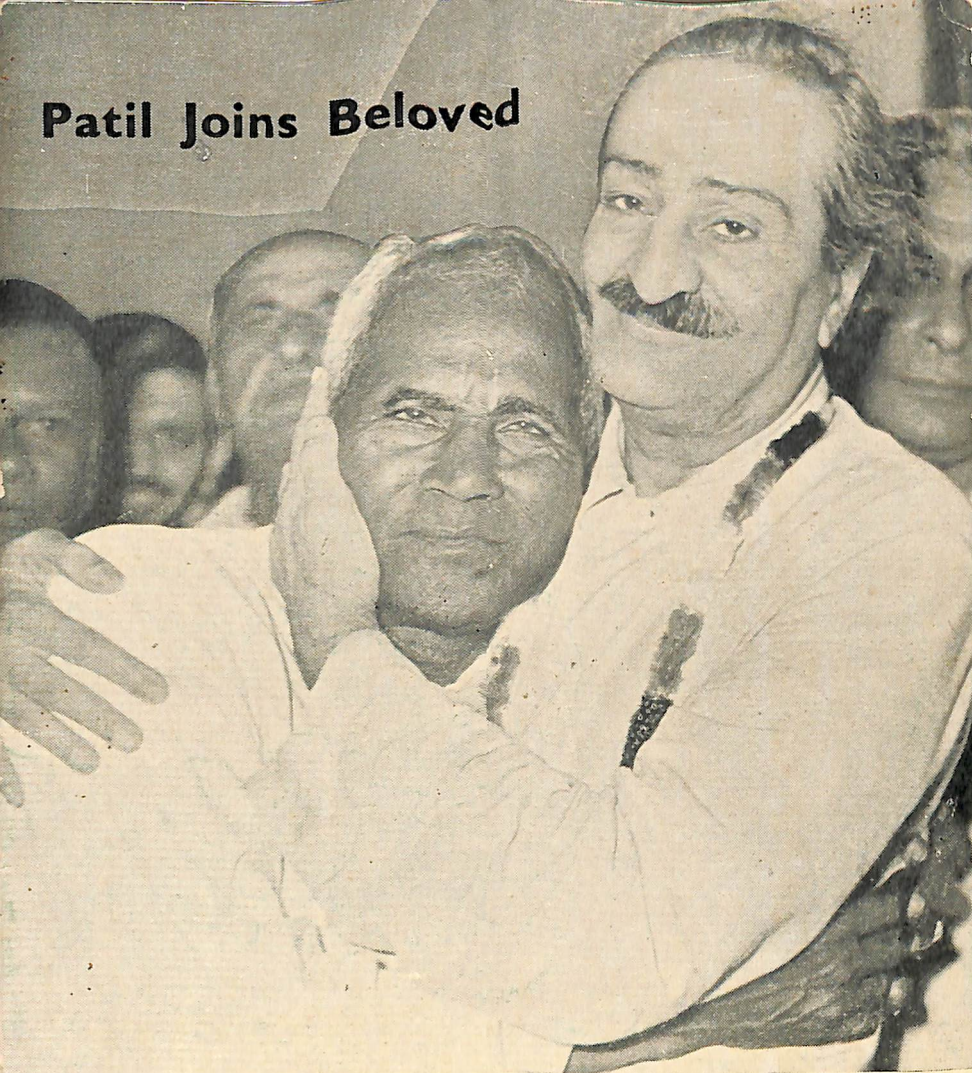


# Patil Joins Beloved



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# PATIL JOINS BELOVED

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AVATAR MEHER BABA

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5 June 1973



It is high time that men have a fresh vision that all life is one in God, who alone is real and all that matters. God is worth living for, and He is worth dying for; all else is a vain and empty pursuit of illusory value.

—Meher Baba

In loving memory of Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil affectionately called Kaka\*, one of the earliest disciples of Avatar Meher Baba and the Chairman of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre.

(1889-1973)

*Prepared by :* **K. K. RAMAKRISHNAN**

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\* a respectable term of address for a very closely related elderly person.



## PREFACE

Death is a severance of the connection between consciousness and the physical body. For a true aspirant after Truth, death is a stepping stone to a higher life.

Death is like throwing away clothes which have become useless through wear and tear. Just as a traveller may stop at different places, and at each halt may change clothes according to his needs, so the individual goes on changing his bodies according to the needs of his *sanskaras*.

Death may also be compared to sleep. When a man goes to sleep, he wakes up in the same physical body. When he drops his physical body at death, he wakes up in another physical body.

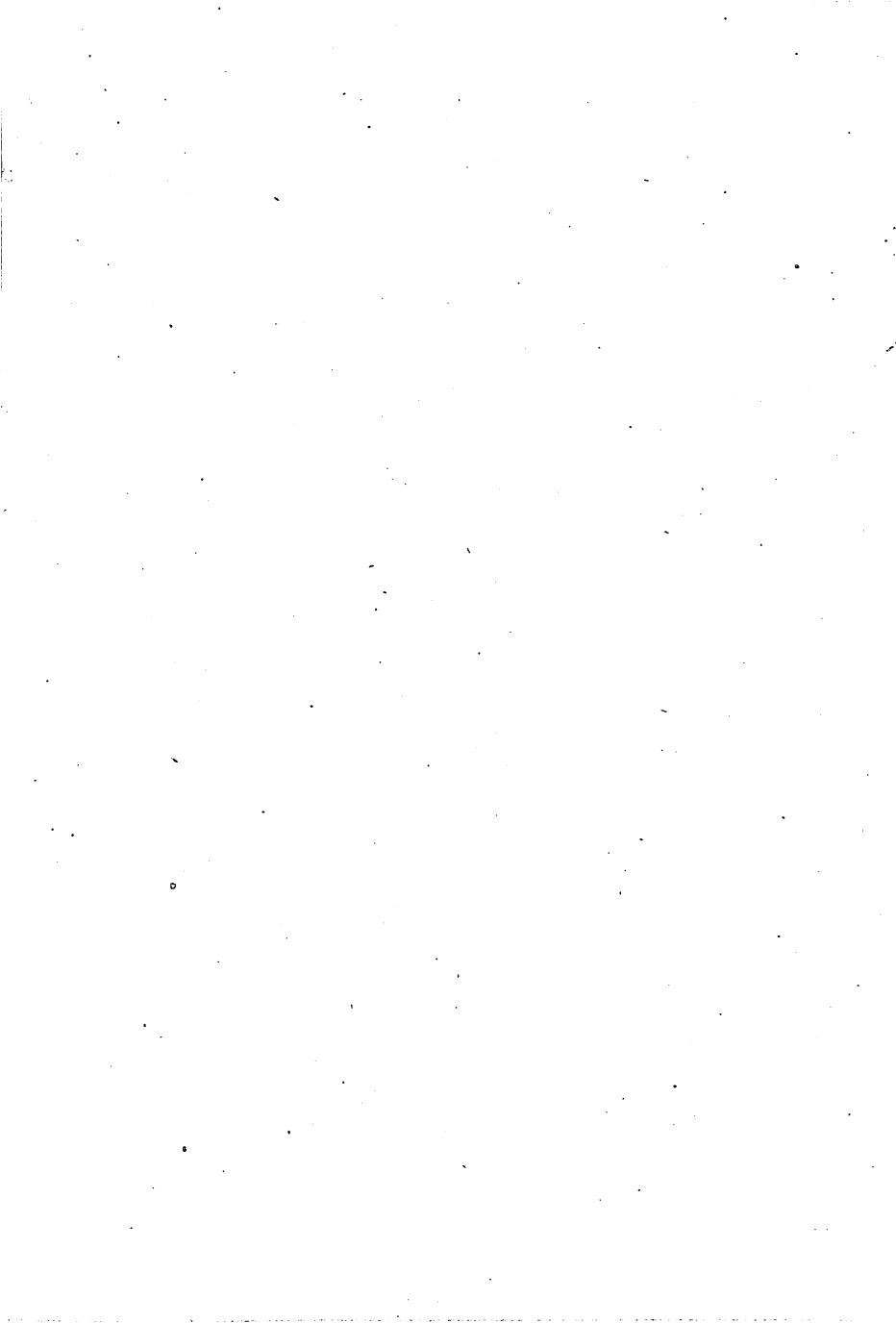
The true death of the individual occurs at that moment when he transcends his limited individuality or separative consciousness by being taken up in the truth-consciousness of the unlimited and undivided being of God. The true death of the individual consists in the complete disappearance of the limiting ego-mind that has created the *sanskritic* veil of ignorance. True death is a far more difficult process than physical death, but when it occurs through the grace of the master it takes no longer than the twinkling of an eye.

This dissolution of the ego-mind and the freeing of the soul from the illusion of the separative limited individuality are known as liberation.

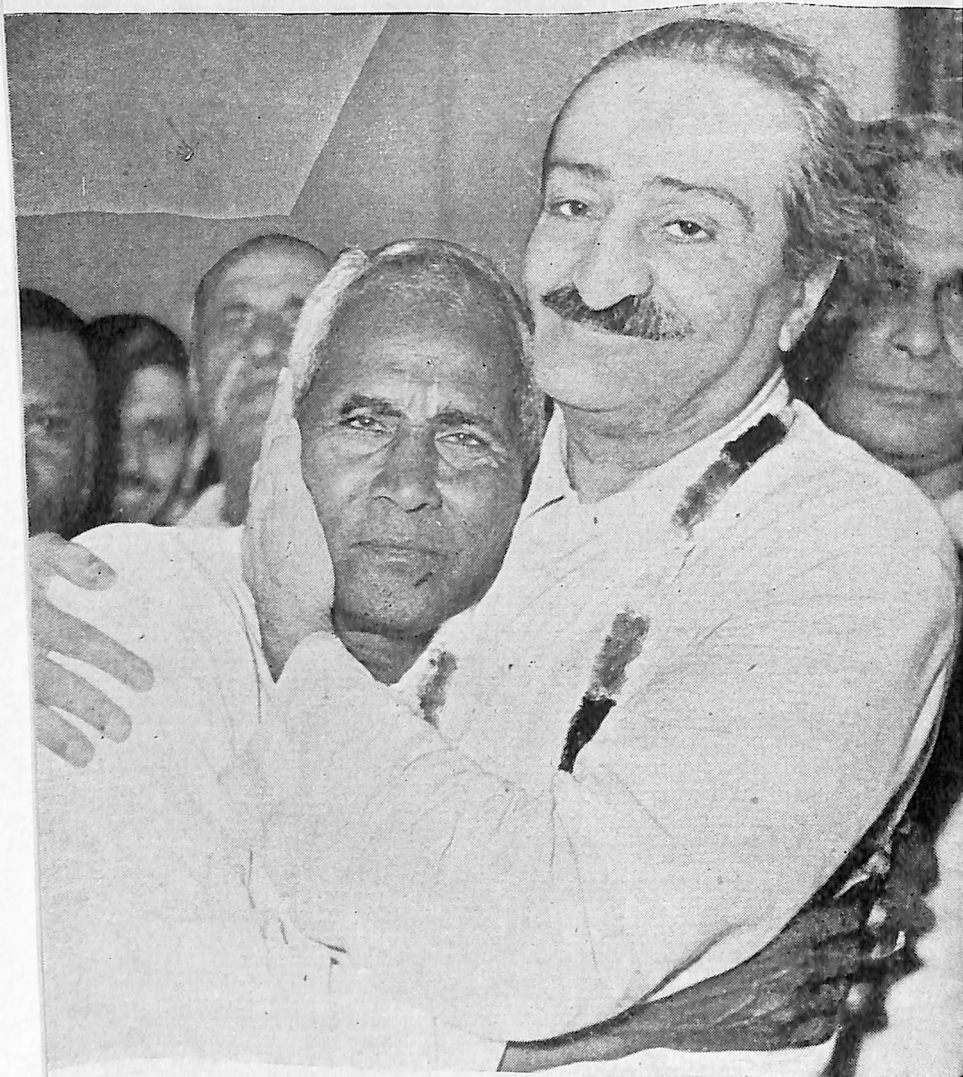
The thought or wish the dying individual holds at the moment of death has special importance in determining his future destiny. If the last thought is of God or the master, the individual achieves liberation.

I want you to make me your constant companion. Think of me more than you think of your own self. The more you think of me, the more you will realize my love for you, I am the ANCIENT ONE Who is your ETERNAL BELOVED, Who loves you more than you can ever love yourself.

**Meher Baba**







**Patil Joins Beloved**

## **PATIL PASSES AWAY**

Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil, the oldest man associated with the life and work of Avatar Meher Baba in Poona passed away at about 7 A. M. on Tuesday, the 5 June 1973. He passed away in prayer. He was eighty-our.

From the information received from the family members, it seems that Shri Patil (affectionately called Kaka) got up at 5 A. M. Had his early morning ablutions. Collected milk as usual from the booth nearby. Then he picked up the mala (rosary) for his daily morning japa (repetition of God's name). It is obvious the last moment came when he was in the very act of absorbing himself in the remembrance of God. Blessed indeed is the soul that passes away with God's name.

According to the traditional religious beliefs in India a man who remembers God at the time of death goes to God or becomes one with God.

When Shri R. K. Gadekar was ailing in Poona in the year 1958 Beloved Baba paid a visit to his house. It was Mahasivaratri day. Baba embraced Gadekar and said, 'Now remember me constantly.' And

Gadekar obeyed. He repeated 'Baba, Baba, Baba' and passed away repeating that Blessed Name. In a cable addressed to his son Digamber Gadekar who was then studying in U. S. A. Beloved Baba said :

Be happy that your father has come to me the  
Universal Father stop..... Baba.

On being asked to comment on what he meant by  
"to come to me," Baba once explained :

"To come to me" means experiencing me as I am. No more bondage of births and deaths. But it does not mean the state of a Perfect Master, of Perfection. That is only to be attained in the gross body. So if you are not blessed with this state of perfection, at least you can have liberation. If you just take my name at the moment of dropping your body, you will come to me. Yes, anyone. It's not easy to take my name at the very moment of leaving the body. Then you individually experience infinite bliss. After liberation you continue to experience infinite bliss eternally. Why? Because it belongs to you eternally. You experience what belonged to you eternally. Even spiritual ecstasy cannot be compared with Divine Bliss. Remember this !"

The lesson to be learnt by those of us who live is that it is the kind of thought that dominates in the



mind of a man at the time of death that determines the form of life one is going to assume in his next incarnation. As you sow so you reap. Psychologically, it is, 'as you think so you become.' Hence the importance of remembering God constantly and continually.

## PATIL'S LIFE AS SEEN BY ME

Patil was born on 12 January 1889. He was obviously brought up in an atmosphere of ancient Hindu religious traditions and disciplines in India—a heritage of most of the Maharashtrian families. He was married at the age of eleven, he told me once. He had a daughter by that marriage, who when she came of age was married to one Shri. Tarde and in course of time became a mother. Patil thus became a grand-father in his youth. But soon the grand-child, his only daughter and his wife passed away one by one leaving him free from the bondage of family life, in order probably to pursue a life divinely ordained for him in the avataric time of our age. Patil remained unmarried all his life in obedience to the advice of his master, Upasani Maharaj. His was, one may call, an example of an ideal celibate life reminding one of Bhishma of Mahabharata, the great epic of India.

He was one of the close disciples of Upasani Maharaj. One of those whom Maharaj passed on to Meher Baba as he handed over the charge of the world to the Avatar. Once Patil Kaka told me : On a certain occasion Upasani Maharaj had asked him whether he had been to Shiridi, the seat of the great Master

Sai Baba. Patil said : 'No.' Then Maharaj asked him to go to Shiridi and to take darshan of Sai Baba, who was then alive. On his return from Shiridi, Maharaj told him not to go there again. Similarly after advising him to follow Meherwanji (as Maharaj lovingly called Meher Baba) one day Maharaj told Patil not to come to him (Maharaj), but stick on to Meherwanji. Thus Patil became one of the earliest disciples of Meher Baba and remained so till the end.

He was intimately close to Upasani Maharaj. It seems to me Patil came in contact with Upasani Maharaj soon after Maharaj had chosen the cremation ground at Sakori as the field of his creative activities for the spiritual emancipation of mankind. The year was 1916. It appears Upasani Maharaj used to visit Patil's house whenever he visited Poona in those days. The following incident will illustrate as to how Patil Family was devoted to the Maharaj and as to how Patil was a recipient of Maharaj's grace—not the grace by which one imagines fulfilment of one's desires, but the grace by which one is freed from attachment to worldly life. In the language of Maharaj grace of a Perfect Master makes man naked as God Himself is.

Once Patil Kaka's wife was ailing and medical treatment had no effect on her. Someone reported that fact to Upasani Maharaj, who was a reputed Ayurvedic doctor, before he became a Perfect Master—doctor of



all earthly ailments. Maharaj called Patil and enquired about his family and advised Patil to bring his family to Sakori. Accordingly Patil's wife, daughter and grand-child were taken to Sakori, where they stayed for many weeks, while Patil lived in Poona looking after his domestic affairs. Then a message came from Maharaj asking Patil to go to Sakori and to bring his family home to Poona as they were then perfectly well. But at the time of departure, Maharaj cautioned Patil to consider every happening to be expression of God's will and be cheerful in all conditions of life. On their way back, when they reached Dhond Railway station, his grand-child apparently hale and hearty, died. Remembering the words of the master, they did not exhibit any sorrow but silently carried the dead child back home and attended to its funeral. As days went on his daughter passed away and his wife followed her leaving Patil to follow Maharaj. Here is an illustration of a Perfect Master's grace working in the life of an aspirant making his heart free to house God.

It is said Meher Baba in the early days of his avataric work used to sweep the floor of a little clinic belonging to one of his disciples, who was also his childhood friend. In six months time he had swept away the disciple's medical practice and made him free to follow the God-Man.

Patil was working in the Judicial department as

a clerk. But when he had a transfer order to leave Poona he resigned. He seemed to have devoted his youthful days in social service, while in the personal privacy of his life he followed his spiritual inclinations. Doke Talim—a Gymnasium, a Library and Reading Room at Nana Peth, besides a number of co-operative business and banking enterprises he began in those days are living testimonies to his selfless service to society.

Patil was one of the rare persons in the Meher Baba fold who had met all the five Perfect Masters of the time and paid homage to them during their life time.

Patil was one of the earliest associates of the Avatar in Poona—before his Avatarhood was announced—before Meherwan became Meher Baba, the Merciful Father of all. When and where did Patil meet Meher Baba ? It was in the year 1916. Place Kasba Peth, where Patil family was then residing. From the biographical records, it is evident that Meherwan came to Kasba Peth to assist his father in his toddy shop. Later on he opened a toddy shop of his own in partnership with his friend Behramji. Meherwan worked in this shop from six in the morning until 12 o'clock at night, washing the bottles, sweeping the floor, and serving customers. During this time Meherwan hired a small room near the shop, and hung the walls with pictures of saints and prophets, including Babajan and Upasani Maharaj. Ceremonies were performed every evening and twice a week between four and five o'clock in the

morning. It is probably at this phase of Avatar's life that Patil came in contact with Meher Baba (then known as Meherwan Seth). Soon they became friends.

I wonder if Patil had any idea of the state in which Meherwan Seth then was ! Meherwan was then the human vehicle in which God's Avatar was brought down by the five Perfect Masters of our time, and which they individually and conjointly were preparing for God's conscious functioning on the earth. Hazrat Babajan through that kiss she had implanted on Meherwan's forehead between the eye-brows infused God's infinite bliss into his being. Sai Baba through the very utterance of the word 'Parvardigar' at the sight of Meherwan imparted infinite power of God. And Upasani Maharaj through the stone he flung at Meherwan as he approached him for the first time gave him infinite knowledge of God and Meherwan at once realized that he was the 'Ancient One.' Upasani Maharaj was then engaged in the important role of re-integrating the divine consciousness of Meherwan with the gross consciousness of this earth on which he was to function as the Avatar of the age. This re-integration process let Meherwan—the instrumental human personality descending divinity on the gross plane—to do the most lowly work. Hence the toddy shop and dirt. It was a clear expression of God's indivisible oneness with everything and everyone in existence. It is an experience every soul has to undergo in its



journey towards Godhood, the birth-right of every man and woman.

Sai Baba of Shiridi used to say : 'I am Allah. I am Krishna. All Universe is in me.' With the same breath he used to say, 'I am a worm in your excreta.'

Sri Ramakrishna, the great master of Vivekananda, the exponent of pure Vedantism in our age, had a similar experience. Once he had a vision in which various dishes containing delicious food were placed before him and his tongue was so to say projecting to taste each dish. One of the dishes contained human excreta, which tasted as delicious as the contents of other dishes.

Here is another anecdote—an experience by Upasani Maharaj. This happened during those four years period of spiritual apprenticeship of utter annihilation of duality in one's self, he had undergone in obedience to the order of his master, Sai Baba, living in the Khandoba temple at Shiridi, naked and fasting all the four years.

One day Upasani Maharaj was sitting under a tree near a well not far from the Khandoba temple. He saw a poor man, who was in an advanced stage of leprosy coming towards the well riding a horse with a bundle of dirty clothes. Dismounting the horse with the burden he carried, he began washing the dirty

clothes one by one stained with the blood from his diseased body; the dirty water from his washing flowing into a ditch nearby. Maharaj was watching him with compassion. At that time a middle aged woman appeared on the scene. She asked Maharaj with signs to drink that dirty water from the ditch in which the leper had washed his clothes and which was leprosy itself. Without any hesitation Maharaj drank from that water. She then directed him again by signs to bathe in that water. Maharaj bathed himself in that water as if he was bathing in the sacred water of the Ganges. Then the woman directed him to pay obeisance to the leper. Maharaj immediately prostrated himself before the leper, who in turn prostrated himself before Maharaj. At that time the horse began to rush at Maharaj fiercely. The woman cautioned Maharaj again by signs to be calm and not to resist the animal. When Maharaj turned to see what direction came next from the woman, she was not there. The leper and the horse too disappeared. Pondering deeply over the event Maharaj slowly walked back to the temple.

The above experience illustrates the kind of spiritual preparedness expected of an aspirant after Truth, before he is considered worthy of receiving the grace from a Perfect Master. It is believed in India that the Master puts one's disciple to such severe tests to ascertain whether the mind of the disciple is free from all sense of duality and craving for sense pleasures.

God is all-pervading means that God exists everywhere. There is no place where He is not. In beautiful and in ugly places. He is in the most sacred place and the most unholy place. God is in everything means that God is in good things as well as in things considered bad. God is in every one means that God is in good people as He is in the so-called bad people; in saints and in the so-called sinners. And the experience of one who has realized God is that of being one with everything and everyone—it is not merely an intellectual idea or idle imagination, but an actual living experience. Meher Baba had demonstrated this aspect of divine experience through his avataric manifestation on this earth in our time.

One day in 1920, we read in his life story, that Meherwan shut himself up in an attic belonging to Behramji in the locality of Kamatipura. He had with him a bucket of refuse which he got from a sweeper of the public roads. He remained in the attic for thirty-six hours. When he came out he was smeared with dirt from head to foot, and thoroughly exhausted. Behramji took it upon himself to make him clean. Behramji Ferdoonji Irani, was the first person who was drawn to Meherwan when he regained a little consciousness after being totally unconscious of the gross world for ten months, as an outcome of Babajan's kiss on his forehead on one night in January 1914. He later became one of his most intimate disciples. Patil can thus be seen to be

the second person who was drawn to Meherwan when he was gradually becoming normal. As Meherwan appeared gradually to become normal, his mother pressed upon him the desirability of adopting a profession or engaging in some business. He was then twenty-two years of age. Meherwan tried to do as his mother wished, and on three occasions found employment, but could remain at no work for long. He worked for a time in his father's teashop. But he was not a successful shopkeeper, for he could not keep his mind on the business, and was cheated. It was then he decided to deal in toddy business in partnership with his friend Behramji. Here Patil met him for the first time.

Meherwan was going to Sakori twice in a month to visit Upasani Maharaj and Patil was his companion on such visits.

When Patil was in a communicative mood he used to tell us incidents that took place in the past. Some such incidents he narrated I wish to share with those who are inclined to investigate into the mysteries of what is called spiritual values of life :

Upasani Maharaj once performed what is called in Vedic tradition a Yagna at Benares, one of the most sacred seats of God in India. Maharaj had asked Patil to go to Benares along with Meherwan and to acquire a place for their stay and to collect articles

required for the Yagna. Maharaj told Patil that it was going to be a conference of all Masters of the spiritual realm presided over by the great master Sai Baba of Shiridi. Patil felt funny on hearing this as Sai Baba had already passed away. Maharaj said, "Do as I say, don't worry. You will not understand this." Perfect Master's words and actions are often clothed in mystery because the ways of God's functioning in the affairs of all men and creatures are hidden. When Patil enquired as to how Maharaj would come to Benares, he simply said that he would be found at a certain place. And there he was.

Patil and Meherwan travelled by train and reached Benares, hired a place as instructed by Maharaj and placed their luggage. Later on Meherwan with his long hair and kafni created a problem, for the landlord who was a magistrate of the place being an orthodox Hindu, refused to let the place to a non-Hindu, although advance had been paid and receipt obtained. Patil tactfully reminded the magistrate to honour his word and there the matter ended.

The Yagna began according to the plan, large number of Brahmin pandits reciting Vedic mantras under a big mandap with offerings thrown into the homakund, Maharaj paying dakshinas to the pandits etc. Sai Baba's photo was hung prominently in the mandap. A whisper began going round stating that



the presiding diety was a Muslim. On the last day of the Yagna a large number of Brahmins were to be fed and given dakshinas. According to the instructions of Maharaj large quantity of food was prepared. But the Brahmins who were participating all the preceding days refused to eat and accept the dakshina on that day. Maharaj thereupon, asked Patil to announce a poor feeding, and so it was done. From eleven in the morning till midnight feeding went on, still food was left over. Then Maharaj instructed that the left over food may be offered to Ganges, the sacred river. The next day the Brahmin pandits realized their mistake. They came to Maharaj seeking for his forgiveness. They were then willing to be fed and were prepared to accept the dakshina. But it was too late.

It seems Maharaj explained later on that it was a conference of all masters of the spiritual realm in which great decisions regarding the spiritual emancipation of mankind were taken and a plan of the avataric work of our time was chalked out. It is an interesting incident but beyond our understanding. However, the presence of the Avatar at such a sacred place is significant. Avatars, it seems to me, travel widely blessing the earth with their physical presence sanctifying the centres of pilgrimage thus giving a fresh impetus to the spiritual impulse inherent in mankind. For over eighteen years Jesus appears to have travelled during

his life time. There are records showing his visit to various sacred places in India, including Benares. Meher Baba, it is said, showed his disciples the tomb of Jesus in Kashmir.

Fourteen years of forest life Rama lived in the company of Sita, his wife and Lakshman, his brother, seems to have been caused for this very purpose. Similarly, there are ample evidence to believe, Krishna, Buddha, Mohamed and Zoroaster have travelled widely in their life time on this earth.

After this Yagna, Maharaj instructed Patil to go back to Poona along with Meherwan visiting on the way Jagannath Puri in Orissa on the East coast of India, which is one of the four Dhams (Houses) of God in India. Accordingly, on their way back, they visited the sacred temple Jagannath Puri. There was then a practice of entering the names of visitors in a register maintained in the temple. When the priest enquired the name of Meherwan, Patil promptly said, 'Jagannarayan', And thus it was entered. Avatar's advent was thus entered in the register in the sacred abode of God on earth through the instrumentality of Patil, his companion and brother disciple (Guru-bandhu) then.

Upasani Maharaj used to chat with his devotees. He talked on various subjects according to the nature

of persons present at a given time. He had a unique way of imparting spiritual values of life through examples from every day life. That was the mode of his teaching. Some of his comments on historical events are interesting, though they are revolting to what one may call reasoning. For example, according to Patil Upasani Maharaj in the course of his usual chat said, that the easy entry of English people into India and the domination of the country by them over a century and half was an outcome of an event that occurred during the avataric life of Rama.

After the Rama-Ravana war, Rama installed Vibhishna, the brother of Ravana as the king of Ceylon and was returning home. At a place named after him as Rameswaram, he wanted to perform the Srartha ceremony of his father and he needed the service of a Brahmin to perform the rites according to custom of the time. Besides Sita, his wife and Laxmana, his brother, there were only Vanara forces accompanying him. At that time a body of a man was found floating in the sea nearby. The body was brought and given life. This person performed the ceremony and he was an English man. This service rendered by an English man to the God-Man Rama ages ago established a link between English people and the Indian people spiritually opening a door for the wisdom and culture of the Western hemisphere to enter into the spiritual motherland of the Eastern hemisphere. Maharaj then

said the English people will soon leave India as quietly as they entered it, the divinely ordained purpose having been fulfilled.

Another interesting comment Maharaj made was on Shivaji and the freedom movement initiated by him. The aim of Shivaji's life was freedom from foreign domination—Hindvi Swaraj. But it was not merely political freedom Shivaji had sought for Maharashtra and India; it was the spiritual freedom of a people he fought for. He was in reality protecting the ancient spiritual values and ways of life of a people. He was truly a spiritual being.

Upasani Maharaj said that Shivaji once visited Sant Ramdas. According to the tradition a carpet was spread for the honoured guest. Normally it was the practice for an honoured guest to sit at the centre of the carpet spread by the host. But Shivaji out of humility in the presence of a Sadguru (Perfect Master) sat on one side of the carpet spread for him. Maharaj then remarked, 'The aim of Shivaji's life would have been fulfilled had he sat at the centre of the carpet spread by the Saint, Ramdas. Maharaj further remarked that because the aim of Shivaji's life was not fulfilled in his life time, not only he but even Ramdas and Tukaram had to wait till that aim, that is, till true freedom of India was attained, simply because Shivaji had paid obeisance to them.

Meher Baba says in his discourses explaining the

operation of Karma through successive lives, "If a person pays respect to a saint on the higher planes he creates a claim against him so that even if the saint himself is crossing the inner planes and treading the Path, he has to tarry and give such help as will bring the person paying respect to that point on the Path which he himself has reached. Paying respect to a saint thus amounts to *Karma of interference*. Though respect, as such, is a good thing to receive, in receiving it the saint may have to halt on the Path until he has helped the person who came to him and gave him respect."

Once Upasani Maharaj sent Patil to Amravati to visit a person, who was a leading personality involved in the Independence movement of the time. He was a man of ranks. He had in his house, Patil told me, about 150 clerks working for him. In obedience to the wishes of Maharaj Patil went and announced himself to the person as being sent by Upasani Maharaj. The person received Patil warmly and accommodated him comfortably. A horse cart was at his disposal and he was shown round the town. After staying there for the period stipulated by Maharaj Patil took leave of the person and returned to Sakori. Patil said, he did not know what for he was sent. Apparently there was nothing significant in this incident. It may appear Patil was sent there for a change. But what is apparent is not real.



What men call God is hidden in everything and everyone around us. Perfect Master is one with God. Hence the work of a Perfect Master is beyond the comprehension of ordinary man. Since the Perfect Masters control the affairs of all men in all aspects of their life, it can be safely assumed that Maharaj was internally influencing the freedom movement of the time. It is also interesting to note that most of the leading political leaders of the time were men of spiritual inclinations.

The true story of Upasani Maharaj's life comes to the Marathi speaking section of our society through a book of major importance for the students of spiritual values of life by Nath Madhav, a reputed Marathi writer. This book was published by Rustom K. Sarosh Irani in the year 1923 as desired by Meher Baba. Major portion of this book, particularly pertaining to the personal life of Maharaj was dictated by him to Patil. Beloved Baba also arranged for another biography of Upasani Maharaj in the Urdu language, by two of his disciples, which was published under the title of *Gari-bonka Asra (Protector of the Poor)*.

It has already been mentioned that Patil used to accompany Meherwan when he visited Maharaj twice in a month. But when Meherwan went to Sakori in July 1921, he stayed there for six months. At the end of December Meherwan was restored to full normal consciousness. Upasani Maharaj said to his disciples :

‘I have given my charge to Meherwanji. He is the holder of my key.’

When Meherwan became conscious of being a Perfect Master, he wrote from Sakori to Sadashiv Patil in Poona, desiring him to lease a small plot of land there, if possible close by the temple of Chatrasingi, a popular centre of pilgrimage in Poona. He intimated that he intended to live in that hut, no longer in the house of his parents. In the month of January 1922 he went to the hut built for him by Patil in Poona on the Ferguson College Road, and lived there and here he collected his early disciple arounds him.

In May 1922 when Meher Baba walked from Poona to Bombay, Patil was one of those forty-five who followed him. He was with Meher Baba during the Manzil-e-Meem phase and it seems most of the early period in Meherabad phase. He was one of those who followed Meher Baba in his New Life phase, one of the two or three who had the capacity to endure every aspect of that life according to the oath they had undertaken. Patil was also one of the two early disciples of Meher Baba, who had offered their properties to Baba before the New Life began on 16 October 1949, but later on backed out of that offer. Whereas Dr. Ghani, who was a schoolmate of Meherwan ( Meher Baba) had accepted Rs. 35000 from his master for the property he had offered unconditionally, in the case of Patil the matter precipitated to a severence of his relation with Baba according to his letter dated 26

April 1950 addressed to Meher Baba written in Marathi and included in the book 'The New Life of Avatar Meher Baba And His Companions' compiled by Swamy Satyaprakash Udaseen. I understand after the New Life phase Beloved Baba had to go to the residence of Patil to bring him back to him. So unbounded and immeasurable is God's love and compassion for man !

Patil was one of the non-resident mandali of Meher Baba, who used to accompany him in most of his *darshan* tours in India. On such trips Patil, I am told, used to be in charge of the food for the party accompanying Baba and it is said he used to look after each one's need in such a way that he was called 'Mai-Bab' meaning mother and father in one. Paying glowing tribute to the memory of Patil on the day of his passing away, Meherjee Karkaria, another non-resident mandali of Meher Baba and the President of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre said that Meher Baba used to call Patil as his right hand.

I think I met Patil in the year 1954 for the first time. It was in the beginning of that year I met Meher Baba physically for the first time. But it was my involvement in the activities for what is being called 'Meher Baba's work' in Poona that brought me in close contact with Patil. He was the President of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre since it was registered under the Public Trusts Act. Patil has been a silent admirer of our efforts for the Cause of Beloved Baba before and after the Centre was registered under



the Public Trusts Act, in the year 1960; the registration of the Centre as a public Institution being necessitated by the fact that the Centre acquired land and property with a view to construct a building for its activities. The board of trustees were drawn from amongst the elderly members of what one may call the 'Baba Family' of Poona, not that each one was inspired to involve oneself in what is being called Baba Work. They all loved Baba, just as an average man in the society loved and worshipped what is being called God, and each one contributed to the Centre activities according to one's capacity and inclinations.

In the year 1958-59 when some of us, the youngsters in the fold, driven by an irresistible urge to acquire a piece of land suitably situated for building a befitting Centre for Baba Work in the sacred town of his birth, Patil, though advanced in age cycled with us showing us various vacant lands in the suburbs of Poona. When finally a suitable piece of land was bought and construction started in the year 1962, the original plan prepared by the contractor was for a small hall. But when Patil saw the construction coming up he stopped the work and made the contractor to alter the plan and thus the present building came up.

Patil had contributed Rs. 5000/- towards the building fund of Poona Centre in the name of his mother-in-law. But it appeared to me that he had carefully avoided any financial involvement beyond

the above contribution inspite of the fact that the construction work of the Centre had to be stopped for a while in 1963 for want of funds, which made Beloved Baba to send Jal Bhai on a tour of Andhra Pradesh and some other parts of India to collect funds for the Centre building construction. Beloved Baba also made Meherjee Karkaria to give a loan of Rs. 30000 to the Centre to continue the work. Though efforts were made in the presence of Baba to persuade Patil to bear a part of the construction cost and though he had promised a provision for the maintenance of the Centre, he had not fulfilled this promise made both to beloved Baba and to myself, but he was regularly contributing Rs. 20/- every month to the Centre till his death. And Patil was a land-lord, considerably rich.

He had observed our activities minutely and assisted us in his own way as an elderly member of the Baba fold. While he cautioned us on economy and advised us to limit our activities to the funds available, he never interfered with what we were doing. But when I insisted on acquiring a larger plot of land which was then available at a very low cost and we were short of funds, he chided me saying, "what is the good of having big ideas when one hasn't money in one's pocket?" I was then deeply hurt by his rebuke, but appreciated his remark and I should say the wisdom of his words continue to guide me even today. One should not let oneself be carried away by one's enthusiasm even if it is for the highest cause on earth.



One has only to offer oneself, as one is and with all that one has. One who is truly dedicated to the cause of Truth is sustained by Truth. One has only to work for Baba losing oneself in that work and Baba's Love sustains the worker and the work. This is our experience in our Poona Centre particularly during the last four years after Beloved Baba's passing away from amongst us.

Patil regularly attended the weekly Monday night meetings of the Centre and other functions held periodically. He used to recite the prayers with such feeling that touched the hearts of all. He was an eye-witness to the various accounts of beloved Baba's life and work we read in books and as stated above had personally participated in various phases of the Avatar's work on earth in our time.

His personal life was a demonstration of practical living in the light of traditional spiritual values of life. For a spiritual aspirant there was lot to learn from the every day life of Patil. He can be said to have lived in the world but pretty above it, like a lotus leaf in the water. He was an early riser. Beloved Baba used to say, "Spiritual aspirants should get up very early. If you get up late, there is not much difference between you and the worldly-minded. The early hours of the morning—from three to six—are best for meditation." In his younger days he must have been a gymnast. Later in his life, his regular exercise consisted in climbing the famous Parvati Hill of Poona six to seven

times every morning. Devoted an hour in the morning for his jap and prayers. He could recite by heart the whole of Tukaram's Abhang (verses on spiritual truths). Beloved Baba used to make him recite in his presence. Patil lived a very simple life. He used to wash his own clothes till the last days. His food was as simple as his life. In his youth, he said he used to drink lots of fresh milk, because they had cows at home. Later on, because milk was scarce, he used to take butter milk in the morning as his only breakfast, lunch at eleven and a cup of milk at night. That was his days menu. When the news of Gandhiji's assassination was announced on the radio, he was taking his dinner. He pushed aside the plate that evening, and since then till his death he never had dinner. A couple of months before his death he had a mild operation of his eye for cataract. But for this never have I heard him to be sick during my association with him since 1954.

Patil met Baba for the last time on 23 December 1968. There was a wedding ceremony at the Avatar's Abode, Meherazad, while the Avatar was physically withering himself in his work in the invisible spheres for the redemption of mankind. Patil with a few others from the Poona Centre participated in the marriage celebration at the Abode of God. Before the wedding ceremony began, Baba called the Poona group to his room. Baba was visibly suffering, pale and exhausted. He told the group about the immensity of the work he was doing silently in seclusion. Baba then said that

he had to hit his thigh constantly with his hand in order to retain his link with the physical world while working in the higher planes of consciousness accelerating the universal transformation of human consciousness and giving the final spiritual push to creation. He then let each one to touch that part of his leg he was hitting on. That part of his leg had become like stone. When Patil touched Baba's body he could not contain himself and wept like a child. Meher Baba was his friend as well as his Lord. He was in his company since 1916. Remember, Patil was not an emotional type. A picture of Beloved Baba's physical health in those days is diligently drawn in the booklet "Meher Baba's Last Sahavas" by Dr. Hoshan Bharucha. Baba then asked Patil, "Is this what you have learnt after over fifty years in my company? You weep for this body! When will you weep for 'me'? I am not this body. This body-garb I have put on for my work. This body I have to discard one day. And I will have to discard it as soon as my work is over." Baba then made all laugh with some of his characteristic humorous remarks.

On 31 January 1969 Baba's Avataric work was over and he laid aside his body. Patil was with us on Meherabad hill for the seven days that followed when many of his lovers from various parts of India and abroad came to have a last look at that beautiful man-form in which God manifested on this earth as man; lived and loved us as God alone can love; worked as

God alone can work; suffered for us as God alone can suffer and finally died as man so that man may live eternally as God. On the seventh day after his Beloved's body was covered, Patil returned to Poona with us. For two years following Beloved Baba's passing away, Patil accompanied us to Meherabad on the anniversary of that day he left us, now commemorated as 'Amarthithi'. From 1972 we began commemorating the occasion at our Centre in Poona—the atmosphere of his love and presence the Avatar had created and blessed at the sacred town of his birth.

( Patil was obviously unhappy about the unfortunate affairs of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust at Ahmednagar, that came to light in the year 1971 and later on dragged the sacred name of the Avatar into a court of law, making a mockery of the Avatar's teaching by the very persons, who have been trained for a life of self-giving love and self-effacing service for the Cause of Truth, persons, who have lived the best part of their life in the physical proximity of the Avatar rendering him physical and mental service. Since everything happens, and nothing can ever happen unless it is willed by God, and whatever happens by the will of God is for the good of all, it can safely be assumed that even through these happenings Meher Baba manifested his unbounded love and compassion for all. Mind of most men being conditioned by faiths and beliefs traditionally passed on, man has a tendency to consider all those in the company of the



Avatar of God as angels and thus above human frailties. We have already the tradition of building churches and worshipping the disciples of the Messiah designating them as saints. Thus it was God's love and compassion for man that has precipitated these unfortunate events after his physical passing away from amongst us, so that man may correctly evaluate all those who were around God, when He walked on this earth as man. )

Except for visiting the Centre for the weekly Monday meetings and other periodical functions Patil practically stopped going out during the last days of his life. He had a desire to have a last look at Shiridi, Sakori, Meherazad and Meherabad, the sacred places with which he had long associations. Some of us from the Centre accompanied him on a trip to these places on 22 April 1973. As Patil was the oldest person living, I took the opportunity to verify certain points regarding Meher Baba-Upasani Maharaj meeting as recorded in the life story of Avatar Meher Baba. It is written that immediately after meeting Sai Baba at Shiridi Meherwan with Beheramji proceeded to meet Upasani Maharaj who was then living in the Khandoba temple not far from the seat of Sai Baba. After this meeting Meherwan is said to have stayed there for two days, and then returned to Poona, from where he went to Sakori twice each month to visit Upasani Maharaj and there was said to be regular correspondence between them. But from the life story of Upasani Maharaj



it is seen that after four years of fast and penance in the Khandoba temple in obedience to his master Sai Baba, he left for places like Sindhi, Nagpur, Khadagpur etc., and it was after his return from these places he had chosen Sakori for his stay.

Patil showed us the place Sai Baba used to sit during the days and the place he used to rest at night. It seems Sai Baba used to rest on a plank of wood eighteen feet above the ground at night. He told us an unfortunate incident that occurred in relation to this nocturnal rest of Sai Baba. Once a young man took it to his head to see what Sai Baba did alone there at night. So, in spite of the Master's advice to the contrary, he stayed on stealthily in the place at night. What he saw was so over-poweringly brilliant and beautiful that the young man lost his sight.

During the *Sahas* for his Western lovers held at the Meher Centre at Myrtle Beach on the South Carolina coast in 1958, Don Stevens asked Baba to explain the meaning of 'the seventh shadow.' And Baba replied : 'If you put the brilliance of the seven suns together, their glory would not equal the first shadow of my glory. Even a glimpse of this glory is enough for one to lose all consciousness. Nothing but the effulgence then remains to be seen continually.' The young man was fortunate to lose only his eye-sight !

When Meher Baba began his Avataric work in Poona, while living in a hut built for him by Patil, it was the rule that none should visit the hut in which

Meher Baba rested after 9 P.M. A certain Irani gentleman with a few friends went to see what happened in the hut from 9 o'clock, at night. But the hut disappeared and they searched in vain all night, though the gentleman was visiting the hut practically every day. Here is an example of the Avataric love. One can be free in the company of the Avatar. He is the ocean of infinite love. He is the merciful father of all. He seeks only our love. Even if we do not love him, he loves us more than we could ever love ourselves.

It has already been stated that by the grace of the Perfect Master, Patil was freed from the bondage of family life. And yet, he had a family. A family he had created and supported. When his daughter died, he got his son-in-law married again and made him live in his house. Mr. Tarde, his son-in-law had two sons and a daughter by his second marriage. He passed away a few years ago. Patil's estate has been bequeathed to these children. He was quite a rich landlord. It seems to me that Patil had his estate from his mother-in-law. Apparently, he looked after it as a trustee and passed on to the children of his son-in-law. He lived in the world, looked after the estate with a practical wisdom befitting a shrewd person of this world, but he was not enamoured by the vanity of wealth nor was he attached to it. I personally feel that it was the awareness of the fact that the property he had truly belonged to his mother-in-law, that might have prompted Patil to back out of the offer he seems

to have made to Baba regarding the property before the New Life began. For, there is a belief in India that one should offer to God only that which is one's own. It is also possible that Patil like Dr. Ghani might have taken the whole scheme of New Life lightly, because of their close association and familiarity with Baba. The New Life itself was symbolic and no one seems to have lived it according to the original oath. Patil lived a normal and natural life in this world and passed away as quietly as he lived. He was a unique person with whom I have had the privilege to have close association with in the Baba-Family of Poona.

Patil was a great soul whose greatness can be appreciated only when one is able to comprehend the glory of God-Man on earth.

It was his practice to come to the Centre every Monday half an hour earlier than the scheduled time of the meeting at 7 P. M. First he would come to the Centre Office, where I work all my spare time. "Kya Khabare hai?" (what news), "Nagarchche Kai Khabar" (Any news from Ahmednagar ?)—with these questions Patil used to greet me every Monday. He used to sit on one of the chairs in the office. If he were in a communicative mood, which was rare, he might sit for a while and talk about some past incidents in his life with Meher Baba and Upasani Maharaj. Otherwise he would simply say, "Carry on with your work" and go and sit on the lawn outside the office till the meeting began at 7 p.m. In the hall he used to sit with others



till the end of the programme. Sometimes he used to say the Parvardigar prayer in Marathi. At 8.30 P.M. after the meeting was over, he would meet me at the door. His parting word would be "Javooka?" (May I go ?)

On Monday, 4 June 1973 when he came, I was in the hall checking the stock of literature. So he came to the place and was standing smilingly watching me work, when I turned back. I told him that I was taking the annual stock balance. As usual he said, 'carry on' and went out and sat on the lawn with others who had come early. That night, I was in the office when the meeting was over. Not finding me at the usual place at the door, he came to the office calling me. Someone said, 'Kaka, Ramakrishnan is here.' He raised his hand in greeting and said, 'Mee Jato.' (I am going) and left the Centre for home. No one thought that he was bidding us all a fare well, like Tukaram, who, when he left the world, said, 'Me Jato Apule Gava' meaning 'I am going to my native place.'

At 6.30 A. M. on 5 June 1973, when I was about to leave the Centre. I found the back wheel of the scooter flat. With the help of the servant at the Centre I got the wheel changed and started, but when I went a few yards I found that the changed wheel too was getting flat. So on the way I got one of the wheels repaired. In the meantime, a message was sent to my office that I was stuck up on the way. Somehow after

the wheel was set right, instead of proceeding to the place of my work I felt like returning to the Centre. As soon as I reached the Centre office, the phone was ringing. Bhikubhai was on the line. He said that he had just then heard from a friend that Patil Kaka had passed away that morning. Immediately the news was conveyed to as many as could be contacted on phone amongst those in Baba-fold in Poona. Later on with Bhikubhai I went to the residence of Patil...301, Nana Peth. By ten o'clock large number of people had gathered at his residence and at eleven his mortal remains were carried in the traditional way to "Vaikunth" the crematorium newly constructed by the Poona Municipal Corporation. Glowing tributes were paid by some of the prominent personalities who were associated with Patil's life and activities in the city. S/Shri Meherjee Karkaria and K. N. Soman from Poona Centre also spoke on the occasion. Meherjee who had many years of personal association with Patil in the company of the Avatar feelingly admired the ideal life Patil lived, which he said was worthy of being emulated. I personally felt that a great soul had left the land of Maharashtra on June 5, 1973.

Greatness of a man is gauged by his nearness to God, the merciful Father of all in creation.

At the 59th meeting of the Governing Body of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre held at 4.30 P. M. on Sunday, the 10 June 1973, the assembled members paid silent homage to the beloved memory of Shri



Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil, the first Chairman of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, who passed away at about 7 A. M. on Tuesday, the 5 June 1973.

In accordance with the Rule No. 3 (c) of the Rules and Regulations of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, the Governing Body then selected Shri Meherjee A. Karkaria, as the next Chairman of the Centre in place of Shri Patil.

At the 60th Meeting of the Governing Body of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre held at 4.30 P. M. on Sunday, the 17 June 1973, Shri D. N. Irani was unanimously selected as the trustee of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre in place of Shri Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil.

Members of the Governing Body of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre as constituted by Avatar Meher Baba during His Annual Summer stay at Guruprasad, in Poona in the year 1960 :

Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil	....	Chairman
Meherjee Ardeshir Karkaria	....	Member
Bapusaheb Bahirji Shinde	....	Member
Kashinath Narayan Soman	....	Member
Laxman Ramchandra Kamble	....	Member
Damodar Shivnath Bhawsar	....	Member
K. K. Ramakrishnan	....	Secretary

Consequent on the death of Bapusaheb Bahirji Shinde in December 1965 and Sadashiv Govind Shelke Patil in June 1973 the members of the Governing Body



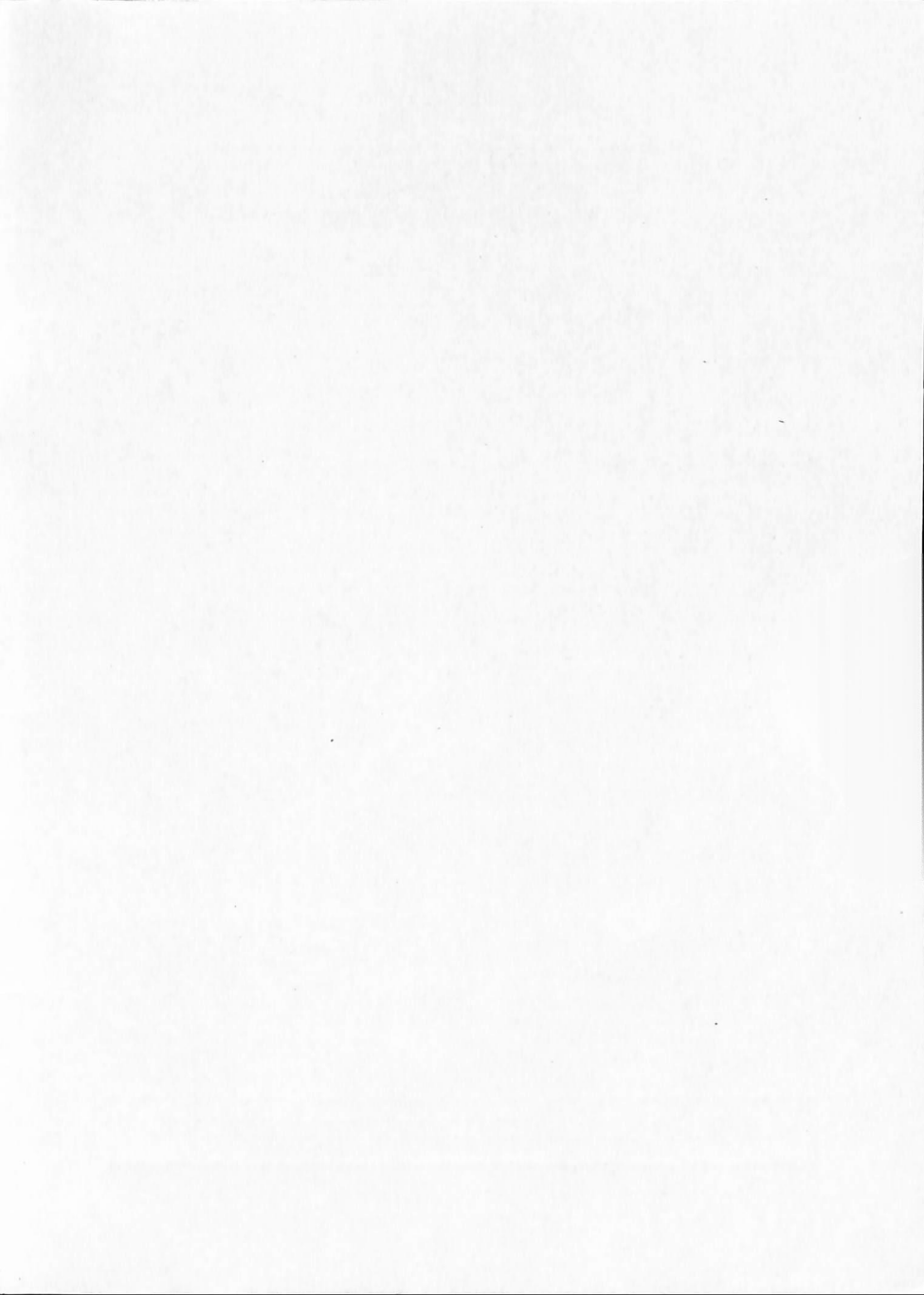
as reconstituted according to the Memorandum of Rules and Regulations of the Centre are :

Meherjee Ardeshir Karkaria	....	Chairman
Kashinath Narayan Soman	....	Member
Laxman Ramchandra Kamble	....	Member
Damodar Shivnath Bhawsar	....	Member
Shankar Rao Genoji Doiphode	....	Member
Dinshaw N. Irani	....	Member
K. K. Ramakrishnan	....	Secretary

## **THE HISTORY OF AVATAR MEHER BABA POONA CENTRE**

In the year 1963, beloved Baba asked me to write the history of POONA CENTRE. I began typing few pages every day in one of the rooms at Guruprasad, in which Pendu Kaka used to sleep, the room adjacent to the one in which beloved Baba used to sit with the mandali during the day. But because of various reasons, particularly due to the stream of visitors seeking *darshan* and the arrangements required to be made for the same, the work was laid aside. Four years have rolled on after beloved Baba laid aside his body. His wish will be fulfilled.

**K. K. Ramakrishnan**



## **I AM NEVER BORN, I NEVER DIE**

Yet every moment I take birth and undergo death. The countless illusory births and deaths are necessary landmarks in the progression of man's consciousness to Truth—a prelude to the REAL DEATH and the REAL BIRTH. The Real Death is when one dies to self—and the Real Birth is when, dying to self, one is born in God, to live for ever His Eternal Life consciously.

Although I am present everywhere eternally in my formless infinite state, from time to time, I take form, and the taking of the form and leaving it is termed my physical birth and death.

In this sense, I am born and I die when my universal work is finished.

**Meher Baba**



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