

*A Garland for
Avatar Meher Baba*



This series of periodicals, published by Meher Baba Foundation Australia, will be produced as and when material is ready and thus may appear at irregular intervals, but by Meher Baba's Grace they will continue, and each will carry a sequence number and publication date for identification.

The material used will be taken from a variety of sources, principally from notes made over many years by myself and Judith Garbett at Meherazad and Meherabad of stories told by the men and women mandali about Meher Baba and their lives with Him.

It is possible that some of the stories given will differ in odd details from the same stories already published elsewhere. However, they are given as they were told at the time by each of the mandali. Certainly in my own case I regret now that the notes were often short and rough. I feel that at times the material reflects this, but in every issue no attempt has been made to embellish the stories - any embellishments made can introduce personal imagination and distortion to the detriment of truth and service to others.

Bill Le Page

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Published by Meher Baba Foundation Australia
334 Montague Road, West End, Queensland, 4101

Printed by Queensland Complete Printing Services
28 Price Street, Nambour, Queensland 4560

ISBN (Set) 0 646 22787 4
ISBN (Vol 1) 0 646 22785 8

Issue No. 1, January 1995

1-702937

MEHERA PART 1

Recollections of 1962, 1969, and 1973 - 1985 with some stories
told by Mehera at Meherazad in the later period

- Judith Garbett

I first met Mehera at Guruprasad, Poona on 31st October 1962, the eve of the East-West Gathering, in Baba's presence, and just a few minutes after meeting Beloved Baba Himself for the first time.

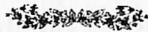
This meeting with Mehera, Mani, Goher, Naja, Rano and Meheru was very brief but very sweet, the more so because it was totally unexpected - we had not thought to see them at all. So the quiet introductions to one another, the few words of greeting, the gentle embraces, all had a very special quality and my memory of those moments is still crystal-clear. Indeed, how could it not be so, because this most wonderful occasion of my life - this meeting Beloved Baba and His dear ones - set the whole pattern of my existence from then on, brought me love and sweet companionship such as I had never before known, opened avenues of enjoyment in daily living never dreamt of or aspired to.

There were two other occasions during the Gathering to see Mehera. On the first afternoon after being drenched in the sudden rain-squall all the Western women were called to the women mandali's quarters for changes of clothing - although I was too shy, too overwhelmed to avail myself of this, and simply stayed in the background watching everything, so I didn't actually speak to Mehera then. Finally on the last afternoon, when we were called to say goodbye to Mehera, I remember her having a number of small items spread out on a bed from which she selected something to give to each of us in turn. My gift was a tiny photo of Baba feeding carrots to Begum the small horse at Mahabaleshwar, and I still keep this among my special Baba treasures.

Everything about the East-West Gathering was so momentous, so overwhelming for me: meeting Baba, Mehera and the women, Eruch and the men mandali, being in Baba's

presence all day each day. We were with the Westerners in the mornings in the big main room inside Guruprasad, and with the thousands of Easterners and Westerners under the huge pandal at the back of the building in the afternoons. Yet I know, looking back, that I never felt lost or out of it in any way. The focus was always on Baba, and time stood still in His presence.

Meeting Mehera and the women was a special part of it all for me, but it was not until years later at the Great Darshan in May 1969 that I began to realise the significance, the beauty and poignancy of times spent in Mehera's company.



On the first morning of the Great Darshan, Thursday 15th May, walking into Guruprasad again after more than six years caught at my heart, and memories of meeting Baba at the East-West Gathering came flooding back. Now it was not the form of the Beloved who waited for us in His chair but a large and beautifully-garlanded photograph leaning against the cushions. Yet Baba was so much there, His Presence was very very strong.

Eruch greeted us all, the Master's Prayer was read out, and Mehera, Mani, the Maharani of Baroda who owned Guruprasad, Goher, Rano, Khorshed, Arnavaz, Naja and Meheru came in from their rooms on the left-hand side of the



*The Great Darshan, Guruprasad, May 1969
- Men and women mandali beside Meher Baba's chair*

big main room where we were gathered. Mehera softly and shyly greeted us with 'Jai Baba'. This was the first time we saw her participating in a large gathering with men as well as women present. They sat in a group near the wall, not far from Baba's chair, partly facing us. Mani gave a few words on Mehera's behalf, then they all sang the Gujerati Arti which had been composed by Baba Himself in the mid 1920s.

Eruch and the men mandali were seated to our right on the other side of Baba's chair, and Francis read his talk The Mighty Beloved.

Then came the long-awaited moment for us of taking Baba's darshan. His armchair, covered in a plain blue-green fabric, was placed a little towards the back of a small square dais. There was a colourful rug where Baba's feet would have rested, and on the floor in front a small Persian carpet. Behind Baba's chair pink floral curtains were fastened together over the wide doorway which led out to the back rooms, and the strong morning sun shining through this fabric highlighted His chair.

The framed photograph of Baba's head and shoulders leaning back in the chair was almost life-size. One by one all came to Baba, bowing down to Him in their own way, just as it was when He was there in His physical form. Each then left the room quietly to go along the verandah to visit Baba's bedroom.

For myself it was in His bedroom that Beloved Baba really gave me darshan, and to this day the memory of it remains the most beautiful time with Him during those four days. It was not a very large room but it had quite a high ceiling. There were two armchairs side by side, one covered in a light green material which Baba used when relaxing. The other, covered in yellow, Baba used when working and Mani told us during the morning that He was most insistent that no-one should touch this chair while He was in it, that they must continuously guard against even the tiniest part of their clothing brushing against it while He was working there. Once someone's skirt came very close to the yellow chair, and Baba told them that they had no conception of what this one had escaped. Beyond the chairs there was a wooden clothes-rack

and a small table with some of Baba's things on them. On the right-hand side of the room was Baba's bed with a pink flowered cover, and a pink cotton canopy over the wood framework. Beside the bed was a small rug, a footstool, and a pair of His sandals.

I can't really imagine what it must have been like when Baba was physically in that room, whether working or otherwise, but for me that morning His Presence was just so incredibly strong. He was *there*. My eyes filled with tears, I felt as though my heart was bursting, and that I was being drawn out of myself, beyond myself. Yet I was also aware of no outward movement, it was all within me; my soul was crying out to Him, and He was drawing me to Him. I turned to the bed, went down on my knees, my head bent to the flowered cover. A perfume wafted up, so overpowering in its sweetness that again tears spilled over and in my heart I was trying to talk to Him.

A little later when I was outside on the verandah with some others, Goher came and said that Mehera was on her side verandah and would like to see us, so I went round straight away. There were two or three already with her and I waited near them. Soon Mehera embraced me. I stood facing her, my hands resting on her arms, and she allowed me to continue doing so while she talked of Baba, of 1962, and also of this Darshan.

Mehera told me how much she still missed His physical presence. She knew that He was in the heart, that He was everywhere, but she missed Him very much. As she spoke, so quietly, standing there close to me, tears were running down her cheeks, but she went on talking gently and in a calm manner. I felt that although she had accepted it as Baba's Will, yet at the same time, being human, her tears would come. She told of Baba's long and strenuous seclusion, of how tired He was after a work period, covered with perspiration and His thigh bruised from the constant hammering with His fist which He told them was to keep His link with the gross plane. She said they all now felt orphaned, and when she would break down in tears the others would tell her that she had to be an example for everyone. 'Baba helps us and encourages us,' she said

I was in tears myself most of the time standing there with her, and could only manage to say a word or two to her. I had met Him over just five days in 1962 - while she whose whole life was centred totally in Baba, stood there in her immeasurable grief, giving out so much love herself in talking of Him. Finally she said to me, 'How fortunate you are to have been here in 1962 and to have seen Him then. And you are fortunate to come now, because you have obeyed Baba's wish in coming, and He would be happy about that because obedience shows your love.'

That same day all the women in our group went to Guruprasad at 5:00 pm to be with Mehera and the women mandali. It was a relaxed atmosphere in that lovely room so filled with Baba's Presence. As in the morning they all sat in a group near the wall and facing us.

Mani asked Mehera to begin by telling some anecdotes. Mani held the microphone for her but she kept leaning away from it, with Mani following her. Mehera spoke of Baba's love of songs in the early days. She had come to Him when she was sixteen. One day at the old Post Office at Meherabad He asked her to sing. 'Swanee' was the only song she knew - she had learned it at school - and Baba asked her to sing it several times so that He could learn it which He did very quickly. Next morning they could hear Him singing it nearby. Mehera said He had a very beautiful voice.

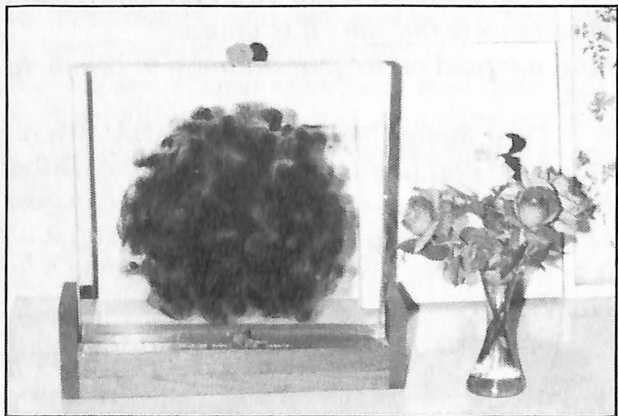
Soon Mehera gave the microphone to Mani who told many stories in her own inimitable way, with comments or reminders from Mehera and the others. After some music, including Mani playing her sitar, we all moved about to talk a little to one another. They were so loving, so gentle. Sometimes when we embraced there would be some talk or a little story and a laugh, but at other times we would just look at each other, holding arms or hands, and words were not really needed. Often I felt I was looking straight into their hearts, full of love.

In the morning Mehera had wept and I had also. In the evening she was bright and smiling though at times serious. It was sweet to spend a few minutes with each one. They said they were so happy to see us, and that they all felt Baba was very much present.

The first Australian group on pilgrimage for Amartithi went in January 1973, and during the '70s many of us continued to go every year. In 1973, having arrived in Ahmednagar the day before, our first visit to Meherazad was on 30th January, and in Mandali Hall I found some changes from my visits in 1962 and 1969. Baba's Chair now had a floral cover, with two fresh yellow marigolds placed above the cushion at the back, and there was a green cushion on the floor in front with a single bougainvillea on it. There were many pictures and photos all round the walls, mats and big grey floor-coverings, with some cushions along the wall near Baba's Chair. Eruch and Mani told stories, and then we went over to Mehera and the women mandali.

Mehera took us into her bedroom to see the Tree outside her window on which Baba's face had first appeared in the bark in 1969 not long after He dropped His body. Recently small pieces of bark had been coming away near the nose. Mehera didn't know what to do about it - but next morning she found that a very fine white spider's web had joined the pieces together! It was still there for us to see. Mehera pointed out the position of Baba's face under an overhanging section so that rain falling from this higher point did not run down over the face. In very heavy rain of course some water coming on the face could not be avoided.

In Baba's Bedroom Mehera showed us His hair arranged inside the thick plexiglass stand brought by Harry Kenmore and his New York group. Baba's hair as a young man was auburn-tinted and very beautiful. When the stand arrived Mehera felt she must be able to find a picture of Baba somewhere among the thick strands of His hair. She kept



Baba's Hair in plexiglass stand

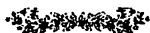
looking and looking, and then found His face on the left-hand side. She asked us all to look too, without telling us where, and standing close by smiling at us. In turn we searched, and some saw it quickly, others took a little time. It is very clear, appears slightly on its side, Baba's hair and moustache well defined, and His face really smiles out when you find it, as though He is enjoying the joke of hiding from you there.

Baba's Room was very beautiful, filled with His gentle Presence. Sweet flowers garlanded His photo on the bed, the perfume rising like a caress as I knelt down and laid my head on the cover in front of the picture.



Soon Mehera took us into the dining room and told us that Baba was always served first. Cooking pots were brought straight in from the fire and placed on mats on the side table to save extra work. Baba would eat first, then the women. He did not like anyone to take more food than they needed. Generally they would have rice and dal, and sometimes there would be fish from Bombay. Baba did not eat much, and would give choice pieces from His plate every day to Mastan the faithful Tibetan dog whose love for Baba was unique.

In the late 1980s Mehera's delightful book "Baba Loved Us Too - Stories of Meher Baba and His Pets" was published. In it you will find her beautifully-written story of Mastan's whole life with Baba from puppyhood. After Baba dropped His body Mastan grieved for Him continually. One day he went into the dining room and slowly walked round Baba's chair and the table, and another day he walked round Baba's bed, then finally seemed to accept that he would not see Baba again. He gradually stopped eating, grew so thin and weak he could not stand, and died in April 1969, unable to live any longer without his beloved Master.



On our arrival at 8:30 on the mornings of 2nd and 3rd February Eruch took us up Seclusion Hill and to Pimpalgaon Village. Also on the 3rd Mehera, Mani, Francis and Bill Le Page went to Poona for the dedication of the site for Baba's Guruprasad Memorial building.

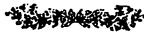
The next morning Francis asked me to work with Arnavaz on some notes for him. At 11:00 she and I joined Mehera and the women at the back of Mandali Hall and they had me sit with them for the Sydney performance to entertain them, followed by a repeat of 'A Singing to Meher Baba' which we had all sung at the Amartithi programme.

I worked again with Arnavaz all day Monday the 5th, and Tuesday was a long and wonderful day for us all at Elloura and other special places with Eruch. The 7th was my birthday and the first of several I was fortunate enough to spend at Meherazad and Meherabad. It was a very happy day with loving greetings from all the mandali. We left for home the following day.



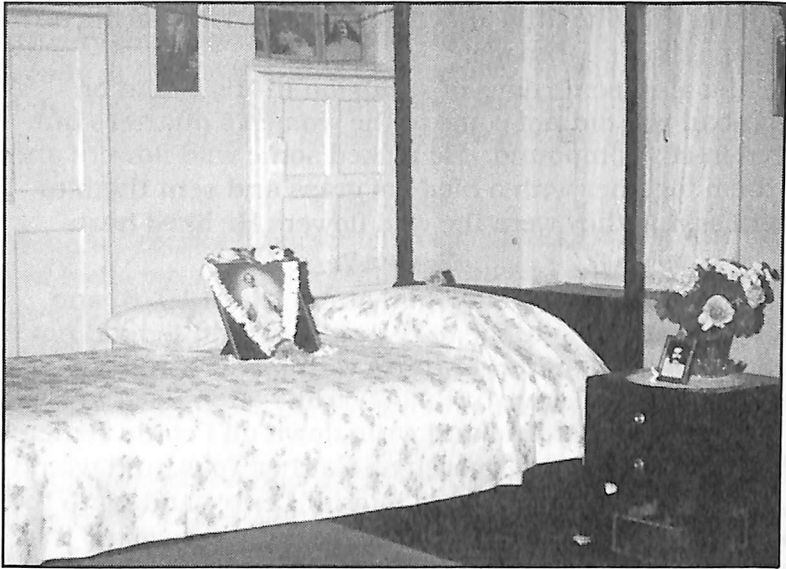
In 1974 we all went again for Amartithi, and spent the first day, 29th January, at Meherazad. In the '70s we could go out at 8:30 in the morning, so would have some hours in Mandali Hall with Eruch or Mani telling stories before it was time to go and be with Mehera. On this occasion the Society from New York also came over with us to the porch. They sang for Mehera and then left, and we all moved in to Baba's Room. Mehera showed us Harry Kenmore's gift to Baba of the big wing chair. She talked about the Christ photos and the Krishna picture which Baba had told her to have framed as He liked them very much. Then Mehera again took all to see the Tree from her window.

Soon it was lunchtime, and Mehera gave each of us prasad of two sweets, at the same time smilingly quoting the Gujerati saying and translating it for us: 'I give you this sweet that you may speak sweetly to me!'



Amartithi being over, on arrival at Meherazad on Saturday 2nd February we went straight up Seclusion Hill with Eruch, and after a short time in Mandali Hall walked across to greet Mehera on the porch.

In Baba's Room she told us that Baba would have afternoon tea there. She would place a little table over His knees while He was sitting in the Harry Kenmore chair, and she would serve Him. He never served Himself she said.

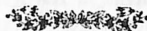


Baba's bedroom

Mehera would sit in the chair by the window facing Baba. Rano sat on a small stool where the dressing-table is now; Naja in the big chair; Meheru on a stool opposite it; and Mani sat in the window to get the light as she read aloud to Baba from books by Rex Stout and others. Baba would often stop Mani at a most exciting place in the story, and none of them were allowed to look at the book before He asked for the reading to continue.

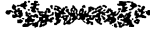
Then Mehera told us to sit in the various spots or on the rug - Mehera was in her chair by the window, Joan Bruford in Naja's chair, myself on a small mat opposite the stools, Lorna Rouse on a stool, May Lundquist on the pink carpet, and others elsewhere.

After this Mehera took us all into her bedroom and began showing photographs and other Baba treasures which she kept bringing out from cupboards and drawers. She often did this during the '70s, and I always loved being there at these times. Later she stopped doing it as there were just too many coming, and they would be shown the Tree from the bedroom doorway only.



I have this one little anecdote from Mehera during our 1975 Amartithi pilgrimage:

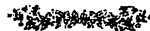
Baba after some days of seclusion in His Cabin on Meherabad Hill did not come to the women's quarters but walked in His compound. He picked some wild flowers and tied them together with a blade of grass and sent them to Mehera saying they were the wild flowers He liked best.



We made the 'God-Man' film at Amartithi 1976, and although I went also to the next three Amartithis I did not take any notes at all of stories or times with Mehera and the mandali then. But from 1980 onwards I often used to sit in the garden at Meherazad and write down all I could remember of the times on Mehera's porch and at her Teas, and would also spend happy hours at the Pilgrim Centre adding to these notes. How glad I am now that Beloved Baba gave me that urge to put it all down while fresh in my mind and heart!



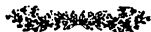
Mehera spoke of going to the Circus at one time with Baba. It was about to close down and move on at the end of its season so it was not crowded. There was an act with three elephants, small, medium and larger in sizes. They had been trained in Hindu puja to a goddess figure - in succession they bowed, offered flowers, an Arti tray, and a coconut. There were other acts also, but at the end the manager had a big elephant walk up to Baba and offer Him a garland which one of the women mandali took from its trunk and put around Baba's neck. This was a special mark of respect to Baba from the Hindu manager.



Baba also took Mehera and the women to the races in Poona which were held in the monsoon season August to September because there it would rain then clear for a day or two, as opposed to Bombay where it rains heavily and continuously.

They were very excited at going, and bought a race book for 7 or 8 annas to read about the horses, jockeys, colours and names. Mehera said she looked for the 'best name' to say it would win, and chose Mogul King. All the horses were well-

groomed and paraded near the grandstand before the race, looking very fine. It was a six-furlong race and eventually all were ready at the post and began to race. It was very exciting to watch - but Mogul King came last! Mehera laughed, enjoying the joke against herself. Baba also laughed when she told Him about it.



Mehera described horsemen from Baluchistan in the far north of India who were very smartly turned out: a starched turban-end stood up in front and there was a long tail at the back. They wore a special white shirt with embroidered jacket and very full pants. Children were told they could be snatched up and hidden in these pants and taken away if they were naughty.

She remembered how a number of these men would come to pay homage to Babajan. They would sit in a group in front of her to her right. Babajan would sit with her back to the neem tree, and Mehera and her mother and aunt would visit also, sitting a little behind Babajan to her left.

Babajan would not talk much at all, but would listen to the men talking to her, and at the same time she would give a slight movement of her eyes towards the women, thus acknowledging them and including them in the group before her as it were. Mehera said this was done very sweetly - her memory of it was very clear and strong. She told us that years later she was occasionally reminded of Babajan's eye movements by Baba doing the same.



Mehera then remembered this story of Babajan's earlier life. Some time near the end of the century, while in Rawalpindi in northern India, Babajan had declared to a group of Baluchi soldiers, who were Mohammedans, that she was one with God. They were furious at such blasphemy, attacked and held her, and then buried her alive, believing they would be spiritually rewarded for killing this heretic. But Babajan did not die, and not long afterwards she managed to make the thousand-mile journey to Bombay where she stayed for some time, and then moved to Poona.

Some of these same Baluchi soldiers later on happened to come to Poona, and seeing Babajan there and very much alive,

they realised that she was indeed a superior being, begged her forgiveness for their act, and became her devotees. Her followers continued to increase over the years and she was widely revered.

Mehera said that Babajan would sit quietly in her place by the neem tree listening to people gathered there, although talking little herself. She could not remember whether Babajan's eyes were blue-grey or hazel, but she had a very fair skin, and her hair was white. She had been a very beautiful woman when young.



Mehera went on to talk of how Baba spoke of cycling or walking every day past Babajan during His years at college, but at that stage He did not have any contact with her, although He knew she was regarded as a saint by many of the local community. His studies progressed and He worked diligently. Mehera commented that Baba had to learn English well in preparation for His work in the world, although of course as yet He knew nothing of His future role.

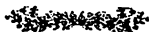
For years Babajan would watch Him go by, but it was not until one day in May 1913 when He was 19 years old that she first beckoned to Him as He was cycling along the road near her. He immediately dismounted and went to her. She stood up and embraced Him, saying 'My beloved son!' From that moment everything changed for Him. For a time He appeared outwardly normal, but began to lose interest in studies and sports, preferring to remain alone except for His visits to Babajan every evening when He would sit for hours beside her. This continued for some months.

Then one night in January 1914 Babajan kissed Him on the forehead, giving Him God Realisation. She turned to her followers and said to them: 'This is my beloved son. He will one day shake the world and all humanity will be benefited by Him!' Babajan was the first of the five Perfect Masters of the Age who over the next seven years gave Him the divine attributes to begin His Ministry.



A couple of days later when talking on the porch of early times on Meherabad Hill, Mehera remembered the occasion

when Baba had a small deer brought into the East Room and called Mehera to pat it. Its horns were just showing through and it was very young and sweet-looking. But when Naja came into the room it began to butt her. When she moved away it followed, slipping on the stone floor, still trying to butt her. It was very funny to watch, and Baba laughed and enjoyed the scene.



Mehera's Birthday was held on Sunday 21st December 1980 to enable more people to come. For many years it had always been celebrated on the 22nd December, the date originally selected by Baba for the occasion (although her actual birthday was 7th January).

I dressed in a sari and just after 10:00 went up the Hill, took darshan, then talked with many already there including Don Stevens. The verandah looked lovely with all the decorations so many had helped to put up the day before.

The De Soto came at last about 11:15 with Mehera, Mani, Naja and Arnavaz. Many of us were near the East Room to greet Mehera, and she walked briskly with several of us around her to the Tomb. As usual so many women were gathered there, and one had to be in the right spot and move quickly to be able to go inside. As always it was so beautiful to be in the company of Mehera and the mandali there. I was close enough to hold a part of one flower-net as it was lowered. Mehera called different ones to put roses on Baba's picture.

After Mehera, Mani and the others had bowed down and placed roses at Baba's feet they all moved over to Baba's Room. In turn we took darshan and then followed over to the verandah. I came just in time to see Mehera cut the heart-shaped, flower-decorated cake. In a few minutes I was in line to greet her, and to put into her hands my gift of the birthday card I had made, enclosing the two photos of Baba's Room at Avatar's Abode which I had specially taken for her. All gifts were handed on to others to collect into bags for Mehera to open later at Meherazad.

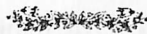
Soon lunch was served, after which I took photos of Mehera sitting with Mani and the others (all of which came out beautifully), then all moved down to the Theatre for the play

'Majnun and Leila', specially written and produced for the occasion. The side-drops, centre top painting of Baba in Persian dress riding a white horse, and the costumes were all excellent, the acting was first-class, and Mehera in particular and everyone there enjoyed it all very much.

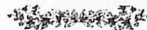


*Mehera on her birthday,
21 December, 1980 at Meherabad*

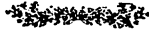
After all the mandali had left by 4:00 pm I went to stand at Baba's gadi for a few minutes, then walked over to the Tomb to thank Him for such a happy day. The weather was just right too, warm but not hot, and not windy. Later on quite a few clouds came up and I thought how lovely the different soft greys were, and how delicate were the patterns they wove in the evening sky as I went up the Hill again. It seemed a gentle and fitting end for a wonderful occasion filled with Baba's love for His beloved Mehera.



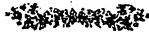
A few days later, spending my first Christmas and New Year at Meherabad and Meherazad was also a most heart-touching and heart-warming experience, and both occasions felt more *real* to me, more joyous than they had done for many, many years. I still remember that special warmth and lifting of the spirit as I went up the Hill to the Samadhi in starlight on Christmas Eve, and I had the same feeling very early on Christmas morning, in the dark with thick fog swirling around me, as I walked from the Pilgrim Centre and crossed the railway line to go up to greet Beloved Baba. New Year too seemed full of hope, and that it *was* possible to achieve one's resolutions to try to please Him, to be His.



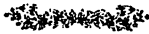
Talking of Baba some days later on the porch at Meherazad, Mehera said He was so beautiful. When young He had a lovely singing voice, His hair was a wonderful colour and very thick, His skin was so fair and soft (she touched her face). He would wear a simple sadra, no button at the neck, and when He played the drum it would sometimes fall away from His shoulder and they could see the beautiful white skin there (she touched her right shoulder).



Baba drinking tea : Mehera would pour the whole cupful into a deep saucer, Baba would lift it up and gently blow on it, then take a tiny sip very quietly to see if it was cool enough not to burn His lips, then gradually drink it.



In June/July 1982 I had four wonderful weeks at the Pilgrim Centre ending with the special highlight of spending Silence Day with Baba there. I shall always remember the most moving experience of being in the Tomb with Mehera, Mani and all the women mandali, helping to place 1500 red and pink roses as a glowing covering over the whole of the Marble. The perfume and beauty of these exquisite flowers seemed to be His gift to all of us there to give back to Him - our love-filled offering in gratitude for the radiance of His beauty so strongly felt in the depth and serenity of His Silence.



Five months later, on 15th December 1982, I was fortunate to go again to Meherabad for Mehera's birthday. The play this time was "Mary", and as before it so sweet to be with Mehera and the mandali and share their enjoyment.

Christmas Day too was a delightful occasion at Meherazad, with the whole of Mandali Hall, the long verandah there, and Mehera's porch all beautifully decorated. At Christmas the porch becomes the stage for the performance of songs and skits and other items, with chairs for Mehera and all the mandali placed on the garden path just below it, the pilgrims sitting on benches behind them. Afterwards Mehera gave prasad to all present. It was a happy atmosphere for Baba's Jesus Birthday, and we felt He was happy too.



In August 1984 I went to Myrtle Beach and spent three wonderful weeks at the Center. My stay there will always remain with me as one of the very special times in my life with Baba. Every single day He gave me so much love, so many sweet reminders of Him, so many happy hours in His Presence.

For the first three days I stayed in the small single cabin called Cedar Nook near the Library. Then I was moved to the Guest House which had been specially built for Mehera, Mani, Goher and Meheru to stay in for their visit with Baba in 1952. When taken to see it on my arrival at the Center I had felt Baba's Presence there very strongly, particularly in Mehera's room. So I was quite overwhelmed when told later that I was to move there, and could scarcely believe my good fortune. I stayed in Mani's room adjoining Mehera's for three days, then in Mehera's room for the remaining two weeks of my visit. I felt so close to them both, and the little stories I heard about them all there with Baba when He came each day, seemed to make the whole house come alive, including the porch with its swing which Baba used, the garden, and the glorious views over the lake. My happiness in the loving atmosphere there deepened my already special connection with Mehera and Mani.

On 3rd September I flew to Washington, straight on to London and through to Bombay to spend four months at Meherabad and Meherazad. And while there I celebrated my anniversary of meeting Beloved Baba at the East-West Gathering, then Mehera's birthday, Christmas and New Year.

Mehera's birthday was indeed special. Sitting with some of the women mandali just behind Mehera and Mani in the theatre on Meherabad Hill, I watched the unfoldment of "Babajan", the most beautiful and moving play I have seen produced there. To me it seemed like a special gift to Mehera arranged by her Beloved for her birthday enjoyment.

This feeling was borne out later when I talked to Heather Nadel about it, congratulating her on a wonderful and inspired portrayal of the title role. She told me that after much research, including asking Mehera herself for particular details about Babajan's life, appearance, movements, and

other essential information, she and Alan Wagner had written the script. There were many rehearsals and everyone worked very hard to ensure that the final performance would be one Mehera would really enjoy. But on the birthday, shortly before the play was to begin, Heather suddenly felt totally unable to portray Babajan adequately. From the stage she looked up to the Samadhi and cried out in despair to Baba that she couldn't do it, she couldn't do it alone, and imploring Him to take over the role. And from that moment she felt that He did so — the whole play went smoothly, and was much enjoyed by His beloved Mehera, and all of us who were so fortunate to be there sharing it with her.



At Mehera's Tea one day in October 1985 she was in a very happy mood. I sat opposite her and could watch her animatedly talking, usually looking from one to another while doing so. She told of New Life times when it was so very cold near Dehra Dun, and Baba would have them get up at 4:30 am. They would quickly dress and wash their faces in the freezing water. One of the men would heat some water for Baba to wash and shave.

One morning they were going on by train and Baba said they would have tea at the first big station, so they were looking forward to this. At the first stop Baba said, No, not this one, and they had to wait a long time for that big station for the hot tea to warm them. But Mehera conveyed that they waited thus, happy in the anticipation of the tea because that was Baba's wish. Then finally when He said they could have it, it was so good to get that hot tea, and how warm they felt drinking it!



The next day, 16th October, Mehera, Goher, Meheru, Katie and Arnavaz came to Meherabad for Arti. With relatively few people there it was very lovely being in the Tomb with them. Some were called to place flowers on Baba's photo. It was New Life Day, and although nothing was mentioned about it, there was for me a lovely quiet feeling, a deep happiness to be there.

When Mehera went across to Baba's Room I followed and stood inside against the wall, but a few minutes later she saw

me and asked 'Do you want to offer this?' It was a yellow dahlia, and I put it above the photo on the gadi, which was temporarily in the Room while work was being done on the verandah floor. It was always so sweet to be in Baba's Room with Mehera, to watch her offer a flower at each photo, stroking Baba's hand or face with it before placing it against the picture. Her every movement was so full of love for Him. It was so very beautiful, so very intimate seeing her there, knowing that she was wholly thinking of Him, being with Him. These moments were very precious for me, and the wonder of them is ever new whenever I recall them.

Mehera walked across to speak with Mansari, then moved to the car. The others got in but she stayed talking with a small group of us, telling how Baba loved driving - 'fast, fast' He would tell the driver.

She recalled once coming from Poona. Someone had put a big ribbon bow on the car bonnet for Him. Baba sat in the back, she was next to Him, then Mani. Goher and Meheru were in front, with a food basket at their feet. Baba liked to eat a snack when travelling this way, so He asked for something and they gave it to Him. Then He told them to eat, and they had the nice sandwiches and other food Gulnar had packed for them. Mehera said she loved boiled eggs, so she had one, then another, and even another! She was laughing as she spoke. Then when the food was being repacked by Meheru and Goher in the basket, one of them said there was one egg left, did anyone want it. She said 'I do.' But Baba said to her 'You have had three, no more!' Again she laughed, saying that Baba even knew what one had eaten, and so she couldn't have that egg.

Then she went quickly to the car and got in, and we all called out 'Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai' as they drove slowly through the gates. We followed, walking in happy little groups down the Hill to the Pilgrim Centre to have our lunch.

(To be continued)





“I can forgive; I have come to forgive . . . It is not a great thing to forgive. In fact, in reality there is nothing to be forgiven for there is really nothing like good and bad . . . In the bondage of duality there is good and there is bad, but in reality everything but God is zero . . . Forgiveness consists in loosening the bindings of duality in maya, which makes you feel and find the One in many. Therefore ‘I forgive you’ amounts to the loosening of your bindings.”

Meher Baba



Mehera loves Me as I should be loved
- Meher Baba

*A*s Sita was for Ram, Radha for Krishna,
Mary for Jesus, for this Advent of Meher Baba
it is Mehera who plays the leading role.

This role, of being the chosen counterpart to the
God-Man, amounts to the highest, purest, most spiritual
relationship, consisting of a divine love which the world
cannot imagine.

Mani S. Irani
(Meher Baba's Sister)