

# **The Turning of the Key**

By Bill LePage

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**The turning of the key: Meher Baba in Australia**

by Bill Le Page.

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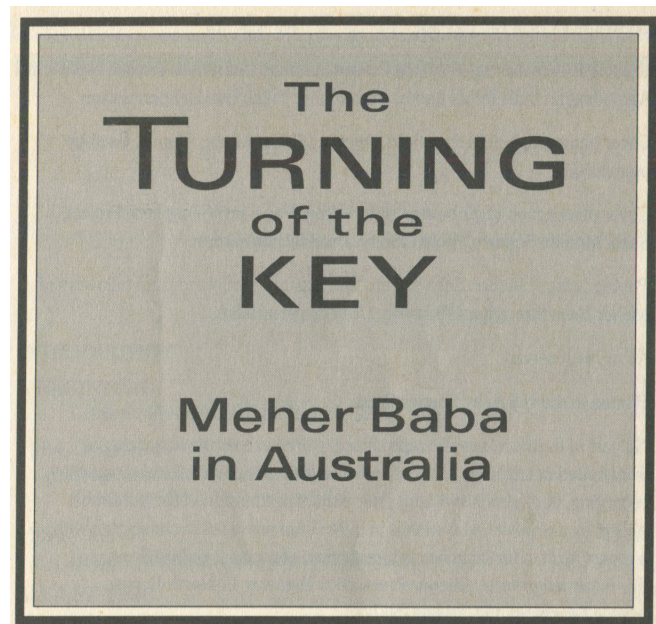
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The  
**TURNING**  
of the  
**KEY**



**Meher Baba  
in Australia**

**Bill Le Page**



Bill Le Page

Sheriar Press  
1993



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# CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION	<i>vii</i>
A BEGINNING	<i>1</i>
Letters : Francis and Eruch, early 1954	<i>13</i>
1954 DARSHAN	<i>20</i>
Some Attributes of Meher Baba	<i>38</i>
Poem from Francis, October 1954	<i>44</i>
1954 - 1956	<i>45</i>
Letters: Adi, Eruch, and Mani, 1954 - 1956	<i>51</i>
AUGUST 1956	<i>58</i>
Letters: Adi and Mani; cables from Meher Baba; 1956 - 1957	<i>74</i>
1956 - 1958	<i>102</i>
JUNE 1958	<i>110</i>
Letter: Meher Baba's orders, 24 June 1958	<i>137</i>
1958 - 1962	<i>139</i>
Letters: Mani, 1959 - 1962	<i>144</i>
Eruch on bringing up children	<i>151</i>
Mohammed and dates story	<i>152</i>
Five brief stories: Sufi, Buddha, Mohammed	<i>153</i>
Tukaram story	<i>155</i>
Pilgrimage to Mecca story	<i>157</i>
THE EAST-WEST GATHERING	<i>159</i>
1962 - 1967	<i>176</i>
Letters and poems from Francis and cables from Meher Baba, 1964 - 1966	<i>178</i>
MEHERAZAD, FEBRUARY 1967	<i>184</i>
A Journey to the Beloved	<i>186</i>
With Meher Baba at Meherazad	<i>191</i>

1967 - 1969	200
First major talk, November 1967: The God-Man	200
The two years before January 1969	212
Letters, cables: Meher Baba, Adi, Francis, 1967 - 1968	214
1969: 31 JANUARY	223
Letters: Francis, February 1969	225
THE GREAT DARSHAN	234
AMARTITHI	236
Poem from Francis, 1970s	238
STORIES FROM THE <i>MANDALI</i> RETOLD	240
Eruch's Taj Mahal story	240
Mani's story of Shirinmai and Upasni Maharaj	244
Eruch on the New Life	246
Eruch's car story	248
Eruch's smoking story	252
Mani's 1969 story: the shepherd	254
FORMATION OF MEHER COMPANIES	257
Meher Baba Foundation Australia	259
What Meher Baba means by Real Work	261
Eruch on Baba Work	265
SPREADING HIS NAME AND MESSAGE	267
Talk: Challenge of Avatar	267
Talk: The Avatar and the Perfect Master	272
DEVELOPMENT OF AVATAR'S ABODE	281
AVATAR'S ABODE AS SPIRITUAL CENTRE AND PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE	283
Article: Meherazad 1981	285
Talk between Eruch Jessawala and Bill Le Page, Meherazad Mandali Hall, 1st November 1982	287
AN END AND A BEGINNING	312
A PHOTOGRAPHIC RETROSPECTIVE	<i>Following page 316</i>
SUPPLEMENT	317
ONE	
Two Introductory Talks	
Love and Obedience	319
The Pursuit of Happiness	325
Three Prayers given by Meher Baba	
The Master's Prayer	329

The Prayer of Repentance	331
Beloved God - A Prayer for Baba's Lovers and <i>Mandali</i>	332
TWO	
My complete notes taken during Meher Baba's Sessions with Western Men at Meherabad, September 1954	333
THREE	
My first booklet: "The God-Man" (1956)	362
FOUR	
Some Material from My Archives	
Notes from London group meeting, 1951	370
Meher Baba's visit to London, August 1952	387
Letter to Ivy Duce from Meherjee, 1953	389
An explanation by Meher Baba following a letter from Jean Adriel, October 1955	394
Excerpt from a letter from Hamirpur concerning Baba Ramdas Naga, October 1955	395
Excerpts from a letter to New York concerning Arnavaz Dadachanji's brother Nozer, October 1955	397
Eruch's notes on <i>darshan</i> given by Meher Baba, Poona, 8 December 1957	400
FIVE	
Australian participants in various special occasions with Meher Baba	
1956 <i>Sahavas</i> , Sydney and Melbourne	403
1958 <i>Sahavas</i> , Avatar's Abode	405
The East-West Gathering in Poona, November 1962	406
Western <i>Sahavas</i> in December 1965	407
Australian lovers who wrote to Meher Baba one letter, September 1965 to February 1966	408
ANNOTATIONS	411
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Major books by and about Meher Baba	412
Where books are available	414
GLOSSARY	415
INDEX	420



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## INTRODUCTION

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**THIS ACCOUNT OF MY LIFE** with Meher Baba has been written because to do so was a challenge I could not ignore; also because many have requested it, since my life more or less spans the history of Meher Baba in Australia. I have done my best to give what I consider relevant details that may carry with them a sense of Beloved Baba's love for His Creation and for His Australia. Yet the task reminds me of reading somewhere that the spoken word is the breath of life and the written word a form of death. I do feel it is true that Baba somehow comes alive in and through spoken words, as the speaker experiences again his coming to God-Man or his moments with Him. But how much more difficult it is to express in words on paper, with all the limitations of language, the indescribable beauty, power, and love of God Incarnate. So I seek these days to listen to those whose words contain His Silence and Presence, and I would travel the world to be with His lovers to do this.

But for now let me tell this story of a worker for Him — for Him personally (although I know He needs no one), and for His Cause. I have tried to relate my strengths and weaknesses, in the wish that those who read will also never lose their determination to serve Him, even when faced with seeming failure, difficulties, and doubts.

Some material relating to my times with Baba may possibly

be questioned. Where there is no doubt in my mind about the accuracy of my notes from the time, or my memory, I have stated these events as facts, or have included the words "Baba said." Where I have less than 100 percent certainty, I have indicated this by a phrase such as "my recollection is," "my understanding is," or "I believe." And where Baba approved of an idea, a point, or an activity put forward by one or another of the mandali, I have stated this.

I write this account for future generations, not only for the present one, and I pray that whatever I write helps those who seek to learn of Avatar Meher Baba from this account.

For those readers who know nothing or little of Meher Baba, I have included an introductory talk of mine, given in November 1967, on page 200, and two others in the first section of the supplement; and for those who wish to read further about some of the times I was with Meher Baba, I suggest three books:

The God-Man by Charles Purdom, Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba by Malcolm Schloss and Charles Purdom, and Practical Spirituality with Meher Baba by John Grant. There are many other excellent books by and about Meher Baba, and the major ones are listed in the bibliography.

As I have said, I have done my best. I do not feel I am a good writer, but this I can say: somewhere hidden in my words is that beautiful Being of Truth. He is there — I believe this — and I pray that those who seek Him will find Him: perhaps only as a drift of perfume, but still Real.

*Bill Le Page*  
Avatar's Abode  
February 1993

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## A BEGINNING

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**IN NOVEMBER 1962**, after great difficulties and sleepless nights, I brought the final thirteen Australian lovers to Meher Baba at Guruprasad, Poona, on the second day of the East-West Gathering. It was afternoon, warm and rich and vibrant with Baba's presence and His creation as the party approached Him in file, to be embraced with sweet recognition and gestures, making all forget, I am sure, the trials that they must have experienced to bring them once more to His feet.

I was last in line, happily aware that a job for Baba had been completed, and all the strain and uncertainty of the last three days were already washed away as though they had never existed. Seated on each side of Beloved Baba were Yogi Sudhananda Bharati, whom Baba stated was a genuine seeker, and the Maharani Shantadevi, who owned the small palace named Guruprasad. There was no one else present as I came before Baba. He looked at me and then gestured firmly towards His feet with His finger. I quickly assumed He wished me to bow down at His feet. This I very happily did, and just in case He thought me half-hearted, I stretched full length with my head on His feet. There was silence, but as it continued I felt compelled of my own volition to rise. As I did so and looked again at Baba, He made the same gesture, and I suddenly realised and said to the Yogi: "Yes, we are from 'down under,' from Australia!" Baba beamed, and I moved on.



This is a story of the love that the Lord Avatar Meher Baba awakened in the land "down under," and of some of the people of that land who blossomed in that awakening.

The only truly significant event in my life was my coming consciously into the orbit of Beloved Meher Baba's love at the age of twenty-two, the beginning and end of my life. Yet, as Baba pointed out, environment is more important than heredity, so it could be of interest to cover, at least briefly, the details of my background up to that point in time.

I was born in 1924 in Melbourne, capital of the southern state of Victoria, in what could be termed a middle-middle-class family, father a salesman and mother a dressmaker before marriage and a homemaker after. Both parents attended the rather colourless Church of Christ, and my sister and I were taken to services and Sunday school on a regular basis. God and religion were always a part of my life, as they were a part of my parents' life and of many of their wide circle of brothers and sisters. For example, I remember one of my father's brothers as a gentle, loving, manly lay minister of the church. The sincerity of their love for God could be measured by the fact that most at least heard the Name of God, Meher Baba, and my parents met Him on both His visits to Australia.

As a child I loved Bible stories and tales from Greek, Roman, and Nordic mythology. My early years, I think, were uneventful, apart from such things as not speaking at all until I was four and a half years old, rather frequent bouts of asthma, agonising childish mental tussles on questions like "Who created God?," and a somewhat vague awareness of a definite shortage of money in the family that led, for example, to my mother, sister, and myself living with more financially secure relatives. But I was not unhappy, and in fact I was very fortunate and favoured because the simple, economically restricted life of my growing-up years stood me in good stead in my efforts to

serve Beloved Baba and His cause in subsequent years. On the other hand, it was only in later years I realised that with my father almost always away from home selling, and myself therefore mainly with female company (grandmother, mother, and sister Laurie), how I had been "soft undeveloped" psychologically, and that it was Beloved Baba who finally brought me up following my first contact with Him.

My sister is five years older than I, and in my formative early and late teen years she was of marked influence. At fourteen I refused to attend church because I had become quite dissatisfied with its teachings and atmosphere. I began to read more widely and, tagging along with Laurie, had contact with cultural and political groups, not mainstream ones, but alternatives such as Bohemian art and music groups, Communism, Douglas Credit, and Socialism. At seventeen I attended another Protestant church because the minister was a colourful, widely-read man who gave interesting talks on religion and modern psychology. At seventeen and a half, in 1941, I joined the army in the medical corps; a year later I transferred to the air force and became a pilot; and I was demobilised on my twenty-first birthday in August 1945.

During those years my parents had left the church and had begun exploring alternative groups and organisations such as Theosophy, Christian Science, and small Christian splinter movements. In my continuing interest in knowing what life was all about, I eagerly attended with them and read literature that was offered. None appealed, and after one or two contacts with these groups I would turn aside, but somehow never relinquished a strong inner drive to establish a true connection between God and life.

After demobilisation from the air force I had no position, no career, and no clear direction in life, so with a sense of relief I accepted university training, made possible by an allowance from

the government. This was the first time anyone from the family had undertaken university studies. But I still did not know what course to do, so I simply followed my brother-in-law's decision and enrolled in the school of psychology. This proved significant because I quickly became more and more disillusioned with the course. I wanted truth, but got only a superficial picture of human nature as detailed through the five senses and some exploration of the unconscious. This feeling persisted, despite intense efforts to grasp thoroughly whatever psychology could offer, and I declined to think of myself, or refer to myself, as a psychologist until Meher Baba asked me in 1958 what work I did, and gave approval to do it with His injunction, "Take My Name before each interview."

My efforts to understand, or rather know, the meaning of life had included visits to local psychoanalysts and others, asking them about their conception of God and how He fitted into their work. I would also happily accept any book offered me, hoping for enlightenment. An important but not final turning point was a book recommended to me, *Prophets of New India*, which detailed the lives and teachings of the Perfect Master Ramakrishna and his chief disciple, Vivekananda. My heart responded deeply for the first time. Jesus tended to be a figure remote in history, unclear, doubtful in authenticity, but here now were men who touched my heart as Jesus did, yet lived almost in my time, and whose message and example were full and precise.

This book had a definite effect, yet I remained unfulfilled, and by the middle of my second year at university I was desperate and even thinking of giving up the course. Perhaps it was a case of "When the pupil is ready, the Master appears," because now the process of coming to Baba was quickened. I was introduced, by the same man who had lent me *Prophets of New India*,

to the main local figures of the Sufi Society.

The Sufi Society had been established in Europe by Hazrat Inayat Khan in the 1920s. An imposing, bearded figure, he was confirmed later by Meher Baba, the maker of saints, as a true saint of the fifth plane of consciousness. Inayat Khan had been directed by his Master to spread the message of Sufism in the West, just as Vivekananda had been directed by Ramakrishna to give the message of Vedanta to the West. Among Inayat Khan's pupils was a Baron von Frankenburg, who studied under him for eighteen months, then migrated to Australia, married a wealthy woman, and settled on a small farm at Camden on the southern outskirts of Sydney. Inayat Khan died in 1927, and his successor, Rabia Martin (confirmed by Meher Baba as the true successor), named the baron a *shaykh* (teacher) of the Sufi Society, and he set about creating a branch of the society in Australia under the overall guidance of Rabia Martin.

Rabia Martin was humble and sincere, and she sought a true man of God under whom she could study and live. In her search she met in New York in the early 1940s two wonderful lovers of the Lord, Mrs. Elizabeth Patterson and Princess Norina Matchabelli. They introduced her to the teachings of Meher Baba, and over a two-year period she gradually came to accept Baba as the Divine Beloved, the "Expected One," as foretold by the Avatar, the Prophet Mohammed, fourteen hundred years ago. She did not meet Meher Baba, but she released her senior pupils from their vows to the Sufi Society and advised them to investigate and seek to accept, as she had, Meher Baba as the God-Man.

The baron was of course also told of Meher Baba, and he began a lengthy, continuing correspondence with Dr. Ghani Munsiff, a disciple of Baba's, who was steeped and knowledgeable in

Sufism. Baba's *Discourses* were sent to Australia, but despite years of knowing of Him, the baron was never able to accept Him as his Master and assert His Divinity.

The two or three members of the society whom I met in Melbourne I liked, but I was not particularly impressed with what they offered. However, a few weeks later I agreed to meet their leader, the baron. In him I met, for the first time in my life, someone to whom I was prepared, figuratively, "to bend the knee." He asked me if I would obey an order, and when I said yes, he asked me to give up smoking for three months. This I did. I also willingly agreed to attend candidate classes, leading, if I wished, to initiation into the society.

The baron at that time was, I think, in his late fifties, a handsome, solidly built, vital and charming man. His knowledge of Sufism was impressive, at least to me then, as was his self-assured poise and intellectual prowess. I later discovered weaknesses in him; he was a flawed hero, you could say, but I shall always acknowledge his role in introducing me to the abiding beauty of Sufism, and I am grateful to him as a stepping stone to the Sufi of all Sufis, Meher Baba.

I attended my first meeting in the society at the home of Dr. Denis and Mrs. Joan O'Brien. (Denis in later years was regarded as the leader of the Baba family in Melbourne, but after Baba dropped His physical form he declined to continue that role.) At this meeting we read the first of the candidate papers, "The Intoxication of Life." I thoroughly enjoyed it, felt its truth, and resolved to continue the classes.

But much more was to come from that evening. As I prepared to depart, someone thrust into my hand a slim volume with the words, "You may like to read this." As was my practice, I accepted the book, thanking the person without looking at it. I began reading it on my return home, to find, as I increasingly realised, that it had truly brought me Home. The book was volume

2 of the old five-volume set of Meher Baba's *Discourses*. As I read, I was gripped with a deep wonderment and excitement: here at last was what I sought — a completely satisfying heart/mind exposition of God and His Creation — and, what was more, it used modern philosophical and psychological words in the midst of simplicity. It was the beginning of my life in Meher Baba, although I only gradually learnt more of this Being who walked the earth amongst mankind as the God-Man.

Baba had entered my life and I dreamt of Him, for example, as the Emperor appearing in dazzling light. I continued to read the *Discourses*, but perhaps because of the divided camp in the Sufi Society, and the indecisiveness of the overall leader, the baron, with regard to Baba's spiritual status, I did not learn much about Baba Himself until the return from America of the baron's senior pupil, Francis Brabazon. This was about 1948, after his stay of eighteen months in California.

Francis Brabazon plays a most significant part in this love story, so let us look at Francis as I first met him in the spring of 1948. He was at the time forty-one years of age, a short, very active, muscular man, positive and animated. He had considerable Irish charm and whimsy, and a sense of fun and humour that could be a delight to the intellect as well as provide a good belly laugh. He was capable, I was told, of being able years earlier to start an argument in a hotel and then gradually slip away, leaving the room in an uproar. He was ill at ease with worldly, sophisticated people of authority; but amongst people who accepted his position, he commanded great attention. He did have charisma.

In the early 1940s he had accepted the baron as his spiritual teacher and lived under his tutorship at Camden for some years. I gather that the baron was the first person at that time who had bettered Francis in psychological and intellectual clashes. In 1946 Francis was sent at the baron's expense to California to

study under Rabia Martin, and hopefully to assist in clarifying Meher Baba's status. It turned out that Rabia Martin was too ill to see Francis, but perhaps it did not matter, because he became 100 percent a lover of Meher Baba, and the baron continued to waver and doubt. Whilst Francis was in California, I believe, Rabia Martin's successor, Ivy Duce, appointed him a *shaykh*, and *momin* (the baron) a *khalif* of the Australian branch of the Sufi Society. *Momin* was the baron's given Sufi name, and he in turn gave many of the close Australian society members Sufi names. I, however, did not receive one, coming in, as I did, somewhat late in the picture.

Up to this point Francis had always been regarded as the natural and logical successor to the baron, but with Francis's acceptance of Baba and the baron's nonacceptance, the baron became doubtful of Francis's suitability for leadership, and a serious schism developed throughout the Australian branch. It was an intense emotional period. It was the first time that I, for one, had experienced a power struggle of the sort that seems inevitably to follow the decline and passing away of a leader who had held everything together. It is said that everything happens because of love, but I think that the dark side of the coin is the seeking of power. The positive side of that is when that power is sought in order to express God Incarnate's Wish, and the negative, when individuals think that God's Wish can be achieved only through them, and not others.

I was greatly shaken and troubled by the turmoil and pull of conflicting camps. It was, too, a test of my commitment to Meher Baba, and this, of course, intensified the confused atmosphere for me.

Then, in the midst of this period, sitting alone with Francis and inwardly calling on Baba, I experienced an overwhelming conviction regarding the truth of my allegiance to Meher Baba, and also that Francis was the true leader, at least for me, of the

Baba family in Australia. Thus began a lifetime connection with Francis, often restitched by Baba Himself when I felt I couldn't stand the relationship any more. But perhaps throughout it Beloved Baba had the last word when He said to me at Meherazad in 1967, "You love Francis and Francis loves you, but I love you both much more than you love each other."

In 1949 Francis purchased nearly an acre of land on one of the high points near Sydney, called Beacon Hill — so named because it was a hill where a beacon could be lit and seen far and wide if enemy ships were to appear through the nearby entrance to Sydney's beautiful harbour. The property was largely sandstone with little pockets of wild and stunted vegetation, but it had glorious views over the surrounding bushland, ocean, and the city of Sydney in the distance, and it was cheap. I understand that the baron paid for it. Francis's aim was to build a centre for Meher Baba which he hoped Baba would one day visit, and he decided to build the house in stone.

There was contact with Baba through the New Life Circulars that were sent to us, but it was not until 1951, when we had the opportunity of writing to Baba, that I had my first direct contact with Him. In my letter I sent my love and asked if He would come to Australia. He replied that someday He might do so.

By this time I had married Joan Burston, whom I had met at one of the Sufi Society meetings, and our daughter Ruth (later to be renamed Maree) had been born in 1948. I had completed a bachelor's degree in psychology. Despite very mediocre results in the first and second years, such was the effect of Baba on my life that I finished the third year with second class honours and had begun work as an industrial personnel officer. This work, which kept me out of so-called pure psychological activities, was of a more practical, down-to-earth nature and paid satisfactorily. Around this time I began to build a house in an outer suburb of Melbourne, and for lack of funds I built much of it myself with



guidance from various casual carpenters. Living conditions were very basic over the three years it took to complete. Our son, Michael, was born in 1951 and daughter Jenny in 1954.

When Francis began his building, I took every opportunity to travel the 550 miles from Melbourne to Sydney to assist him. On one occasion in 1953, between changes in my employment, Joan and I and Michael and Maree lived for three months in a tent on the Beacon Hill property, helping Francis with the building. Today I am more conscious of the real hardships that I caused Joan and the children in all those early years.

After the death of the baron of throat cancer in 1950, Francis left for the United States, hoping that Meher Baba would visit there as He had said He would. This did occur, and Francis was with Baba at the Myrtle Beach centre in early May 1952 for three days, during which the future of the Sufi Society was raised by its leader Ivy Duce, with Francis present. Over the previous few years, as Baba became more and more the sole focal point for so many of the members, including Ivy herself, the society faded in importance, yet Ivy at least did not want to see it disappear, and the question remained of its relationship with Meher Baba.

The changes in the leadership throughout the society had already been challenged, and splits had occurred in Australia, America, and elsewhere, just as had happened after the passing away of Inayat Khan. In Australia many people dropped away, some maintained an uncommitted stand, and some continued their allegiance principally to Baba, and to Francis, whose conviction for Baba was at least an inspiration and source of strength to them. These splits, partial and complete, occurred within families, in groups, and between major centres such as Melbourne and Sydney. Such movements can seem so real, so important, and so painful at any particular time; and then as they continue to occur with simple variations in players and patterns taking

place, they assume more and more an unreal, "passing show" quality. I am ever reminded of Beloved Baba on another occasion sending me a message: "The world and its affairs is nothing into nothing into nothing..." It seems now, after forty years, so much like a dream, and yet that dream is repeated, and no doubt will continue to be repeated, down the ages.

So, at the request of Ivy Duce, Baba took the Sufism of Inayat Khan under His wing and created a new charter of spiritual goals and conduct as the basis of whatever organisation all concerned thought should be formed. The charter was called Sufism Reoriented, and Ivy Duce was confirmed by Baba as *murshida*. Although Francis was present during the many talks on the subject at Myrtle Beach, and it appeared that Sufism Reoriented applied also to Australia, but independent of Ivy in the United States, nothing was ever mentioned again by Baba regarding its implementation in Australia. Francis wanted only Baba, and as Baba never mentioned Sufism, Francis never raised the matter either.

After three days with Baba at Myrtle Beach, Francis was ordered to return to Australia with the injunction "to plant a rose garden in Australia for Baba." These events in 1952 sealed my growing resolution to do everything possible to move permanently to Sydney and so to help Francis more and more in Baba's cause in Australia.

But how to achieve this? We had two children and no money, owned property now in Melbourne, and had no connections in Sydney. The possibility of moving looked hopeless. So Meher Baba with His unseen guiding hand pulled the necessary strings in the most natural way. At the time, new in His love, I seemed to be simply swept along by unfolding events; now I can recognise His hand more immediately and clearly.

The first event was a casual meeting in a street with a man older than myself who had been a fellow student at university

and who had become director of the psychology corps of the Australian Army. We only knew each other by sight, but stopped for a short conversation and he asked me if I wanted a position as a psychologist in the army. With no wish to spend another period in the army I hurriedly said no, but fortunately I met him again, and this time had the sense to ask if the position could be in Sydney. When he said yes, I promptly accepted, and joined in Melbourne so that our expenses of relocation to Sydney would be met by the army.

Shortly afterwards I learnt that a family of Baba lovers, Stan and Clarice Adams, who had been staying with Francis at Beacon Hill, giving tremendous help in building and publishing work for him, wished to return to Melbourne to live. They saw our house and fortunately agreed to buy it. Thus for the first time in my life I actually had funds available. With a part of these I purchased a block of land close to Francis and resolved to build again.

So nine months passed, and in June 1954 I moved permanently to Sydney, the family coming a month later. The day I arrived, I met Francis as previously arranged in a city coffee house. As soon as I sat down, without a word spoken, Francis handed me a printed circular from India. It was an invitation from Meher Baba to males over the age of sixteen who loved Him or who wished to do so, to come to India to see Him. Thus was my life completed — God called and I responded. I gave no thought to anyone or anything; I was going, and that was that. Looking back now, I bow to Joan's love for Meher Baba, which meant her acceptance of my actions. I make no excuses for myself; it is a simple fact that I would do the same again and again. And yet now, because of a few sharp lessons Baba gave me, I would endeavour to ensure the happiness and blessings of my close ones before I acted.

I had money from the sale of the Melbourne house and

with this bought my ticket, provided half of the cost of Francis's fare, and gave a small loan to a third man, John Ballantyne, who also decided to go. My next hurdle was to gain permission from the army to be away for six weeks. To save expenses we decided to fly over and return by sea. But I anticipated no problem and gave the director little information other than I was going to India. Because of my rank in the army, permission had to be obtained from the chief of staff, and for whatever reason (perhaps India as a country worried him), he refused my leave. When this was announced to me over the phone I was at first incoherent with dismay, and then bellowed to the director that I was going to see my Spiritual Master, Meher Baba, and that wild horses would not keep me from doing so. He said in effect, "All right, keep your shirt on! I myself will see the chief of staff." This he did, and leave was granted. Baba's Name had wrought the change.

In February 1954 Baba had called Francis to join Him for the Andhra tour. The following letters between Francis and Eruch concern the booklet *journey with God* (about that tour), which Francis wrote on his return to Australia. They also contain Baba's invitation to Francis and to Australian men to come to the *darshan* in India in September 1954.

Florence Hall  
Mahabaleshwar  
26 April 1954

Dear Francis,

Your letter of 10th April covering the draft of the booklet duly received.

Baba was very happy to hear the contents of the whole

draft and desires that it must be printed and circulated by you to all interested.

Baba says that the whole thing is excellent from the first page of the draft to the last word. All the *mandali* and the women group also like it very much because, as Baba says, "It is appealing to the mind and also to the heart, it is so simple and yet so deep. It is full of love."

Enclosed are booklets for your use (to be added to your booklet). Only picked material may be used. Also find enclosed typed pieces of messages of Baba dictated on board during Andhra programmes.

Baba says that you are at liberty to make best use of these enclosures. There is no need to use all the material for your booklet. You select relevant things to fit into your own theme as — "What He says" — as you have mentioned in your letter.

Baba wants you to arrange the printing of the booklet as soon as conveniently possible and then send a hundred copies to Baba for the local distribution in India to the selected groups, who will in turn circulate the copies to all interested.

Baba sends His Love.

Sincerely yours,  
*Eruch*

P.S. Please acknowledge.

Encl: 3 printed booklets and typed messages

[Note: This booklet by Francis was published as *Journey with God*.]

Beacon Hill, N.S.W.

11 May 1954

Dear Eruch,

Your letter of Apr. 26th conveying Baba's approval of booklet, and instruction to go ahead and print arrived nearly a week ago. I delayed answering in order to be able to give you approximate information as to date of publication. I cannot expect this to be effected for another three weeks (approx.) when 100 copies will immediately be sent to Baba.

I am overjoyed at Baba's kindness in allowing this publication, and for sending his love. Please thank him for me.

I have a strong wish now to embark on a series of writings that would bring unmistakably to Western minds the *fact of Baba*, and the true function of Spirituality. Perhaps his Grace will enable me to eventually do this. I do not think this is too bold of me. Eknath caused even an idiot boy to write a great work. Baba can do the same with me if he considers it necessary as part of his work.

I feel now a great happiness in Baba, and in the *mandali*. The tour was my first real experience of love and brotherhood. Please give any members at Mahabaleshwar my love. And the same to yourself.

*Francis*

Florence Hall  
Mahabaleshwar  
21 May 1954

Dear Francis,

Your letter of 11th May was read to Baba and He felt

very happy to note all you wrote.

Baba is pleased to hear that by the end of the next month or so you will be in a position to send 100 copies of your printed booklet.

But, you must note that Baba and *mandali* leave Mahabaleshwar for Satara on 1st June to stay at Satara for a few months. Please note the change of address as follows: Meher Baba, Grafton Bungalow, Camp, Satara (India).

Baba very happily approves, with His blessings, your idea of embarking on a series of writings on Baba — all the facts.

Baba says, "Do it and begin doing from now." He further says that your love for Him will guide you, your faith in Him will give you the determination, and that His own blessings will inspire you to turn out His work through your pen. He wants you not to worry about how and what you will write. He says that you commence writing on the series and do not at all be anxious about the result. Let it be immaterial whether your writings are accepted or not. You do not worry; let the result itself have the worry.

Baba sends His love to you. All *mandali* send their good wishes to you.

Yours,  
*Eruch*

Beacon Hill  
3 June 1954

Dear Eruch,

I gratefully acknowledge yours of 21st May, and thank Baba for His Blessing and kindness. I had already begun making notes for the series of writings a few days before

your letter arrived, and with Baba's confirmation and Blessing, I sat down there and then and wrote several pages straight off with great happiness.

I wish to advise that a man named Norman Davis came to see me a few weeks ago. He is looking for a *Master*, and was advised that I might be able to help him. I told him about BABA, and about the work that Baba has done here. However, he felt that he should first go to England and clear himself with his previous "teacher," and then would like to go on to India and try to see BABA personally. So I gave him Meherjee's and Dadachanji's phone numbers in Bombay — that they would know whether Baba could be seen, and advise him what to do about it. ·

Sincerely,  
*Francis*

Rosewood  
Camp Satara  
10 June 1954

Dear Francis,

Yours of 3rd June was read out to Baba. He has noted about Mr. Norman Davis and has arranged to instruct Meherjee and Dadachanji that if Mr. Davis contacts them on phone or otherwise, they should advise that Baba is only available to him on and from 12th September '54 till the end of that month, at Ahmednagar (Bombay State).

12th September 1954 is the day fixed for Baba giving His *darshan*, for the last time to the masses, in the District of Ahmednagar; and anyone from outside district can avail



of this opportunity of seeing Him there at Ahmednagar proper on 12th September.

After 12th September, Baba has instructed *mandali* concerned to hold a great meeting at Meherabad, Ahmednagar — on 29th and 30th September '54. This meeting will also be the last of its kind before He drops His body soon after breaking His Silence by the end of this year.

Baba has therefore desired that all who love Him, irrespective of whether they have ever before seen Him and come in His physical contact or not, should attend this great meeting which has its importance in the fact that Baba will hold this meeting as the last of its kind explaining to all present there about His present Incarnation and Work.

If you have the address of Mr. Davis, Baba wants you also to inform him all that is said above and ask him to see Baba on 12th September if he is really keen to meet Baba to have the contact of the Master.

As the September Meeting is exclusively for all males, Baba has no objection to any male member attending the meeting at Meherabad on 29th and 30th September. Male members at your side, keen to have Baba's contact, may attend the meeting if it is at all possible and convenient for them to do so provided they can accommodate themselves with the habits and the food of the Indian *mandali* — as you had, and yourself managed during your last visit.

Though it seems absurd even to suggest and expect anyone to come to India from a distance of thousands of miles to attend the Spiritual Meeting, yet it is possible, to presume on the safer side, that there might be one keen enough to jump at the opportunity of contacting the Master even if that contact were to be of a few minutes. Therefore, Baba wants you not to hesitate to tell about the meeting of

September if you come across anyone (*male* member) who is really keen to meet Him in India.

Baba says that it is needless to bring to your ears the desire of Baba that He wants you also to be by His side in India on and from September 10th till the end of that month. Unlike the last call, this time, Baba says that He wants you to come to India only if the time and the period of stay is suitable to your own convenience and commitments at your side and if it could be possible for you *easily* to spare the necessary funds for the trip to India and back.

If you cannot come then do not worry; but, Baba says that if you can *conveniently* and *easily* undertake this trip, then do come.

Gabriel Pascal is also expected to be near Baba from August end onwards.

Baba wants to know from you at an early date reply to all said above; and also, He wants to know the approximate date when He should expect the booklets printed by you.

Baba sends His Love to you.

(By order of Baba)

Yours,  
*Eruch*

P.S. The *mandali* stay at Rosewood Bungalow and Baba is in Grafton.

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## 1954 DARSHAN

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**IT SEEMS AMAZING NOW**, but in September 1954 it took us two and a half days to fly from Sydney to Bombay in easy, leisurely hops. It was a magical journey, yet tedious, because I longed to reach the Being who gave my life meaning and direction. I did in a sense think of Baba as God, yet I was really only conscious of Him as an overwhelming Presence who even in physical absence consumed my heart and mind.

Meher Baba's manifest love as a host showed immediately on our arrival at Bombay and continued in the Grand Hotel (still grand after decades, but only just) and in the bus journey. This journey lasted all day as we wound up the Ghats, broke down, lunched slowly at Poona, and finally arrived at Meherabad in the full, living darkness of the evening, which I can still experience to this day. We walked up the hill to the dormitory which He had directed to be prepared for us on the upper floor of the old stone water tank, and in which His Eastern and Western women *mandali* had stayed over many years.

I went through this first period spent with Meher Baba very serious and earnest, trying so hard to learn, to absorb, and tending in the end to be overwhelmed and overawed. Perhaps as a result I only remember vividly this incident, that moment, this one and that one of Baba's multitude of expressions and moods, and of the plays of light and shade, humour and revealing drama,

that He constantly brought to life in our presence.

Baba referred to me as a lad, and that was how I felt, not at all sure how I had got into this grown-up world. But at the same time I thirsted for it, sat on the rock wall surrounding our living quarters long before He was due in the morning, watching the dusty track waiting for Him to come, to see Him striding slowly up the hill effortlessly, each movement like that of some skilled dancer who forgets himself for a moment and becomes pure movement, not breaking His stride, whilst now and then gathering a stone from the path and throwing it to the side with the same smooth, complete motion. To watch, absorbed, and dwell on His slightest gesture was to see and experience beauty, and awaken my heart in longing to serve Him. I never saw a single movement of body, limbs, or facial changes that did not prompt my heart to declare, "Perfection!" and my mind to be baffled and say, "He could not be other than God!"

Early in the morning on 12th September we were taken by coach from Meherabad to an open area in Ahmednagar called Wadia Park. There, standing on the platform, we watched the car bringing Meher Baba drive to the side and below us. Baba walked briskly around to the front of the platform, but I felt no strong response as I watched. After some little time Baba seated Himself on the platform. Then, as though He had suddenly remembered our existence, He turned in the chair in short emphatic movements, looking at each one. At least, I was aware He looked at three of us, because I was the third, but such was the effect of that glance on me that I have no idea what happened later. His glance pierced me as though it were a shaft penetrating to the depths, and I felt a shock through my body like an electrical charge.

Later Baba sat on the edge of the dais and began distributing a handful of a simple white sweet to each one of the immense crowds as they filed before Him. I found the long hours of the

day tiring, yet His sixty-year-old physical form showed no sign of discomfort or weariness. He remained as He was when He began. It was hot and enervating, even more so in the close area where Baba sat, heavily surrounded as He was by us Westerners and some Easterners standing in an arc and peering down at Him. I noticed the constantly graceful movement of His hand and arm despite the long hours; I noticed that no one was missed, although the crush was heavy and some would tend to be pushed aside. Baba's arm would shoot through the press of bodies and make contact with the jostled one. Baba gave and gave His love, irrespective of the motive that brought those tens of thousands to Him; but I noticed that, absorbed as He appeared to be in giving sweets to each passing hand, every now and then He would stop and stroke the face of the person and perhaps say something. The contact, the wide, blossoming smile it produced, obviously suggested that here was one who loved, and did not just seek blessings for self.

Two days later an almost daily programme commenced with Baba. During these times He gave discourses and other messages. Earnest as I was to absorb everything that I possibly could from these hours with Meher Baba, I endeavoured to write down (long-hand) everything that I felt was significant. These notes, given in full in the supplement, are as I took them down during those days, virtually unedited, and they show that delightful mixture of formality, serious discussion, firm injunctions, and humorous informality that characterised God-Man, at least as I encountered Him. Baba began thus:

Christ and His Inner Circle and the Christian mystics all stressed purity of heart. Mohammed and His Imams, Zoroaster and the Magi, Krishna and His Companions, the Vedantists, all stressed purity of heart. So does Baba stress purity of the heart. Today we will see what this means —

and what the heart is — and what the mind. Does the heart mean only the organ or something deeper? One Sufi said, "The Abode of Love is infinitely higher and above the domain of intellect. He alone out of millions and billions of people can touch and kiss the threshold of the Beloved, who has his life on his sleeve." This is a literal translation. But what does it mean? It means that if you want to see your Beloved God, go before Him with your heart on your palm; thus it means that the intellect can never reach the One who transcends the mind. So we come to the understanding that God cannot be understood. He is not visible because He is infinitely visible to that eye which has no curtain or veil over it: veil off — elimination of desires; veil off — elimination of I-ness or ego.

On the third day after the *darshan* program in Wadia Park, we Westerners had private interviews with Baba, although in the case of the Australians the three of us were together. This was in the room below our dormitory, now the museum, in upper Meherabad. We sat cross-legged in front of Him, able to look easily into His face, and hardly aware of Eruch standing behind the low upholstered chair where Baba sat. The interview particularly gave me the opportunity to see and observe Baba close up, to note the soft, fine hair, the smooth, fresh skin despite His age, the delicate line of the mouth often hidden beneath the moustache, and His eyes — ah! His eyes — dark and light, sombre yet sparkling, dancing with a thousand lights, a beautiful rich brown, and a look that saw me as an individual, surface and depth, and simultaneously also saw through me and beyond, giving a sense of seeing not me but the universe. When He smiled, His whole face shone like the sun, pouring warmth and vitality into one's entire being.

Baba put us quickly at ease, smiling affectionately at us and

praising Francis for bringing Him two jewels, John and myself. (Many years later Baba again used the term *jewel* when He described me as "one of the jewels on the fingers of His hands.") I have no idea how long we were with Him, but it seemed relaxed and leisurely, with an eternal, timeless quality making it as real, as living now as it was then. It also was tense, riveting, compelling, as Baba constantly stirred the whole of one's being and heightened the quality and depth of response to His presence. To be in His presence was simultaneously sobering and exhilarating, and also so much more, as though one had become involved with a powerhouse; to continue being with Him over a long period of time was to doubt one's capacity to sustain the involvement.

It was again the beginning of a realistic assessment of my capacity for spirituality. I began to look at the *mandali* (particularly so when I lived with them in 1967), and to note how they coped with this Divine Powerhouse hour after hour, day after day, year after year, and I realised that this was a slow, developing process and that not yet was I at that stage. Of course, when the time comes, His Grace makes it possible. I learnt that He never gives more than we are able to take.

But to return to the interview: He asked us if we loved Him and would obey Him. When I said yes, He asked of me three things: the first, if I would walk naked through the streets of Ahmednagar. I said yes, not thinking about the order but simply resolved in a spontaneous way to do so if necessary. The other two orders I do not remember, but one could have been, "Would you return willingly to Australia if ordered?" In each case I said yes.

Then Baba enquired if we wished to say anything, and I, prompted by Francis many times in the lead-up to this interview, asked if Baba would come to Australia. He looked at me keenly and said, "Do you think I am not already there?" That silenced me, and I did not feel any need to ask Baba anything ever again.

He made it clear that He had everything in place, and all I had to do was love and obey Him and tag along.

He asked each of us, John first, what we took Him to be, and John answered, "A Perfect Master." Baba looked at him sharply and quizzically and said, "How would you know?" Then He turned to me, and I said without any conscious thought, "You are my ideal. You are what I would like to be." Baba lifted His hands and beamed as only He could, setting alight one's being but without flattering the ego. He then asked us if we experienced lust, and on our saying yes, He told us when this occurred to "picture Baba."

Addressing me, Baba said that I was to spread His message and to take over from Francis the house at Beacon Hill, which was at this stage still unfinished. The change of ownership of house and land was effected on our return, and in later years Baba referred to the house as built by Francis and myself.

The injunction that certainly had the most immediate and painful effect was the order, "Do what Francis tells you to do." I said yes, but I had no idea what was in store for me. This proved truly the beginning of my continuing development from lad to man. I pray that Beloved Baba does not forget me and my development to manhood.

That order was incredibly difficult at times to carry out, especially as Francis lived with us as a part of the family for a number of years. Yet all I feel now is gratitude, as I realise I could not have survived the strong ups and downs of my life over the past forty years but for that beneficent blessing. I feel that I must be honest and admit that my obedience to this order was often very poor, and finally in mid-1967 I wrote to Francis in India saying in effect that I knew what I was doing in the work at that time and would he "get off my back." This letter, read to Baba, brought a very sharp rebuke — "Do you want to continue to be a worker for Me or not?" — and then, later in the letter, the



message, "Once and for all, Francis is the leader in Australia and you are his right hand. You may consult Francis when you wish to." I know nothing of the spiritual consequences of that message, but it did coincide with many new developments in the history of Baba's cause in Australia.

Returning again to 1954, during the days that followed, Baba did not embrace me or pay me any of the special attentions that He gave to the older Westerners. (Actually John Ballantyne was the youngest and I was the second youngest of the seventeen men.) Yet Baba did not neglect me. On one of the early days, He directed that the Australians should occupy the Seclusion Cabin situated very close to the tomb, Francis to stay for the whole period and John and myself to share the time, there being room for only two beds.

Again on one of the early days Baba suddenly pointed to John and me, saying, "These two lads have a love for Truth," and directed that we should spend half an hour at midnight in the tomb for seven nights.

Francis was to shut us in each night and be responsible for our well-being. We were to sit where we wished, completely still, with eyes open and mouth shut, and mentally repeat Baba's Name. I sat on the edge of the crypt the first night; the tight wooden doors were firmly closed, and the tomb became utterly black. I was not aware of John or my surroundings, and I could not think of Baba. The more I tried and the more I failed, the harder it was to even say "Baba" mentally, and the awareness of being absolutely alone and adrift increased. Gone were the warmth and comfort of the distractions of everyday life, gone were the companionship and attention of family; there was only myself alone, and somewhere Baba, Who did not seem real to me at the moment. I experienced acute panic, and it seemed as though I passed the entire half-hour in that state.

The next morning my mind was still chaotic, and I was not

able to blurt out more than a few words to Baba when He asked me what I felt in the tomb. I tried to say something about the panic that I had experienced in the pit of my stomach and then managed to say, "My heart pounded all the time and I could not say your Name."

"What was there to frighten you?" asked Baba.

Again I stammered something about "images of the outside world."

Baba then asked if we were prepared to carry out what He asked for seven nights. We said yes. Baba replied:

Do not be frightened, there is nothing to fear. Don't force your attention; keep awake and don't move. Even if a snake crosses your legs, let it pass by. And love Baba during the half-hours. Fear means there is no love. Think of Baba from the bottom of your hearts; after seven nights you will have a glimpse of Baba. Why this fear? Francis of Assisi and Francis Xavier loved Christ with all their might, and what they suffered, none of you could guess, but fear was foreign to them. Do not fear, love Me. Don't be troubled, think of Baba and be happy.

Because of a very early start the next morning, Baba instructed us to miss one night and resume the next. This we did, and again the following morning Baba asked us how we felt. For myself, the half-hour had been much easier, and I said something about being "fine." Perhaps I should have said that the experience of fear was lessening, that I was still troubled but that I wanted to continue. In any case Baba looked at me thoughtfully, I would say, as He did from time to time during the various periods with Him, and then said to discontinue the half-hours. And that was that. If the fact that He withdrew the order spelt failure on my part, then so be it. Although I have failed Baba many times, I am not giving up my efforts to serve Him because

of continuing failures; and in any case I think He enjoys exercising His attributes of compassion and forgiveness.

I have given this experience in full because it has had a strong and continuing effect on my life. It signalled, together with His instructions to me in our interview, the beginning of a very real and personal development for me as a human being. It was a traumatic experience, and to use a trite phrase, I shall never be the same again. From it, words read in spiritual discourses came to life, or rather, the minute beginnings of life: the relationship of Baba to self is one to one; Baba is truly the One to take and not to give until the two become One; fear is a fear of loss of self and its world in the mistaken belief that the self and its world must exist; one must not let the mind know what it has lost, must not give it the opportunity of dwelling upon loss; and to do this, one should constantly feed the heart from the Source of love, Meher Baba. Love conquers all, love alone prevails. The experience helped considerably to dispel my spiritual pride, but it did not stop me wanting to stick with Baba and try my best to serve Him. Perhaps Beloved Baba's answer was given to me and Francis on an occasion in 1956 in the big room of Meher House, Beacon Hill, with only ourselves and Eruch present: "I know that you two will stick to Me to the end."

Another dramatic experience of those days in 1954 was the time when I found Baba responded to a deep thought-feeling centred on Him. He was giving a discourse, paused, and for a moment stopped in repose with His eyes fixed in what I saw as ineffable sadness. With pain that made me gasp and bring tears to my eyes, the words came to me: *He is seeking only to be given a home in each heart*. Inwardly, involuntarily, I asked Baba, "Please stay exactly as You are so that I can gaze and gaze upon Your face." Baba, surely in response to my wish, said that we would stop the discourse and that we could look upon His face for five minutes. He then assumed the precise expression of the time of

my experience, with His head slightly inclined and His eyes looking to the side. Thus I had my wish, and that episode has stayed with me ever fresh.

Years later I read the following diary entry of Dr. William Donkin's, and it reminded me so much of my impression of 1954 that I give it here:

He was a fine sight to look at, His phenomenal strength of character and His sort of mysterious spiritual beauty and radiance very much visible as He sat on His couch. Baba's face in repose is such a fusion of spiritual bliss and serenity and a sort of dragging sadness, which gives such dignity and grandeur to the face and really surpasses a scenery of nature, both in its amazing hold on the onlooker, and its rapid changes.<sup>1</sup>

The phrase I often use to myself to describe Baba's eyes at that time is "a haunting sadness."

There is another aspect to this incident that I could mention. It was really the first time that I fully sensed the immense pain that was obviously always there in Baba, but which only occasionally appeared when we lovers were with Him, between the bursts of sunlight that He manifested frequently for our comfort and warmth. When I was with Him at His home in Meherazad in February 1967 with only a few *mandali* present, His suffering was much more apparent and continuous. He said to me then, "As your breath ebbs and flows but is always with you, so is My suffering always with Me." And I think that Beloved Baba had the last word in the following incident at that time. I was close to one of the *mandali* at Meherazad as we watched Baba move slowly and painfully to His chair, and I heard the disciple say softly with a long sigh, "Poor old man." Later that day as I walked alongside the chair carrying Baba to His room, He said, "Remember, I am God 100 percent." And He repeated

this. So to my understanding He was saying, "You may see My Man-ness and weep for its condition, but remember I am God Absolute; do not merely descend into sentimentality over My condition, but remember that this suffering is in order that you may be free."

Coming back to 1954, some of the loveliest times spent with Baba were when He called for musical records to be played on the gramophone. For me each time was truly magical. The atmosphere created by His presence and the sound of *qawwali* singers pouring out songs of love for God was incredibly rich and moving. Sometimes Baba would stop the record, and at other times, after it had finished, He would give a translation of the words or a commentary. I have since heard music from other countries that border the Mediterranean and across the Middle East to India, and it seems to me as though it has a common thread of expressive longing for God, with the heart as it were in the throat, giving the voice an unmistakable quality of love for God. That feeling comes from the depth of the heart, not from the choppy movement on the surface of the mind which we call emotion. The deeper the feeling, the less it can be expressed in words, and the less one wants to.

During those days of song, a few popular Western records were played on the old gramophone at first, for example, R. Crooke's "Ah, Sweet Mystery" and Marian Anderson. Then a little later there was a series of Indian records. Baba stated He liked the highest and the lowest in music. Later He asked for one of Bing Crosby's records and for "Begin the Beguine." Here are some of my notes on a few of the records played for Baba. Translations of the remainder will be found in the supplement.

Of Akhtari Bai, a *qawwali* singer, Baba said: "Some of you might or might not like her voice, but she is the greatest *qawwal* in India. She always sings about lovers of God.

Here she sings about *masts* who through love for God have discarded everything, do not care about anything, and appear as mad. So the *mast* says to the Beloved: 'If You want to make me mad for You, do not let my fortune make me fun for the onlookers. Don't make me a laughing-stock. O, you people of the world who think me mad and throw stones at me, if you were fortunate and had this love, you also would be mad.'

"The Master of Hafiz, Attar, had long tresses. In the song Hafiz says, 'Do not let your hair flow freely, because at every flowing my heart receives an arrow.' "

"O Hafiz, these tears which I shed are tears of blood but so precious that you should consider them pearls and use them as earrings.' "

God says, "'Oh lover of Mine, if you want to enter My Lane, just let your heart roll under My Feet and be kicked by Me as My ball.' "

"The singer says, 'I have been so killed by your Love, and yet you are cruel. Beloved, you do not even glance at me.' "

"So today we have tried to love God. We talked of love, and sang songs of love to God."

So many memories... scenes unfolding in slow motion as I relive walking with Baba, sitting with Baba, eating lunch but caught up watching Baba walk around the long table touching various ones, and then sitting on the ground against a post and calling the visitor from Japan to come to Him, noting his slowness to do so, and then Francis's speed in obeying when he was called; brief cameo scenes of Baba's varying expressions, changing positions, swift, constant, fascinating mood changes; everything during that time contributing to my commitment to the God-Man. Many of the other men spoke of having experiences of

Divine Love in those days with Baba. I have not had such experiences, but I can certainly testify to the incredibly warm, enveloping, inspiring, loving-kindness that Baba constantly manifested.

While I have clear and penetrating memories of my time with Baba in 1954, I am dismayed at the vagueness of other memories. But I do recall that my mind was not questioning, doubting, probing, and where Beloved Baba, for example, participated in prayers to God, I did not query but totally accepted whatever He did. I was intent and serious, and not critical or observant as one would be when one questioned and sought to understand the significance of Baba's actions. Such was the day when Baba led us all down the hill to the Mandali Hall at lower Meherabad, and with us present He participated in Zoroastrian, Hindu, Islamic, and Christian prayers read by different members of the *mandali*. Before each prayer Baba washed His face and hands or His hands alone, and the intensity of His participation was visible in the movements of His fingers and sometimes of His right arm. The full account of this day is wonderfully conveyed in Charles Purdom's book *The God-Man*, but I would like to add here the Christian prayer which Eruch read out, at the end of which Baba touched the ground:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

O Lord! Hear my prayer and let my cry come unto Thee:

Thou who art the God of the God, the Father Almighty, art the Father Everlasting!

O God! Almighty Father! The Lord of Lords! The King of Kings! All the earth doth worship Thee.

To Thee All Angels, to Thee the Heavens and All Powers,

To Thee All Saints and All Beings with unceasing voice do cry:  
The Holy! The Holy of Holies!

Full are the Heavens and the Earth of the Majesty of Thy  
Glory.

Thou the Glorious! Thou the Exalted Effulgence;  
Thou the Praiseworthy in the Assemblage of the Prophets;  
Thou the Celestial Beauty! art the Eternal Song of Thy  
Lovers.

Thou Who art acknowledged, praised, and worshipped  
throughout the world, in all Churches, Synagogues,  
Mosques, Temples, and Pagodas: To Thee I most  
humbly bow down.

Thou of Unbounded Majesty! art the Father of the Creation;  
Thy True Adorable and Only Begotten Son, the Christ, art the  
King of Glory, the Saviour of Mankind, the Ancient One,  
the Highest of the High!

Christ! the Messiah! Thou of the Father Everlasting art the  
Son Everlasting:

Thou O Most Merciful Lord! hast taken upon Thee to deliver  
Man from bondage, to Eternal Glory:

O The Ancient One! The Redeemer! Thou, having first over-  
come the Sting of Ignorance, didst open to all the kingdom  
of Bliss, Knowledge and Power;

I most humbly praise Thee, O My God!

I Most Firmly Acknowledge Thee, O My God!

O My Soul of Souls! I believe in Thee, because Thou art Truth  
Itself;

I worship Thee, O Highest of the High, because Thou art the  
Only One worthy of Adoration: I love Thee above all  
things and beings, because thou art Love Divine Itself;

I beseech Thee, because Thou art Mercy Itself;

I offer Thee all my thoughts, words, and actions, my sufferings  
and my joys, because Thou art the Only Beloved:



I therefore beseech Thee, My God! My Lord of Lords! The Highest of the High! The Ancient One! to have mercy on me, according to Thy Unbounded Mercy, and let my cry come unto Thee:

O My Beloved! Suffer me not to be separated from Thee for ever and ever!

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

On another morning Baba came up the hill on foot looking pale but smiling. He told us, "It is the last day of My coming here, and today we will drink together. This is not the Last Supper, but the Last Drink." Baba talked about various matters for a short time, and some interviews followed. Then He sent for fruit drinks, which were brought in and put before Him. All except Eruch and the Westerners left the room, the doors were shut, and there was silence. Baba told us, "For one minute close your eyes and ask God, Who is the innermost Self of us all, to help us to love Him honestly." He then sipped from each glass, and handed one to each of us. "Drink slowly," He said.

After we all had finished, the doors were opened and the *mandali* came in and were given a glass each, but the drinks were not sipped by Baba. "Now we will all go to the dome (*samadhi*).\" We went with Him there, on to the graves of close disciples nearby, and to Baba's room. Afterwards He sat with us under a tree, then left to go down the hill.<sup>3</sup>

More memories: Baba dealing with queries from one of the *mandali* concerning arrangements for the 1,200-strong men's meeting, and me watching and saying to myself, "There is the Perfect Executive." I have no idea what was said, and I was perhaps twelve to fifteen feet away, but that vision of perfection in practical action stays with me sharp and clear. He is the Chief Executive of Creation. He does have a board of five Directors (the five Perfect Masters), but there is no doubt who is the real boss.

There are many memories, too, of Baba's loving moments with this Englishman or that American, memories that bring a smile and an uplift of the heart — little gestures, but done with such thoughtfulness and simple affectionate humanness. His concern with the elderly ones' health, humorous yet serious threats to Dr. Donkin if anyone should get ill because of the least inattentiveness to our hygiene, concern over travel arrangements for the elderly, about this one's injury and that one's comforts.

But the memory that stands out is the occasion when Baba took us to Arangaon village. Just before we went there, Baba gave this talk:

I love these poor people of the village very much. I am the poorest of the poor. I always say that and I am really that. Emperor and beggar at one and the same time.

This reminds Me, from the day I stopped speaking, I also stopped touching money. I don't touch money, but money comes and goes; disciples everywhere give money. Only when I give to *masts* and special poor people on special occasions do I handle money. On these occasions I wash their feet and give the money with My own hands. Sometimes I distribute grain, but always the feet must be washed first, and then the gifts handed over, because I do not only play the part, but I become that.

So this village is very dear to Me. Years back there was a dispensary and hospital here, also leper and *mast* ashrams. I supervised everything; for example, in the boys' ashram I bathed them, washed their clothes, cleaned latrines. The same with the *masts*. I did these things not for show, but I became that part.

The people of this village are very dear to Me. You will see how they live.

(He had previously forbidden us to visit the village because of

the "germs, worms and microbes," but said that with Him we would be safe.)

When we reached Arangaon, Baba walked with us through some of the lanes. In the midst of the procession He suddenly turned aside and walked straight into one of the narrow single-story terraced mud-brick homes lining the lane. Why I do not now know, but I was with Baba and followed Him through the narrow, dark passageway into a largish communal room where a number of people were present. As I watched Baba, He went straight to an old woman and embraced her. I felt rather than saw the intense joy she experienced in this obviously unexpected but longed-for visit from her Beloved Baba. Then Baba, just as quickly, turned round and brushed past me on His way out of the house. The impact of that whole episode stays with me. The scene was timeless, the heart cry of the woman's longing timeless, and the response of God's embrace and comfort amid the earth walls and floor and the simplicity of the setting could have all taken place in any Advent of God-Man.

I do not recall any contact with Mohammed the *mast* during this period, although no doubt I did have some. But I do recall very clearly that Francis and I visited the *mast* Ali Shah in his small room at lower Meherabad. He was seated on his bed, and Francis and I sat on each side of him, the *mast* taking no notice of us at all. Then I offered him a cigarette from my packet, and he slowly, carefully, precisely took two and puffed away happily when I lit them. A simple incident, but remembered mainly for the quiet, happy atmosphere that I felt so strongly in that small, bare room. William Donkin, in his book *The Wayfarers* writes of Ali Shah: "This delightful fifth plane *mast* is interesting, not only because of his many contacts with Baba, but also because he is a perfect example of the *jamali* type of *mast*. Despite his passion for cigarettes, his blandness, his docility, and his superficially doll-like appearance, he possesses an utterly disarming and child-

like quality of simplicity. This simplicity is no fictitious pose, but is an intrinsic quality in him to which Baba has so often drawn our attention, that it is, perhaps, an outer measure of the stature of his inner grace."<sup>4</sup>

So the three weeks passed, finishing with the two-day men's meeting. One final incident I might mention occurred after we left by the evening train on 30th September. This departure from the immediate presence of Baba suddenly brought back overwhelmingly the realisation of what I faced on my return to Australia. I remembered Baba's instructions to me to do what Francis told me, and I became greatly troubled. Francis and I stayed in Bombay for some two weeks waiting for the ship that would return us to Australia. As mentioned earlier, we did this in order to cut down the cost of the journey. For the first few days in Bombay I remained disturbed and depressed at the thought of Baba's instructions. Then by chance we saw advertised a film from America, *The Next Voice You Hear*. We went to see it, and as I watched, the film became a key to reawakening my heart and my commitment to Baba, and to the quieting of my mind, which had become agitated with apprehension. The film was the story of an American family, thoroughly disorganised, tension-ridden and directionless, who hear a voice on the radio saying, "The next voice you hear will be the voice of God." This is of course followed by silence, and the effect on the family of this announcement is transforming and inspiring. From being unharmonious the family becomes harmonious, cheerful, and loving. The film was an experience which repeated the main lesson that I had absorbed from my time in the *samadhi* under Baba's instructions: namely, do not let the mind know what the heart has lost, and do not let the mind run free, but turn again and again to the heart and to one's love for Him.

It was to be two years before I saw Meher Baba again. What had the three weeks meant to me? What was my impression of

Meher Baba? The following talk I actually wrote years later, but it is a true expression of my thoughts and feelings in 1954:

### SOME ATTRIBUTES OF MEHER BABA

Avatar Meher Baba came to Australia twice, in 1956 and 1958. In 1956 He stayed principally in Sydney, and during that time I drove Him around. On one occasion, seated beside Him, I was thinking as I drove, "How is it possible for this Form that is seated alongside me to be not only the Creator of the universe and universes, but also to contain it all?"

I didn't speak aloud, thinking that I would not trouble Him with such a matter. But a moment later, not to my surprise because it always seemed so natural that He who is the very depth of my being should answer my unspoken thoughts, He explained in simple terms that yes, the whole of Creation is contained within Him, that He is everything, in everything, and beyond everything, and that not only is He the only Reality, but He is conscious of being that Reality.

How many thoughts I must have had in the course of my times with Meher Baba, but as in the car, it was only those thought-feelings that mirrored a certain depth of longing for God as Love and Truth that He might respond to. One sensed that His actions had a logic of their own and were, in any case, without exception, beautiful beyond expression and meaningful beyond definition. It is those times of Baba's response to me that I remember particularly, not so much the words if there were any, but the timeless silence that permeated and enveloped everything of Him, and which was reflected not only in His eyes but also in the stance of His body, the movement of His hand and limb, and the passing play of expressions across His face. Yes, it is this timeless silence that one remembers and relives.

To return to Meher Baba's response to me in the car: without understanding any more than I did before, I was nevertheless satisfied, and have not felt perplexed over the matter since. But that experience means that it is no surprise to me that others also question, and particularly ask me what was it like to be with Meher Baba, what did I experience, what were His qualities? What has loving Him meant to me?

First and foremost, Meher Baba had a Presence, a Presence so complete and so overwhelming that one found no difficulty in being conscious only of Him. Yet He projected that Presence in the most natural way. He was simply being Himself, responding lovingly to those with Him, yet never giving the impression of seeking to gain their attention through any device, including miracles. I think of Meher Baba sitting silent for hours before an audience of thousands, each one happy and absorbed with a momentary embrace or touch from Baba, no matter how long they had to wait to receive it. I think of Baba stopping His already overcrowded car on a country road to give an old wayfarer passage to the next town. I think of Baba rising from His chair to greet black people in America long before the new social conscience regarding them; and going forward to greet the aged as they with difficulty moved towards Him. I think of His countless gestures of loving thoughtfulness, of material help, or a few words of meaningful comfort, such as saying with a twinkle in His eyes to the woman amongst the crowd harassed by her two children, "If only two children can make your life a hell, can you imagine My plight Who has billions of children?" and thus immediately comforting her and at the same time putting her troubles into intelligent perspective. So I think of and salute the countless men and women who carry His touch

of love and who endeavour to express wholeheartedly that touch in their lives.

An all-pervading aspect of His presence is a selfless, all-embracing love that immediately lightens the spirits, and gives hope, courage, and a longing to embrace all with that same love. Never at any time did He express any thought or feeling that He was seeking anything for Himself.

I can recall during my first contact with Him being most moved by the expression in His eyes, and the realisation that came with that feeling that here was One Who only sought in a philosophical sense the highest good for each, and in a personal sense a home in each heart.

I knew that outwardly He owned nothing, that He never touched money, that He dressed in a most simple fashion, and ate sparingly, even fasting for long periods. Such knowledge reinforces the conviction that He is seeking only our liberation from the bondage of our ignorance and selfish desires, and that all His attentions to us — His words, His orders, His wishes — are to bring about in us a joyous, carefree, love relationship with the whole of Creation.

In observing Avatar Meher Baba, in efforts to absorb His message, to absorb what He stood for, to understand this complex Being Who seemed to ever change and yet ever remain the same, one was constantly impressed with diametrically opposed qualities. He made one think of tempered steel and the softness of water. He made one aware of the illusoriness of Creation and of the reality of love for each other; of the inexorable law of cause and effect that what we sow in the form of thoughts, feelings, and actions will be returned in like form. And at the same time He made one aware of His compassion when tears would come to His eyes over the plight of one whom He loved and who loved Him. He would remain unmoved and apparently

indifferent to some personal distress of ours that we might feel was our greatest tragedy, and yet respond when least expected.

There is a delightful story, one of literally innumerable instances throughout His life on earth, where He was with a large group of His lovers. Even on occasions when there was a sea of people moving around, talking, joyous at being with Baba, and Baba was just sitting there silently, each person would go away with the feeling that Baba had paid special attention to them, that there was something special between Baba and them. As I have said, on this occasion there was a large group of His lovers, and Meher Baba was seated at one end of the hall. There was general singing, and at the far end of the hall, one of the lovers opened his mouth to join in. As he did so, a fly got in. He coughed it up and went on with the singing. But after a while the lover suddenly became concerned: "Did the fly go away or did I swallow it?" A minute passed. He continued to be agitated. Baba, from the other end, suddenly gestured, "Don't worry. With My own eyes I saw the fly fly away!"

Or to take another delightful incident: a husband and wife, Westerners, were seated some twenty to thirty feet behind Meher Baba at some public occasion. The wife was not a follower of Meher Baba, but in sitting there and observing the interaction between Him and those around Him, she was suddenly moved to whisper to her neighbour, "He is a good man." Instantly Meher Baba whirled round in His chair and, looking directly at her, He gestured, "Not good man but God-Man."

We live in deeply troubled times, and it seems that no life is untouched with anguish and suffering in some form. From babyhood to old age we are at the mercy of forces that continually seek to destroy us. In our heart of hearts



we know that the answer to this quagmire of suffering is love, and that it is only through love that we can rise above and be free of these forces that seek to destroy us.

It was in order to release this love that Meher Baba came among us. It was in order that we might have the courage and vision to begin a new life that He lived as man among us.

There is a beautiful story relating to a young woman in the 1930s. She came for the first time to meet Baba in America and immediately on seeing Him burst into anguished tears. She fell towards Him, weeping all the while. Meher Baba took her head and placed it on His lap, and she continued to weep for some time. Then He gently raised her head and said, "What is it; why do you weep? You are so young, so healthy, so beautiful. What is it that troubles you?"

"Yes," she said, "I may be all that, and wealthy too, yet I am such a miserable, wretched person I feel like committing suicide."

Baba said, "That is a good idea. Do so this instant in My presence." And He took her head and placed it at His feet and said, "There, now you are dead." Then after a while He lifted her up. "Now live again. Live a new life now. Completely forget the past and leave it aside. It has nothing to do with you. You are dead, and this is a new, fresh life."

That is what Baba is saying to each one of us: live a new life, leave aside completely, forget, the old life with its disappointments and hurts and resentments — and live a new life in His love, seeking to live as He has outlined in this beautiful statement:

This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life

of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed, and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful action, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honour nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed, and religious ceremonies.<sup>5</sup>

I do not know what more to say about this Being Whom I was with on various occasions over a fifteen-year period. I would like to say so much, I would love to be able to contain in words His beauty, His strength, His compassion, His truthfulness, His loving concern, and hand them, as it were, on a platter to you. I find it impossible to find the words to do Him justice.

He is here. As He has always said, He will be present whenever we think of Him, and perhaps He will be moved to touch each of our hearts, and then the truth of His words, "Things that are real are given and received in silence," will be manifest to us.

Francis and I were sailing down the coast of India on our way home when he wrote this poem:

## SAILING DOWN THE INDIAN COAST

I awoke in the dark of the morning –  
The night had almost passed  
    without remembrance of my love.

Across the dark waters, a light  
    from the shore of His country  
Sharply admonished me.

Thinking of BABA and His bright Companions,  
It was no time before the dawn broke,  
And the sun rose again in the blue expanse of  
    my love.

*F.*

9 October 1954

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## 1954 - 1956

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**THE TWO YEARS FROM 1954 TO 1956** saw the consolidation of the Baba family in Australia that was to remain almost stable and static in numbers until the influx of the young men and women in 1967-1968. The group was mostly made up of people from the now defunct Sufi Society and partly of new members. But they were almost all middle-aged, with just a few young ones plus some children such as our three. We all certainly tried to increase the numbers but with little success. It was difficult enough to discuss spirituality in other than orthodox Christian terms, and virtually impossible to speak of the "second coming of Christ," giving Him a different Name.

The number of Baba lovers who remained active and committed to Him from 1954 to 1967 was no more than about 70. Immediately after the 1958 *sahavas* at Avatar's Abode, 48 expressed willingness to obey Baba, although 55 (excluding the children under nine years) attended the *sahavas*; in October 1958, 57 people replied yes to the circular sent out by Baba; and 62 fasted between 26 December 1960 and 16 January 1961 as wished by Baba; but on the other hand only 30 Australians, plus one New Zealander, attended the East-West Gathering in 1962. The number of lovers in Australia who wrote to Baba as invited, September 1965 to February 1966, was 65.

In addition, there were probably 40 to 50 who stayed for

varying lengths of time and then drifted away. Some did not meet Baba despite an interest in Him and His message; some met Him and did not continue the connection, outwardly at least. John Ballantyne, the young man who was with Francis and me in 1954, was an example. He met Baba in 1954, was active with the group in 1954-1956, met Baba again in 1956, and then a few days later disappeared; he has not been seen since that time.

In 1954 and 1955 we continued to work on Meher House, and now at least the family had the partly completed building to sleep in instead of a tent. But we still used a temporary canvas and timber-constructed kitchen and dining room for meals and meetings. Sometimes there would be up to twelve or fifteen seated around the long makeshift table, and it seemed to be my standard task to make tea for all at the end of the evening meeting. This, as with all cooking, was done on two Primus stoves. Sometimes we would have unexpected visitors such as snakes, rats, possums, birds, and other creatures. It was some ten years before the bushland surrounding Meher House disappeared.

Life, particularly for Joan with three children, was not easy. The underdeveloped area where the house was situated did not help. It was not until just before Baba's 1956 visit that electricity was available (pressure lamps and hurricane lanterns were used); there was as yet no laundry, and washing was done outside the house in a makeshift lean-to; there was no sewerage available: again the toilet was outside, with an earth-pan which I would empty into specially constructed pits until the matter had sufficiently broken down to be used to create gardens.

Yes, life was undoubtedly hard, but then the blessings that flowed from Baba far outweighed the difficulties: messages of love from Him that reinforced our germinating conviction that Baba was, is, and will be ever present in our hearts; the sharing of the awakening love in new ones; the exciting possibility that Baba might come to Australia some time; and the deep joy that

came with the meetings and readings and musical sessions that Francis organised. I think that Beloved Baba made it clear to Joan that the hardships were all worthwhile when He said repeatedly never to sell Meher House, and then in 1967 said that it is a place of pilgrimage second only in Australia to Avatar's Abode.

We did not miss any opportunity to spread His Name and message, travelling distances to see any person or group who indicated an interest or who might be interested. During 1955 we had the interesting task, set by Baba Himself, of selling one hundred copies of the newly published book *God Speaks*. For myself, I took to this challenge with relish, and apart from selling copies to bemused fellow officers and to anyone else who gave me half a chance, I took a week's leave from the army and went to Brisbane, some 650 miles to the north, travelling by train and staying in a very basic lodging house. The effort resulted in the sale of five books including two copies of *God Speaks*, yet I feel, perhaps fancifully, that Baba used that stay as the beginning of His connection with Brisbane and Queensland. Just north of Brisbane now is Avatar's Abode, His spiritual centre for Australia. By the time Baba came in 1956 we had sold 107 copies of *God Speaks*.

For me, 1955 saw the beginning of correspondence with Baba's *mandali*, mainly Eruch and Mani, which has continued down the years, but also with Adi K. Irani and various others such as Ramjoo Abdulla. Eruch's letters were almost entirely commentaries on the spiritual life "as gathered from Baba." For example, Eruch wrote on 3rd August 1955:

Many things happen to us and to all, near us and everywhere, every moment of our life; and yet we give importance only to those things happening that affect our own personality, directly or indirectly. And what has Baba to say

to this? Baba said that, in the absolute sense, nothing happens; nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen! And Baba has something to add to this. You might call it a P.S., as He was very fond of not missing a P.S., and then P.P.S., whenever He used to dictate letters to any one of His lovers. The P.S. in question is: whatever appears to happen, happens by the Divine Will for the ultimate good of one and all.

After adding this P.S., I feel like proceeding with this letter. Well, by now, you must have read through the account of the diary of the last "meeting" at Satara – "The Die Is Cast." If one is able to follow the gist of all that is said therein, and be sure, Baba would like us to follow all that is said in "The Die Is Cast," one cannot escape to note well what is repeatedly stressed, all about holding fast to Baba's *daaman* (garment) without least expectations of material benefits or spiritual gains. Irrespective of what will happen, and what is to happen, and what has not happened, Baba lays stress on the bond of LOVE which alone is capable of giving sufficient strength to one who dares to hold the *daaman* of the Avatar; the Avatar, Who boldly declares — "Hold Me fast, or you lose Me!"

Although it is very, very rare to possess such a sublime love as Baba wants, yet Baba, through His "Final Declaration," through His "Glorification," through His "Confirmation," through His "Decision," and finally through His discourses in "The Die Is Cast," has shaken up our love factor to such a degree, through such sieves, that all, what has sieved through, can in no way be inferior to what is wanted by Baba. Our love has been thoroughly sifted by our Beloved; and what remains of love now is love more thoroughly graded and tested to stand the sublimity as desired by our Beloved, Baba. History records that the

Beloved can never order the halt here; He must continue His sieving operations to enable mankind to behold and to experience the Love Divine from the crust of this earth into the very core of the universe.

In the absolute sense nothing happens, and yet our Baba can effect a happening in one's life, which can change completely the course of one's life, and yet make one experience that nothing has ever happened to one's self! Such is the secret, as Baba had said, of the final experience of God-Realisation.

In the presence of Baba we do get such a feeling of "nothing happening." Baba always appears as He is; with all our past experiences and His past promises nothing seems to have either affected us or troubled Him in the least! We attribute all this to our ever forgetting things that happened in the past and to not knowing what is to happen in the future. But Baba says that you do not forget ever, once you realise your State! All this forgetfulness and forgetting is due to the fact that nothing happens in reality.

I do not understand myself why I have been harping on this subject today! Forgive me if this letter proves boring. Convey my love to Francis and accept the same yourself.

*Eruch*

In a different vein, Mani on 16th May 1956 writes:

Our flowering trees are in glorious bloom once again, and particularly lovely is the goldmohr with its fiery orange blossoms. A few days ago in the palm grove in front of our house there was a fight between a big cobra and a mongoose — the agile mongoose won, of course. There is a big



family of these mongooses (or is it mongeese?) down by the well, and they keep the place more or less free of snakes.

From yesterday Baba walks over to Judge's bungalow every morning to work with Kaikobad. Quite often Baba asks me who the letters are from and it was with joy I was able to convey your love and thanks to Baba. He gestured, "I am happy."

The tempo of our living was decidedly increased with the news received early in 1956 that Baba was definitely coming to Australia in August. The house-building went on apace, and we worked day and night to finish what has always been called the "big room" (it is thirty feet by twenty with stone walls, a large window to the view, and a timber-lined high ceiling). This is the room in which Baba stayed during His visit and in which all the meetings were held.

We made the large double garage, situated some thirty feet downhill from the house, into a dormitory and common kitchen and dining room for the women Baba lovers who stayed on the property during the visit, except for Joan and the children and Lorna Rouse, who all stayed in a lean-to shed with small adjoining tent. Two tents were provided further downhill in the bush for the men Baba lovers. The four *mandali* who accompanied Baba — Eruch Jessawala, Adi K. Irani, Meherjee Karkaria, and Dr. Nilkanth Godse (Nilu) — all stayed in the house with Him.

There was also a further flurry of activity to ensure that everyone we could think of was invited to the open public day that Baba had said He would allow. With the last cash available, we hired a photographer and his movie camera to film Baba during His Sydney stay.

By this time the baron's quite expensive (for those days) English car, a 1947 Triumph, had finally come to Francis through the baron's will, and it was given to me for use and maintenance.

It was in this car that I drove Baba during His stay in Sydney in 1956 and 1958. Unfortunately the car had not been maintained well over the years, and after Baba's visit of one day to Sydney in 1958, I reluctantly decided to abandon it, keeping only Baba's seat and the door arm-rest which He had used. This I felt was the pinnacle of my driving career, and never have I had such a classy car since.

So passed the two years following the momentous September 1954 *darshan*, and now all was set for the Lord's first known visit to His land down-under.

During those two years various other letters from Adi Sr., Eruch, and Mani were received, and some of these are given here.

[Extract:]

Kings Road  
Ahmednagar, India  
21 December 1954

My dear Francis,

Baba gave up using alphabet board from 7th October. He gave up the use of fingers to express thoughts from 1st December. Before doing the latter, he called a few of the *mandali* at Satara on 30th Nov., and with those who stay with him kept us awake the whole night. By the courtesy of a woman devotee from Bombay, a *qawwali* singer paid by her was sent to Satara. He gave us whole night lovely singing on Sufistic and Vedantic thoughts and about Masters and kept the *mandali* deeply interested and pleasantly awake. Baba was also very pleased with his songs. Some photographs were taken. Similarly, photographs on the trip to Pandharpur were also taken. As promised,

Gadge Maharaj invited Baba and Baba visited Pandharpur with a few *mandali*. Tens of thousands of people gathered and Gadge Maharaj acclaimed Baba as the World Teacher. So much for the present.

With wishes of love and blessings from the Highest of the High and the dearest of the dear to you and the two other brothers.

Yours brotherly,  
*Adi K Irani*

Rosewood  
Camp Satara, India  
6 April 1955

Dear Bill,

It was so kind of you to have remembered me, dear brother.

The few days that you all were with us and the very few hours that we could be with you all — all seemed a dream, a very fine dream, to me; it will never be forgotten so soon, nor so easily! We all think of you and others, who had come from distant lands, very often; and the memory of those days haunts some of us, who came in close association with you all. It is surprising how intimate you all are to us.

As our dear Baba had disconnected Himself from all outward activities, there is not much news from our side to give you all. And whatever little that is to give, you must have already heard from Francis. Mani must have written to him. It is a long time that I have not written to our very dear Francis.

Very recently Baba took a very few of the *mandali* with Him to Khuldabad — about 15 miles from Aurangabad —

Khuldabad is famous for its well-known Ellora Caves. Tourists from all over the world pay visits to this place. But Baba went there for His own work. Night and day He worked there. We stayed there for nearly a week. We too kept awake along with Baba on all nights — except one night before we left the place — Baba had told us that we would have to be staying there for 21 days. But He returned after a week's stay as He finished His work soon. Intensive working told upon Baba's health and He felt very weak, although His face was bright and glowing as ever.

Tomorrow Baba goes out of Satara again, but this time only for a few hours. He goes to Mahabaleshwar to meet the poor, not to give them *darshan* but to do His work. From what we witness, Baba's work with the poor comprises of (1) washing their feet, (2) bowing down to them, (3) comforting them, and (4) paying them — a gift from Baba. The way of the world is that the poor are supposed to lick the boots of the rich. But with Baba — His ways are unfathomable — the "richest of the rich" bows down to the poor!

Very shortly you will receive a fresh circular, "Decision," the last of the series beginning with Baba's Final Declaration.

At our side everything is as usual except that we find Baba without His inseparable "board."

How are our dear brothers Francis and John?

Francis must be experiencing a great change in his life at this juncture. He is really very dear to Baba and to those who love Baba. His shouts through the mike — "Avatar Meher Baba ki jai" — still ring in the ears of many devotees who have heard him. Please do convey to him my love and the same too to dear John if you happen to meet him.

Dear Bill, you are not the only one who feels so completely a novice in every aspect of spirituality: we all do feel

the same. Every step on the Path and every turn throws more light and confronts us with our own ignorance of the Reality. The only consolation that we can have is that we gradually understand more and more of the grip of ignorance — our own ignorance — that holds us fast. Therefore it is that Baba always gave us hints that we should not bother about the Path or anything that dealt with spirituality, once we come in contact with a Perfect Master. The only thing that matters then is whether we obey Him or not. A man in contact with such a Master has to lay down his life at the feet of the Master. But Baba says that this does not mean that the man has to kill himself; no, he has not to kill himself; he has to kill his "self."

This is the most difficult thing to achieve in life; and the battle is won only by the grace and guidance of a Perfect Master. Let us all desire for this Grace.

With love,  
*Eruch*

Dr. Donkin sends his love to you, Francis, and John.

13 May 1955

Dear Francis,

Received your letter of 29th with the enclosed lovely stamps — thanks for your thoughtfulness in remembering to do so. I did not mean to reply so soon, but know you would love to have news of Him, so here goes:

Baba went into seclusion on 1st April at midnight. Mehera and I are allowed to see Him every five days, and we went over the other day. Baba showed us around the

rooms — it is such an old house, but there is a lot of atmosphere. The central room (or rather two rooms in one) where He walks up and down — His only exercise, for He does not step outside of the house, or indeed that part of the house; His bedroom, and adjoining it, a little room (couldn't be more than 6 feet by 8 feet) where He shuts Himself up for His work — it has a rather high and narrow cement platform on which our Highest of the High actually sits when working.

On the 30th, it being the last day of His critical phase of work ending April, there was great activity among Baba lovers in all parts of India, with full programs for the day and past midnight, *arti*, *bhajans*, processions with Baba's picture, meditation, and feeding of thousands of poor. One worker writes about an influential person who contributes very largely toward the feeding of poor, as well as giving much personal service — saying about him, "He has completely changed from his old life." Another miracle of a heart touched by Baba's Love. The man met Baba in 1954, and since then his life and love are Baba's.

Sent your message to dear Gustadji — he had a big smile for it and sends you his love.

With best wishes and salaams to you and Bill,

*Mani*

[Extract:]

King's Road  
Ahmednagar  
3 March 1956

My dear Bill,

Do accept my grateful thanks for the loving greetings you sent me on Baba's Birthday. I received it on 22nd.

The first time in Bombay, Baba's Birthday was celebrated by a gathering of 600 persons. Only selected persons were admitted. From 4:30 P.M. to 11 P.M. there was *bhajan*, speeches, Baba film, and *qawwali*. I read out my speech in English, and the Gujerati translation of the same was read by another devotee.

Baba is in seclusion and will continue to be so until 15th February 1957. He reserved for himself a break in July to go to the West. On return from the West, he will resume seclusion. It is likely that in April Baba may go out to contact *masts*, strictly observing no contact and no correspondence with anyone excepting *masts*.

Love to you, Francis, and John.

Yours as ever,  
*Adi Sr.*  
[Adi K. Irani]

Satara  
10 August 1956

Dear Francis,

This is to tell you I just received — how well timed! — the precious *Gita* and the love of all that accompanied it, commemorating Baba's first visit — thank you, Australia, it

will hold a dear place in the *ashram's* treasures. Today is just the right day for me to also tell you how much I loved reading *The Quest*. Frankly I began it in the spirit of quickly going through it and found myself lost in a timeless sense of beauty, reading some lines over and over again just for the sheer love of the words. Thank you for sharing it with us. We played some *qawwali* records (Baba's favourites) last evening, thinking of Baba with you all in Sydney.

My love to Bill and Joan (received their loving letter and chortled delightedly at the domestic picture of you), and all Baba-ones, and to you Francis,

in Baba,  
*Mani*



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## AUGUST 1956

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**AVATAR MEHER BABA** stepped onto the tarmac of Sydney airport around 3:00 P.M. on the 9th August, a Thursday. He looked around for a moment and then spotted me with the photographer on the upper open roof of a nearby building where we had decided to film His arrival. He waved and then, moving across the tarmac as only He could move, disappeared with the *mandali* into the arrival terminal.

Sometime later He emerged and immediately greeted Francis, John Ballantyne, and a few men lovers who had come to the airport to assist with luggage. One of the children, Joanna Bruford, was also in the group.

I had already brought the car to the entrance of the terminal, and Baba was then settled into the front seat, with me mentally hopping around like a cat on hot bricks, awkward, nervous, over-anxious, so that I missed much of the natural bubbling joy that I should have experienced on meeting my Master again.

The journey to Beacon Hill began, and I started to relax when Baba after some little while said, "You are a good driver, but don't look at Me, keep your eyes on the road!" Underneath the tenseness and stiffness, of course I was happy. I loved being with Baba, I longed to do anything He asked and hoped that He would always ask of me, yet I was raw, unskilled at serving, and did not know how to improve. Looking back now, there were just

so many occasions when I failed to carry out thoughtfully and well even simple tasks for Him, but I must also say that there was over the years some improvement. In seven hundred years when He comes again, by His Grace I will be better still. And in the meantime I have the encouragement, despite everything, of His messages of "good old Bill," and "good old Billy-boy," "long live Bill," and other such expressions of love and support which He sent me from time to time as I reported on the work He set me.

Unfortunately I cannot now remember anything else of note of that first journey with Baba. We arrived at Beacon Hill a little after 5:00 P.M. as I recall, and although we understood that we could not be "officially" with Him until the next morning, Baba nevertheless greeted us all just outside the house. He stood on a little raised section of stone, and each came forward to be embraced. There were about thirty of us, including children, staying on the property.

There have been many accounts written by various ones of the days with Baba in Sydney and Melbourne, and so I will not repeat these details but only relate some of my own times with Him.

On the morning of the 10th, Baba called us all into the big room. He sat on the bed in the corner, some embroidered tapestries from the baron's home hanging behind it, hiding the still-rough stone walls. We all sat on the floor, and at one point Jenny, our youngest child, then two and a half years old, fell asleep in my lap. I hadn't noticed this, but Baba stopped the discourse, lovingly gestured towards her, and said: "We talk of God and she has gone to God!"

Baba looked at us all gently, thoughtfully, and then asked for those who loved Him to put up their hands. From memory some did; but for my part I felt inhibited by a sudden bout of introspection. Did I *really* love Him? Baba then asked me directly, and confronted with this, I raised my hand. Baba followed with:

"Would you throw your three children into the ocean if I asked you to?" and I answered yes. It is difficult to look back now and analyse my mental state at that moment. Yes, there was a shock at such a question, but preparation with reading and thinking about Baba and what it means to follow Him helped to determine the response with minimum struggle. I think that at the time, and certainly ever since, my answer meant that I gave the three children to Baba, that they are His and not mine.

Another thing I remember vividly from that first morning session was Baba's beginning the discourse on worry with an exaggerated miming of the various types of people who worry — thin people, fat people, serious people, and others — and as He described them, so His face reflected delightfully and graphically their predominant characteristic. It was infinitely more realistic than even Charlie Chaplin's acting, which Baba Himself always appreciated so much.

On this subject Baba said:

Don't worry. Worry accumulates and grows in strength, becomes a habit long after the original cause has ceased to be. You worry now about some condition — yet you have experienced all conditions: you have been blind, sick, poor, old, young, beautiful, ugly. You worry about your children — you have had numberless children, and they have had numerous parents and children. You worry about your job — you have been in every occupation. You worry about your wife — you have had so many wives. You have been everything and experienced all conditions, and yet you worry about the slightest thing that happens to you.

Everything emanates from Me but is not real. If you were dreaming and I appeared in your dream telling you you were dreaming, you would say you were enjoying it and that it was real. But in your awake-dream, I tell you

now that nothing is real — so don't worry. How to stop worrying? Think of Me. Love Me. I say with divine authority: Love Me and your worries will vanish.

Reality is impossible to describe, it is difficult to attain. Only one in a million becomes a lover of God; and out of a million lovers only one gets Realisation. It sounds impossible. But you have an opportunity because I am here with you and I say: Love Me.<sup>6</sup>

That morning session created the atmosphere that persists to this very day, and will continue to persist while Meher House, and particularly the big room, exists. The warmth of love that Baba poured into the house and us was the gentle warmth of the spring sun that invites voyages into unknown seas and unplumbed depths of feeling: a time when the whole being surges forward with a cry of "yes" to the clear call of this Man, the God-Man, "Come all unto Me." In that living room of our house, the call was not, I felt, to stern asceticism and outer denial, but to the tuning of everyday life to His song of, "Lose yourself in Me by loving Me in all, even at the cost of your own happiness."

In 1958 at Avatar's Abode the call was intensified, the sun approaching summer, as it were, and Baba was, to my mind, saying: "The time is nigh; become more serious and take even more to heart My words. I will not be long with you." But to be honest, I did not think at all of Baba's passing from this earth. Somehow I accepted the notion of Baba always being here, and I remember that in 1967 — the last time I was to see Baba — when I left Mandali Hall at Meherazad, I was happy that He had not embraced me, because I felt that He had just sent me out for some work and that I would be recalled any hour, any day, any year. I could not see Him, but it was as though He was just round the corner, and I would see Him again shortly.

During the days in Sydney, Baba also gave other short discourses, and here in essence are two of them.

## TWO TYPES OF EGO

Baba explained: There are two types of ego. The false ego has innumerable wants and desires. It says, I am a man, I want this; I am a woman, I want that; I am sick; I want to be happy; I am rich; I am very poor.... It is always "I."

But when this ego is annihilated a transformation takes place: the false "I" is replaced by the real "I", and the experience, "I am free from desires and wanting, I am infinite, I am one with God" is gained. That is the Real Ego.

If a man asserts "I am God" because he has read and understood intellectually that there is nothing but God, this assertion fails because he and his mind are not One. This assertion is due to thinking, which means duality. He had no direct experience, only an *idea* of unity through his understanding; therefore this is not a real experience, and is not the Real Ego. There is no room for compromise: you cannot be a man of the world and at the same time become One with God.

If you have realised God within you, and God is all-powerful, then you must also be all-powerful. Why then do you feel helpless? Because there is a veil that veils you from God. You yourself are the veil, and it is not possible for you to lift it. Your eyes can see a vast panorama but cannot see themselves; for that a mirror is required. When the mirror of My Grace descends, your own True Self is revealed in an instant.

But how can you obtain My Grace? It is very difficult. You must drown yourself completely in the ocean of My Love, then you will find My Grace there. If you cannot bear

to drown yourself, there is compromise. There can be no compromise if you want Me.

What is this love? Love wants to give itself. It does not want anything for itself. It wants only to give. Now, a man can have a great love for his wife, can't bear to be separated from her, feels lost if she even talks with someone else. He just wants her for himself. And this craving for possession is selfishness, and breeds jealousy and fear. He does not look for her happiness, but only towards his own selfishness. But in divine love, wanting only to give, there are two stages: first there is the longing for oneness of union with the Beloved, and in that there is the craving "I want to be one with God." In the second stage the lover does not want anything of his Beloved, he is satisfied in pleasing the Beloved under all circumstances. And that is the only love that can be called real love. In the so-called love of another person, only happiness and misery are found, not abiding happiness.<sup>7</sup>

### THE THREE SEEKERS

Three different men came to Baba. The first said, "I do not want anything, Baba, I only want God." This made Baba very happy. But then the man said that if he had good health he would not want anything else but God. Gradually he added his other difficulties. Finally Baba said to him, "You want health and wealth for yourself and your family — and then lastly, God."

The second man said, "I want to be with you always, Baba, to serve you. I have nothing to do with the world now and do not want anything. If you will give me a meal and some clothes I will stay and serve you." Baba told him to remain. Later the man said to Baba, "I have one attachment;

when I am free of this I will return and stay with you until I die."

The third man who came said, "I want God-Realisation, nothing but this." Baba told him to lock himself in a room for three years, taking only milk and no other food, doing no reading or writing. And the man with great daring did this; even when a cobra came in, he did not leave his room but waited for the one who brought his milk to kill it.

Baba then told us all: "I want you to know that love for Me should not have any demands or wants. Wanting has its origin in the very first urge of God to know Himself. This Original Want has expanded into so many different illusory wants which are continuous, life after life, until finally you get fed up with wanting, and want nothing. At that instant you get the answer to the first question, 'Who am I?,' with 'I am God.'

"Live a normal life," Baba said, "and just love Me and do not be attached to living. Then you will have a curtain of Baba's love protecting you from the world."<sup>8</sup>

"Deny your false self, and your Real Self asserts itself. Ask for nothing and you get everything. Renounce everything to such an extent that you eventually renounce even renunciation."

There was just one outside interview that Baba agreed to, with the ABC radio reporter Donald Ingram-Smith, who, because of his own personal interest in Sufism, asked if he might interview Baba. This took place in the big room on Saturday morning during the hours set aside for the general public to see Baba. Baba sat on His bed in the middle of the room facing the reporter, and Eruch interpreted Baba's gestures. Francis was also there with the *mandali*. The conversation was recorded, and has been edited slightly for ease of reading.

ERUCH: Baba says: Intellectual conviction? It is not necessary to have intellectual conviction because it doesn't help at all. It is dead. After intellectual conviction there must be the further step of conviction by sight. Then that conviction also must be replaced by the actual experience of union with God. It is not necessary for you to be intellectually convinced.

Here is Francis Brabazon, who is a poet. But let us suppose he is illiterate, that he has not read anything, nor wants to read anything. Yet somewhere he has heard that there is a certain thing named God. He is convinced that God is there, and he says, "I must see God, I long to see Him." He loves God very much, and in his longing he is like a fish out of water, he loses his appetite, he cannot sleep. His only wish is to see God. And he does see Him, but without any intellectual conviction, because he is illiterate. His mind is illiterate but his heart is not: his heart wants to see God.

Now here is another man. He has read much, he is very intelligent, he has heard much. Through reading continually he gets intellectual conviction. He says, "I am convinced there is nothing but God," but this is only intellectual conviction. He has no love for God; he is simply convinced through intellect.

Baba says, here now am I, Eruch, as a third person. Baba says that I have studied much, read much, and that I continue to read and hear much. I have read Baba's book *God Speaks*, and I am convinced there is God and that God is the only Reality. Baba says I also have heart. I have intellectual conviction, and love, and the longing for union with God. That love and longing enable me to attain my Goal.

So here is Francis, who we suppose has not read anything, is not intelligent, has no intellectual conviction, but does have heart.



Here is this man, intelligent, with intellectual conviction, but he has no heart, no love.

And here am I, Eruch, intellectually convinced, and I also have heart.

I can attain the Goal, and Francis also: he can see God, become God. But this man, without heart and only intellectually convinced, can never see God.

I who am intellectually convinced and also have heart can see God — and I can also make others see God. But Francis, who has only heart, realizes God just for himself — and does not help others. That is the difference. Do you follow what Baba is saying?

REPORTER: When you speak of love, sir — what do you mean when you speak of love?

ERUCH: Baba says: What is love? Here is my Beloved, and I love the Beloved. This means to give up everything, wanting nothing in return. I want to give, to make Him happy, pleased, even at the cost of my own suffering, my own pleasures. I only want to give and make Him happy. That is love. The lover is prepared to sacrifice his own life for the Beloved. The sublimity of love is wanting nothing.

Worldly love is also love, but with some selfish motive: it is possessive love. The love of man for woman, woman for man, is but a speck of love: it wants something.

There are degrees of love in Divine Love. At first it wants union with the Beloved; but when that love reaches its zenith, it does not want anything, not even union. There is no question of possession or of wanting. It just gives.

REPORTER: Could I ask one more question? What is your purpose, your work? What is your work in the world?

ERUCH: Baba says: To give My Love to awaken mankind, to

make them know that everything is illusion. God is the only Reality. One who can love God can attain that Reality. All are one, but no one knows that oneness. God is within you, but there is a veil: and you yourself are that veil between you and God. God is within Me. I have taken this form to unveil all human beings to know that there is only one Reality and all else is illusion.

REPORTER: The Reality is within and without simultaneously?

ERUCH: Baba says: There is no within and no without. Reality pervades. There is nothing beyond Reality, no within or without, no up or down. Reality is all over, all-pervading. So-called illusion is also Reality. Illusion is the shadow of Reality. When you walk, your shadow follows you. You do not attach any importance to the shadow, because it has come out of you, it is nothing but shadow. It is your own shadow that follows you; you do not follow the shadow. Exactly at midday, twelve noon, the shadow disappears. It is only you who are there, and the shadow has no existence at all.

Those days of 1956 with Baba were filled with simple, intimate moments that brought Him so naturally into our lives: Baba playing trick games and sleight-of-hand with the children, particularly Michael; Baba framing Joan's longish hair around her face with His hands and smiling upon her as only He can; Baba concerned that Lorna Rouse was moving about in the coldness of the evening without socks, and gently counselling her to look after her health; Baba giving to our family, "for the little one," the toy koala bear that had been given to one of the *mandali*, who had promptly given it to Baba (Jenny slept with it for more years than would be normal for children); Baba giving me back the socks which I had purchased and given to Him for warmth (these I still have); Baba turning around slowly so that we all

were able to see and admire His new Nehru-type suit (it was blue-grey and He did look incredibly slim, handsome, and about twenty years younger than His age at that time, sixty-two); Baba asking me as I drove Him how far to go, and a few moments later asking again and again, and then explaining that this was one of the little games used on the long *mast* journeys in India to keep the driver alert and active; Baba's hair being combed by Eruch whilst I was with Him. At this time He had called me into the big room to discuss travel arrangements for the house visits to two Baba lovers living in the area. When I entered, Eruch was combing Baba's hair before plaiting it, and as I watched, Baba said, "My body is like fine gossamer through which the winds of the world freely pass." The poignancy of that moment frozen in time and His remark will ever be with me. When in later years at Meherazad I kissed His cheek and wished Him Happy Birthday, His skin felt and smelt like a baby's, so fine and soft that it seemed as though without substance, and His hair felt the same.

On at least two occasions during His stay at Meher House Baba praised the large mural that was painted by Frances Lee, a very dedicated and talented artist and Baba lover. Baba even suggested to her an improvement to the mural, which again indicated His interest in her and her work.

Prior to coming to Sydney, Baba had said that He would give *darshan* to members of the general public on one occasion only during His visits to Sydney and to Melbourne. I of course had nothing to do with organising that occasion in Melbourne, but I did help organise the Sydney *darshan* and together with others was active in handing out a printed invitation card (which is reproduced in the photograph section following page 316). Among those whom we invited to come were, of course, all those to whom we had spoken about Baba earlier, and also all the army personnel with whom I worked and to whom I had talked about Him a great deal. At least two of the army families came on the

day. One interesting point regarding this public day was that afterwards we were told of people who, despite the careful directions we gave them, never succeeded in reaching the house, some actually passing within a couple of hundred yards. It appeared that their time to meet the Avatar had not yet come.

Again of interest is that not one of those people who did come (about 110 in Sydney) ever pursued their contact with Baba, as far as I am aware. However, I have on odd occasions after some thirty years heard that in at least three cases people remembered vividly and with heart-felt warmth their meeting God so many years before.

It had been decided that Joan would travel to Melbourne with Baba so that she could introduce her mother to Him (her father had died earlier). When Baba was told of this, He directed that the three children and I stay in the house until His return. He also gave me with His own hands a manuscript copy of *Life at Its Best*, a book of His messages which was only then in the process of publication, and said to read it. I drove Him to the airport and then, after His departure, returned to the house. Those hours are vividly with me now: His Presence seemed palpable in the house, the atmosphere rich and warm and perfumed, as though He had determined that we would experience Him as still physically present. That experience continues to this day, but for me in an interesting manner: in the normal course of the day Baba is with us, alongside us, participating lovingly in the family's activities, but then if someone not of the family arrives to be with Him, He asserts His Presence, making the big room less a living room and more a place of pilgrimage. I fondly imagine Beloved Baba suddenly sitting up in His chair, beaming, and saying, "Ah! Someone has come to see Me!" It certainly feels like that.

As we were leaving the house for the last time in the evening of the 14th August 1956, we — Baba, the four *mandali*, Francis, and I — stood for a few minutes in the small entrance

passage of the house. Two things happened. First, Baba had Francis and me embrace in front of Him, Baba saying how Francis loved Him very much. Earlier Baba had said to Joan (as reported to me later): "You have no idea how dear Bill is to Me. I love Francis first in Australia, and Bill second." So Beloved Baba, in His inimitable way, touched the hearts of the three main participants in our little domestic drama. It is unfortunate, yet human, that I at least did not always continue the harmony with Francis that was experienced at that time through Baba. But perhaps that typifies His role as Avatar: He comes on earth, lives among us, and gives us an experience of how we should live, and that impression, of perhaps only a moment, by His Grace goes on germinating until full flowering.

The second thing that happened concerned Meher House as our home. Somehow Baba brought out my thought that Meher House should be left for His use solely and that we should live elsewhere. Baba emphatically said no, that the house was our home, we were to live in it in a natural family way, but that we were never to sell it.

This all happened in the evening of the 14th. Earlier that day Baba had unexpectedly announced that He would take everyone to the movies. We were to decide which programme to go to and arrange for the tickets. This caused quite a flurry of activity, including the problem of what film to see. Finally someone suggested one called *The Man Who Never Was*, and this was agreed on. Bookings for the best seats for about thirty-five were made by phone. When the time came for departure, Baba appeared in a smart new suit, as I mentioned earlier. I believe it was on this drive that Baba said and comforted me: "Don't worry about thoughts. It is almost impossible to control thoughts. Let them come and go. It is very difficult to control feelings, but actions can be controlled. Don't let feelings become actions. You *can* control actions."

In those days there were two main routes from Beacon Hill to the city, with a few variations possible on each route. On the six journeys with Baba to the city and beyond to the airport, I varied the route taken to give Him different views of Sydney and its magnificent harbour. Also on the occasion of visiting the homes of the Baba lovers, as mentioned earlier, I drove Baba along a stretch of the coastline and then through a section of forest. After the movie I drove Baba up one major street and down another. By the end I was definitely more relaxed driving Baba, but I still kept my eyes on the road!

Beacon Hill is eleven miles from the city, and after leaving Baba and the *mandali* at the Mayfair Theatre, I parked the car a little distance away. We gathered in the foyer, and I understand that a cat appeared as if from nowhere and gave its attention to Baba. The seats were in two rows near the front of the upstairs balcony, and when we reached them, Baba stood in the middle of the rows and directed where many of us were to sit. Later I was told that one of two men, sitting further back, said while Baba organised the party: "Who does he think he is — Jesus Christ?"

So eventually we were settled. I was seated almost directly behind Baba. The supporting film started (I never noticed the title), and for some minutes I did my best to follow it. But shortly I gave up and decided to close my eyes and think of Baba instead. It must have been only a little time, and suddenly I felt a tapping on my knee. It was Baba's hand tapping me. He was smiling and nodding at me, whether in agreement with me over the film or happy that I was thinking of Him, I do not know, but shortly after that Baba directed we should leave. So we saw little of the programme and nothing of the main film. It was then that I drove Baba through the city streets.

That evening, early though it was already dark, we set off for the airport. The times spent with Baba during my four airport visits are now somewhat jumbled in my mind, so I will mention a

few incidents, but on which visit they occurred I cannot remember. Each incident is crystal-clear in my mind but not the time frame. In one such incident there was a group of *mandali* and Australian male Baba lovers milling about over some luggage difficulty. I was standing near Baba, and He at once turned to me and gestured sternly as if this confusion were my fault. I replied that I had passed on responsibility for the luggage to another Baba lover. Baba immediately smiled and gestured acceptance of my explanation. I was at once happy and relieved.

At another time we were all seated with Baba waiting for the flight to be announced (my experience with Baba has been that He was always *very* early for His flights). At one point Baba got up and began pacing up and down the lounge where we were seated. I say "pacing," but really the word should be "flowing," so effortless and smooth it was, precise, contained, and powerful. Later when Baba spoke of Himself as a caged lion and the breaking of His silence as the breaking of the cage, the picture of Baba walking at the airport immediately came to mind: that was what we had been watching, a caged lion.

After some pacing Baba again sat and asked me to get Him an orange drink, not cold. I rushed off and ran to each building of the airport seeking His request. No orange juice, but I did eventually find a sort of orange drink, cold. What to do? I took the paper cup of juice into the men's bathroom and held it in the basin filled with hot water. So I eventually got Baba His drink, and I was rewarded because after one mouthful He gave the rest to me to drink.

For me, replete with His love, so ended Baba's first visit to Australia. What had it meant for me? First and foremost, that all in my immediate family (except for my sister despite her spiritual yearnings and dreams of Baba) had come into physical contact with God in human form. Gradually, over the succeeding years, the life of each became more and more channelled and moulded

at all levels with Baba's direct guidance.

Secondly, His visit established, at least until His next Advent, our home as a place of pilgrimage, a place about which, some years later, Baba said: "Do whatever you will with the house" (meaning alterations, repairs, etc); "nothing will ever destroy My Presence there."

Meher Baba specified four major places of pilgrimage: Meherabad and Meherazad in India; the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in the U.S.A.; and Avatar's Abode in Australia. Avatar's Abode is undisputedly the major place of pilgrimage in Australia, the spiritual centre for Australia, and it could be said that Meher House is a minor place of pilgrimage. I am equally involved with both Avatar's Abode and Meher House, but such are the memories I have of Beloved Baba at Meher House and particularly in the big room that I have a soft spot for Meher House. It was for many years the major focal point for His work in Australia: as He expressed in a cable to me on the anniversary in 1966 of His first visit to Australia:

LET MEHER HOUSE BE BEACON TO ALL STRIVING TO  
REACH ME MY LOVE BLESSINGS TO MY DEAR BILL JOAN  
FAMILY AND ALL GATHERED FOR ANNIVERSARY YOU  
ARE MINE ON YOUR BIRTHDAY AS ALWAYS LOVE  
BABA

I tend to think of Meher House as His home in Australia (He certainly spoke of feeling at home there), a place where I remember Him relaxing with readings from His favourite poet, Hafiz, with a pink eiderdown tucked around Him and cold lemonade warming in front of an electric radiator; playing games with the children; reminiscing about the old days; helping to distribute food to the *mandali* and a few lovers in the kitchen; listening and participating in spiritual chit-chat with the *mandali*; a natural,



warm and loving companion and father, at home with some of His *mandali* and lovers.

Thirdly, Baba's visit consolidated His family in Australia which, despite the usual family squabbles and friction, formed the backbone for His work in this country over the years.

In 1956 and '57 an increasing flow of letters came from Adi Sr. and Mani, some of which are included here. They give many vivid little pictures of Baba and day-to-day activities of the *mandali*, told with characteristic humour, warmth, and simplicity. I have given only extracts from Adi's letters, as the remainder of each one related only to business matters.

[Extract]

King's Road  
Ahmednagar  
25 August 1956

My Dear Bill,

Baba landed in Bombay on 17th afternoon instead of on 16th evening. Our plane was detained at Colombo for 20 hours. Baba's previous remark on the journey, that due to Suez Canal trouble our flight might be deterred, came true. The accompanying *mandali* then thought such an eventuality was remote.

Immediately on landing Baba resumed His seclusion. Nobody was allowed to see Him at the airport except Nariman, who brought His car. Baba left for Satara straightaway. He is happy and healthy, and will end His seclusion on 15th Feb. 1957.

You remember that Baba had selected from Sydney and Melbourne a number of men and women who were earmarked for the oncoming big meeting in India. It will be

held in November 1957. I give below names and addresses of the persons from Sydney and Melbourne. I would like you to fill in the addresses of those whom my list does not show, and send me a complete list at your very early convenience.

Hope you, your dear wife and children are keeping well, so also Brabazon, Robert and his wife.

With wishes of love and blessings from Baba to you all,

Yours as ever,  
*Adi Sr.*

[The meeting planned for November 1957 was cancelled.]

Satara  
31 August 1956

Dear Clarice and Ena,

Thank you both for your very lovely letters and I need scarcely tell you how very much we enjoyed them. I wanted to write earlier giving the news of our ever-beloved's return, but was down with one of my bouts of cold and flu (which lasts, like a Hindu wedding, for nearly a fortnight) and only now have begun to attend to the pile of lovely letters that have come since His return. I hope to make up for it though, so here goes:

Although on His return Baba looked naturally tired, He was much less so than we expected and was still looking so radiant with all the love from your hearts. He told us many a loving and touching incident, and one could go on listening forever. Although we did not feel His absence, as we knew He was with His loved Western Family, all the hours of waiting and missing were concentrated on the 17th when

we were expecting Baba's arrival at noon. You can imagine how the suspense and anxiety climbed as the hours went by and the toots and horn of every car (and there seemed so many that day!) failed to be that of Baba's car. What happened was that His plane was delayed at Colombo [Ceylon] and the cable He sent us from there did not reach us. Instead of 16th evening therefore, Baba arrived in Bombay on 17th afternoon from where He sent us a telegram which reached us scarcely an hour before He did — and, when He came!!!!!!

The boys and neighbours had set up some fireworks and made a lovely archway of flowers and coloured lights, and Baba looked so beautiful in His garland as He stood beneath it smiling in appreciation and love. The *mandali* made a giant-size bouquet, and we had flowers and chalk decoration all over the house. Baba talked so lovingly of you each, telling us about Dr. O'Brien and Stan and Dr. Lee and many many others.

On the 6th Baba is feeding 200 poor children in Satara, will give them each *rava* (special sweet dish) and a piece of material for dress or shirt — and that is as far as we can see; though I think one can see as clearly in His eyes and smile the blessing He gives with it. He will also wash their little feet.

Selfishly our hearts can scarcely contain the happiness of having Him with us physically once more, and we are looking forward to welcoming you dear ones to India next year. With Baba nothing is ever still, and with every little thing He touches starts a succession of ripples that follow each other in eternal rhythm, like His ever-revolving Creation ("twirling on His little finger," as Babajan said). Talking of Australia, the first thing Eruch said was that Baba's stay there was nearest to a *sahavas*, as Baba had

more time to sit around with you *en famille*.

I loved Colin's words, "When He touches you you feel peaceful all over" — one witnesses it daily. There is a man here (an income tax official) who likes to boast what a "hard" man he is, yet the moment he sees Baba or comes near Him, his eyes begin to shimmer with tears. He told Goher once, "Not only my fellow workers at the office but also my wife notices the difference in me since my meeting Baba, and say I'm a wonderfully changed man. My wife reminds me I did not shed a tear when my beloved father died, and can't get over my melting like butter in Baba's presence and particularly at His touch." Actually he was a school friend but did not see Baba again until 30 years later; he never stops reproaching himself (or fate) for all the lost years which did not bring him to Baba sooner.

Please send the Baba-news in this to Bill, though I shall be writing to him in a few days. I sent him yesterday a couple of cyclostyled copies of the general account and impression of the tour as written by Eruch (one for Sydney, one for Melbourne, so you all may share), but it was Baba who supplied to us the intimate little touches that make the picture of His visit with you all such a wondrous one.

Baba's Love to you each and all.

Mehera joins me in sending much love as ever to you both, to both the Joans, to May, to Cynthia, and to ALL the women of the Baba-group.

*Mani*

Satara

5 September 1956

Dear Bill,

Salaams to my honourable brother-secretary!

I sent Baba-news a few days ago in a letter to the Melbourne group, and know it was shared by you all. Now it is your turn and know you will share it with the Melbourne Baba group. This alternating system comes from two reasons: firstly we are all ONE Baba family, and secondly Baba's Satara secretary is pretty lazy and most efficient at making work easier for herself.

News: On the 1st Baba fasted for 24 hours (without water too) and we were not allowed to share fully. He has also begun working from three to four hours every morning with Kaikobad. On the 7th Baba with a few men will go on a *mast* trip, to and around Hyderabad, for a week; i.e., right after the children's programme on the 6th. On the 1st *maya* was working pretty hard too, and everything that could possibly go wrong seemed to do so. At the end of the day Baba explained it was because of His special work He had begun on that day, and opposing *maya* was at her best (or do I mean worst)....

Baba is physically with us once more, and as is usual when that happens, time and the past go to slumber and one has to strain the imagination to remember there had ever been a separation. I sent you a few days ago the cyclostyled copy of Eruch's account of the tour (Adi is unhappy about the messy style of the print, but says the machine got temperamental and cyclonic and Baba wanted it done by a particular date...) but it was Baba who gave us the intimate touching details of the *sahavas*, telling us most lovingly of you each....

I've been reading Shakespeare again after many years and can't get over the profound philosophy packed in some of his simplest lines. One line in *Hamlet* I particularly love that makes me think of Baba and all us lucky ones: "The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty...." For isn't it perpetually amazing why Baba cares for us and gives us so much of His love, we whom Baba sometimes refers to as "pearls" and at other times as "secondhand furniture"...? And how little our all is in return! Baba once said, many years ago, "You love Me greatly, but My love for you all is greater. You stick to Me, but I hold you to Me. If I *really* tested you in my God-way, you couldn't be able to stay with Me for a day longer." Beloved Merciful Baba!

Don't worry about the photo orders, Bill (it brings me sympathetically closer to you, for I'm the same, but don't let Joan hear this, for she thinks I'm such a good secretary!). Send them whenever you find them. *Maya* has been paying Beheram [Baba's brother, Beheram S. Irani] a long visit, for when he wasn't ill in bed (with an elephant-size leg from a septic spot) it has been his wife or the children, or the cat broke his precious photo plates or the camera broke down at a critical moment. But His grace has many aspects, and I wonder why we cannot welcome those appearing less pleasant with the same spirit as we do the happier ones.... Baba told me to send in all the first letters (since His return) His love. So here it is:

BABA'S Love to you each and all in Australia.

Much love to Joan and the children and *all* you dear Baba-ones.

*Mani*

From Mani's letter of 16 October 1956 (sent by Ena Lemmon to me):

Baba was on a 24-hour fast yesterday (as usual without water) and drove to Kolhapur to contact some *masts*. On the 10th and 12th He observed similar fasts (which seem significantly concerned with His work in this seclusion), and yesterday's He told us was the last, but I seem to remember His having said something like that last month! But as Kabir says, "Scores of pundits and thousands of intellectuals (may argue and debate over the why and wherefore), but God's business God alone knows."

Baba stayed in Bombay for only two and a half days, contacting *masts* there. But the one He wanted from Hardwar could not come (or, to be more correct, would not come in spite of Baidul's persuading and coaxing, for sometimes these *masts* called to Baba do that as explained in *The Wayfarers*), so Baba left for Meherazad. There it rained night and day and the *mast* still did not come, so Baba returned to Satara on 8th evening.

Mani sends much love to each of the Baba group. .

Satara  
23 October 1956

Dear Bill,

You must've received the message through Ena, from this lazy gal. Thank you for the photo order, it's in perfect order. Am sea-mailing them to you in a few days, and they have all been touched by Baba as usual. I had sent an enlargement to the Melbourne group (as to all Baba groups, with love) and it is called "Head Study." Ena enquired if that picture was available, and I've told her I

shall be happy to send any number of them, and she will write her requirements to you to send along with any further orders you might have received. I don't know whether I sent you this particularly beautiful picture among the samples — anyway am enclosing a small one here for you. Another thing Bill, as the taxes on imported things (which includes photographic paper and termed "luxury"!) have shot up recently, I'm afraid our loving customers will have to be charged about four pence more on each picture in future. I hate doing this but realize it can't be helped. Also I've persuaded Beheram to buy a good new copying camera (as his third-hand one completely collapsed) and if it wasn't for this we might have managed with the previous prices. But I'm sure you and the Baba family will understand....

Yet another thing, Bill — you remember those lovely unused stamps Ena sent me one time? Well, the bulk has gone to my various "children," who appreciated them enthusiastically. But I have still some with me and would like to give this towards the Baba poor fund, and am sure she will be happy, too. So I'm sending along these remaining ones with the photo package to you, and (if they are useful for postage in Australia) if possible would like them given to friends there who can use them for correspondence, and include the proceeds of it with the photo check when you send it to me. OK? I haven't written to Ena about this, though I meant to do so in my last letter.

You must've received my short letter about the change of date (to January end) of the final List for Australia. I'm hoping to write to you further about the November programme (glad news, I think) after Baba's return from the *mast* trip. He left by car on the 21st for a week, and we expect it will be one of those strenuous trips, particularly



with the rain-bogged roads. He has gone towards the north, making nearly 350 miles the first day....

Yes, I can understand too well the monetary problem concerned. We who have Baba's Love are, as Mary Backett said, "millionaires in love," but I told our Beloved the other day, "You should now get a millionaire in the worldly sense, Baba, some lucky one whose money you can use for your Universal work." But I don't expect there is such a lucky millionaire yet, so...?

It's a lovely experience to watch Baba work through the aspect of money, and one fathoms a lot from it, as from all things that Baba does. One sees money flow into His right hand and out from the left; while His own needs are so extremely simple. Baba will spend a large amount on what would apparently seem unnecessary things (like keeping the pet horse, our golden Sheba, who has every attention and luxury possible), while the *mandali* are more and more restricted in their ration of daily necessities. But we see and learn how nothing that He does is unnecessary (however little or seemingly trivial and inexplicable), that it has deep connection with His work for the world.

I just loved Michael's reply to Meherji, and that bit about "Jesus Christ"! [see page 71] (told Baba and He seemed quite amused). How is Baba's beloved "dervish," Francis? Warm greetings to him. Am looking forward to reading in *The Awakener* his commentary on Baba's visit — Filis [Frederick] is so happy with it, but that isn't surprising when one has read everything of Francis's,

Much love to Joan and the children, to you and each of the Baba-devoteds,

*Mani*

P.S. When convenient please give Grace (Swan) the message that I received her loving reply to my letter, and send my love....

Needn't reply to this, Bill; shall be writing again in two weeks.

22 October 1956

P.P.S. Just received Francis's twin letters (not identical, though, for the birthdate of one of them is September), but that is our Francis and wouldn't want him a whit different, eh Bill? Tell him it was good to read his letters and know how he's getting on, and I send him my warmest wishes for all he does, or rather Baba does through him. Special love to Lorna and the latest and littlest member of the Baba family.

The Australian cricket team is in India, and playing in Bombay this week, and am wondering if Baba won't stop on the way back and have a dekko [look]...?

Extract from Mani's letter, sent to me by Ena Lemmon, but undated:

Today Baba is fasting once more for 24 hours without water, and I suppose because He knows it is more difficult for us this way, He does not allow us to share fully.... Baba arrived earlier from the *mast* trip, on 11th evening, looking tired, for it was a strenuous trip after all, not so much the driving as the walking. Baba and the *mandali* particularly remember the six-mile walk to contact a good new *mast* (one of the men, Bhau, said it seemed more like 20 miles), over impossible ground that was in turn rocky, mucky, thorny, pebbly, high and low, and included wading through a stretch of knee-deep water. But with Baba it is never the struggle that matters, only the work accomplished, and He seemed happy to have contacted this good *mast*.

Then again He seems to have been busy apart from the *mast* work, for the *mandali* were telling us how on the 10th at about 2:30 P.M., a few miles from Gulbarga, they had a very close shave from a bad accident. They could only describe it as a miracle, for there was no other explanation to show how the car that had slipped from the incline of the road and gone over completely on its side to only a few inches from the ground, could right itself and be back on the road as it did, without turning turtle in the ditch. Bhau says, "We still cannot grasp how it happened — one second my face was almost touching the ground, the next we were straight and on the road again, and we saw Baba's hand firmly holding Eruch's arm." You see, the car had slipped over on Baba's side, and Eruch was on top of Him with no control over the steering wheel; and Baba (from that impossible angle) pushed Eruch back into his place, making it possible for him to yank the wheel, and in a moment they were on the road and on four wheels again.... When they call it a miracle, Baba looks most innocent and gestures, "I don't know anything about it."

Ever so much love to each of the Beloved's Family.

Satara  
2 November 1956

Dear Bill,

This is not the letter I promised in my last one of 23rd, but an in-between one to let you know about the fast that beloved Baba wishes all those who love Him (and if possible even those just interested in Him) to observe on Feb. 15th when He emerges from His present seclusion. So all Baba-devoteds and Baba-interesteds in Australia should be

informed through the Sydney and Melbourne groups.

The fast should be observed for 24 hours on 15th Feb. '57, i.e., beginning from midnight of the 14th and ending at midnight of the 15th. During those 24 hours, all should abstain from eating or drinking anything — not even plain drinking water should be taken. Also during the fast, all participants should think of Baba as much as possible, and repeat His name as often as one conveniently can (i.e., during waking hours)....

Baba has done so many of these strict fasts without water during His present seclusion, and here at last we're allowed to share one with Him. All concerned in India, America, England, and Europe, etc., will also participate....

Baba returned on the 28th morning, very tired after the week's hectic *mast* trip, driving night and day the first three days, which covered 1,500 miles; and ended the last two days in Bombay, where it was prostratingly hot (even from the Bombay residents' standard, which must be some heat!).

I sent the sea-mail package of photos to you yesterday, Bill, and, blessed as they are with Baba's touch, am sure they will reach you safely. As we had sent a photo of Baba to the groups with our love, have enclosed in it one for dear May (Lundquist)....

In haste, but with fond love to you each and all dear ones in Baba,

*Mani*

Mulwala House  
Canberra City, A.C.T.  
14 November 1956

Dear Bill,

Thanks for the two copies of letters from Mani of 16 and 23rd Oct. and also the one to you of 2nd Nov. It is always so nice to hear from her. In fact I received a letter myself from her only yesterday. I mentioned to her about Pat Gavin missing out on meeting Baba and she gives me some very interesting points. Of course you have heard all of it before so won't quote the lot. She says this amongst other things:

Sometimes such a one coming with doubt in mind is, after meeting the Master, drawn to Him very close. At other times, one who comes even though he thinks it is with an open mind, fails to receive the direct blessing. One woman in N.Y. wrote and said she wanted to meet Baba and see for herself, as she would only trust her own instinct. But when she saw Baba, the first thing she asked Him was for a sight of a beloved one she had lost (he died some time ago), and she failed to receive His gift. I told her that in such a case the fault lies with us, for there is always water at the Fountain, but when we go with a vessel that is already brim full (with our own desires and wants), then it is not the fault of the Fountain if we cannot get our fill from it. It is not He who holds back the nectar from us, it is we who are incapable of taking it in. And of course I think the close ones who recognize and love Baba have a deeper connection than of just this life — they have forged the divine link

from former lives, and are drawn to Him and in Him sooner or later while He is amongst us.

Baba wants us these days to spread His message of Love, in our own possible way. Through our contact, those meant to come to Baba will naturally do so (even if it is just one or two out of the many we speak to about Baba). We should not be disappointed if more are not drawn; we are just the instrument and Baba will draw those who are meant to come. This I feel has the significance that Baba's manifestation must draw near, and those who are meant to have the contact will be ready for it. Baba said in Andhra: "When the Powerhouse is switched on..." (you know the rest, I think).

Now to get down to another point in your letter. You know, May, I'm so glad you told us about the biscuits. One day we made some biscuits for tea (we have a light lunch and tea together at midday, and the real meal in the evening), and as Baba took one He told us they were not like those He had in Australia, and we wondered who had made those. Now we know it was dear Grace, we should love to have her recipe and try and make them here for Baba.

Perhaps you will be kind and share this with anybody wanting to hear from Mani, and perhaps you might be good enough to mention to Grace about the biscuits. She could then possibly save Mani writing by sending her the recipe herself.

Well, I have not mentioned all yet. Mani says:

Our love to all Baba-ones there, and I would specially like to mention Betty Stoltenhoff. For although it is just not possible for me to write separately to

more people than I do at present (with other duties involved and the inadequate time at my disposal), I know His news is shared by all dear ones, and writing to the few is writing to you all. Love also to Grace, and to each and all Baba-ones, and as ever

Much love...

*Mani*

It has been nice to have Francis here... suppose he will tell you the news when he returns. Greetings to you all and love from

*May [Lundquist]*

[Extract]

Ahmednagar

24 November 1956

My dear Bill,

Baba left on one of His lightning *mast* tours again towards the North doing nearly 2,500 miles in car with hardly any food, rest; and on His way up and down stopped at Meherazad, Pimpalgaon for one day and three days, and permitted me to see Him. He returned to Satara on 23rd.

Barring temporary fatigue which He gets over after a little rest, He keeps healthy and happy; while His seclusion during travel or stay at Satara continues unperturbed by any voluntary movements outside. He has been also observing fasts at Satara.

With love to you, Joan and Francis

Yours brotherly,

*Adi Sr.*

Satara  
27 November 1956

Dear Bill,

This is a short letter with some happy news. Baba had me send the following message to America some days ago, and now wishes me to send it to England and Australia also. Therefore, please inform all concerned in Australia (Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, etc.\*) that

Baba wishes each one to write immediately a short letter direct to Him, just this once during His present seclusion, and expecting no reply to it directly or indirectly.

(\*also Victoria Best, who I believe is in Tasmania. I had written her some time ago asking her to get in touch with you regarding the November details — she must have done so. I think the Melbourne group know her, though I'm sure you do too.)

Fondest love to you each and all,

*Mani*

Just received your letter of 21st! Wow, you didn't tell me you had so many artists in the family. The mail came at one of those right moments when Baba was relaxing in His chair on the verandah, and He saw the pictures. Tell Ruth Baba smiled and made the familiar sign that means "very good." We all thought so too and are really delighted. I can just close my eyes and see you in the car, and Stephanie at the curtained window. It's also nice to see our Highest of the High had time out from His universal work to have a shave. Makes me think of Anita Vieillard, who told us that when she first heard of Baba and was waiting with the others to



see Him emerging from the car, she thought He would have a long, full beard and just lost her heart when she saw the lithe form and smooth, fair face with that twinkle in His eyes. Ruth of course is a symbolic artist, and the beard depicts the divine wisdom of our Beloved, and then too it's practical, as I find from experience a face is much easier to draw if you can cover half of it with a beard.... You may be interested to know I've been given a beard too by some in the U.S.A. (one for Santa Claus and one for Father Confessor) but am glad it doesn't show outwardly, though I could've made good money for Baba at some circus as the bearded lady. Tell Michael we thoroughly agree with his judgement of Ruth's drawing. I couldn't have done it half as well. I once drew a tiger and think it was really good too, and somebody came by and admired it terribly, saying, "Oh what a lovely mouse!" — so you see? Seeing the pictures, the talk got on to Australia, and Baba again mentioned Joan and the children (particularly Michael), and the others. Much love to them....

Loving acknowledgment to Ena and Grace for their letters. Baba returned from the *mast* trip sooner than expected, and will be writing about it in Ena's letter. Love to all dear ones in Baba, and a MERRY XMAS in advance....

Everybody says Ruth's managed to get such a "feel" in Baba's picture! What tickles me is the lyre bird looking mighty surprised she laid those eggs!

Oh, by the way, about the information on the Five Masters, I feel ashamed to say I know as little myself. But Adi would be the right person, as he has better access to different literature and is in correspondence with others in India who could supply further information. I'm sure you know I'd love to help; it's just that I don't know enough. I've been looking recently into the dates of the Five Masters'

births and demise and could supply that if you like. In answer to my queries on that, I received a few days ago a little Hindi magazine about Tajuddin Baba which I will read, and can send you bits of interesting information from it (though perhaps Ghani has already included them in his notes that you have?)....

If you happen to see Grace or write to her, please tell her I'll let her know how the biscuits turn out (they seem delicious in the recipe and hope they will come out as well as hers did!).

From Mani's letter of 1st December 1956 (sent to me by Ena Lemmon):

We have been reading about the Olympic Games, and our thoughts have been often in Australia. When Baba was last in Bombay, He attended once the cricket match between Australia and India, though only for about two hours — enough, I guess, for His contact with them and with the vast crowd that attended. Baba returned from this last *mast* tour on the 23rd and just as we expected (isn't it like a woman with her eternal "I told you so"?), He did not take it easy. He said He meant to, but there was a loved "quarry" in sight, a high Hindu *mast* whom Baba wished to contact (and had not contacted before), and after the first 1,000 miles they learnt he was leaving his usual habitat at three o'clock on that particular afternoon. So Baba had the car raced at record speed (128 miles in two hours can be a hair-raising experience on usual Indian roads, dotted with towns and villages and cattle, dogs, and bullock-carts) and got there just in time as the *mast* was leaving. Baba was very happy, as He always is when He contacts these *masts*, whom He calls "My true soldiers."

The *mandali* had a near collapse, however, some of them not having been well to begin with, and Baba cancelled the further tour and returned to Pimpalgaon where He intended to rest for a few days. But there it poured incessantly (the rain too seems to have gone mad this year, for such torrents at this time of the year are most unusual to say the least) and Baba and the men returned to Satara on the 23rd....

He told us He intends to go to Bombay for a change though one wonders what change or rest can ever mean in Baba's language.... He is so obviously preoccupied with work these days, and even when outwardly relaxing, it's fascinating to watch His fingers moving rapidly (as though He were writing in space), but of course He never tells us these things. (I sometimes think perhaps that is why the Avatar is never a woman, or He wouldn't be able to keep all these secrets to Himself — but this is just Mani being funny)....

Much love to all dear ones in our Beloved's Family.

*Mani*

[Extract]

Ahmednagar  
28 January 1957

My Dear Bill,

I shall go to Poona on 11th and accompany Baba to Pimpalgaon. He and the womenfolk will stay at Pimpalgaon. On 15th February there is a poor programme when Baba will give to the poor *prasad* of cloth and sweets. According to doctors' advice, the two February programmes are shifted to March. On 18th March Baba will go to Sakori and on

approximately 23rd March to Poona to give an embrace of love to a saintly person, Dada Vaswani, who has hundreds of followers and who has been aspiring to have Baba's *darshan* since long. On both these occasions devotees from all over India will be invited to just have Baba's *darshan*.

With love to you, Joan, Francis, and kisses to your children,

Yours as ever,  
*Adi Sr.*

P.S. (1) Wish you success in your enterprise of writing a life account of Baba along with the five *Sadgurus* responsible in bringing down the Avatar of the age.

(2) In the next consignment of books, I shall also send a typed copy of a small speech that I prepared for reading on 25th February on the occasion of Baba's Birthday Meeting at Bombay convened by Bombay Baba lovers.

SATARA 18 AUGUST 1956

FRANCIS BRABAZON  
KALIANNA CRESCENT  
BEACON HILL NSW

ARRIVED SATARA MY LOVE TO YOU EACH AND ALL IN  
SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE  
BABA

AHMEDNAGAR 23 FEBRUARY 1957

WILLIAM LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRESCENT  
BEACON HILL NSW

MY LOVE TO ALL MY LOVERS IN SYDNEY CANBERRA AND  
NEARBY  
BABA

AHMEDNAGAR 17 DECEMBER 1957

WILLIAM LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRESCENT  
BEACON HILL NSW

MY CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS AND LOVE TO ALL MY LOVERS  
IN AUSTRALIA  
BABA

King's Road  
Ahmednagar  
9 April 1957

Dear Bill Le Page,

Baba wishes me to write to you for the information of all Baba lovers, about His new book at present in the hands of Dodd Mead for publication. This book, *Listen, Humanity* by Meher Baba, narrated and edited by Don Stevens, is soon to be published in the U.S.A. at Baba's instructions, and includes along with a detailed account of the last *sahavas* a number of His teachings and discourses not published before. Baba had entrusted this work to Don Stevens, wishing that it be ready for the India *sahavas* now to be held

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in January 1958. Don has lived up to the trust, completing it in good time and presenting it in a simple and depthful manner that will appeal not only to those who love Baba but generally to all who are seeking in various ways for a higher meaning to life.

Sufism Reoriented, whose members are as devoted to Baba as other lovers who do not belong to this corporation, have ventured in face of great financial odds to print and publish this work of Baba. Baba wishes it to have the widest possible distribution and sale, not only among Baba lovers but among as many others as possible. Baba wants all, irrespective of the fact that Sufism Reoriented were made responsible for its publishing, to assist them and give them full cooperation in this matter.

Baba sends His dear Love to you one and all.

Yours as ever,  
*Adi K. Irani*

The above has been sent to the following people, for the various Baba groups in England and Europe: Christ Andrews (Greece); Max Haefliger (Switzerland); Anita Vieillard (France); C. B. Purdom (England); Dorothy Hopkinson (England); Delia DeLeon (England); Mary & Will Backett (England).

17 June 1957

Hi, Bill!

Here's your headache again, calling this time from Meherazad. The children's programme on the 9th went off very well, and as always on such occasions Baba was looking radiant. Though as usual we girls were not present at

the actual programme, we could see from early morning the stream of devotees going by our cottage towards the *mandali's* quarters, while the line of vehicles outside the driveway kept growing rapidly. Then came the buses full of the children, bright eyes and happy smiles barely showing above the bus windows and their united cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki jai" was music. Baba returned at noon, leaning on the arms of Eruch and Meherji and followed by a large number of others (Baba lovers from Poona and other parts of India). Visible from a distance was the single flower garland round His neck, and not so visible the dust of 200 pairs of little feet on His dear forehead. On the 10th we started early in the morning so as to avoid the midday heat, and we got here in good time after a fairly comfortable journey. The first two days the difference in temperature was markedly felt but after a couple of showers it is cooler. I know you send the Baba news on to the different groups for all concerned, for now that there is not enough material for the Family Letters, I send the news by individual letter....

Yes, Bill, that sentence is perfectly O.K, and perfectly clear to me now — it was plain dumb of me or perhaps the lorgnettes need repairing.... Yes, I see what you mean about the money. Actually it was meant for the Australian share alone, but we had in mind the possibility of the number exceeding the 38 so far given (29 definites, 9 possibles). Also the fact that the Australian List (No. 1) has YES in the contribution column, which alone seemed to more than cover the original minimum amount mentioned. Another thing, if the bankdraft cannot be made out to the Ahmednagar branch, then it can be made out to some Bombay bank (suitable for foreign exchange purposes)....

And now Auntie Mani speaking: it had been a rather busy morning and Jenny's delightful drawing chased away

a couple of cobwebs from my perspiring brow, for you can't frown and smile at the same time, can you? And oh yes, it's perfectly clear to me what it is — it's a train, of course, and the thought behind it? Daddy going to India. Then some hard thinking: "You can't cross water by train," and so on the other side she drew a boat (never you mind if the mail is a bit wacky), or it could be a wonderful fish with the fin where she thinks it would be more useful as propeller (must tip Baba on this point when He makes the next world). Gosh, Bill, I can see you riding a Moby Dick to India! Her picture made a lot of sense — wish some of these abstract drawings that pass for masterpieces could do as much. And lastly, don't think this rambling has been any bother to me — I love it and could go on doing it for hours. My love to Francis; got his letter few days ago, and one point I must include here pronto, about the young ones coming for the *sahavas*. Baba says anyone over 14 is permitted to come, O.K? (that is, none under 14 allowed). Here's a kiss for Jenny and a duck (drawn without lifting pencil). Hope you like my duck, Jenny. It quacks a lot, just like me.

And as always much love to you all,

*Mani*

Just heard our dear Norina has passed away, on 15th noon, "most peacefully."

STOP PRESS: Baba's wishes for each and all concerned in Australia about the 10th July. Complete silence should be observed from midnight of the 9th to midnight of the 10th. Also during that time complete fast should be observed except drinking water as often as liked, and tea *or* coffee ONCE during the 24 hours (with or without milk as desired).



Please acknowledge this immediately, Bill (preferably by cable), so that I'm sure the above important message has reached you. If I do not hear from you by end of the month I will repeat the message by another letter....

[Extract]

Ahmednagar  
27 July 1957

My Dear Bill,

I received your other letter of 10th July intimating that you had despatched 1,000 copies of introductory booklets on Baba with a blank space on the last page where name and address can be stamped. I do find the idea excellent.

I also hereby acknowledge your previous letters of 12th Feb., 9th April, and 22nd April. I also received from Francis the revised typed copy of *The Quest* in duplicate. I received from you a typed copy of *God-Man*, which I find precise and excellent.

The condition of the Beloved is excellent in every respect excepting that the pain persists. There is no knowing when it will disappear — not likely in the near future. However, He keeps extremely busy and cheerful. The oncoming *sahavas* congregation work of giving directions will occupy Him intensely sometime later.

Just before I began this letter, I saw Baba passing through A'nagar on His way back to Pimpalgaon (Ahmednagar) in Lt. Col. Goldney's car who has been given an opportunity of staying at Meherazad, Pimpalgaon. During a short and hasty interview on the roadside near my office, Baba asked me several questions about how the office work was going on, including all the odd jobs that are daily

attended to. When Baba comes to Pimpalgaon, the 9-mile distance from A'nagar entails some extra work.

With love and blessings of Baba to you, to your dear wife, to Francis, and to all others who know me there, and with my loving regards to you all.

Yours as ever,  
*Adi Sr.*

9 September 1957

Hi, Bill, dear soldier of Baba!

Our letters crossed — my long one of 15th must have reached, and I loved your birthday one and read it to Baba (perhaps you felt that smile He gave). Well, Bill, now that I know I'm almost six years older than you (though not any wiser, I'm afraid), I don't feel too bad about my lorgnettes and umbrella that I try to daunt you with sometimes....

Many close ones are going through some big difficulty or the other, and some (in East and West) have had broken bones and hospitalization. The most recent one is our dear Dr. Ben Hayman, who had a car collision this Sunday (1st) suffering fractured ribs and astragalus of left foot, and this Friday the foot was operated on. Baba sent him a beautiful cable, and I hope to be writing personally soon. This incident also clarified something that was puzzling me lately: since a few days before Ben's car accident, Baba kept asking me if there had been a letter or cable from Ben. As dear Ben does not write often, that puzzled me. He asked nearly every day, and on the Saturday said, "Tomorrow remind Me definitely about Ben." When asked what I was to remind about, He said, "Never mind, just remind Me." And

so we are sometimes afforded the littlest glimpse of His unfathomable ways....

I would like to send you (hope to in few days) a number of pictures taken since Baba's return last year, and some very recent ones taken not by Beheram but by another Baba lover photographer. One is a small set of ten pics, the series giving an intimate picture of Beloved at the meeting in Poona (at Guruprasad). I will send you two copies of each, one for Sydney group and one for His Melbourne group, as you may like to keep for record (and if anyone wishes to have them individually you can let me know as usual, Bill). The only thing is, these samples I will send will have to be in the account, I'm afraid. O.K.? But there will be no hurry; it can be sent through Adi some time as you did this last time — and loving thanks for that, Bill.

Am sending two copies of the enclosed [Family Letter], so you can send one right away for Melbourne (as you have no typewriter and it must mean a lot of work, will it help if I send three copies of such letters?). In haste as always, and much love to Joan, Frances, Lorna, all the children, yourself, and dear Francis, May, Ena, Clarice, Joan, and all — and to Grace (loving ack. for her dear letter)....

*Mani*

Those wunnerful Baba booklets arrived — Baba happy.

King's Road  
Ahmednagar  
9 December 1957

My dear Bill,

What I say here is not meant to be printed in *The*

*Awakener* or anywhere. Kindly inform all Australian groups about this:

*The Awakener*, Fall issue 1957, makes mention in the last para. under the caption of Builders of Bridges, that *Mira — East and West* is our sister publication. I would like to clarify that this should not lead one to believe that anything released through its series journal and books has the guidance or support of Baba, nor that Baba lovers must read and subscribe to it. In fact, Baba would want all His lovers to accelerate circulation of His own magazine, *The Awakener*, instead of subscribing to publications based on orthodox teachings and conventional lines. Although many such publications faithfully render sincere service to the public in general, the living essence of Truth is embodied in the words of the present Avatar, which ring above and beyond the echoes of the Masters and saints of the past. If we would listen, we can hear them again in His latest book, *Listen Humanity*, a copy of which Baba would like all His lovers to have, to be treasured in every home along with *God Speaks*.

Baba does not order His lovers not to read the *Mira — East and West* or similar publications, but He does order all those who would want to, not to seek elucidation from Baba on any point therein that might confuse them.

With loving regards,

Yours as ever,  
*Adi Sr.*

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## 1956 - 1958

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**THE TWO YEARS BETWEEN** Baba's first and second visits were dominated initially by the assurance that Baba would call invited ones to India in 1957, and then for most of the period by the shock of His second car accident, the flow of reports and news on His condition, and, in the later part of the period, His decision to come again to Australia in 1958.

For some time I had been acting as unofficial secretary and distributor of materials such as books by and photographs of Meher Baba, plus the various books by Francis. During this period the publication of Francis's books proceeded, and this took considerable amounts of my time as well as of my money. Until Baba "turned the key" in 1967 I was almost always broke, and at times, for example after the East-West Gathering of 1962, quite heavily in debt.

Not that I was at all comfortable with this; in fact it worried me because I always recall an occasion in 1954 when Baba, in front of the Westerners, gestured to an Eastern lover, saying how much he loved Baba but that through going into debt in his zeal to work for His Cause, he had become a burden on Baba. He showed very loving concern for this lover, thus making it clear to us that such is His love for us that even our material circumstances are of concern to Him, and therefore we should be prudent and try to avoid creating extra burdens for Him.

After Baba had returned to India, amongst other things I prepared my first introductory booklet (see supplement, section 3). This was eight pages with a photo of Baba on the front cover. When a copy was sent to India, not only did Beloved Baba sign it, but Mani in a letter dated 3rd May 1957 wrote:

Hi, Bill! Am rushing this reply to yours of 22nd, hoping it's in time to save something of those fingernails! Now the issue has gone to the Supreme Court, for Eruch read it out to BABA, and the verdict (unanimous) is "Excellent." Baba is happy with it, both the idea and the writing, and He and Eruch and all of us liked it immensely. Adi came the next day for repairs to his car, and this was again discussed with him, and it's decided, Bill, that you should send Adi up to 1,000 copies of it. (Adi will adjust payment with your book accounts and will be writing to you later about it.) This introduction is just the sort of thing that's been vaguely stirring at the back of my mind for some time — I mean that someone should do it, and the way you've done it is whacking good.

Shortly after Baba's return to India in 1956, He had Adi K. Irani send me a list of those invited from Australia to the *sahavas* which He said He would hold in India in November 1957. Much correspondence then ensued between Adi and Mani and me over this list, some withdrawing, some coming forward, and in particular I was responsible for collecting the money which the *mandali* calculated would be needed for accommodation costs in India. With Robert Rouse's help, I did have great fun dealing with the shipping company over the constantly changing passenger list. Later, when Baba changed the *sahavas* date, the whole group was rebooked on another ship, again with variations in the list of names. Finally, when Baba announced that He would come to America and Australia in May-June 1958, the bookings were

cancelled. It proved very good training for the problems of booking the group's journey to India for the East-West Gathering in 1962.

In this direction and that, in all respects I was kept busy, but this was especially the case after Baba announced that He would hold *sahavas* in Australia in June 1958.

Over the years Francis and I had talked of establishing a centre for Baba north of Sydney, and we had on occasions explored certain areas of northern New South Wales with that in mind. It was certainly clear that an extensive centre could not be practicably established in the suburbs of a major city. On one occasion we took an extended motor tour of an area some 350 miles from Sydney (sleeping under the stars and cooking on an open fire), and on another, an area was explored at a similar distance from Sydney but closer to the coast. No location seemed to be the right one, but with awareness of Baba's physical condition after the second car accident, and after His decision to come again to Australia, Francis determined in January 1958 that a further effort must be made to locate a suitable site in a warmer climate than could be expected in June in Sydney. Locations just south of Brisbane, around Tambourine Mountain, were discussed, and Francis said that if necessary he would go north of Brisbane. This happened, and with Baba's definite approval a property of eighty acres, on the top of a small mountain called Kiel Mountain, was purchased in February 1958. On 2nd February Francis received the following cable, which included a reference to his new book, *Stay with God*:

PLACE SECURED BY YOU EXCELLENTLY SUITABLE  
YOUR TYPESCRIPT PROVES YOU HAVE REALLY STAYED  
WITH GOD  
LOVE  
BABA

At first Baba's visit was scheduled for the second week of June, but then this period was moved forward. He actually landed on 2nd June. This gave barely three months in which to prepare a house, meeting hall, roads, and accommodation for the Australian lovers, and establish a water supply and other necessities before His arrival. For all of us, and particularly for Francis, it was a period of extremely satisfying, intense, and exhausting work.

During the three months of preparation, a new road of even curve and even grading was cut around the side of the hilltop to Baba's house; the farmhouse was removed in one piece and replaced on a slight ridge below and about 150 yards distant from Baba's house; roads were constructed to the farmhouse and to various sections of the property to assist movement and to allow Baba to inspect the property if He desired; all roads within the area were strengthened, channelled with gutters and drainage pipes, and laid with concrete where necessary; a large meeting hall was erected near Baba's house and on the same level; a further area was cleared and levelled, and tents were erected for the men attending the *sahavas*; toilets, bathrooms, and tankstands were constructed; beds, tables, and benches were made — some for the lovers, and specially custom-built items for Beloved Baba; curtains, linen, and house decorations were prepared by the women for Baba and the *mandali*; an internal telephone system was connected to all major points — Baba's house, farmhouse, and the men's quarters. The trees, gardens and paths in the immediate area of Baba's house were trimmed, formed, or beautified as required.

But the principal and outstanding work was the construction of Baba's house. The building was purchased from a series of standard designs for a wool or farm-produce building, with wooden floor, steel girders and roof structure, braced throughout with timber, and the roof and walls were sheeted with corrugated iron. On one side was a long, low, open verandah, with a



roof of iron also. Since then this verandah has been enclosed, so it is difficult now to visualise exactly how Beloved Baba was driven in the car beneath the verandah and how He was assisted from the car and given the key to open His house.

The house is 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. Baba's room, set within the outer walls of the building, is  $17\frac{1}{2}$  by  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet approximately. The remaining 40 by 20 feet contained four simple beds at one end, hidden by a curtain hanging from one of the steel roof girders. There is no inner lining or ceiling, and the outer corrugated iron is visible. Near the curtain on one side was a table with four wooden chairs where the *mandali* accompanying Baba could eat, and in one corner outside Baba's room was a screened area approximately 7 by 7 feet as a bathroom for Him. Apart from the double doors leading into the house, there were a number of simple louvre windows set into the walls to give light and ventilation.

The original plan was for Baba's house to be a temporary structure, and Baba's room was built in such a manner that it could be dismantled in sections and re-erected exactly the same in a permanent structure located on the highest point of Kiel Mountain. Its present location, which of course has now become the permanent one, is some 50 to 100 feet lower than the highest point (commonly known as the Trig Point). On Francis's return to Australia from India in 1969, we spent many hours discussing and sketching proposed permanent structures to house the heart of Avatar's Abode, Baba's room. But over the years I realised more and more that it should be left where it is, in order that we and all future pilgrims to Avatar's Abode might visualise and absorb Baba's arrival, stay, and departure on the original site.

But to return to the preparations of Baba's house and the property for His visit: in the final month before the *sahavas*, much remained to be done, and work was continued from dawn to late at night under pressure lamps. But by 2nd June the finishing

touches and general cleaning up were completed; the paths and driveways surrounding Baba's house and meeting hall were all freshly laid with cinders, garden plots were formed with stone, and the house was prepared for the arrival of Baba.

May Lundquist, who greatly assisted in the preparation work, later wrote of this time:

I was given the job of helping the carpenters, something which greatly suits me and which seemed to suit Diana Snow even better. Both Diana and I helped to sand the wood for the most important place of all — the Baba room. By now the walls were up and the important thing was to match the wood for this special chamber, which was built well inside the outer walls. The ceiling had to have light-coloured timber, while the walls were to be in darker timber — turpentine, which is nearly a red wood. They have some really beautiful wood in Australia. It was always difficult to get the material on time, and sometimes Roy Baulch would have to do some other work until the material arrived. In addition to building the Baba house, the tanks had to be put up; the meeting hall was being constructed; the roads were being made, partly concreted; the bathroom was being built; the grounds had to be cleared; wood cut; water carried; bunks made for the women; palliasses made for all, a dining room had to be fixed under the farmhouse and cooking arrangements made; stores had to be planned and brought up; toilets built; tents erected for the men.... John Bruford put up telephones between Baba's house, the farmhouse, and the tents and helped with the building of Baba's chairs, etc. I had already made some cushions in Canberra, which I now filled; more cushions had to be made (for the carry chair and a few for the car), and I was given the task of doing them all. In the meantime, under

Diana's direction, we had started the painting of the Baba house. The day Francis announced that Baba had sent a cable saying that He was arriving a week earlier than expected, I really thought it was a bad joke. I had not thought it possible that He would do such a thing. But now it was true.<sup>9</sup>

Years later Joanna Bruford, another one who helped greatly in the preparations, spoke of this time:

It was very hectic. I was 17 and Bernard 15, and it was quite a shock to me. When we got here it was just expected that we work.... We got up in the morning and we worked before breakfast, then we had breakfast and we worked until smoko [tea break] — it was a long, long stretch and it went on like this for the whole day. We really worked hard. Everybody in the place worked. Francis had us disciplined here; it was my first experience of a real team effort. It was terrific, everybody was flat out to do what they could for Baba, to get everything right.... I was out there shovelling gravel for the road. Sometimes people would give me odd jobs, but we never stopped. Bernard carried water, but there were hundreds of jobs and it was all hard yakka [work]. Every bit of muscle power was needed, and it was all really well organized, nobody dared slack for a second. It wasn't external discipline, it was everyone's own internal discipline. It was everyone pulling together, and it was a really great feeling. In the last week a lot of people arrived. It seemed as if we were snowed under with people, but everybody got jobs, all different sorts of jobs. I wasn't the only woman working on the road, and that wasn't the only job I did. But it was my first experience shovelling gravel, and I really enjoyed it. If you left the farmhouse in the morning and came up through the trees and looked up to

the hill, it looked like an ant hill. There were always some figures running backwards and forwards, there was great activity. People were always doing something.<sup>10</sup>

My own main memories of the period are of the excessive rain, clouds of mosquitoes that limited work in the bush to about ten minutes in any one spell, red mud from the volcanic soil that seemed to permeate everything, being so tired after a day's concreting that one didn't know what to do with one's body, constant pressure and concern about getting everything done before Baba's arrival, the companionship that prevailed amongst the lovers who were there, the enjoyment of the evenings with Francis reading from his manuscript of *Stay with God*. I had two periods of leave, early and late during the period, and in between I managed a temporary transfer in the army from Sydney to Brisbane of about four weeks, and I was thus able to be at the property each weekend. Perhaps because the physical work was interspersed with days at a desk, I often found the work hard. It was at such times that I deeply regretted not being more physically robust. But as Reg Paffle, now in old age, says, "It was a wonderful time!" It was so indeed.

Ultimately there were many who contributed to the preparation of Avatar's Abode for Baba, but I would particularly like to mention firstly Reg Paffle, then Lorna Rouse, Diana Snow, John, Joan, Joanna, and Bernard Bruford, May Lundquist, Robert Rouse, Ken Davis, Marj Donaldson, Roy Baulch, and Jack Paynter.

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## JUNE 1958

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**MEHER BABA LANDED IN SYDNEY** on Monday, 2nd June (Brisbane was not then an international airport), and then flew to Brisbane in the evening of that day. The weekend prior to the 2nd saw the main influx of the fifty-five lovers who gathered to be with Baba, and then in the afternoon John Bruford and I drove two cars to Brisbane to bring Baba and the *mandali* to the hotel where I had arranged for Baba to stay overnight prior to driving to Avatar's Abode. In 1958 Brisbane was like an overgrown country town, although its population at the time would have been about four to five hundred thousand, and there were very few suitable hotels to accommodate Baba. I finally chose the Bellevue (since demolished) because of a small separate cottage at ground level behind the main hotel. Baba kindly said to me later that the accommodation was satisfactory but not ideal. I did not realise at the time that during the late evening beer barrels were rolled down a ramp into a cellar close to Baba's quarters.

From the hotel, John and I drove the two cars to the airport and parked close to a gate to the side of the terminal building. The early night was still, quite mild in temperature, and the area where we stood seemed quiet and remote from the rest of the airport. I remember it now as an atmosphere of expectant hush, as though the world was aware that some stupendous event was

about to occur. Then as we watched, the figure of Beloved Baba slowly emerged from the darkness, with His hands resting, supported, on the arms of Eruch and Francis each side of Him. I was as though transfixed, motionless before this timeless scene. The spell was suddenly broken with Eruch's voice calling: "Bill, come and greet your Baba!" I then ran forward and was greeted by Baba with a mighty thud on my back with His hand. We continued together to the gate where He greeted John. The luggage was collected, the other *mandali* — William Donkin, Adi K. Irani, and Nariman Dadachanji — gathered, and we drove some five miles to the city.

On arrival at the hotel, I was in the lead car and stopped in front in a position where Baba's car behind me was furthest from the entrance. This meant that Baba had to walk some extra fifteen to twenty feet, and Francis gave me a sharp rebuke, quite justified. I was stricken with remorse, but Baba flashed a smile of forgiveness at me.

During that evening with Baba, His arrival, His appearance, His movements, I became very much aware of an immensity of suffering beyond reasoning comprehension. Again and again throughout the following days my mind was thus confronted with and momentarily stilled by awareness of Baba's suffering. He once said: "As your breath ebbs and flows but is always with you, so is My suffering always with Me." The Sufi saying "When the heart weeps because it has lost, the spirit laughs because it has found" describes the pain and the joy of the lover in this suffering of the Beloved: for Baba has said that the suffering of Avatar is in order that all beings and things in creation may awaken to the realisation of their true state. Baba said, "This *sahavas* will be unique in the sense that you will witness and share My present universal suffering by being near Me as My fortunate companions — being with the Ancient One Who will be at the same time completely on the human level with you."

We did witness His suffering. We were there, and we felt it. And for a moment we understood the cry of the lover of God: "I cannot stand this pain of longing for You, Beloved, yet do not take it away because it is my very life." But whether His suffering was from the deterioration of His physical veil, or was an expression of His longing to awaken in our hearts, we do not know: we can only testify that His suffering was like a hammer upon our complacency and insensitivity. His suffering enveloped us; and sometimes, too, He was stern and almost fierce. But His very being was loving-kindness and compassion, and His every gesture, every word, every expression, a shaft of light through the seven planes of consciousness. He knew precisely our capacity for evaluation and change, and never took us near the limits of our endurance.

Meher Baba — absolute beauty suffering, that beauty might know itself in all forms and beings; and creation bending low in pain beyond words, and rising in new song and humanness in and through this suffering of Avatar.

The next morning, early, Francis and I were called to the cottage, and Baba asked about the arrangements for the journey to the property, talked of the sensitivity of His nose after the car accident (He was sitting with a handkerchief to His nose), and asked about the money I had collected as "love gifts" for expenses of the cancelled *sahavas* in India. To this day I do not remember the amount, and when I said some figure which popped into my head, Baba looked astonished, disbelieving and dismissive, it seemed, all at the same time. The matter was not raised again. But the time with Him there was another of those intimate, working yet "homey" periods, which I treasure in memory.

About 9:00 A.M. the two cars departed Brisbane for the property some sixty-five miles north. To describe the setting for the property, imagine a vast saucer, three-quarters of the rim a range of hills, the remaining quarter the ocean, and the centre a

small mountain five hundred feet in height. This is called Kiel Mountain, and the top of it is the property. Standing on the peak and gazing around it does appear to be the centre of this extended saucer of country. The area is coastal, subtropical, and the colours are brick red to dark brown soils, dark green eucalyptus foliage to pale green sugarcane and cover crops.

When Beloved Avatar Meher Baba came here in 1958 the area known as the Sunshine Coast — a triangle of coastal land roughly forty-five miles along the shore to a furthest inland depth of thirty miles — was a small-farmers district, and there were few holdings larger than twenty to thirty acres. The main crops were pineapples and sugarcane, and although tourists were attracted to its beaches and picturesque country roads and farmlets, the number of visitors was not great. In lifestyle the area was very conservative, and there was an unusually high number of religious groups, mostly Christian, in the vicinity.

The sun was shining, the effects of all the recent heavy rains disappearing as the cars came slowly into the property, passed the men's tents, round the lovely curve of new road with the summit close on the right and the coastal plain to the ocean below and on the left. As the cars neared Baba's house, the farmhouse (the women's quarters during the *sahavas* period) was passed on the left, somewhat below and a little distance from the road. The Australians had gathered around the farmhouse, on prior instructions from Francis, to watch their Beloved arrive. As Baba approached His house, His flag of seven colours, sent earlier from India by Mani, was hoisted on a tall flagpole erected between the house and the meeting hall. Baba's car entered the long verandah running the length of the house and stopped outside the double doors designed to allow freedom of movement for those assisting Baba in and out of the house. A few minutes later Baba sent word to those waiting at the farmhouse to come up to the meeting hall. All gathered quickly. The *mandali* carried



Baba in a carefully designed chair to the hall. At the entrance Baba stepped out and, leaning on the arm of Eruch, one arm raised in greeting, slowly walked to a small, low dais. Baba sat with the four *mandali* standing in an arc behind His chair.

Baba spoke of the Australian *sahavas* arrangements: each morning to meet at 9:00 A.M., have one hour for lunch, and begin again at 1:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. He instructed that the *mandali* were to have the same food as everyone else. Baba asked about the men's tents being on the side of the road, and Francis explained that the road was part of the property and that Baba's house was also on this same road. Baba asked further questions about the property, its size and shape, and to whom did it belong, and Francis replied, "It is now your property, Baba." Baba gave the property back to Francis, saying that He now held neither goods nor property. Baba then asked many questions about the finances and about who had contributed to the buildings, and each was asked to stand as the names were mentioned. There were several, but the only one I particularly remember in this matter was Roy Baulch. Baba ordered that these people were to have their contributions returned to them. Baba queried the ages of several children in the front, as He had stated that only children over nine could come to the *sahavas*. They were all over nine years of age.

Baba now asked Francis to introduce each to Him, and one by one everyone filed past and received that embrace which is the conscious or unconscious goal of all creation. When all were seated again, Baba asked if there was anyone who could remember the Prayer of Repentance by heart. Amidst a painful silence no one answered, and Baba then asked whether anyone had a copy. A lover from Melbourne, Elsie Smart, remembered she had one in the farmhouse and was asked to get it. After it was obtained, John Bruford read aloud the prayer while we all stood before Baba, and Baba said that all present were forgiven their failures to that

moment. The morning session ended then for lunch.

About an hour later the Australians assembled in the hall and four men chosen by Baba — Reg Paffle, Stan Adams, Jack Paynter, and John Grant — carried Him in His chair to the hall. Baba lovingly remarked to Francis that a lot of work had been done on the property to make it ready in such a short time.

Baba asked Francis who had helped him in the work, and as Francis obviously at that point had a mental blank, Baba prompted with various names, mine being the first or second, and as each of us was named, we stood. Baba then explained about the *sahavas* in India and how Pendu, who was responsible for the arrangements, did not know till five days before whether the *sahavas* would be held. At that moment nothing had been done, yet within those five days all arrangements were completed for the accommodation of 1,600 people.

Baba then asked Francis to read the discourse on obedience given by Baba in America the previous month. As Francis read, Baba interrupted at various points to explain further. Baba asked if all were willing to obey Him during the *sahavas* period, and from 10th June to 10th July 1958. Had all considered well their obedience to Baba? Did all understand? Baba asked those who could not obey Him to come forward. This two boys and one man did. Baba asked if they had understood the terms of coming to the *sahavas*. The younger boy said he had not understood, and the other two said they were really not sure whether they could obey Him or not. Baba asked Clarice Adams, the mother of the boys, if she had explained to them the conditions of coming to the *sahavas*; she said she had explained to her two sons, but evidently she had not explained adequately. The two boys and the man were asked to stand near Baba on one side of the dais. Baba turned to the remainder of the Australians and said He hoped all had been as honest as these three. He said that at Myrtle Beach He sent away all those who could not obey Him,

but here He was allowing these three to remain.

The atmosphere became more and more tense as the weight of Baba's words concerning obedience forced each one to concentrate deeply on the question. Baba continued. He asked Robert Rouse if he could obey Him if He asked him to cut his wife's throat. Robert answered yes to Baba. Baba then asked another lad if he understood completely what obedience meant: could he, if Baba asked him, walk down the street naked? The lad said that would be a hard thing to do — he was not sure, perhaps he could. Another lad was asked a similar question, and was also troubled. A young girl was asked could she obey: did she really understand all that obedience to Baba implied? And thus Baba spoke with one or another.

For the younger boy still standing beside Him, Baba showed great concern. He told Clarice: "The boy is not happy, you must talk with him." And later, when the boy went back to his seat, Baba would catch his eye and make signs to him of playing marbles with him, as He had done in Melbourne in 1956.

Baba decided on a ten-minute break to allow the two boys to speak to their mother and to give the man time to consider further. After the break, when all were in the room again, the three agreed to try to obey Baba. Francis continued with the reading of the discourse. When it was finished, Baba said this would be the last time we would see Him in the flesh. He would drop the body in the next twelve months. Baba said that only a few would hold to His *daaman*. He said that all, including Eruch, were to make sure to hold to His *daaman* during the coming year. As Baba noticed the young boy again with tears in his eyes, He said, "Baba loves you — you must not be .sad." As the tears still fell, Baba added, "When you cry, see, Baba cries, too!" as He pointed to the rain that was gently falling.

Because of shortness of time and money, the meeting hall which was built for Baba's use during His visit was not finished.

Around two-thirds of its walls we put hessian (burlap), but the material stopped about four inches from the ground, and this I felt was the principal reason for its draughtiness and Baba's discomfort. So very early the next morning (Wednesday the 4th) I got up and began to build up the soil below the hessian in order to eliminate the gap, and thus the draught. This I continued for some time, not very successfully, and about 8:00 A.M. I stopped, leant on my shovel and gazed towards Baba's house, thinking of Him. At that exact moment, Eruch opened the door of His house and called, "Baba wants Francis and you at once. Please call Francis." I bounded off down the hill to the farmhouse for Francis and then returned for one of my most significant meetings with Baba.

Baba gestured for us to sit on the carpet facing Him. He was in the chair in the corner of the room. Even now when I am in His room I like to stand and sit in the same spot. This was the first occasion on which He referred to me as Francis's right hand. He again told me to spread His Name and message, as He had in 1954 and also in 1956, and as He would again in 1962 and 1967, but each time with increasing emphasis and detail.

Baba spoke at length about Avatar's Abode, directing that a trust be formed for the property and that Francis and I were to be two directors of a board of five. He then asked us who else should be on the board, and between us we named Robert Rouse, Reg Paffle, and John Bruford. Baba agreed with these choices. He stressed the importance of the property and its development as a centre, but I personally do not recall any mention of Avatar's Abode as a place of world pilgrimage until 1967. There was also no mention of myself as chairman of the trust until 1967. I understand that later Baba asked each of the three men nominated as directors if they were willing to be that. Each said yes.

At 9:00 A.M. private interviews with families and individuals

began, and all through the morning Baba gave personal instructions and guidance to this one and that one, to groups, to a family, and then to a group of families. There seemed to be constant movement of people in and out of Baba's room, creating an impression of a flow of humanity which cut through and broke down individual and family barriers, and at the same time strengthened the bond in His love between husband and wife, parents and children, and different families and groups. Baba as Beloved formed and strengthened with each lover that relationship which would ultimately lead to Union, and Baba as Friend advised and guided and set the direction of their daily life, and provided the opportunity for participation in His work. To one family Baba expressed concern over the health of the children, and gave instructions for a period of treatment.

Two of the families, Robert and Lorna Rouse and John and Joan Bruford, were brought before Baba together and asked if they would move from Sydney and Melbourne respectively and live on Avatar's Abode. Both couples said yes, and then Baba spent considerable time on their relationship, responsibilities, and what work they would do for Him on Avatar's Abode. Later Baba again spent time with each family regarding this change, and in the case of the Brufords He Himself asked their two teenaged children if they were willing to move to Avatar's Abode with their parents. They also said yes. Thus Baba showed His gentle, loving concern for those whom He loved and wished to bring closer to Him, and to increase their participation in His work in Australia. These two families have carried out His wishes and provided the essential base for the physical maintenance of the property. Their work, undertaken by each of them in very difficult circumstances, has been of tremendous benefit to Avatar's Abode. This is so with each member of the two families, but I must particularly mention John Bruford, who lived with extreme physical handicaps and who, apart from other activities, made

Baba especially happy with his sculptures of Baba.

Of Joan and myself, and of Robert and Lorna, Baba asked the whereabouts of the younger children, and when told they were housed at nearby farms, He detailed Robert and myself to collect them and bring them to Him. This was done about the middle of the morning, much to the joy of the children. To Michael, whose birthday it was that day, Baba conveyed "Happy Birthday" and gave him much attention.

After lunch it rained, and the afternoon meeting was held in Baba's house with Baba sitting a little forward of the doorway of His room. Again the *mandali* stood behind Him in an arc, and I remember with delight Baba flipping a cushion that had been placed beneath His arm, unerringly backwards to one of the *mandali*, without a glance behind Him. The removal of the seats from the meeting hall to Baba's house gave various men further opportunity for contact with Baba. As I swept the floor, He blew a kiss to me.

When all had assembled (including, at the invitation of Baba, the farmer at whose house the younger children were staying), a further discourse was read. The reading was interspersed with occasional interruptions from Baba. At one time Baba raised His hand, saying He liked the weather with the warm rain, how it reminded Him of the *sahavas* in India in the old days when they were held in very primitive conditions. At another time He gestured lovingly towards a young child who had fallen asleep in the lap of her father during the reading, and then asked Francis did he think all were tired, and should the group go out for a while? After a short discussion, the discourse was resumed and completed.

All returned to their quarters and the cooks began the evening meal for Baba and some fifty-five men, women, and children cooking on a wood stove and kerosene Primus. Meals for Baba and the *mandali* were carried up the hill to Baba's house,

and on at least one occasion some food was brought back by Francis for distributing amongst the group, with comments of praise from Baba and the *mandali* for Lorna, who was chief cook. Baba seemed happy with all that was done for Him during the *sahavas*, and particularly happy with that done for Him under trying conditions and with personal discomfort. He was happy too with the labours of the group who had prepared the property for His *sahavas*. Many times He spoke of the property, its spiritual future, its management, the arrangements for the two families who had been asked to live and farm there, of its beauty and its location. Yes, undoubtedly Avatar was pleased with His Abode.

Well before 6:00 A.M. the men responsible for the fires of the stove and hot-water coppers were astir, and whoever tended the copper near Baba's house was greeted with bright smiles and friendly words from the *mandali* as they appeared. From 6:00 to 9:00 A.M. there was great activity as the remainder of the group arose and went about their tasks.

Before nine o'clock all were ready and climbing the short rise to Baba's house. Again the meeting was held there, with Baba sitting near the doorway of His room and the *mandali* standing either side of Him. Baba asked if all had slept well, and questioned those who said they hadn't. Baba then asked for the Prayer of Repentance to be read again, and Francis went down to the farmhouse to get a copy. One of the *mandali* read it, and Baba again said all were forgiven their failures up to that moment, and that all those who loved Him and were not able to be present were included. The group were given the words "Beloved God, Thy Will has come to pass" to repeat at exactly midnight on 9th July 1958.

Francis was then sent outside to see if the weather was suitable for Baba to visit the men's and women's quarters. The mist had lifted, though there were still clouds about with sun coming through. Baba again asked Francis to go and see what it was

like, and following a short discussion during which Baba continued to question Francis about it, Francis said, "If it is Your will to do the tour, You will do it now."

Baba was driven to the farmhouse and spent some time in the house and in various rooms. Joanna Bruford, who was present at the time, says of this visit:

When Baba came to the farmhouse He asked to see the sleeping places, and went from room to room looking at all our bunks, which were crudely constructed wooden frames with wire base and straw palliasses. There were a number of these bunks in each room, arranged in double-decker fashion so that we could all be accommodated in the farmhouse.

Baba must have been told at each bunk the name of the woman who slept there. I specially remember that after coming out of the room where I slept, Baba came into the main room of the house where May Lundquist slept. Hers was the bottom bunk against the kitchen wall, and above it she had a small picture of Baba. When Baba came into that room He pointed to the bunk and was told it was May's. Then He pointed at the picture of Himself, and said how dear May was to Him and how much she loved Him. I have a vague impression of May being there, her tallness and her retiring nature, but what I do remember 100 percent clearly is the wonderful smile on Baba's face and His pleasure in May's love. It was just so nice. When Baba was happy, we felt happy. Baba also went into the kitchen, where He spoke to the cooks, but I don't remember whether He came into the farmhouse via the front door or the back stairs.

Baba was then driven to the men's quarters, and here again He spent a little time viewing the site and the surroundings.



On return to Baba's house all the women were called to be with Baba in His room. This session lasted a long time while Baba spoke about Mehera and Mani — of Mehera who is the purest of women and Baba's beloved, and of Mani who loves Him so much and who works for Him from morning to late at night doing correspondence and other work. Baba handed round photographs of Mehera and Mani and other groups of Indian women lovers. Then Baba held four large photographs which Mehera had said to give to some ladies. Baba asked to whom should He give them, and Joan Bruford said she thought they should go to the ones whose homes were most visited by group members. Baba gave one each to Clarice Adams, Frances Lee, Lorna Rouse, and Joan Le Page; then He handed to the remainder either miniature leather slippers made by Mehera and Mani or bangles also sent by them. Before the women left, He gave each some of His hair.

The men then came to Baba's room for their session with Him and received a stone from Meherazad Hill where Baba had spent considerable time in seclusion. The first and largest stone was given to Francis for Avatar's Abode, the next was given to me for Meher House, and then a smaller one was given to each man. When one man stretched out his left hand to receive a stone, Baba gestured disapproval and waited until he had put forward his right hand before placing the stone in it. Baba also gave Francis two large coloured photographs of Himself for Avatar's Abode, one coloured and one black and white to me for Meher House, and two black and white for Melbourne. Baba specified that the two photographs for Avatar's Abode be placed on either side of and above the doors to His room.

After the men had come out of Baba's room, and all had returned to the farmhouse thinking that the morning programme was over, everyone was called back again to receive Baba's *prasad* of a sweet. Baba threw a sweet to one or another,

and if missed it had to be returned to Him for a second throw. Baba insisted that each should catch the sweet. There was much merriment as some of the children often missed the catch, and in the case of Michael, he continually missed until Baba finally placed it directly into his hands. In my case, I was on one side of the house and Francis on the other. Baba looked at Francis, and with me thinking Francis was next to receive a sweet, I found it fair and square in my cupped hands resting on my lap, a distance of at least twenty feet between Baba and myself. I had not moved.

Generally throughout this second visit to Australia Baba was serious, at times unsmiling and withdrawn, and certainly more stern than He had been on His first visit. It was as though He intended to quicken the germination of the seed of love which He had sown on the first visit, and was less inclined to humour our moods, our "will we" or "will we not" love and obey Him. But of course, with Baba, humour was never long absent and would break through at unexpected moments. One such little incident was when I was walking with Him the length of the verandah; we stopped, and He pointed questioningly towards some tropical fruit growing nearby. I said: "They are pawpaws, Baba," and I shall never forget the quizzical, humorous look He gave me, with His Hands in a typical questioning gesture, as though saying, "Oh! this Australian language!" Eruch then explained to me that the word for the fruit in India is papaya. Such moments of natural human intimacy with God, I feel, help build the foundation-stone of one's life.

He did take us on occasions for an unhurried walk in the sun, or under the verandah of His house, or stand with us and gaze over the green lovely fields towards the distant but visible ocean, and reassure our groping hearts to take strength and go forward. On one such occasion He stood with a group of us, Francis by His side, beneath the window of His room, looking out across the trees and fields to the ocean in the distance. He

said how beautiful Avatar's Abode is and affectionately pinched Francis's ear, saying how well he had chosen for His Abode.

Early on Thursday afternoon, after spending a little time with Baba outdoors while He viewed the property and surrounding countryside from near the house, everyone gathered inside again. The men had been asked to amuse Baba, and presented jokes and light-hearted stories for His entertainment. After some time Baba said He would tell a story both comic and tragic about the four saints at the *sahavas* in India in 1958. Two of them were genuine saints and two of them were — let us call them saints. Baba told how the two who were not real saints sat near Him and listened to His discourses. When Baba left Meherabad for Meherazad each evening, they would form a group and give their own discourses. Baba heard what had happened. One asked for Baba's forgiveness; the other was ordered to fast for forty days, taking only water, and all the time to think of Baba. He went on to say that one who allows others to bow down to him without real authority is feeding his ego. One who has no authority and yet permits people to bow down to him plays a losing game, while those who bow down gain. The unburdening of *sanskaras* of those who bow down at his feet is the cause of his loss, for he takes on *sanskaras* that can only be wiped off by many more births.

At the close of the day all filed past Baba and kissed His hand.

On the last day Meher Baba gave a discourse, illustrating it with three circles drawn on the floor to represent the gross, subtle and mental worlds, and using a hat to represent the false "I." This discourse was reported by Adi Sr. as follows:

All the three worlds, the gross, subtle, and mental — and God the Infinite — are within you, who are fully conscious. But because of the falseness attached to your *Real I*,

you experience only the gross world with your full consciousness, and your back is, as it were, turned to the subtle and mental worlds and to God, the Infinite.

With the help of a *wali* on the fifth plane, you are able to withdraw within yourself with full consciousness more towards Reality, and experience the subtle world. Here again your back is, as it were, turned to the mental world and to God, the Infinite.

With the help of one on the sixth plane, you are able to withdraw within yourself with full consciousness still more towards Reality, and you experience the mental world as you get stationed onto it. Here, your back is, as it were, still to God, the Infinite.

This is the stage when, with the help of one on the sixth plane, you may be given a complete right-about-turn: turn with your full consciousness so that you fully face God the Infinite, and have your back turned to all the three illusory worlds within yourself. When you face God the Infinite fully, you see Him everywhere and in everything, and your full consciousness may then be said to be your very sight.

Even at this stage when you see God face to face, the falseness attached to your *Real I* is still not detached and, therefore, the seer and the Seen are not united. Only with the help of a Perfect Master is the falseness attached to the *Real I* completely lifted, and you as the Seer and God as the Seen, become one.

But because YOUR falseness has been lifted by the Perfect Master, YOUR *Real I* is liberated of falseness, and therefore it is you who experience the Reality as YOURSELF, and YOU affirm this experience by saying, "I am God."

Any other individual whose falseness has been lifted by the Perfect Master similarly experiences the state of being

"I am God." This is because the impress of one's falseness removed from the individual's *Real I* retains the stamp of one's Real Individuality which dwells in the realm of Reality.

When the discourse was finished, Baba asked the group to entertain Him again, and further stories were told by the men and some songs were sung.

At some point during these days, Baba said that many present would not see Him again in the body. This reminds me of one who was present and who did not see Him again, and it awakens a very touching story.

I have previously mentioned in the 1956 chapter about the mural done by Frances Lee. In June 1959 she died in mysterious and distressing circumstances. The house in which she was sleeping burnt totally to the ground, and she tragically died in it. In response to my cable to Baba about this, He cabled back to me:

FRANCES LEE WAS DEAR TO ME AND IS NOW  
NEAR TO ME  
LOVE  
BABA

In a letter that arrived a few days later, Mani wrote:

Then next came that cable about Frances, relayed by Adi over the phone — what is there one can say, even a chatterbox like me has no words. She had grown quite close to me somehow — apart from the indelible bond of Baba's love — sort of personally, though I couldn't say why. Perhaps it was her courage, the kind that receives not medals but scorn, and perhaps the greater because of it. Thinking of her would make me think of the line (by one of the Bronte sisters), "I who had the heart to sin, will have the heart to bear." She did have a big heart, and blessed indeed to have it filled with Baba's love....  
Baba sent you

this cable today: "Frances was dear to Me and now she is near to Me." So she's all right.

Then, many years later, after I had mentioned in a letter to Francis — read to Baba, as all my letters were — regarding Frances's husband, Norman Lee, who also was with Baba in 1956 and 1958, Francis replied: "Apart from its news interest, it was good that you sent it, for after it was read to Beloved Baba, He said to me that He was looking after Frances." I mention this in detail as an example of Baba's incredibly loving compassion for all those who had touched His heart.

Returning to the last day of the *sahavas*, a cable from the Australian women that had been requested by Baba to be sent to Mehera was read to Him:

ALL WOMEN BABA-LOVERS AT SAHAVAS AVATAR'S  
ABODE SEND LOVE TO BABA'S BELOVED MEHERA

The word "thanks" was also originally in the cable drafted by the women, but Baba said to delete it. He gave no explanation for this request. The group then dispersed for lunch.

At 1:00 P.M. everyone gathered outside Baba's house to say farewell to Baba. While we waited, Baba again called Robert and Lorna, spoke to them once more about their move to Avatar's Abode, said that He wished Robert to accompany Him to Brisbane and Sydney, and that Lorna was to care for His room in His absence. She has continued to do so daily, only extreme illness preventing her loving obedience to His order.

Baba then came outside and sat on a wooden chair at the north corner of His house. The sun was shining, but as I recall, His face was in the shadow. We all filed before Him and kissed His hand in farewell. When all had gone before Him and were standing waiting for His departure, Baba called my father, who had held back, apparently not regarding himself as a lover (in

contrast to my mother), and Father willingly came forward and knelt before Him. I am not sure now whether Father kissed Baba's hand, but it seems in memory that his head rested for a moment on Baba's knee. He was a proud man, and for him to kneel before Baba without hesitation was very touching to me. Earlier, during the morning session, Baba had also called my father to come forward from amongst all of us gathered there. Baba embraced him then, long and lovingly, and as Elsie Smart said later, "It was as though He had embraced us all."

There were again two cars, John Bruford driving Baba, Eruch, and Francis, and myself with Adi in front and Dr. Donkin, Nariman, and Robert in the back plus most of the luggage. Baba's car continued the length of the open verandah, the house on one side and flowering hibiscus on the other, circled and returned under the spreading mango tree, with Baba smiling and waving to His lovers lining the road, and set off for Brisbane.

The drive to Brisbane took two hours, and we arrived at the Bellevue Hotel at 4.30 P.M. Baba went straight to the cottage where He had stayed on His way to Avatar's Abode, and Eruch, Nariman, and Donkin remained with Him. We did not see Baba again until the next morning, but Adi sat with us in the lounge of the hotel and told us some absorbing stories of Baba, particularly from the Manzil-e-Meem days, such as Baba coming down the stairs in the morning with His hair flowing, waking them with His singing. This was before His Silence had commenced, and from all accounts, including Adi's, Baba had a most lovely voice and would often sing and play musical instruments.

Baba ordered spinach for His evening meal, and this reminds me of the occasion during the *sahavas* when Baba also asked for spinach, but plain. One of the women helping Lorna considerably with the cooking, felt compelled to add just a little lemon juice. The spinach was sent back with the message: why was something added when He asked for it to be plain?

We woke at 4:00 A.M., and all tramped down to the kitchen to prepare Baba's breakfast of cornflakes, prunes, and cream. I seemed to be the one responsible for the preparation, and to this day I agonise over whether or not I sweetened the prunes; I simply cannot remember doing so. It must have been an interesting sight to the night porter, because finally there were eight of us in that kitchen, and all we were doing was preparing breakfast for one person. When the porter said wonderingly that the unseen one person must be very important, I said, "Yes, He's the Highest of the High." The porter reflected on this, and then with a puzzled nod of the head agreed, "Yes, he must be very high!"

So Baba had His breakfast, and later we were called to the cottage to greet Him. His obvious suffering pierced the heart, and He said that He had had a very bad night. But then He embraced each of us and lifted our hearts, easing the thought that somehow His suffering might be due to us.

We drove to the airport at 6:00 A.M. for an 8:00 A.M. flight, and of course the airport terminal was deserted. I was sent to buy a newspaper and on return was asked to read something to Baba. I looked desperately over the front page (I still have the paper) trying to decide what item of news could possibly be of interest to Him. After one or two efforts, Baba took the paper and gave it to Eruch, who then read all the headlines irrespective of perceived merit and waited for Baba to indicate what item, if any, He wished to hear in full.

On the flight to Sydney, Baba handed me His packet of cornflakes, which was a part of the breakfast served on the plane — perhaps, as I thought later, to express His appreciation for my shopping journey with Adi in Brisbane late Friday afternoon to buy flakes for His breakfast, or (I fervently hoped not) to indicate His forgiveness in not sweetening His prunes.

From the airport we took two hired cars to Beacon Hill. We reached Meher House about midmorning, and now began an



embarrassing episode which ended well. I had no idea where the key to the house was, nor did I have one with me, and naturally I could not keep Baba from knowing this latest carelessness of mine. To make matters worse, it was obvious that in any case we had failed to lock the house securely, because I promptly climbed through a window which was easily opened and brought Baba in through the front door. Baba and I were alone, and the others occupied with paying the fares and seeing to the luggage. I was an awkward host but very happy to have Baba once more in Meher House. I asked Him to sit on the bed which He had used in 1956 and which was still in the same position in the big room. While I fussed around looking for the key on my desk, Baba reseated Himself on a large cane armchair and watched me. For some unknown reason I suddenly said to Baba that perhaps the key had fallen through a trapdoor which Francis and I had originally decided to put in to give us access to quite a large clear area below the floor. Why I said this I have no idea, because the trapdoor was very tight, and had not been opened in years, and to cap it all there could well be snakes under the floor (we still had bushland around us) and I had a marked fear of snakes. Of course Baba promptly gestured that I should look, and I had no option but to do so, whatever was down below. I grasped, I think, a screwdriver and began to work at the trapdoor, but I had no sooner started than Baba clapped for me to stop. This I did, and from that moment I never experienced again that fear of snakes. This was just as well, because when I began the development of Avatar's Abode in earnest, I had to kill many snakes.

Eruch, Francis, and the others then came in, and over the next nine to ten hours I spent one of my most heart-warming periods with Baba. It is rich in memories. Above all Baba expressed how He felt at home in the house, and He acted and looked at home, relaxed and comfortable. A radiator was put on, a pink eiderdown placed over Baba's lap, and we all sat or stood

informally, at ease, around Him. There were, as I recall, no lengthy discourses or conversations, but what I think of as easy, spiritual "heart talk," centred on Baba, but with everyone in some way or another participating.

Baba decided that a cable should be sent to Mehera, telling her that He was well and that they were now returning to India. Baba talked about Meher House, how happy He was in "the house that Francis and Bill built." He said again to me, "Never sell it." He looked at the photos we had on the walls and, pointing at one showing Him in His *kamli* coat, remarked that it reminded Him of the early days. Then He digressed and spoke of Pendu, injured as he had been in the car accident, and how Pendu was growing old, and reminiscing about "the old days." Then Baba Himself talked of how the *mandali* needed bicycles in the early days to keep up with Him when He walked. Also He spoke of His period of seclusion on Angiras Rishi Hill and of the conditions there for Himself and the *mandali*. He gestured questioningly at my army cap on the desk, and that gave me the opportunity of saying that I was a psychologist in the army, and that I felt very concerned over such work and my involvement with and effect on other people in fulfilling it. Baba looked at me and said, "Take My Name before every interview."

At one stage I was sent out to purchase lemonade for Baba. It was cold, and Baba did not like cold fluid. So the bottle and a glass of the lemonade were put before the radiator to become warm.

At another stage Robert was sent to dispatch the cable to Mehera, and to purchase fish, bread, and cheese for lunch. On his return with the food, we all gathered in the kitchen of the house. This was a room nine by nine feet and facing north; the sun at the time was coming through the windows and warming it. Baba sat on a wooden kitchen chair at the end of the small table against the wall and watched as I, and later Francis, cooked

the fish on two kerosene stoves. As each piece of fish was finished, it was placed on a plate and handed to Baba, Who then put on it bread and a thick slice of cheese which He had cut with His own hand from a large block. Plate after plate was gradually handed by Baba to each of the *mandali* and Australian lovers standing and sitting in the kitchen. Naturally, as cook, I was last, and conscious that everyone else was either finished or nearly so,

I sat on the floor and hurriedly began to eat. This I had difficulty doing because of lower teeth trouble. Baba suddenly stopped me and asked why was I eating with such obvious trouble, and I explained that I had lost three or four teeth in my lower jaw. Baba told me to get false teeth. This little incident was interesting because I have since felt that my naturally fast life rhythm began to slow from that point, and secondly I was able to refer proudly to my false teeth and say, "God told me to get them!"

That scene with the sun and warmth, Baba so lovingly cutting great slices of cheese and feeding us, His attentiveness and concern for us, the informal companionship and informality of all nine of us in our small room — all this is another incident where words fail utterly to convey the beauty and wonder of God-Man's presence on earth amongst us.

Later in the afternoon the subject of our return to the airport was discussed, and I said that the car used for Him in 1956 was still serviceable and available. Baba must have sensed my inner reservations (while stubbornly wishing to drive Him again), because He announced that we would inspect the car. So we all tramped slowly down the pathway to the large garage situated some thirty feet from Meher House and a little below. Baba looked, very doubtfully, I felt, at the car and asked me again if I was sure it would get Him to the airport. And again, with my fingers mentally crossed, I said it would.

We paused in the doorway of the garage, and not with any idea in mind, I said to Baba that I was thinking of converting and

enlarging the garage into a retirement home for my parents. Baba very emphatically said, "Yes, do so."

Apart from the fact that the car had to be push-started, it performed well, and I very happily drove Baba once more. We arrived at least two hours before the flight was due for departure, but such was Baba's way. During the wait Baba sat on a lounge in the more secluded corner of the airport, and we all stood around. Little was said, and there were long periods of general silence with Baba looking preoccupied and serious, and we, taking His mood, were likewise. Gradually during this time we became aware that there was a growing, very large crowd nearby in the main thoroughfare of the terminal building. As the crowd grew, so did laughter and chatter, and it seemed as though, with the increase of noise there, there was an increase in pensive silence with us. No one appeared to take the slightest notice of God-Man seated in the corner of that building. From our occasional glances it seemed as if they were absorbed in their light-hearted gaiety and noisy comradeship. In the days that followed we learned that this large, loud-talking crowd close to us was farewelling the leader of a religious sect.

No doubt it was an illusion, but it seemed that the area containing Beloved Baba and us became more withdrawn and dimmed, separated from the brightly lit areas nearby. He Himself sat there, so simple, so still, silent, and unpretentious, yet that very scene and His presence within it made me more aware of the richness that lay beneath the surface, and nurtured my inner assurance that He always remains.

That memory takes me back to the simplicity of His house at Avatar's Abode and the richness of His Inner Being that I feel when I open the door to His room and enter what I feel to be the equivalent of His heart.

Often the question is asked, what has been gained from one's contact with God-Man, what has one learned from the Lord

in His Advent as Meher Baba? What can one say? The answer seems to lie within the words of Dr. William Donkin when he was asked that question: "It is not what I have gained, but what I have lost in the form of useless mental baggage." Reliving such times with Beloved Baba seems to slow down thoughts of knowing this or knowing that, of having achieved this or having achieved that; one is conscious only of Him. The mind is momentarily stilled except for an awareness of Him and of a readiness to obey Him, whatever His wish. It is at times such as these that one understands a little more when it is said that the spiritual path is one of clearing and starving the mind of all but thoughts of loving and serving Him.

By the time the flight was called, the crowd grouped around the departure gate had become a solid mass. Interestingly, some of the people now apparently oblivious of Baba were among those who had come to the public day on Baba's first visit in 1956. I am told that Nariman shouted something in Hindi and quickly the crowd parted, and a clear passageway appeared. We stood there and watched as Baba walked slowly forward, supported by *mandali* on each side: we watched, heedless of the crowd, God-Man's back receding. And then He was gone: no farewells, no turning, no waving.

From India Baba sent the cable:

ARRIVED INDIA WITH ALL YOU LOVERS IN MY HEART  
INFORM ALL  
BABA

Francis replied:

ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE TAKEN US WITH YOU YOU HAVE  
LEFT YOURSELF WITH US ETERNALLY

Shortly afterwards a letter came from Mani:

21 June 1958

Dear Ones,

This little family letter is not so much to send you news of Beloved, but to acknowledge with full heart the receiving of it, personally from Him and through letters, the sharing of His Western *Sahavas* that He said was 100 percent to His satisfaction. To us it seemed, as Baba talked of you all, that He not only brought the love of you each in His heart (as He said in cable) but brought you personally here with Him. He told us of beautiful Avatar's Abode and all who helped to make it; of the devoted care and arrangements and of your great love and obedience. We were so happy to know from letters how well Baba was looking. One said, "He was looking just about like a thousand million suns." He brought that radiance with Him, looking wonderful, walking with greater ease of movement and much less support, as was apparent when He smilingly walked down from the plane at Bombay and across the distance to the airport that was packed sardine fashion with His lovers welcoming Him with cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki jai." "From Woombye to Moombye"\* was on our lips as we awaited His return to Bombay. Baba stayed for a day at the Dadachanji's and about four days at the Ganeshkhind cottage in Poona, returning to Pimpalgaon on the 14th. The dear Jessawala family were hoping Baba would stay there longer, till the much-delayed monsoon should break, thus making it cooler in 'Nagar. But Baba said despite the heat He would come to Pimpalgaon, for He has much work to wind up before July 10th (to "roll up the carpet" as He put it), in completion of

His *sahavas* work in the East and West. Baba has started the ,: special work and has told Eruch and some of us that we will be kept specially busy. Baba sends His love to you each, and says, "The only place that can hold Me is the heart. Keep Me close with you — I am always there."

With much love from us all,

*Mani*

\* Parsi pronunciation of "Bombay."

P.S. Baba wishes all concerned to be informed of the 10th July observance (as He explained to you), in that even those who could not attend the *sahavas* should know of it and observe it.

Attached to this letter, in a personal note to me, was the following:

Dear Bill,

Three hundred aerogrammes have been ordered from the P.O. (hope poor 'Nagar can supply that!) for the sending out of Baba's instructions to the *sahavasis* of Myrtle Beach and Australia, and preparations have begun full speed. So this is just a Hello, a very special hello and a little family letter. Baba spoke so dearly of Francis and you all — made us nostalgic for His Abode, as though we've been there....

In much haste and with much love,

*Mani*

Tell Francis Baba was very happy and delighted with the reply to His cable. And He told us of the delicious and intimate meal at Beacon Hill!

Love to Joan and the kids too *and* to Bill.

This second visit of Baba to Australia certainly confirmed Jiis connection with and love for Australia. From our point of view the further contact with Baba consolidated His place in our hearts, and that would stand until Union with Him; but for Australia, it nurtured the plant of spiritual longing for all the generations over the next seven hundred years.

Although Baba sent me back to Sydney to continue working for His cause there, the main thrust of my vision of the flowering of Baba's love in Australia centred on Avatar's Abode. All efforts to draw people to Baba were directed to the final goal of their pilgrimage to Avatar's Abode.

From June 1958 I took every opportunity to visit and stay there, dragging my family north on slow, tedious car journeys (seven hundred miles), as I used to drag them from Melbourne to Sydney in earlier years before our move to Sydney.

I took a keen interest in the efforts to farm the property, which Baba had agreed that the two families would undertake, and contributed what money I could to its development. My involvement with Avatar's Abode was complete in 1967 when Beloved Baba directed that the family and I should move there, and that I was to be the chairman of the trust which I was to form. During His visit, as I have mentioned, He had said to form a trust, but this was not repeated again until my visit to Him in 1967. At that point Baba told me to take His Wishes very seriously. I will cover my efforts to do so when I write of my 1967 visit to Him, and of the years that followed that visit.

Meherazad  
24 June 1958

Dear Bill,

The following are the orders I mentioned I would send between June 10th and July 10th.



For forty days, beginning from July 14th 1958:

- 1) Repeat (audibly but softly) 1500 (fifteen hundred) times a day, at one sitting any one time during the 24 hours: "Beloved God thy Will has come to pass in that all our Baba has declared will soon come to pass this year." (When not found possible to do at one sitting, it may be done in two sittings.)
- 2) Give up one cherished item: i.e., some special food or drink, or smoking, etc.

Carry on the rest of your activities as usual.

You should not cable or correspond with Me or Eruch until informed otherwise.

Love,  
*BABA*

You should not write any inquiry to India in re to above orders.

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## 1958 - 1962

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**THE YEARS 1958 - 1962** saw some changes in my circumstances. Late in 1958 I completed my five-year contract with the army and began some twelve years' work as a personnel consultant, interrupted on a few occasions by short periods of regular employment. The consulting proved very significant because it gave me freedom of movement and time in my work for Baba, and also it provided me with many useful contacts for the work. Although economically I experienced some definite ups and downs in the consulting work, it did provide me with sufficient for the family and at the same time enabled me to devote my energies principally to Baba. At some point — I now have no clear memory of when — Baba had said to me that I was "not to sacrifice financial security for Him at this stage." So I endeavoured to provide fully for the family, but I must confess that there were some very lean periods. However, it was a case of we might be down, but by Baba's Grace, we were never out. It is a source of such heart-warming wonderment and joy to me to note how no lover of Baba has ever been neglected by Him. Always through His own unique way He has seen that none go into old age alone and destitute. As they in their way upheld Him in their hearts, He upheld them even in their basic necessities. And if they worked for Him during their lifetime, He looked after their families, in sickness and in health, their children's education and

establishment in life. I do not feel I shall ever be able to repay the debt I owe my ever-loving Baba.

The next thing to happen was Francis's departing for India, in January 1959 in answer to Baba's call. He was to stay there with Baba for ten years, as it turned out, so naturally more work devolved on me. Not only was there more correspondence, but I was involved in the distribution of *Stay with God*, Francis's epic book, and busy in preparing an introductory booklet on Baba.

Over the years I was in some form or another always reading and writing: rewriting Ramjoo Abdulla's *Sobs and Throbs*, the account of Baba's schools and His pupils of the 1920s; attempting to clarify Baba's teachings through writing of them; preparing outlines and drafts of material to help spread Baba's message, much of it of indifferent quality and very often incomplete. But now I feel that whatever skill in writing I do have at present is due to those persistent efforts in past years. Of course there was also immense joy for me when Baba saw and praised some writing that was published, or when He expressed happiness with the letters that I sent frequently to India, to Francis now that he was there, to Mani and to Adi. At least with the Family Letters that Mani regularly wrote, always there would be personal notes from her, such as the following examples.

Your little letter of 29th  
just reached, and warmed my  
heart with all it conveyed.  
Thank you dear Bill.

Meherazad  
3 January 1960

Hello Bill!

This is happy acknowledgement of your three letters, including the "painful" one (both for you and Auntie Mani),

but what can I say that you haven't told yourself, dear Bill! for I know how it is when one takes oneself thoroughly on the mat for a slip that turns out to be important — and at times like this (after the hot self-tirade is over) I try to recall Bushnell's lines:

You are not punished for your sins but by your sins,  
Not rewarded for your virtues, but by your virtues.

Don't you like that?

This postman's knock brings another Family Letter, and with it comes an earlier medical report which (as I mentioned on top of it) is for close ones in Baba — i.e., for Baba lovers, and not for general wider circulation (to friends or newcomers, etc.), and it is left to the group worker's discretion. So be sure to add that in your note, Bill....

Will have to wait for an opportunity to send that sketch (for it's rather big in size), but one copy is definitely reserved for Ruthie and Michael. Hope you did have an off-the-saddle week at Avatar's Abode — I had an adorable Christmas painting from Radha [Rouse]. The love cabled from Beaconhillers reached the Lord of Love, and His cable (also sent to Avatarsabiders and Melbourne lovers) must have reached. It said:

LOVE AND LOVE TO EVERY LOVER BABA IN SECLUSION

These few lines come in more than the usual little hurry and bring more than the usual "much love" to you and Joan and Lady Ruthie and Mighty Michael and last but most to me *jeeny* Jenny (*jeeny* in Gujarati means "tiny" in feminine gender).

*Mani*

Please give my dear love to  
the dear Rose family — Echo,  
Ranae, and Bob — I rec'd.  
their lovely Xmas thought  
and love in beloved Baba.

And the Baulchs and  
the Le Pages!

P.S. Enclosed bookmark, received from Andhra.

Guruprasad, Poona  
17 May 1961

Hello, dear Bill,

Looks like Mani Aunty can really stretch it when it comes to Family Letters these days. I closed my eyes and hammered away, and when I opened them I found there were five pages of it! And what's worrying me and making me frantically bite my nails (shh! don't tell this to the children or they might start doing it) is that it'll become a habit, and even a four-page one will seem such a small letter it will seem like dessert. But I mustn't stretch this letter too much.

Your Vivekananda anecdote was most welcome, particularly as I had heard it a long time before and could *not* recall the details accurately when trying to relate it on a couple of occasions! So I truly thank you for it, Bill, and oh, I enjoyed it for my own self, too. Am enclosing a bookmark (done by Baba lovers in Andhra) that I might have sent you before but am not sure. So if you have TWO by now, the thanks are due just to Aunty's absent-mindedness. And I'm enclosing one more, Bill, which please give to Ranae Rose. It is just an acknowledgement of that dear family's dear greetings received at Christmas time, and I cannot think of a

better way of saying it than with this enclosure. Yes, indeed, you've been a good boy with such a prompt acknowledgement, and your letter of 30th was as welcome as always. And my loving thanks for Sai Baba's book, I shall love to have it. I shared your letter with Eruch and Francis, particularly about Mervyn Langly, about whom I read to Baba. Baba's Love to Mervyn.

How are the Big Three? We couldn't get over Ruthy's painting that Francis showed us in Meherazad; she's not only a "lidy" but a pretty talented one! As for Mighty Michael, I could hardly recognise him in the picture at Avatar's Abode — or rather at the beach with the children there, although one couldn't miss that dear curly head any time. And joyous Jenny, tell Joan to give her a huge hug from me. My love also to your dear parents, Bill, and lots of it to Joan and yourself.

from

ahem

*Aunty Mani*

Don't forget to be a good boy again and drop me a line to say the five yards of fam-letter reached safe — OK?

Up to 1961 help with my secretarial work was willingly given by Baba lovers such as May Lundquist and Diana Snow, whenever time allowed, but in this year it could be said that Baba sent professional help in the form of Judith Garbett, whom He drew to Him in September. Her background was solid secretarial training, growing over the years into administrative managerial duties. There have been many Baba lovers who have given beautifully of their time, energy, and resources for Beloved Baba's cause, but for me three stand out: Reg Paffle, who still labours at Avatar's Abode despite a severe stroke; Judith Garbett who,

despite indifferent health at times and increasing years still does secretarial work for me, such as the manuscript for this book; and May Lundquist, a long-time, energetic, and dedicated worker who died in 1978 of leukemia.

Soon after her initial contact with Baba, Judith began to help with my work, at first with the dissemination of the Family . . Letters sent to me by Mani, and then with the distribution of books and introductory material by and about Baba.

Here is another batch of letters from Mani, revealing as always her delightful humour and flair for word-pictures and Baba-news, which we so much enjoyed receiving over these years.

29 August 1959

Dear Bill,

Sent on the Family Letter few days ago, and the circular before that....

Well, now, can't a fellow have an interval of peace — for heaven's sake what's she got to say this time...? Just a fond hello with a few nonsensical lines — quite a big reason in itself, but am afraid there is a postal purpose at the bottom of it all. We're trying out some unused stamps torn off air letters that were written on but not posted. We're wondering if these sort of stamps are valid for use on envelopes. The post office didn't seem to know either, and you'll agree that even if they're not efficient, they're practical, for they've advised us to find out by experience. Hence this informal letter — it might reach you, Bill (do let me know if it does), or it might be returned to me (in which case I will post it on with the regular stamps), or it might....

Made a discovery the other day: I know some more

poems than Francis — isn't that incredible? He didn't know the one about Jenny (at least not the one I learnt before I was 12). It goes like this:

Jenny ate jam  
 Jenny ate jelly,  
 Jenny went to bed  
 With a pain in her....

Don't be mistaken  
 Don't be misled  
 Jenny went to bed  
 With a pain in her head.

(Though I must confess I liked very much the Jenny poem Francis recited)....

Here's a kiss to the only Jenny I know. How's Ruthie with her easel these days? ....Love to her and Michael, to dear Joan and Bill,

*Mani*

6 February 1960

Hello Baba's Bill of Beacon Hill,

Received with much love your dear letter of Christmas thoughts and the love greetings by cables and cards from His own dear Aussies. The Beloved's love to you each. This is just to rush you the Family Letter, Bill, and though the postal scales say "not quite one ounce," it brings tons of love with it (which the P.O. don't charge for, fortunately) to you dearest Beacon-hillers one and all, and my special very



loving acknowledgement and love to May, Cynthia, Ena, Emily Firmstone, and that dear Rose family (Renae, Echo; and also Ted and Robert) for their letters, greetings, and lovely cards.

Thanks for that utterly lovely glimpse of the BABA-room, Bill! Just received it. The Owner looked at them with obvious joy and pointed out some of the articles to Mehera and us. A hug from me to Jenny to give to the Bear — what might be called a "bear hug." By the way, just for your information, the airmail envelope only just held out by the four corners when it reached, but the contents were intact.... About *S.W.G.* [*Stay with God*] copies to the Indians you mentioned, I wasn't quite sure and asked F. what he thought about it. He said as he'll be writing you soon he will add re this suggestion also — right?

*Mani*

10 May 1960

Hello, dear Bill,

This time it won't be a case of rubbing your eyes, but perhaps of straining your ears for a Baba letter from that chatterbox. Well, here it is, Bill, and I don't know how much it says, but it speaks a lot, you'll agree.

The last bit about the Silence Day was completed in the midst of an unbelievable racket of sound. There was a Hindu wedding in the backyard of our neighbour's place, and an old gramophone and other variety of instruments were making plenty of noise through some outsize megaphone late into the night (in fact, Francis was so frantic he even wanted to go to the length of bribing his servant boy to go gag the party responsible for it). Was most happy in

picturing myself listening in on the family reading of the *Ramayana* with Baba's Beaconhillers. What a lovely idea too, and am sure if many families in many countries could share such evenings together like this, there would be far less divorces and delinquents.... The summer seems to be about to break into stormy showers, happily; this afternoon when Baba visited a Baba lover home, it was terribly hot! This brings heaps of love to you ever dear ones at Beacon Hill, Juniors and Seniors, including your Mum and Dad.

*Mani*

3 April 1961

Hello, dear Bill,

This is Auntie Mani speaking from Guruprasad, sending HAPPY EASTER greetings to you dear ones in the Eternal Resurrector and Awakener! Adorning the breakfast table of our Christ on that morning was a spray of white Indian lilies we found in the corner of a garden, and there was a chocolate Easter egg in a little handmade basket my niece sent. Just now Baba is playing ping-pong with the *mandali* (Rano says nobody says ping-pong any more, it's table tennis in modern parlance), an old favorite game of His that Eruch has introduced as a new mode of added exercise for Him; but even a few minutes is for Him (as is almost everything else) quite an effort still.... I almost forgot the reason why I started this letter today, but you'll wonder what the enclosure is: am sending herewith a list of the names of all those in Australia who observed the fast according to beloved Baba's Wish. And there is also a list with the names of those who did not fast (at least their fast-slips to Adi did not arrive), i.e., on my comparing with the names of those who had written

yes in reply to the circular sent out in 1958. Please have more copies made of the lists (am so sorry three were not managed this time) and send to the group heads concerned — it is for record and information, so that you will know who among the "old" ones has not fasted, and the "new" ones that have joined in, etc. There is also a list of additional names and addresses, or changed addresses (this latter again in comparison to the old yes lists). In short, enclosed are three lists, just one copy of each. It will also help you all concerned for your sending out circulars and messages, etc....

Another thing posted to you yesterday (by sea) is a package with some Baba messages, etc., printed in little booklets by different lovers of Baba in India, for His Birthday. Have sent three copies of each, for you to send out as you usually do the Family Letters....

I can see the road from where I'm typing, and just saw my twin nephews cycling home from school. In the old days they used to wave in frantic joy; now they hardly dare to turn their heads towards Guruprasad because the Lord of their lives is in such strict seclusion!

I wish I could express through this paper some of the intimate warmth of Baba Love that your letter carried over — and I simply loved the bit you quoted re St. Francis. I was reading this morning about Bayazid, who asked God the shortest way to reach Him, and God said the way was not long, it was simply that the progress was slow because of the load he carried. Once the burden of *sanskaras* was laid down, he'd be there! But as you say, how much easier to read and nod one's head....

Much love to you dear ones at Beacon Hill, big and small, one and all,

*Mani*

Guruprasad, Poona  
19 May 1962

Hello dear Bill!

I was determined to make this time's Family Letter only a little over four pages, but circumstances decided differently, and the fifth page is brimfully full. Dear Vishnu was so active and gay the last three days. It was as if he was aware of that date he had with God and was happily anticipating it. It was so instantaneous he had no time to take Baba's name at that last moment, but I'll tell you something I didn't mention in the Family Letter: although he was quite dead (heart and pulse stopped) when we laid him on the sofa, with his eyes half closed, when Baba came and stood by him, Dr. Goher said, "Look, Vishnu, Baba has come, Baba is here," and believe it or not, his eyes opened to the full so that they were turned to Him Who was standing by him; and they remained like that till we shut them gently ....

Within a week we expect Pendu home with us again, and we hope it means no more hospitals for him. He has been through three major operations within such a short time, and by His grace has survived it. Donkin has been here with him throughout the crisis and has been a wonderful help. We are waiting for the rains to break — they should any day now — and it is hot and muggy to the extreme. You dear Aussies must be wearing woollens by now, I guess. It was so dear of you to send me those pictures of Joannie with Judith. Mehera and all have loved sharing them. Judith looks amazingly like a Zoroastrian Baba lover we know whose life and love are Baba's; her husband and son adore Baba too. It warmed our heart to greet dear Judith and Joannie. Please give our very fond love to them both. There was one little detail in the picture

we wondered about, by the way: a picture on the table in which we could see Baba, and another figure (a woman) and some animal in the foreground (sheep or cow, or?). Magnifying glasses were brought out (and my famous lorgnette, of course), but none could recognise the picture, including our dear Francis. Perhaps some time you could· clarificationize?...

You will see the mention in the Family Letter re Francis's book (Francis expects to be writing you in about a week; he forgets whether he remembered to direct you about it in his last letter to you, and he doesn't remember whether he forgot. It's this heat, you know, and we've *all* got summer amnesia). No, but I'm only joking, Bill. Actually, what Francis has said is that he has written to you something about it, and will be writing to you further... that's all.

Here's reams of love to all His very dear Beaconhillers, each and all, big and small, from the Guruprasadians.

*Mani*

Over these years Joan and I did our best to bring up the children with proper care and love. In hindsight my shortcomings greatly pain me, yet perhaps because the motive and effort were sincere and genuine, Beloved Baba touched, nurtured, and moulded them. From a worldly point of view, their attachment to Meher Baba through us, their parents, made them aware, sometimes painfully, of being apart from other children. Yet I believe they each know now what a blessing their own personal connection with Beloved Baba is.

Sometime during the 1970s Eruch, as gathered from Baba, spoke of bringing up children. As far as I can recall, the gist of what he conveyed was this:

Yes, the parents should control the child's environment with all care. It is absolutely necessary to have a proper environment created for the growth of the child. And the parents can best do that. True parents are those who have the interest of the child foremost at heart, and then their own comfort, their own happiness, their own married life.

But nowadays we find that there are parents who shirk the responsibility of rearing their own children, who don't wish to care for their growth, and therefore they grow in an environment where all sorts of impressions are fed. Good food is not the only food for them; more important are the mental impressions given.

The personal attendance of the mother is absolutely necessary while they are growing. Their friends should be carefully chosen, and also the school to which they go. They should have some companion who is always there and can be relied on. They should not be left with the servants, or some strangers, or babysitters. One never knows who else may be allowed near the children by these people. Special bedtime stories should be told, ones that will feed good impressions. And the father should also be very loving and kind, but at the same time firm. Not that he should spank his son or be harsh to his daughter, but he should be firm and warm towards his children.

The best way of disciplining children is for them to imbibe from the parents the right way of life. Let them see how the parents behave, if they feel concern for each other, if they are friends to each other, and also if they are tidy, properly dressed, clean. Then the children will in a natural way develop good habits, and will learn the art of loving concern for others, learn the art of charity, of forgiveness, of speaking the truth and so on. If a disciplined life is lived by the parents, then the child imbibes discipline naturally. That's all.

On another occasion, Eruch explained that the way Baba inculcated discipline in them was to do it Himself. What He wanted

them to do, He would go out of His way to do Himself, and do it, and do it. If you tell children anything to do regarding discipline, they will go against you. So you continue to do it yourself, and discipline will be awakened in their hearts, minds, automatically, as it were — but you need patience for it. You will have to carry out the particular type of discipline you would like them to learn. There is no other way out. In regard to these values, Eruch shared with us a story he remembered about Prophet Mohammed.

It so happened that Mohammed was seated one day with his close followers, and a mother came to him with her small son. "My Lord, please tell this child to stop eating fresh ripe dates. I cannot stop him from eating them, and he is spoiling his health. He is my only son. Please advise him."

Now, a person, once he has had a fresh date, cannot resist having another and another and another. But they are very harsh on the stomach, there is no doubt about it. So this mother thought that if she were to take the child to the Prophet, He would say something which would impress him. Mohammed looked at the boy and at the mother and said, "What you say is right. But please come again after a month. It is better if you come then." The mother folded her hands, bowed down, and left with her son.

True to her promise and despite the immense difficulties of journeys through the desert in those days, she came again with the child a month later. The Lord received them and petted them, and made them sit down, and asked how they felt and what was the reason for coming to Him again. She repeated the whole thing. And the Prophet then brought home to the child how dangerous it was to eat a lot of dates. "One, two, three a day is all right. But that is enough. No more than that. I also am fond of dates," Mohammed said, "but I don't eat so many. It is not healthy to have a lot. So will you give Me a promise not to eat more than a few a day?" The child promised and everyone was happy. Then they left.

After they had gone the companions living with Mohammed were intrigued that He had not advised the child on the first visit, and finally someone asked Mohammed. "It was impossible," He said, "to give advice about dates when My fondness for them was worse even than the child's. Unless and until I desisted from dates, how could I give any advice to him? So I had to call the mother and her son after a month, but for that month I never ate, never touched, a date."

To create an impact, a force must be there behind it. Unless you live the life you are advocating, there will never be an impact on the heart of the person you are advising.

Throughout the years, I continued to read widely accounts of previous advents of the Avatar, and also of the Sufi masters. These readings sustained and clarified my faith and my endeavours to love Baba. Such stories include this one:

Abu Said, the Perfect Master (described by another Sufi master as "The Royal Falcon of the Way"), tells in his autobiography of the time when people flocked around him, praising and lauding him, and a Voice would say to him: "Am I not enough?" And when people reviled him, turning aside and abusing him, the Voice would say: "Am I not enough?"

Or another cherished story: Three young Sufis were condemned to death by the Sultan for heresy. One stepped forward, asking to be beheaded first. The Sultan was amazed, and asked why a man in the prime of life should seek death so eagerly. The Sufi replied that every moment in life is precious because it can be spent in remembrance of the Beloved, and he wished to give his brothers the extra moments of life by dying first. "One moment of this world is better than a thousand years of the next World, because this is the place of service and that is the place of proximity, and proximity is gained by service." The Sultan was so impressed by the young Sufi's love for God that he pardoned



all three and said, "Ask a boon." They replied, "The only boon we ask of you is that you should forget us, and neither make us your favourites nor banish us from your court, for your favour and displeasure are alike to us." The Sultan wept, and dismissed them with honour.

Or the story of the great Sufi Master who even after taking the vows of discipleship continued his trade of blacksmithing. Then one day whilst listening to a blind man reciting *The Koran* outside his shop, he became so absorbed that he put his hand into the fire without using the pincers and drew out a red-hot piece of iron. Seeing this, his apprentice fainted. But when the Master came out of his state of ecstasy he left the shop forever, saying, "I left work and returned to it; then work left me and I never returned to it again. It is only God Who in His providence gives and takes away."

Or the beautiful story of the Buddha settling a dispute between His lovers. Each side considered they were right in their stance and disputed accordingly, refusing to "give in and give up," just as Meher Baba would exhort His lovers to do in this advent. The Buddha counselled each party that they should "stand in awe of divisions, and for the sake of harmony accept that which each was accused of and come together again." The Buddha said, "Not by hatred is hatred appeased: hatred is appeased by nonhatred; this is an eternal law."

Or the story of Mohammed the Prophet being accosted in the street by an old man and, listening patiently and compassionately to his tale. When the old man followed Mohammed to His house, the Prophet gave the old man the only cushion available to sit on, while He sat on the floor.

As with all periods of absence from Baba, during these years we each day waited with longing for His call. I often remember this story of the Perfect Master Tukaram's longing to be with his Lord:

Twice a year, in July and November, Tukaram always made a pilgrimage to Pandharpur. But at one time, suddenly ill with fever and too weak to go, his heart filled with sadness. It happened that some pilgrims who greatly revered Tukaram came to Dehu where he lived, asking him to go with them to Pandharpur. Being unable to travel, he wrote twenty-four hymns of praise to God and sent them as a letter with the pilgrims. Choked with emotion, he very slowly walked a short way with them, saying, "O God, why hast Thou become weary of me?" Weak and ill, he felt God was abandoning him, preventing him from making this pilgrimage.

Reaching Pandharpur, the pilgrims, full of joy, made their way to the temple. Taking Tukaram's hymns of praise into the inner sanctuary, they saw Lord Krishna standing there, His lotus hands on His hips, making a charming sight. They placed their heads at His feet, laid the letter before Him, and read it to Him. Krishna was very touched. He called His wife, Rukmini, and told her about Tukaram and the letter, saying, "Let us go to him." But Rukmini reminded Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, that all the people who had come to visit Him would be troubled if He were not there. She suggested sending the great Eagle, Krishna's vehicle, to bring Tukaram to Pandharpur, and this was done.

Taking only a moment, the Eagle arrived at Dehu and saw Tukaram still standing outside the town at the place where he had said farewell to the pilgrims, steadfastly waiting for their return. Unconscious of himself and everything about him, he thought only of the Lord with love. The Eagle spoke gently and gave Tukaram the letter sent by Krishna: "You are unable to bear separation from Me, and it is the same with Me. Therefore I have sent the Eagle to bring you, so sit on its back and come to Pandharpur. It will make Me happy; do not refuse." But Tukaram wept, saying it was improper for him to use the Lord's noble vehicle, and sent a message asking that the Lord come to Dehu.

So the Eagle flew back and told Krishna why Tukaram would not come. "He is still standing outside the town waiting for Thee."

After a few days the ceremonies at Pandharpur were over, and the pilgrims pleaded with Krishna to visit Tukaram. Reaching Dehu, they found Tukaram in the very same spot where they had left him, his hand on his forehead shading his eyes, constantly watching for their return. Astonished, they exclaimed, "In performing his songs of praise for God, his whole body has become God, and still he does not let go his feeling of love for God." They gave him some items brought from Pandharpur, which delighted Tukaram, but he asked, "Is all well with Krishna? He has abandoned me here far from Himself." They said, "Krishna is coming today to visit you." Tukaram's desire to meet God there was very great, and placing his hand on his forehead, he waited with courage, continually pleading with the Lord in many loving words to appease his longing.

Suddenly the Eagle's wings flashed in the sky, bringing Lord Krishna; His delicate form and face were so beautiful: jewels and garlands adorned His neck, peacock feathers decorated His crown. Krishna stood before Tukaram and caressed him and embraced him with love. Their joy in being together knew no bounds.

Soon Krishna took Tukaram's hand, and they walked to the old dilapidated hut where Tukaram lived. Krishna asked for a meal to be prepared quickly, and Tukaram's wife, Avali, cooked some grains, greens, and bread. Krishna sat down and satisfied His hunger. Tukaram lovingly offered *tulsi* leaves for cleansing His mouth, and then Lord Krishna vanished out of sight. Thus was Tukaram's longing to be with his Beloved Lord fulfilled.<sup>11</sup>

Somehow this story reminds me of another particularly touching one, given by Eruch during our visits to India in the 1970s. As I remember it, this is what he told us:

You know that the Prophet Mohammed laid down that followers should at least once in their lifetime make a pilgrimage to the Kaaba at Mecca. So there was a man who with very great difficulty saved enough money to make his pilgrimage as enjoined by the Prophet. He was an ordinary labourer, and he had to toil long hours to earn sufficient for the journey. At the same time that he set off, there was also a whole tribe travelling on pilgrimage to Mecca. There were men, women, and children, and all were led by a very pious man.

Now, there is a date fixed for the pilgrims to circumambulate the Kaaba. It is an injunction of the Law that the pilgrims are to be present on that particular day at least once in a lifetime. So the tribe is hurrying to reach the Kaaba on that day. They have no time to waste. But while they are travelling, one of the women nears the point of childbirth. It is clear that she must soon deliver the child, and for that she must cease travelling and stay on the roadside. The leader of the tribe, bound by the traditions, says, "We must leave this woman and hasten to reach the Kaaba by the date. God will take care of the woman, because we are all heading towards Him. It is His duty."

And what happens to this woman left with a newborn babe alone on the roadside? God does take care of her. Through whom? Through the man who with the greatest difficulty had earned enough for the pilgrimage. He finds the woman distressed and alone, and he stays with her and helps her. But in doing so he misses the central point of the pilgrimage, the circumambulation on the set date.

In due course the tribe returns, headed by the pious man, and camps again where the woman and the man have stayed. The man is so relieved. The husband is now with the woman, and her relations and all the others. So now he bids them goodbye and leaves to complete at least his journey to the Kaaba, even though he thinks the spiritual value has been lost.

During the night the pious man has a dream, and in that dream he hears a voice saying, "Of all the thousands of people who have gone to the Kaaba this time, the pilgrimage of only one is accepted by the Lord." The pious man says, "My Lord, whose pilgrimage have You accepted? Who is the blessed one whose pilgrimage You have accepted?" And the Lord says, "The one who looked after the mother and child."

What matters is your longing for the pilgrimage. Whether you are there physically or not, the important thing is to long to be there, to be in His presence, to keep Him company.

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## THE EAST-WEST GATHERING

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**THE YEAR 1962** saw the truly significant event of these years: Beloved Baba inviting His Eastern and Western lovers to visit Him over seven days, 1st to 7th November 1962. This invitation was given in March, and so there was plenty of time for eager anticipation, despair because of shortage of finances, joy when this was solved, much correspondence and many cables, and the seemingly more than usual drama of moving a changing, sizeable group of men, women, and children from Australia to India within a strict timetable. At first it appeared certain that the family and I could not go because of lack of funds. This was also so with Robert and Lorna and their child, Radha. Then a message from Baba stated that both families had to come, and very fortunately May Lundquist and Judith Garbett (both as interest-free loans) and Joan Bruford (as a gift) made funds available.

Baba also expressed the wish that all should return by the first available ship. But we were informed by the shipping company, P&O, that this was impossible because the ship was absolutely full. So, goaded by frequent messages from Baba to do my utmost to effect His injunctions, I hounded (and haunted) the shipping office with almost daily visits, constantly asking for cables to be sent yet again to the head office in London asking for the twenty-three berths. At the eleventh hour, the seeming impossible happened, and all gained bookings as wished by Baba. When informed, He sent me a cable:

VICTORY INDEED BABA VERY HAPPY WITH HIS DEAR  
WORKER

At about the same time, in reply to my saying that this visit to Him will mean a great deal to Australia, Francis reported that "Baba gave a bright smile and said, 'Yes, it will.' "

The drama of the bookings was over, but more was to follow. Reg Paffle, Craig Woodford, Anthony Thorpe, and I travelled by air, and the main party, twenty-three in all, were booked to go by ship to Colombo and then by air to Bombay so that all could arrive in Poona in time for a special programme on 31st October. This had been requested by Baba in a cable:

BABA WISHES TRY ALL DISEMBARK COLOMBO AND  
TAKE PLANE BOMBAY

This was arranged, but just as the ship was approaching Colombo, China invaded India, and all Indian Airline planes were commandeered by the government.

In the meantime I had arrived in Bombay with the other three men in the early hours of the 30th, and with the intention of having them go on the first morning train to Poona, I stayed awake while the others slept, in case the hotel staff failed to call us in time. They departed as scheduled, and it was only then that I discovered there would be no plane from Colombo. It was a tense day, with no news of the group from Colombo and no way of my knowing where to contact them. In addition to all this, it was a public holiday, which made it that much more difficult. It seemed that I spent the day wandering around Bombay, trying to get news. Then by phone I learnt from Eruch in Poona that some of the group may have got on an international airline from Colombo, and that if so they would arrive around midnight. I was told that Baba wanted me to come to Poona the next day with whoever did arrive.

Well, the flight arrived (on BOAC, I think), and I found ten of the group. Robert, who could only arrange that number of

bookings with great difficulty, had decided to send in this first group the four who had not previously met Baba, and among the others one who was older and another who was ill. The remainder had to stay on the ship and arrive in Bombay in the early morning of 2nd November. I had managed to hire a minibus at the airport, and after their two hours in customs I took the small group to the hotel, where we checked in around 2:30 A.M. Because of the lateness of the hour, again I stayed awake in order to be sure of getting them to Baba via the 8:00 A.M. train to Poona, which we reached at lunchtime. In the afternoon Baba called the men to see Him at 3:00 P.M. at Guruprasad, and the women about 5:30. I was with each group and introduced them to Baba.

The East-West Gathering began the next day, 1st November. During the morning session for all the Westerners in the large main room inside Guruprasad, Baba called or spoke to various ones. It was mainly an informal time, with Baba putting everyone, especially the new ones, increasingly at ease with Him. Later that day Baba directed me to return to Bombay on the night train to meet the ship next morning and return to Him with the remainder of the group. I slept on the train for a few hours, and arrived at the dock about 5:00 A.M., to find the ship already berthed.

I somehow got on board and eventually located the group and, of course, my family among them. I learnt that customs inspection would not commence until 8 A.M. and, with such a large group apart from other passengers, decided it would be impossible to get the 9:00 A.M. train, so we all settled down for a leisurely breakfast and resigned ourselves to another day without Baba. I was in the middle of the meal when I suddenly felt as though I received such a kick in the backside from Baba that I jumped up and immediately leapt into action. With considerable bluff, cajoling, flattery, and impatience, I got the group through customs and into taxis bound for the railway station, although we nearly lost one which headed for Victoria Docks instead of Victoria



Station. Anyway we made the train, with the men of the group throwing the luggage on board as it began to move out.

Later I realised with some amazement that I had stayed awake for two nights and had only a short sleep on the third night, yet I had been for the whole time alert, active, and cheerful. I then perceived a little of the sort of endurance that Beloved Baba can inspire. But to put my experience into perspective, here is an incident in Eruch's life with Baba:

During one tour with Baba, Eruch went without sleep for more than a week. He does not know the exact number of days, but it was more than a week. At this time they were travelling in a bus, and Eruch was seated alongside Baba. It was a long journey. They were sitting quietly, and the bus was moving gently along the road. The next thing Eruch knew was that he was suddenly jolted awake as the bus passed over a big pothole. He had fallen deeply asleep, and woke to find that his head was on Baba's shoulder, his mouth was open, and saliva had trickled onto Baba's sleeve. As he realised this, Eruch was startled and embarrassed, but Baba pressed Eruch's head onto His shoulder again and indicated that it was all right to rest there. Eruch felt moved and ashamed, but to honour Baba's wish he remained in that position for a few minutes, then straightened up, continuing to sit alongside Baba. Then he became aware that he had woken from that short nap feeling as though he had had a full night's sound and restful sleep. He was completely refreshed.

So we eventually arrived at our Home, the enfolding, sheltering embrace of His love. Baba was at the time in the midst of the afternoon session with Eastern and Western lovers both present, but it was the Easterners' opportunity to individually meet Baba and be embraced by Him, as it had been the Westerners' in the morning. However, on our arrival, the file of Easterners slowly wending their way to His feet was momentarily halted, and joyfully one by one we all greeted our Beloved and were enveloped by

Him. Again for me the dominant impression of Beloved Baba was subtly different during this gathering: in 1956 He was a loving companion, in 1958 a stern yet loving Master, and now, in 1962, a loving Father.

During those days, Baba virtually sat the whole time in a chair, like a full, bright Sun beaming warmth and sustenance upon His large family. We had little personal contact with Him, yet He seemed never absent from us; I am sure His eyes touched each and every one from time to time, as they did me, giving each the assurance of an eternal bond with Him. He did give some attention to Denis O'Brien and myself the first morning when He handed us the manuscript of *The Everything and the Nothing* with His wish that it be published in Australia. Denis gave the necessary money, and I saw to its actual publication in Sydney. And again He told me to give forth His Name and message.

When we were not with Baba, most of my time was definitely spent organising medical help for one or another of the Australian group, including the family. The main doctor I had contact with was William Donkin, author of *The Wayfarers*, and I remember to this day the impossibility of following his remedies for the three children, all sick at the same time. He gave Joan and me four different medicines with varying vague times for them to be taken, so that in the end both he and we knew that the task was impossible, and he cheerfully walked out, saying in clipped English tones, "Of course, I don't believe in any of this medicine." Knowing his intense love for Baba and dedication to His service, it was obviously his way of saying that the children would soon be well anyway, and they were.

One delightful and impressive after-hours occasion was when the sizeable family of Bombay Parsi lovers invited the Westerners to informal afternoon snacks. It was my first experience of how Parsis can all talk at the same time at full volume and yet apparently be able to understand and really communicate

with each other. I fell in love then with their lively, outgoing, expressive love for Baba, and I treasure any time I am able to spend with the Bombay and Poona Parsi and Irani Baba lovers.

Judith Garbett has written well on her times with Baba at the East-West Gathering and so I give that here:

Poona was journey's end at last as we got down from the train to see long, rambling platforms, milling groups of people, red-turbaned porters clamouring and swarming into carriages to bring out luggage, padding along barefoot, heavy cases balanced with ease on their heads; everywhere movement, colour, heat, dust, noise. Francis Brabazon was there to meet us, and after brief happy greetings, we followed him as he briskly threaded through the throngs of people, out to the entrance and waiting cars.

The Wellesley Hotel was quite small, rather quaint and old-fashioned, with a relaxed, homely atmosphere, and as one of the four new ones I felt very fortunate to be accommodated there along with the Le Pages, Rouses, Brufords, May Lundquist, Reg Paffle and Anthony Thorpe, as well as Francis, whom Baba had given special permission to stay with us for the two weeks.

On our arrival there at lunchtime on 31st October, Francis had told us we would all be seeing Baba at 3:00 P.M., but when we came downstairs again we learnt that only the men were to go to Him then, and the women at 4:00 P.M. So Hazel, Nell, and I decided to wait on the small, low-walled verandah, and sat on an old couch looking out onto tall, shady trees, white-flowered and sweet-scented, a pleasing barrier against the noisy, busy main road. After a time, a phone call came which seemed to indicate Baba would not be available to anyone. We did not know quite what to do.

The other two from time to time paced up and down unhappily, but I stayed sitting on the couch looking at the trees, watching the sun slowly, slowly sinking down behind them, thinking about Baba, wondering what He was really like, wondering whether I would meet Him after all. I seemed to have no will to move and could only sit there, thinking about Him, longing to meet Him....

Suddenly, about 5:30, a blue car swung quickly into the drive. Bill leaped out, raced up the front steps, realised we were all there, and called out, "Come on, Baba wants to see you now!" Within moments we were being driven to Guruprasad by Adi Sr. and told how he had many times driven Baba in this same car. Soon we were walking up the gracefully curved marble steps and onto the tiled verandah, spacious and cool, to join the other Australian women who had just arrived from their hotel. Eruch came to greet us with his warm, friendly smile, apologising for the confusion over the times for us to see Baba.

Quickly we slipped off shoes and sandals. I remember looking up and realising with surprise that Baba was already there, waiting for us, sitting on a big couch at the far end of the room. Eruch said, "Come and see Baba," and we walked through the wide double doors into the big main room straight towards Him. Eruch and Bill moved to our right, close to Baba; we all stood in a wide group facing Him, and as Bill introduced us, one by one we went to Baba for His embrace. Those who had met Baba before in Australia were of course so happy to be seeing Him again. As each came to Him, Baba would reach up, placing His hands on her arms or face, drawing her to Him for a kiss on either cheek, sometimes with a smile, a loving glance of recognition. I seem to remember, waiting my turn, that I felt a little nervous — it is hard to recall exactly; then nothing more until I was standing

in front of Him, leaning down, my hands on His arms as He reached up and took my face in His hands, drawing me to Him, allowing me to look deep, deep into His eyes, giving me for just a fraction of a second, a fleeting glimpse of their infinite depths. It seemed like a soul-touching, silent promise to me, a promise of eternity, a moment unforgettable in its intensity. It was almost as though time stood still and I was in a kind of vacuum as I experienced this most stupendous event of my life. But in that moment I knew, clearly, simply, irrevocably, that I was His. Then He moved His hands, and as I kissed each cheek He kissed mine. I did not say anything; I did not weep as so many have done on meeting Him. Then His embrace was over, somehow I moved away, and He was waiting for the next one to come to Him.

When all had received His embrace, Baba sent the men out and called in Mehera, Mani, Goher, Naja, Meheru, and Rano, who came through the curtained doorway from their rooms. They were meeting us for the first time, and introduced themselves by forming a single file and progressing along our standing line. Each one gave her name, and as we gave ours, she repeated it, embraced each of us, then moved to the next one. Both groups found at times a little difficulty in pronouncing a name, and there were soft repetitions, smiles, and quiet laughter.

Baba remained sitting on the couch during these few happy minutes of meeting His close ones, and then the little gathering was over. Mehera and the women stayed in the room as, with quiet farewells and a last look at Baba on His couch, we went slowly out to the verandah. I didn't want to go, and kept looking back. I remember wondering, "Is it all right to wave to *God?*", hesitated, and then did give Him a little wave as I finally turned towards the door. I can

still feel that wish to wave to Him and that hesitancy. I could not clearly see His face, but He was still sitting there as I left, taking with me an indelible memory, ever-precious and so often recalled, of this first quiet, incredibly beautiful meeting with Baba.

Next day the East-West Gathering began. The mornings were for "Westerners alone," on Baba's instructions. The buses bringing all from the different hotels would reach Guruprasad about 8:30 A.M. Excitement increased and footsteps quickened as the groups walked up the long, broad driveway, each one wearing the special Baba medallion which was the pass to go through the gates; then hurried up the steps to the verandah, slipped off shoes, and stepping through the wide-open glass doors, moved across the big room towards Baba, Who was already seated on the big couch. Quickly selecting a spot as close as possible to Him, all sat on the floor, or on chairs along the wall and to the back — it did not matter where, as long as one could see Him clearly. Baba gestured for the children to come to the front, and for a passage to be kept so that all could come to Him when called for His embrace, or for some particular purpose. Eruch and other *mandali* were ever-ready and watchful close to Baba's couch.

The first morning began with each going in turn to Baba for His embrace, greeting Him in their own way: some leaned towards Him, some knelt before Him, now and again one prostrated at His feet. And to each one Baba gave and gave of His love. Then He spoke to various ones, asking about their lives and work, sometimes enquiring if they had slept well, or about health, or families at home. He told one young American woman [Bunt Bernstein] not to worry about her baby: "Give all your worries to Me; if you keep doing the worrying I can't take over the burden. Give

everything to Me, and I look after everything." Sometimes He joked with someone; sometimes with just a smile He seemed to convey a loving, deeply personal message to another.

The morning sessions would end about 11:00 or 11:30, and throughout the hours the big room seemed absolutely filled with the warmth and light of His love; and the gathered love of all seated before Him seemed to well up and flow to Him — His love, first-given, being offered again in love to Him. It was a deeply moving experience; entirely, indescribably, beautiful.

The second morning had a different pattern. First, of course, Baba greeted everyone, asking again if different ones had eaten well, slept well, were in good health, and also giving little humorous comments and questions. He told us He wanted everyone on returning home to write one letter to Him. Then Baba gave a discourse: a detailed explanation of the Four Journeys of the Soul. Eruch read Baba's gestures as Francis pointed with a long stick to the corresponding sections on a large chart on a stand, specially prepared for this discourse. The clarity and warmth of Eruch's voice added a further quality to the whole wonderful experience of hearing Baba Himself explain the journeys of the soul.

Another most moving experience for me during this second morning was the reading by Francis of an ode of Hafiz, translated by Baba, and versified by Francis. The refrain, repeated in every couplet, is "so be not grieved," which was for me like a personal message of love and understanding from Baba — for although I did not weep at the moment of meeting Him, during the previous night the floodgates had opened. I could not sleep, thinking about Him, and wept because I felt I did not know how to love Him. Listening to

this ode, I felt that Baba knew my anguish and was telling me not to be concerned or unhappy; so immediately the sun shone again and I could enjoy being there with Him.

Saturday, 3rd November, began with our finding Baba seated on the verandah giving *darshan* to a small group of Indian lovers from a far-off village. They had not been sitting near enough to be called in the lines for Baba's embrace on the previous days, and had sadly gone to the bus station that morning; but He heard of this and called them back, and so we witnessed their joy and love for their Beloved as He embraced each one, sending them home fulfilled. We were told that every person from that village had come, leaving everything behind — farms, animals, and all — so they could be with Baba for two days.

One of the conditions for those coming to the gathering was that no one was to ask for personal interviews with Baba, nor expect any. Yet on the Saturday morning Baba called the Western lovers, in their own area groups, for brief interviews with Him in one of the small rooms off the verandah. Most of the Australian group had of course met Him before, but the four new ones were again introduced by Francis. I still remember how suddenly surprised I was to hear Francis saying, "And this is Judith. She is a first-class secretary who has been helping with the Baba work," and Baba then said that He was pleased I was helping Bill. In this way, very gently, Baba indicated the pattern for me to follow in my life with Him, and over succeeding years He sent me little messages from time to time which kept confirming it. So this group interview with Baba stays with me as a special time within the whole special time of those days of the East-West Gathering.

Sunday was the public day, but as usual the Westerners happily congregated in the main room with Baba in the



morning. Baba gave an explanation about God, using coloured drinking glasses which fitted into one another, the largest one having the word *God* on it in big letters. Unfortunately I cannot remember the discourse, but the picture is crystal-clear in my mind of Him sitting there on the big couch, moving the glasses rhythmically with His beautiful hands, looking round at us all and smiling. Then followed the wonderful performance for Baba by the renowned singer Patwardhan and his group of Indian musicians. There is a glimpse of this in one of the movies, but it is so brief that the remarkable quality and personality of the singer and Baba's enjoyment of it all cannot be conveyed. The performance lasted perhaps an hour, and then we went outside into the grounds, where group photographs were taken with Baba seated in a chair and someone holding an umbrella over Him. This also is shown in the movie, and the camera particularly focused on Baba being helped to walk slowly out. Inside the room, He had walked past me; outside, I was lucky to be fairly near Him, and many years later an American Baba lover gave me a small colour print of one of the photographs, with myself in the picture a few feet away from Baba, a further treasured reminder of that whole time with Him.

The real East-West Gathering began each afternoon — the huge *pandal* at the back of Guruprasad was already filled with thousands of Easterners when the small group of about 135 Westerners came to join them after lunch, sitting in the front rows facing the wide platform with its small dais and deep armchair ready for Baba in the centre. As is customary in India, the women sat on one side and the men on the other, and everywhere there was light and a blaze of colour in the bright cotton awning materials of the *pandal*, the spirally decorated poles, the lines of bunting

and drapes around the platform, all enriched by the vivid shades of the women's saris and dresses. The whole effect was of joyousness and celebration for this huge family coming together as "the children of East and West in the house of their Father," as Baba Himself described it in His message "My Dear Children," which was read over the microphones the first afternoon.

The programmes were always very full: groups singing *bhajans* and *qawwalis*, Baba listening intently, sometimes swaying or moving His fingers to keep time, sometimes explaining the words; the three Andhra Players presented their story of Baba's life in song and prose; Baba's messages or instructions were read out over the microphones; and all the while there would be the long lines of Easterners waiting to come to Baba for His embrace, which He would signal to begin, and then stop for a period, alternating with the music and singing. Many were those who brought a garland or an offering of fruit; sometimes Baba allowed a garland to be put around His neck, and often He would touch gifts and return them as *prasad*. Sometimes a well-known figure, or at times a child, would receive extra attention, a smile or a question. The very young, the very old, some very poor, some large, some thin — men, women, and children — all were there to enjoy the company of God, to receive His love and to give Him love. It was the Easterners' turn, but the Westerners, sitting watching Baba and the bright throngs filing past Him, were also sharing every moment.

An unscheduled occurrence the first afternoon created a happy time for the Western women. It rained, very suddenly, and very heavily, and everyone was drenched; Baba stopped proceedings, and then unexpectedly the women were beckoned up the steps to the platform and taken

through to the women *mandali's* rooms, where many were given their dresses and saris to change into. There was much talking and laughing together, as the *mandali* made sure the visitors were well looked after. I still felt so shy, so overwhelmed by meeting Baba and with all that was going on, that although I too was wet, I didn't feel it was bad enough to ask for a change of clothing, and kept rather in the background watching it all. Even so, it was a heart-warming experience to be there in the intimate atmosphere of the women's rooms. Before long all were called back to the platform, and Baba said He would embrace the Westerners as well as the Easterners. In India rain is always thought of as a blessing, and so indeed it was for us all. At the end of the afternoon, as on each day, Baba told us, "When you go from here, take Me with you."

On the public day thousands had been standing for hours outside the gates of Guruprasad in a long, long line stretching far down the road. Baba's chair was moved to the edge of the platform so that the people could file past Him on the ground level immediately below Him. Before they came in, Baba called His men *mandali* to file by Him there and bow down to Him. It was the first time in many years He had allowed this, and it was an extremely moving scene to watch. The love each had for Him was paramount in every line of their bodies as they bowed down at His feet; to me it seemed that such a moment was His gift to them to give again to Him their all. Then the public day began in earnest, and hour after hour until evening the lines of men and women moved quickly past Baba offering their love and respect, and He responded, continuously lifting His hands to His heart. During the afternoon the Australian women were called to see Mehera and the women *mandali* to say goodbye, and it was a happy time for us all with them

in their rooms. Mehera gave each a little gift, a small photo or Baba button or other keepsake.

And now the East-West Gathering was over for the Easterners, and almost so for the Westerners. On Monday morning we all went to say goodbye to Beloved Baba in the big room at Guruprasad. Each was to go to Him for His embrace and then leave the room. I was sitting about halfway back, so I could watch others for a while, and especially remember "Baba's soldier," Ruth White, who was then over ninety. Baba spoke a few words to different ones, and to May Lundquist, who was near me, He said, "This is the last time you will see Me." May thought it must be that she was going to die soon, but Baba's meaning was otherwise. My turn came, and I stood there hesitating, but Baba beckoned to me, "Don't hold back," and so I went to Him....

I thought I would not see Him again, but was to do so twice more. Some of us from the Wellesley were called two days later to sing to Baba: we had practised in Sydney and on the ship coming over in the hope of this, and although most of us had colds and coughs by now and it was not the best of performances, yet I will always treasure the memory of that brief time with Him as it was then that Baba suddenly gestured directly to me, "Are you happy?" and I answered, "Yes, Baba, very happy." It was a very sweet moment. When we were to leave, Baba indicated that each was to come to Him for an embrace, but to cover our noses with handkerchiefs so that He would not catch a cold from us.

It seems incredible, looking back, that the East-West Gathering took place in just four and a half days. It certainly felt much longer than that. There was something going on all the time, yet one could sit there, either in the small morning gatherings or among the thousands in the afternoons, just looking at Baba. One didn't have to do anything,

but just be there with Him, be in His presence, feel His love.

The gathering was now ended, but arrangements had previously been made for the Westerners to make two full-day trips, the first to Meherabad and Meherazad on Tuesday 6th, and to Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar on Thursday 8th. Both these days were wonderful occasions for me. I immediately loved all these places, particularly Meherazad and Meherabad, and felt a connection with them which has broadened and deepened with the passage of years.

Saturday morning, 10th November, Baba and all the *mandali* were to leave Poona by car at 8:00 A.M. for Meherazad, and He gave us once more the chance to see Him and say goodbye. By 7:30 all were assembled under the spreading neem tree at Bund Gardens where Babajan often used to sit. A big chair was placed for Baba, and we gathered quickly round Him, crowding close together, straining to get a good glimpse of Him. *Arti* was sung, then Baba was helped into the car. Again everyone surged forward to be near Him, and then, very slowly, the car inched its way towards the road between the lines of lovers trying to keep near Him till the very last. Everyone was waving to Baba; He was waving and smiling to everyone. Gradually the car gathered a little more speed and moved away from all the outstretched arms, the words of farewell, the smiles, the tears. It accelerated, and was soon gone, merged with distance, while eyes strained to catch the last glimpse of it, heart scarcely able to bear the final parting from the Beloved. I felt as though something of me had gone with Him; I can still feel that aching, still see the car diminishing, disappearing.

Over the next four days there was time to relax a little, go for walks, watch the people going about their daily lives; we had afternoon tea together on the balconies of our rooms at the hotel, talking of the days with Baba; we visited

all the Baba places in Poona; saw the new, almost finished centre. On 15th we took the morning train to Bombay, escorted by Francis, and went aboard the *Arcadia* in the late afternoon. Kishore Mistry, one of the helpers specially assigned to our group in Poona, was also there to farewell us, and on the ship after dinner he sang the *arti* to Baba's photograph in the lounge room with all of us there, then went ashore. Francis also said goodbye on the ship and left to catch the late train back to Ahmednagar.

And so the great event I had travelled halfway across the world to attend was over. But a new life had begun for me, with an entirely new significance and purpose. God-Man had so quietly and gently drawn me to Him, had embraced me, had awakened my heart to His love, and had made me aware of the sweet gift of His Companionship: one of so many gifts He has continued to give as the years go by.

**THE PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION** of *The Everything and the Nothing* marked a new and expansive surge in our work for Him. I registered the name of Meher House Publications and set to with a will to create, Baba willing, Meher House as a publishing house to equal the great English ones. Well, He decided not at this stage, but I had great enjoyment trying to achieve it. After *The Everything and the Nothing*, we published Francis's *The East-West Gathering*, and again Baba was very happy with the product.

During these years of the sixties, we sent hundreds of copies of books by and about Meher Baba to prominent public and literary figures. In one such campaign we posted 350 copies of *Stay with God* with individual letters to leading poets and writers selected from the English *Authors and Writers Who's Who*. Later we sent copies of *The East-West Gathering* to another group of writers. I think we received no more than six acknowledgements and a few words of praise in either case. Between 1963 and 1968, 11,000 copies of *The Everything and the Nothing* were distributed worldwide.

Again over a period of time we distributed, mainly on foot and with some postings, about 75,000 leaflets featuring Beloved Baba's photo on the cover and two discourses from *The Everything and the Nothing* inside. This distribution was done mainly by me,

the three children, and Reg Paffle, helped at times by a few others. To these leaflets twenty-four replied, seeking either a copy of the book or further information. After that, despite invitation, no one maintained contact following their initial enquiry.

But through it all my letters to Francis were usually read to Baba, and He continued to enthuse and comfort me with messages of love and encouragement. In one such message He said, "Tell Bill he is really a gem, but this is not to go to his head."

In late 1964 Baba sent word that He would give us *darshan* in India in December 1965. This again created a wonderful flurry of excitement and anticipation, with the usual flow of correspondence concerning it. In mid-1965 Baba said He would give me seven days' leave with Him at Meherazad above the full *darshan* period. This leave of course disappeared with the cancellation of the whole programme in September, and I can recall my easy acceptance of this. I was too busy to experience much disappointment, and I was content and confident that I would be with Baba when the time was right.

At least nine months passed, and then again, absolutely unexpectedly, Baba sent word that, seeing that He had not given me the seven days' leave, He would make up for that with fourteen days' leave. Later He specified that I should come during the second half of February 1967 so that I could be present on His Birthday.

Some letters, and a few poems which Francis sent to me personally during 1964-1966, as well as three cables from Baba, are given here.



## FOR DEAR BILL ON HIS FORTIETH BIRTHDAY

Altho' P Chu-i held that 60 was the ideal time of life,  
 It is clear that 40 is the best age of all.  
 First, it is a most auspicious number:  
 Forty days was the duration of the Flood;  
 For 40 years Moses was with the Israelites in the  
     Wilderness;  
 Jesus fasted for 40 days;  
 Meher Baba's Great Seclusion was for 40 days,  
 And He is now in His 40th year of Silence.  
 Then, by 40 one has clearly discerned  
 What is eternal and what is passing,  
 And, having gained wisdom thro' experience  
 One can easily control one's affairs  
 And so have plenty of time to serve the beloved Master.  
 May you have 40 more years in which to serve Him.

*Francis*

[Extract]

Meherazad  
 12 March 1965

My dear Bill,

Beloved Baba was very happy with your expressions of  
 love for Him in your letter of March 7 — that you perceive the  
 nothingness of one's self and the world, and that in the last  
 analysis there is only the Name of Baba as one's anchor (or  
 ballast), and so, in spite of all setbacks, you carry on holding on  
 to Him and doing His work. Beloved Baba again

repeated that none of the work you are doing for Him will go in vain, and that even though all your work (including distribution of 35,000 folders door to door) has not resulted in "one new one coming" with you to Him in December, you should not get discouraged in the least. After He breaks His silence what you have been doing will bear fruit.

Eruch pointed out that it took thirty years for the work to get under way here in India, and remembered an all-India tour which he and Pendu were sent on in 1952 which brought no visible result. It is only since about '53-'54 that the crowds have been coming. Thirty years in India itself! We must not chafe that things in Australia are so slow. I might tell you that Eruch expressed surprise at your Meher House Publications Report for 1964: that you had sold so many books and at the quantity of leaflets distributed — great surprise and pleasure — and told me to be sure and tell you how happy he was about it all. We shall look forward to seeing the new biography of Baba and advertising folder you and Judith are doing. Be sure to tell her beloved Baba's words about the work and Eruch's pleasure in the 1964 report.

Love,

*Francis*

For dear Bill on beloved Baba's Birthday,  
Meher Year 72 (1966)

## SYDNEY

A branch of the morning came into my room  
and burst into blossom — light made petal-flesh —  
and I remembered you, Sydney, queen  
of Pacific cities.

How beautiful  
you are with your ear-pendants of yachts,  
bracelets of sea-going ships, rings of small  
fishing craft and ferries, necklace of bridges,  
girdle of orchards, honey and dairy farms.

How white are the beaches of your feet  
adored by eight thousand miles of ocean.  
The skirt of your gardens is a delight  
to loiterers on summer evenings  
meditating the reality that  
flowers are more permanent than steel.

Your check-print blouse of streets is a map  
of intimations and intimacies.  
Your breast is a silence of blue  
shadows of ripening grapes. Your heart  
is a tone-poem of aspirations,  
a ballad of topical histories,  
a jazz-piece of infinite improvisation.

The department stores are laden trees,  
each floor a branch bearing various fruits;  
the small shops are berries and condiments  
planted in rows; the coffee-shops are dreams  
of solid music, architectures of fantasy;  
the office buildings are storied gardens  
of frangipani, wattle and cyclamen dreaming  
of the long weekend and tented sands.

Your hands reach out and caress the suburbs,  
destroying the disaster of distance  
between one-family castles, drawing  
each heart into your heart, nourishing them  
with kisses and soft words, tears and laughter.  
The children shine like polished kitchenware,  
the girls wear hair-nets of tennis rackets  
and the young men ride surf-boards along the streets.

Your hair is a cloud of gold on the Blue Mountains.  
Your eyes are a thousand nights of longing,  
a thousand mornings of expectant flowers.  
When, at times, you veil them with tears,  
you merely sow the air with diamonds.

How beautiful you are, Sydney. You are  
a bride fit for my beloved, the Word.

With love,

*Francis*

AHMEDNAGAR

22 FEBRUARY 1966

WILLIAM LE PAGE

KALIANNA CRESCENT

BEACON HILL NSW

I AM PRESENT WITH YOU ALL GATHERED IN MY LOVE FOR  
MY BIRTHDAY MY LOVE TO ALL MY LOVERS IN MEHER  
HOUSE AND SYDNEY

MEHERBABA

AHMEDNAGAR

2 AUGUST 1966

LE PAGE

KALIANNA CRES

BEACON HILL

DON'T WORRY IF NEW COMPANY OFFERS DEFINITE  
APPOINTMENT LEAVE OLD COMPANY JOIN THE NEW

LOVE

BABA

AHMEDNAGAR

14 AUGUST 1966

BILL LE PAGE

KALIANNA CRES

BEACON HILL

MY LOVE BLESSINGS TO YOU ON YOUR BIRTHDAY  
CONVEY MY LOVE TO JOAN RUTH MICHAEL JENNY  
JOANNA

BABA

## WHEN THE BRAVE GO MARCHING OUT

With loving thoughts on the Anniversary  
 of Beloved Baba's visit to  
 Meher House at Beacon Hill  
 from Francis, Meher Year 72 (1966)

When the brave go marching out  
 It is a joyous, joyous sight  
 They beat no drum, but quietly hum  
 And they always march at night

When the brave go marching out  
 Their tracks they cover as they go.  
 They march as One 'neath the midnight sun,  
 Tho' some travel fast

When the brave go marching out,  
 It is a fine sight to see.  
 With hearts aflame they sing God's Name –  
 Their weapons are minstrelsy

When the brave go marching out,  
 They march beyond Kingdom-come.  
 They conquer dreams of all that seems,  
 But they never, never leave home.

Note: This was sent to me after telling Baba through Francis  
 of our house-to-house distribution on foot of thousands of leaflets.

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## MEHERAZAD, FEBRUARY 1967

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**IN BOMBAY** I stayed at the Grand Hotel (as in 1954) and had a sleepless night. I was very much reminded of the account of *masts* reluctant to come to Baba because "Baba means trouble." I longed to be with Him again, and at the same time my mind would not stop wondering what was in store for me in this latest phase of my life. But dawn eventually comes, and with it the assurance that the light is always there when the heart reawakens to Him.

I do not remember the journey to Poona, but I do remember lunch with Meherjee and Donkin, and then being driven by Donkin to Ahmednagar, a memorable trip, with Don telling me of his meeting with Baba and then particularly dwelling on the New Life journeys, which were to him physically "like a Sunday stroll." I did not see Baba on my arrival at Meherazad. My room was in the cottage opposite Mandali Hall, between Francis on one side and Baidul in a small room on the other.

The next morning we assembled in Mandali Hall and awaited Beloved Baba's arrival at 8:00 A.M. He was carried each morning by four of His men in His special chair from the main house where He lived to His office — always known as Mandali Hall. At the door nearest the house He alighted, and with His hand on Francis's arm He would walk the length of the hall three times. On His arrival He was greeted by us with folded hands, standing of course, and we watched His movement as He walked up and

down. He then sat, and we all settled down Indian fashion on each side of the room. Facing Baba right to left, Francis was seated on a cushion, Eruch on a mat beneath a window for light, then myself, Meherwan (Eruch's brother, at Meherazad for his annual two weeks' holiday always spent with Baba), Bhau, Pendu, and Aloba when he was called by Baba, mainly for quotes from Hafiz. On Baba's side, Kaka faced towards Him, sitting on a chair, and behind him sat Baidul, also on a chair, when his physical condition permitted it.

It was only after we were all seated that Baba really acknowledged my presence by saying, "Bill seems just like one of the *mandali*." That naturally made me happy: I felt comfortable and, more important, felt that I was not being intrusive to His comfort.

I felt no necessity to continually look at Him. I was simply content to be there and do His bidding. I like to think now that a measure of His acceptance of me was that He did not put on any special show for my benefit. As an example of what I mean by this, when the old cook from Meherazad, who lived at Meherabad, walked the fifteen miles on His birthday to greet Him, He allowed her to see Him and He became for those few minutes the gracious, beautiful, welcoming Being of the *darshan* and *sahavas* occasions. The neck brace was removed, and to me it seemed as though even the structure and texture of His face changed. He glowed like the sun, and my heart turned over with His beauty and His enveloping warmth towards that simple, loving woman. Then, with her departure, the neck brace was replaced, and He became again God suffering, at work in His office.

Shortly after my return to Australia, I wrote a general account of my stay at Meherazad. It is in the present tense, just as I experienced it, and I give it here unchanged.



## A JOURNEY TO THE BELOVED

Philosophers, historians and spiritual masters have all noted time and again the recurring patterns of God's creation, recurring patterns that are never exactly the same, but vary in colour, name, and form. The rise and fall of races and civilisations, of empires, kings, and fashions: the more one scans the history of man broadly, the more one senses the unrolling film of God's dream of creation, ever repeating the main themes and ever varying in colour, name, and form. One appreciates more and more that it is a film we watch, ourselves the shadows projected on a screen, and in which we become involved and lost. Such a view of life has long been recognised and accepted by countless thinkers. Yet most of us are denied this insight into the true nature of the endless shadow-play by our narrow involvement with the immediate issues and scenes which have ourselves as participants. We do not see broadly, see what lies below the surface, detect the recurring patterns, perceive the underlying realities behind the shifting colour, name, and form.

This is the case with the Ancient One, the God-Man, the Christ. In God's dream of creation He also, naturally, placed Himself, the supreme Reality, fully conscious of creation as dream and Himself as Truth, to remind the creatures of His creation that what they think is reality is not so. He comes as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, whenever the spiritual law has been lost sight of and materiality is rampant. He is the recurring pattern with varied colour, name, and form. But involved as we are in some limited area or aspect of the dream, we fail to see the recurring pattern, the Reality behind the varying surface.

How then do we recognise Him on His periodic visits?

How do we overcome our narrow vision and see that He is the same One who has always come? God does provide the means. Our heart is a true mirror: the response of our heart to His message a true reflection. Heart can tell us if we give it the opportunity. Heart can make everything possible if we allow it. Why? Because God is in the heart, but He sleeps and is to be awakened.

Heart is the depth of the mind, and its voice is heard as the mind ceases to dictate the goals of life. The mind with its vast storehouse of impressions clamouring for expression, seeks dominance and self-assertion; but the heart knows how to give and forgive, recognises the unity of all life, and "seeks expression through self-giving tendencies which unite man with man and make him selfless and generous." To allow this love to grow, the mind with its multitude of wants must be controlled and curbed, so that the ends of life are determined from the heart without the interference of the mind. The key to this effort is a refusal to deny the basic cry of one's nature that there is an ultimate meaning to life, that there is something more to life than this most unsatisfactory play of shadows. As this process continues, an ideal is sought, and at the same time, a heart-longing to give form and named qualities to the stirrings of the heart. This ideal takes the form of the God-Man, because He is absolute Perfection in human form. And one desires to come closer and closer, to awaken more and more this Beloved of the heart, He who is friend of the friendless, succour of the needy, eternal springtime in "the winter of our discontent."

God-Man is wherever His lovers are. Love calls forth His presence, and He never fails the call of love. He who is infinite and everywhere lives in His physical form in India, nine months in Meherazad and three months in Poona. Yet

I associate Him essentially with Meherazad.

Bombay, Poona, Ahmednagar, through Ahmednagar, and the road continues to Aurangabad with bare, ancient hills at intervals — hills that seem even more ancient because their bareness and dryness. Six miles from Ahmednagar an earth road leads off on the left, a road to the now nonexistent reservoir (dry these many years), to Pimpalgaon, to Happy Valley and beyond. On either side the fields are dry through and through, poor, sandy, rocky soil that appears completely inadequate to support a continually rising population. On the two hills that flank the road at one point the government has belatedly planted trees — a few acres of struggling eucalyptus. About one mile, and there is another turn-off to the left marked Private Road. This leads to the, small estate called Meherazad. The road is straight, level, and tree-lined, and Meherazad is not visible until one is nearly upon it. On the left is seen the graceful, sweeping, symmetrical contour of Baba's Hill, or Seclusion Hill, where Baba spent important periods of seclusion connected with the New Life. At the beginning of the property the entrance road branches into two, one branch leading straight on through high wooden gates into Baba's and His women *mandali's* area containing a small cottage, a two-storey house, kitchen at the rear, outhouses, pumping shed and tank for the well located to the rear side of the property; and the other swinging right in a long U-shaped curve into the men's quarters.

Here in quietness and whitewashed simplicity lives the friend of the universe, God-Man, He Who loves us more than we can ever love Him. How much He is friend, unfortunately we only seem to realise after He has dropped His physical cloak and retired to rest. This casual home of His, Meherazad, has an atmosphere that cannot be denied — it

is there as much as Baba is there — as intangible and as definite. It is very difficult to describe the atmosphere, just as it is to describe God-Man, but it is certainly not a dead or sleeping quietness. One feels very much alive in every part of oneself, mental alertness without agitation, joyfulness and sufficiency without excitement and expectancy. It is very beautiful, but the beauty, over and above the normal beauty of His creation, is that of the incomparable Being who adorns it.

Meherazad now is very quiet. The routine rarely alters, and time is simply day and night, punctuated by the ringing of Baba's bell, and the two daily visits to the men *mandali's* hall. If a calendar is not marked, the date would not be known. And in this quiet, this silence that speaks volumes, the bell and the occasional soft distant call of a neighbouring farmhand to his cattle seem to emphasise the view that the world is a passing caravan, and the only real thing the call of the Shepherd to return from straying.

Meher Baba sits, His heart an open treasure-house of compassion for mankind, but His body in strict seclusion. Here He sits, a few old disciples and companions with Him, physically tortured and helpless with the aftermath of two severe accidents and a lifetime of fasting, sleeplessness and service to creation. He never spared Himself in His daily life — nor does He now, but not in the same ways as previously.

When He laid down that the spiritual path is love and service, He lived this to the hilt, without consideration of the cost to His body. He was the master-whip who set a cracking pace for all with Him. Now He is broken in health, the lightning hidden behind veils of pain. Now He is Master and helpless man at one and the same time. How frail, infinitely weary, infinitely sad, racked by physical infirmities

and injuries, stomach ruined by a lifetime of fasts and neglect; and yet how infinitely God in human form, Lord of the universe contained (in illusion) in a deteriorating cage. Soon He will be free, stretch out His mighty spirit with a roar and be gone to His home for seven hundred years.

There was a time when Meherazad was a beehive of activity, housing many disciples. Now there are but fourteen: eight men, six women, and the average age more than sixty years. Their lifetime of service to Meher Baba has left its mark, has given them many physical ailments, but, except where it would be of help to others, they never tell of the hardships of their service, nor do they complain in word or deed of their physical distress. Meher Baba stated many years ago, "My true greatness will be seen in the transformation I effect in My disciples." This is the main thought one has in associating with them over a period of time. Certainly they are human, individuals, they have their differing individual traits, likes and dislikes; they voice their opinions, are above everything natural and spontaneous. But they all have one thing in common, difficult to pinpoint, but which could be described as lightness of spirit. They affect one as does a clear dawn after a night of deep sleep. This lightness comes from a common source — an absolute unswerving devotion and obedience to their Beloved Baba. They have only Him, and such is their single-minded devotion that they become a true reflection of His divine qualities. They adopted as their motto "Mastery in Servitude": so they know nothing except that of being His slaves, yet in that surrender is their emergence as true men and women. Their strength is His strength, but that can only arise in the freedom of their choice to be His slaves. As they have expressed, "We exercised our freedom to become His slaves," and in turn He has made them rocks for the foundation of the house He builds

for our shelter until He comes again.

Meher Baba Himself does little outward work now, in distinct contrast to earlier years. He sits and listens with infinite patience and kindness and sometimes enjoyment to the little songs, queries, complaints, tales of woe, pleadings, from His lovers. He is attentive (to an outsider at times strangely so, the matter so trivial or inartistic) to these messages and letters; yet one has a distinct and unshakeable impression that such is not His real work, that inwardly He is working in a way and on what we do not know, but whatever it is, it is His real work. And again one has an impression that, whatever His work is, it has reached a culmination point and that He is now biding His time for the results to manifest. For each one He is friend and beloved, an infinite divine ocean of compassion even to our little individual human problems; for mankind, creation in general, He is God taken form to bring about the unfoldment of a further reel of His dream-film. He alone knows whom and what He awaits. Meanwhile He gives attention to the growing multitude of lovers. To each He says, "Love Me more and more, turn to Me, remember Me whole-heartedly and I am with you, inwardly helping you."

It is very difficult to write of Beloved Baba as I saw Him over those fourteen days. To picture Him now is to remember the slow, uneven walk in the hall, the neck brace, and the movement in the chair as He obviously sought to ease the pain in His body. He so often spoke of not resting well at night, and on one day Dr. Goher said that His temperature during the night had been 104 degrees. Looking back, it seems that I recognise and feel His pain now more than I did then; I feel more now than then His distress with the news that Pegu, the Siamese cat that was always with Him at Guruprasad, had been killed on the road

outside the bungalow; and I regret so much now my lack of adequate words when He asked how His movements seemed to me as He walked in the hall. And the intensity with which He stressed the importance of His place, Avatar's Abode, gathered, if that was possible, additional weight from His physical pain.

I remember His grumbling about the 5:00 A.M. celebration of His Birthday that meant for Him early rising and early ablutions, and as I remember I experience, now more than ever, the wonderment of this Being who dwelt among us as the God-Man. Mind you, Baba was always Baba, Baba is and will always be Baba. There was never a moment when He was not present, irrespective of the condition of His physical veil; but I do remember the vibrantly active Baba of 1954 and 1956, and contrast that image with the picture of Beloved Baba sitting in His chair in 1967. Thinking of Baba over all these years for some reason reminds me of a letter I wrote to Francis, which was read to Baba, in which I said that I would work for Him even if He were not God. Baba seemed to appreciate that.

On some mornings He asked me how I slept, and on one such occasion He expressed surprise when I answered that I had slept well. Baba gestured that I reminded Him of a poem He had learnt at school, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and quoted the lines from it: "Cannons to the left of them, cannons to the right." This brought forth much amusement from the *mandali*: Baba was reminding me of Francis on one side of me at night, talking volubly and sometimes explosively in his sleep, and Baidul on the other, announcing to the world with much noise that he could not sleep. It was true they did wake me, but within the secure atmosphere of Meherazad, that did not trouble me at all.

So, despite His condition, His humour was never far away. Many times His odd remarks would lighten the intensity and heavy concentration on the development of Avatar's Abode and His work in Australia. For example, Francis left the hall at one

point, and as he disappeared outside, Baba gestured to me with a mixed expression of bewilderment and amazement: "Francis is always going out for a piddle." Baba was also obviously considerate of me and of the amount of pressure that I could take during those daily sessions. The example that I remember most vividly in this regard was an occasion when Baba was walking in the hail, this time with His hand on Eruch's arm. I was standing against the wall with the other *mandali*, watching Baba, and as He passed me, each time He shot me a glance of such stern intensity that I simply longed to disappear through the floor. I had no idea what I had done, but it was apparently something that had really displeased Him. Finally He stopped before me and gestured seriously and questioningly towards a few hairs growing high on my cheekbones. I stammered that I did not shave those particular ones because they would only grow and spread. Baba replied dismissively, "No wonder Joan is pulled down in health looking at those each day!" Well, it might be serious, and perhaps another indirect injunction to be more thoughtful of Joan, but Beloved Baba was also obviously lightening the mood that prevailed to that point. I now often wonder what work He was doing at that time — was it me? the family? Avatar's Abode? Australia?

Baba, during those days, did spend quite a lot of time on Joan's health and mine. He prescribed for Joan a course of vitamin pills and injections to improve her general health, and for myself vitamins and meat-eating. This reminds me that in 1958 Baba had said no meat and no alcohol on Avatar's Abode. Then a few years later, when Lorna Rouse was not well, Baba permitted meat-eating.

During the discussions on Avatar's Abode in 1967, Baba said a small glass of wine on special occasions only could in future be taken on Avatar's Abode. Baba also asked me about my smoking habits, and although I really had no clear idea, I said



that I smoked something less than a packet a day. Baba looked at me thoughtfully but said nothing. From that time I knew that I was to give up smoking and that Baba in compassion had allowed me to choose my own time to do so. This I did some years later: and I had absolutely no difficulty in doing so.

When I was not with Baba, I was given massive files to read of the work being done in America by Rick Chapman and Allan Cohen and others. There was time spent talking with Francis, and again with Francis and Eruch when we prepared completed texts of the discussions with Baba on Avatar's Abode, His work in Australia, and on some of His family of lovers in Australia. Thus my days were filled and work-oriented, and the only relaxing time was an evening walk with Eruch, Meherwan always, plus Francis sometimes.

During those walks Eruch would tell stories of incidents with Baba or from spiritual tradition. Some of the stories lasted over two nights, and they were all told with a freshness and depth that makes them memorable for me to this day. Perhaps it was the setting of those walks, the atmosphere of Meherazad that we carried with us, and especially it could have been seeing the yellow light of the single hurricane lamp outside the window of Baba's room in the growing darkness as we returned, but I shall ever carry with me the impressions of those walks and those stories. I did not record them at the time; it did not occur to me to do so, and in any case some have since been published. But let me try to re-create one which Eruch used to illustrate his advice to me, as gathered from his lifetime with Baba, to "become naked in the work." This story was to show what he meant by "naked."

The time must have been late 1940s, because Adi K. Irani had recently received a new car from America, the blue Chevrolet. Adi loved driving cars, he loved cars, and this one was new and rare in India. He felt very proud of it. At this time Baba and the

*mandali* were in Poona, and Baba was told of a good cricket match that was to be played at the famous Poona Cricket Grounds. Baba loved cricket, He needed then some relaxation, so He decided that He and a few *mandali* should watch the game for a time. But He knew that if He were to appear even near the members' stand, He would be troubled by people seeking *darshan* and thus not be able to enjoy the game. So He asked Adi, who was driving Baba to the grounds in his new Chevrolet, to take Him to a secluded section away from people. But Adi did not want to miss this opportunity to show off his car to the well-to-do crowd, and he finally persuaded Baba to allow him to drop Baba and two or three *mandali* in their secluded spot, and then to park near the members' stand.

This was done, and Adi sat happily behind the steering wheel in full view of the many onlookers, and in the rear seat were Gustadji and a *mast* who had stayed with Adi as directed by Baba. All was going well for Adi, and he was delighted with the amount of attention that he and his car were receiving. At that point the *mast* suddenly got out of the car and relieved himself. This was bad enough for Adi, but then Gustadji, in his usual old patched clothes, followed the *mast* with newspapers and proceeded to clean him up. Adi sank lower and lower under the steering wheel, and at the earliest chance drove back to Baba and obscurity. Baba thoroughly enjoyed the story when He was told that evening.

There were other lighter and less work-oriented moments with Baba from time to time. One such occasion was when we presented Him with John Bruford's head sculpture of Baba. This I had carried with me from Australia in a specially packed airway bag. Baba was so touched by John's work that He sent this message to him: "I the Perfect One am very happy with your perfect work." Another occasion was when I played Beloved Baba the tape I had made of Ruth and Jenny singing together some of Francis's songs. Baba wiped a tear from His eye as He heard

them singing, and later said to me, "I am the only Real One, and they should sing about Me to awaken the hearts of all who hear them to the knowledge that I am the only One. They have touched My heart deeply. When I came this morning I was infinitely sad; now I am filled with happiness after hearing their singing. Be sure to give them the kisses I gave you for them."

Another lighter time during those sessions with Baba was an almost daily exchange between Baba and Pendu over the likelihood of the re-election of a stalwart Baba lover, Sardar Amar Singh Saigal, to the central Indian government. Saigal had little money for his campaign, and it was generally accepted that considerable funds were needed in India to ensure election. So Baba would say to Pendu in effect: How can Saigal possibly be elected? And Pendu would become more and more excited, saying that by Baba's Grace, he *could* be re-elected. The discussion would continue with Pendu talking Gujarati, voluble and animated, and Baba looking very doubtful and serious. Of course, against all the odds, Saigal was re-elected, Pendu beaming with the news and Baba happy. I suspect that Beloved Baba thoroughly enjoyed these little dramas, and of course it was clear that He was doing His work through them.

The atmosphere of Meherazad is special every moment, and certainly so in the early hours of Baba's Birthday. We rose around 4:00 A.M., and after baths and donning our best clothes we assembled in the hall, and on the stroke of 5:00 A.M. called out loudly, "Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!" seven times. Then the prayers were recited, and *qawwali* records were played loudly through a loudspeaker powered by a generator. The Indian servants had worked many hours decorating the hall and particularly around Baba's chair. Baba came about 6:00 A.M., and we all greeted Him with "Happy Birthday," and I punctured the blown-up balloon above His head so that the hundreds of rose petals, which the servants had placed within it, showered over His lovely head. I

gave Him a copy of the book, *Monkey*, and a kiss on the cheek. Then we had a special birthday breakfast, and later Baba returned for a work session during which the mass of birthday letters and cards and cables were read to Him.

In the evening I was driven to Ahmednagar and, with Adi K. Irani and Sarosh Irani, accompanied the procession celebrating Baba's Birthday for some distance through the streets of the city.

Over the days Baba gave attention to various ones in Australia, sending them some message that, carried out as He wished, would make Him happy and so bring them closer to Him. In some cases He expressed His wish directly from Himself; in others He approved a message that may have arisen from a suggestion by me or one of the *mandali*. For example, Baba returned to Joanna Bruford as *prasad*, a sum of money which she had offered to Him, and approved her use of the money to study horticulture. At another time Baba spoke of May Lundquist, of knowing how much Avatar's Abode meant to her and how she had helped in every way she could to make it His place. He said that May should always regard it as her home and her place of retirement when that time came. He asked her to lovingly and enthusiastically support me in the work He had given me, and I most happily testify to her efforts to do so. She was a wonderful companion. In referring to retirement to Avatar's Abode, I am reminded of another example. Baba was told of Judith Garbett's casually mentioned hope of being able to live in retirement at least close to Avatar's Abode, and Beloved Baba sent His special love to her and said He was happy if she eventually retired on Avatar's Abode itself.

So Baba sent His love to this one or that, expressing happiness in the work they had already done for Him, and perhaps expressing some way that they might continue their participation in His work in Australia, centred on the development of Avatar's Abode and on spreading knowledge of His Name and

message. To Michael Le Page He sent His love and encouraged him to love Baba more and more and to continue to study well, and to Bernard Bruford He expressed happiness in Bernard's application to his studies, and pleasure in all the work he had done for Avatar's Abode.

Baba gave considerable time to Reg Paffle, whom He described on one occasion as "Baba's man," expressing happiness that Reg would move permanently to Avatar's Abode, but concern over his livelihood when he did move. Various idea were put forward to Baba, and when dairy cows were mentioned as a possibility, He said that He liked the idea of a dairy. The matter was finally solved sometime later by Reg settling into full-time caretaking of Avatar's Abode with a small wage from me. I cannot measure with words the contribution of loving service Reg has given to both Meher House and Avatar's Abode.

To myself, Beloved Baba expressed these wishes:

Francis will transfer Avatar's Abode to Bill, who will, when the time is ripe, form a Trust of which he will be Chairman and turn the Place over to it.

Bill's objective will be to make Avatar's Abode universally known, for it is to become one of the great Places of Pilgrimage in the world. This is a great burden Baba is putting on Bill's shoulders, and it will be the responsibility of all who love Baba to co-operate fully with him as one heart, with many hands.

In a few years' time Bill will move with Joan and the children and his mother to Avatar's Abode.... Meher House will be let to suitable tenants. It is not ever to be sold, for it is also Baba's Place.

This general theme of Baba's wishes was repeated over many days, and with great forcefulness and pressure by Baba. I remained as willing as always to do whatever He asked of me,

but the question of my capability of measuring up to what He wished me to achieve weighed more and more heavily on me. Finally, when I spoke to Eruch about my doubts, he encouraged me to speak up to Baba the next morning. This I did, and Baba looked at me steadily and then said, "I will turn the key." Thus I was assured that however inadequately I might perform in the role He had given me, the result was absolutely in His hand and according to His wish.

On one occasion, after I had walked alongside Baba as He was carried in His chair back from Mandali Hall to the house, I was alone with Him on the porch of the house. He looked at me seriously and a number of times, opened His arms wide, saying clearly to me that I was to try my best to be big-hearted, brave, and courageous in my life and the work He had given me.

On the fourteenth day I left Mandali Hall, with Beloved Baba physically present, for the last time. Earlier on this day Baba had handed me a piece of cloth as a present from Him and a large photo of Himself, 16 x 20 inches, for Meher House. This photo He held in His hands for a moment looking at it, then kissed it, saying, "How beautiful He is!"

On the fifteenth day, on Baba's instructions, I was taken for the day to the Ellora Caves by Don and Francis. Why, I do not know, and I have often wondered. But perhaps Beloved Baba was saying to me that the development of Avatar's Abode as a great Place of Pilgrimage would take many generations, as, for example, had Kailas temple at Ellora.

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## 1967 – 1969

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**I RETURNED TO AUSTRALIA** at the beginning of March 1967 and was immediately thrown into the whirlwind that Baba produced with His "turning the key." I had many TV and radio interviews, and a number of public meetings with a maximum attendance of about three hundred.

My first major talk was given before some two hundred people at Lower Melbourne Town Hall in November 1967. It was read to Baba at Meherazad shortly before the meeting took place, and He sent me the following cable:

TODAY YOUR SPEECH WAS READ TO ME IT IS MOST  
APPROPRIATE WHETHER ONE OR THOUSAND ATTENDED  
MATTERS NOT  
LOVE  
MEHERBABA

As Baba was still in the body, the talk was naturally written in the present tense. I have now altered that to the past tense and made a few minor corrections:

### THE GOD-MAN

Two thousand years ago in a small area among a small number of people, fairly remote from the main centres of mankind at that time, one called Jesus said, "I and My

Father are One" and "I am the Way," and, without travelling Himself, had a profound effect on a large part of the world, inspired a long line of great saints and lovers of God. As an example, witness the lives of the desert fathers in the centuries soon after Jesus, perfect examples of the life of humility, purity, and charity which Jesus had laid down and Himself lived.

Fourteen hundred years ago, in an even more isolated area among an equally small number of people, one called Mohammed said, "Come in under the shade of this tree, for the Way is beset with dangers," and, without travelling Himself, set in motion a remarkable outpouring of spirituality expressing itself in all aspects of life. In the Sufis can be seen one of the highest examples of the life of brotherhood and love for God which Mohammed had established.

Similar pictures could be presented in relation to other known forms of the God-Man or Christ. In fact, personal study of religions of all countries and times and people shows that each is based on the concept of Saviour or God-Man. The North American Indians, the Maoris, and the Polynesians as examples held the idea of a divine incarnation or God-Man. In the *Koran* occurs the sentence, "We [God] have sent Our Messengers into every corner of the earth and there is no one who has not heard of Us." And in the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, there is the statement, "Whenever the spiritual law has been lost sight of, and materiality has become rampant, I come." Each religion promises the advent of the Saviour, particularly at those times when men generally have given way to hatred, greed, and violence, when man through alienation from himself is unable to establish real friendship with his environment and his fellow men, even to the point of devising the means of world annihilation.



He comes when self-interest or selfishness is at its height, when anxiety, tension, and insecurity are the major motivating forces, and at the same time when mankind becomes disillusioned and profoundly sceptical that legislation, politicians, national conferences, and evangelists, can stem the tide of destruction, and in desperation, like a man at the point of an untimely death, begins to recollect that the answer again must lie with God. The God-Man sometimes appears as a king, sometimes as a carpenter, but whatever outward role he adopts, He continually, openly and subtly, demonstrates a meaningful "livingness" applicable to everyone, no matter what his circumstances in life may be.

The God-Man is thus the total manifestation of God in human form, when God knows Himself as God whilst living the life of man amongst mankind. God is One, and He as the Avatar or Christ is always one and the same, but the manifestation is repeated from time to time "in different cycles, adopting different names and different human forms, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages." The God-Man is the sole spiritual authority of the age, "the only one infinitely capable of leading others to Self-realisation" and of bringing to the whole creation "a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life." In one of His discourses Meher Baba states: "The God-Man is like a gauge against which man can measure what he is and what he may become. He "trues" the standard of human values by interpreting them in terms of divinely human life."

During this century there has lived one named Meher Baba who stated, "Do not doubt, I am the Ancient One, the Avatar, the God-Man. I am not this body that you see. It is only a cloak I put on when I visit you. I am infinite Consciousness. I sit with you, laugh and play with you; but

simultaneously I am working on all planes of existence."

As in any community holding to belief in one particular manifestation of God-Man, we in a Christian country have been brought up on the idea that Jesus was the one and only manifestation of God for all time. We have been taught that when Jesus said, "I am the Way," that the "I am" referred only to Jesus. But our teachers have not considered another statement of Jesus: "Before Abraham was, I am." And we have not reflected quietly on the strange idea that God the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe should take human form once only, for only a part of the world, and that the only path of salvation for the rest of the world is to be forced in some way or another to accept and worship this one advent.

I have in the first part of this talk presented you with a different idea, namely that there have been throughout man's history periodic visits of God; that these occur at those times when man's suffering and delusion is at its height; and lastly that this present period is such a time, and that God has manifested again with the name of Meher Baba.

Meher Baba was born in Poona, India, in 1894. His name as a child was Merwan Sheriarji Irani, and He was called Meher Baba by His early disciples. *Meher* means compassion, and *Baba* means father. His parents were from Persia. The father in his early years underwent great austerities in an effort to realise God, until a voice in his sleep said to him, "You are not destined for that which you seek, but one who will be born to you will achieve it." A few hours before Meher Baba's birth, His mother had a dream in which a vast river of people flowed past, gazing expectantly towards her. He lived a quite normal childhood; liked marbles, kite-flying, and cricket; enjoyed poetry, including that by English poets; and was a good student at school.

In 1913 while still in college, a momentous event occurred in His life — the meeting with Hazrat Babajan, an ancient Mohammedan woman and one of the five Perfect Masters of the Age — as John the Baptist was one of the five at the time of Jesus. Babajan gave Him God-Realisation and made Him aware of Himself as God in human form. And as John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as being greater than himself, so Babajan said of Meher Baba that the whole world will benefit at His hands.

He began His spiritual work in 1921. Disciples were very readily drawn to Him, and these He trained for an arduous life of selfless service through moral discipline, love for God, and spiritual knowledge.

After a period of intensive training of His disciples, Meher Baba established a colony near Ahmednagar, India, which is called Meherabad. Here His work embraced a free school for boys where "the assimilation of spiritual values into life" was stressed, a free hospital and dispensary, and shelters for the migrant poor. "The most practical thing in the world is to be spiritually minded" was the keynote for the conduct of the various activities. No distinction was made between individuals, and all mingled in common fellowship through the inspiration of the Master. It was also often at Meherabad that the growing number of His Eastern and Western disciples, who were of different backgrounds, received His personal guidance and close daily association.

Meher Baba travelled extensively throughout India, contacting many advanced spiritual pilgrims who were completely intoxicated with love for God. His work during these journeys, often to the most remote areas of India, and covering perhaps 20,000 miles a year by train, bus, and bullock cart and on foot, included also the bathing of lepers, washing the feet of thousands of poor, and giving them

grain, cloth, or money. This work with the poor, lepers, and advanced spiritual pilgrims was done almost entirely incognito, His disciples referring to Him as their "elder brother." At certain periods during His life He permitted hundreds of thousands to come to Him for His *darshan* and spiritual blessings.

While Meher Baba undertook considerable activities, He constantly pointed out that He had not come to establish anything new, but to put life into the old. He emphasised frequently that He came to awaken, not to teach.

"When my universal religion of love is on the verge of fading into insignificance I come to breathe life into it, and to do away with the farce of dogmas that defile it in the name of religion and stifle it with ceremonies and rituals." In establishing *ashrams*, schools, shelters, and hospitals, as He did from time to time, Meher Baba pointed out that He created these for the purpose of His universal work, only to dissolve them once that purpose was served.

I am covering the life of Baba very sketchily, and it will, I hope, give you some idea of His activities, but as you can imagine, it misses so much of the colour of innumerable day-to-day highlights over the years — highlights in the form of stories of the way His disciples came to Him, His training of them, the life they led with Him, leading to the stage, as He once said, when "My true greatness will be seen in the transformation I effect in My disciples."

Their training and their lives were certainly exacting and full of challenges. During one particular early period, Baba had with Him forty disciples. One of these was appointed cook, and instructed to provide fresh food only each day, that every person had to be completely satisfied in the quantity of food he needed each day, and the cook was to have absolutely no waste food at the end of each day. Impossible,

one could easily say, yet it is a fact that His disciples consistently carried out such instructions, and much more difficult ones, during their life with Him. Of course they sometimes failed in the goal set by Baba. But they learned and knew that if they tried wholeheartedly to carry out His wishes 100 percent with full faith and love in their Master and God-Man, then the work would go well.

There are many such instructive and inspiring stories about Meher Baba and His disciples. There are also stories of the intense love that the schoolboys had for Him and His love for them — for example, it is recorded how He wept when one of the gifted pupils was taken from the school by his parents against the fervent wish of the boy. There are stories of many, many miracles that occurred over the years — miracles that Meher Baba denied any knowledge of, stating they occur because of the faith in and love for Him that His followers have. Not faith and love in the hope of miracles in a spirit of bargaining, but faith and love with no thoughts of reward. In other words, love for the sake of love itself. Meher Baba Himself stated that the only miracle He would perform in this Advent would be the effect wrought when breaking His Silence with One Word — the same word that St. John writes of in his testimony of Jesus: "In the: beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

There are stories of all sorts that bear thinking on in pondering on the question "Was Meher Baba God in human form?" For example, an English medical doctor who met Baba as a student, and then after graduation went to India to live with and serve Baba, mentioned to me the number of times he noted physical disturbance in Baba coinciding with world events. In his typical English fashion he pointed out that there was not necessarily a connection, but he himself

believed there was. I do also. There is a little story in connection with this. I will quote it as it was reported to me by one of Baba's disciples:

One crowded Sunday we saw, among the long queue of people who were waiting their turn to approach Baba, a woman who was having trouble keeping her two boisterous youngsters in order. I did not think Baba would even have seen her, surrounded as He was with the others who were garlanding Him, greeting Him, being greeted and blessed by Him, and often offering sweets and fruits, which mostly He would touch as a sign of acceptance and return to them as His gift to them. But He had, and in response to His gesture, the woman very feelingly replied, "Yes, Baba, indeed they do give me trouble." With a twinkle in His eyes, Baba said: "If only two children can make your life a hell, can you imagine My plight Who has billions of children?"<sup>12</sup>

It could be said that the two most predominant features of Meher Baba were His compassion and His suffering.

The love between Meher Baba and people blossomed visibly in many touching and lovely ways. Some of these are recorded in various books, but the vast majority one finds only by association with and pertinent, tactful probing of His disciples and followers.

There is simply so much that is generally unknown of Meher Baba's activities, and He Himself did nothing to help in the matter — or rather, seemed quite indifferent to whether it was known or not. I know of instances to do with assistance to the sick, needy, and destitute that Meher Baba forbade His disciples telling to others. I myself have witnessed the profound and lasting effect He had on people — and it should be noted that this happened without necessarily a physical meeting taking place between Baba and them.

To go back in time for a moment, one day during 1925

Meher Baba told His disciples that from July 10 of that year He would observe silence, and since that day continued to do so unbroken for forty-four years. His many spiritual discourses and messages were dictated by means of an English alphabet board, which was discarded in 1954, and then by unique hand gestures interpreted by His disciples.

He did not give what could be described as a simple reason for this Silence, but said that it was not undertaken as a spiritual exercise, nor as a vow of silence, but undertaken and maintained solely in connection with His universal work. He said, "If My Silence does not speak, of what avail words?" and although this statement can be taken on many levels of meaning, it is true that when one met Him, He did not appear to be silent. He was so expressive, not only in His facial and hand movements, but in the subtle communication that can take place between people without words, that it was hard to realise at times that He was not actually speaking to one.

He stated that He would break His Silence, and that this would help each one to help himself in knowing his real Self. In other words, the One Word would come from God straight to the heart, its effective force and the reaction to it being in accordance with the magnitude and receptivity of each individual.

A few more personal details now on Meher Baba. He lived a simple life, was unmarried, ate little, and slept little. In the matter of food He was neither a vegetarian nor a non-vegetarian, taking whatever breakfast, lunch, or supper was prepared for Him with love. However, His favourite dish was plain *dal* and rice. He retired for periods in strict seclusion and observed long fasts; but He did not lay down any rules in these matters for others, saying that inner renunciation is of far greater importance spiritually than external

renunciation. He owned no property, and only handled money when giving it to the poor, destitute, or sick from time to time. He did not wear any of the marks or robes of a saint, was plainly indifferent to the devotional ceremonies practised by the various religions, and emphasised that the only real prayer to God is one of pure praise without asking or complaint.

Meher Baba enjoyed listening to music and poetry, and throughout his physical life was particularly fond of Hafiz, the great Persian master-poet who in matchless verse describes the Lover-Beloved relationship. He moved and mixed freely with one and all, and enjoyed games and sports, jokes, and humorous skits — "Amusing incidents that arise at the expense of none lighten My burden."

People were drawn by His simplicity, joyfulness, the absence of any self-seeking motive, and because of the loving-kindness that welled so naturally and spontaneously from Him.

Many words have been used in attempts to describe the qualities and characteristics of Meher Baba, and all of them seem to fall short in grasping His manifold complex personality. I myself always feel in a talk, such as this one today, that I can never do true justice to His uniqueness.

Writers have written of Meher Baba describing Him in these terms: Obviously master of every situation. Attentive to detail. Extremely thoughtful of others, exhibiting, as it were, eyes in the back of His head. Humorous, full of joyous goodwill. The poorest of the poor when with the poor, and the richest when among the rich. Most expressive and mobile. Extremely active, vital, warm, humble, radiant, always setting a perfect example in everything undertaken.

And while I and others who have met Meher Baba will say, "Yes, all that is true," we also could not help saying that



such words fall completely short in delineating the length and breadth of Him. In the end, we tend to say He is one with us at our level of humanness, is truly the Friend, Guide and Ideal, and that at the same time He is beyond understanding and definition, and we cannot imagine Him to be other than what He stated, God in human form.

I could go on describing Him in superlatives, and you could go on being sceptical. Conviction about the spiritual status of Meher Baba is somewhat like love; you cannot will it into existence. One day it simply arises and manifests in a feelingful certainty, which, while based on countless aspects of His words, actions, and attributes, is also beyond such facts.

Perhaps whether or not you pursue a study of Meher Baba depends on certain things stirring within you, and a persistent restless belief that there are answers, or rather an Answer, to one's questions, doubts, and dissatisfactions. The things stirring within one could be a natural devotion to God as Truth and Beauty, and dissatisfaction with conventional forms of worship; it could be a flame-like pursuit of perfection in art or intelligent service to others; or a general dissatisfaction with the world as it is. Probably dissatisfaction with the world is the most common issue that drives people to seek a deeper meaning and value in life. But I do not mean by "dissatisfaction" that the world simply isn't to our liking, that the whole unsatisfactory mess is due to everyone else, including God. What I do mean is dissatisfaction with a world that each one of us has created.

I mean dissatisfaction with the thoughts and feelings and words and actions of our self that have brought about the mess that it is. And I mean that this dissatisfaction stimulates or feeds the desire to help create a better world through a change in our own attitudes and behaviour.

Meher Baba says it is no answer to run away from the world and our responsibilities in it. He emphasises that true freedom lies through our honest and whole-hearted efforts to fulfil our responsibilities, based on our love for God the Beloved, to Whom all things are due. And Meher Baba assures us again and again that every effort, no matter how small, to carry this out will be answered tenfold by God. He will assist and guide, encourage and enlighten our honest efforts to face the reality of the role we play in creating the world around us, and our efforts to do something constructive about it. That is why He repeatedly said, "I have come to give My love in order that you can help yourselves to find that which you are seeking."

The more we ponder on questions such as what is the purpose of life, what type of life should we be living, how to achieve true and worthwhile results in art, science, work, homes, and so on, how to find meaning and purpose and goodwill in our everyday lives, how do we bring up children, form a friendship with our wife or husband, with our neighbours — the more we consider these things, the more we come to a deep conviction that love is both the answer and the means of arriving at the answer. Love that is the active appreciation of the intrinsic worth of the object of love; love that is the light of intelligence, not sensuality or sentimentality or emotionality; love that is striving for an ideal, real and tangible, and one that constantly says to us: Live for other than yourselves, and you will truly find your real Selves.

Meher Baba is for many, many people throughout the world, and myself among them, that Ideal, Guide, and Friend. His most frequent words to people were, "Love God wholeheartedly, don't worry, be happy," and He demonstrated in Himself and encouraged in others this ever-present selfless

love as the most natural theme of everyday life. As Meher Baba stated:

"Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite Love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and time again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false. I have only one message to give and I repeat it age after age to one and all: 'Love God.'

"Live not in ignorance. Do not waste your precious life-span in differentiating between and judging your fellow man, but learn to long for the love of God. Even in the midst of your worldly activities, live only to find and realise your true Identity with your Beloved God. This love can belong to all, high and low, rich and poor. Everyone of every class and creed can love God. The one and only God Who resides equally in us all is approachable by each of us through love."

Quite a few people were drawn to Baba as a result of this talk.

By His Grace, a lot was done in His Cause over the next two years. We also produced a new introductory booklet, as well as one issue of a proposed bimonthly *Meher Baba News*, which Baba was very happy with; He signed the copy I had sent, returning it to me, and agreeing with Francis's comment that it was "the best thing yet done anywhere."

According to Francis, Baba asked a number of times, "When is Bill moving to Avatar's Abode?" But it was not easy to do so. The children were still at school or college, I was still a consultant, we were having more visitors, I was busy with interviews and meetings. In short, "the key" was certainly turning.

In those two years before Beloved Baba dropped His physical form, it was like being with Baba physically — both extreme joyfulness and great energy nurtured by His unfailing expressions

of affection and encouragement; and deep despair and anxiety as He also exhorted me to spread His Name and message and to move to and develop Avatar's Abode. My tension over those two years was not helped by Francis. Dear man: one who loved Baba very much and who longed so much too to see Baba flourish, as it were, in Australia, Francis at the same time was seven thousand miles away, and I think only intellectually appreciated my position of having to earn a living, give attention to Joan and the children (now well and truly teenagers), give time to the growing family of new Baba lovers, and yet also seek to increase that family. It was a full-time job, no doubt about it, and certainly not comfortable and easy, but one which I would rather die doing than lose. It was this tension that made me write in exasperation to Francis to let me get on with the job in my own way and style, and which brought forth from Baba the following message, as written in a letter from Francis late in 1967:

Baba says He knows everything and He does everything. Do not be confused. Remember Baba's instructions. Do your best and Baba will help you. Baba says that *soon* an opportunity regarding Baba-work will arise: grab it with both hands without thinking about how it will affect your job. That does not mean that you should give up your present job, but means that when this opportunity of Baba-work comes, don't try to earn more money at the cost of the opportunity. Then Baba dictated the following:

Dear Bill, understand once and for all time that as far as Australia is concerned Francis stands first and last and you are his right hand. So keep him informed of new developments and always seek his advice when necessary.

*Baba*

Baba then added: "I want you to tell Me clearly whether you will try 100 percent to carry out My instructions."

After my reply that I wished for nothing more than to do His bidding, Baba dictated the following letter:

Your letter of 29th October made me very happy. You have not disobeyed Me in the least, and I am not displeased with you in the least. On the contrary, I am pleased with you.

Continue to try as you have been trying, and soon an opportunity will arise which will make you also happy. You can expect a breakthrough in December. Remember all My instructions and do all My work — but not to the extent of overlooking your family responsibilities. Earn enough; not more, not less.

Let Francis know from time to time developments in My work. I am God and you are my Billy-boy.

Love to Joannie, Ruthie, Michael, Jenny, Joanna, Reg, Bernard, Mother, May, Diana, Judith and to all the new ones interested in My message — and to yourself.

These cables and letters from Baba, Adi Sr., and Francis give just a few pointers to the many happenings in the two years before January 1969.

AHMEDNAGAR

24 FEBRUARY 1967

RUTHIE & JENNY LE PAGE

KALIANNA CRES

BEACON HILL NSW

I HEARD YOUR SONGS TODAY AND WAS TOUCHED BY  
YOUR WONDERFUL VOICES AND I WANT YOU BOTH TO  
PERFECT THIS ART OF SINGING TO CARRY MY MESSAGE OF  
LOVE TO THE PEOPLE

LOVE

MEHERBABA

POONA  
1 JUNE 1967

LE PAGE  
AVATARS ABODE  
WOOMBYE QLD

ALTHOUGH I AM EVER WITH MY LOVERS INDIVIDUALLY I  
AM ALWAYS HAPPY WHEN THEY GATHER IN MY LOVE SO  
CELEBRATE THIS ANNIVERSARY AT MY ABODE WITH A  
BANG AND LET MY MESSAGE FILL EVERY CORNER OF  
YOUR HEARTS LOVE TO YOU ALL

BABA

AHMEDNAGAR  
23 JUNE 1967

LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRES  
BEACON HILL

BABA ASKS HOW ARE YOU?  
FRANCIS

Ahmednagar  
9 March 1967

Ena Lemmon  
Sunrising  
The Patch  
Victoria, Australia

Dear Ena,

I have your letter of 28th Feb., and would answer it thus,  
after it was read to Baba:

- 1) Beloved Baba had wished when He visited Melbourne that Denis be head of the *then* Baba group in Melbourne. It is therefore left to Denis to remain in direct contact with individuals (those who loved Baba and were interested in Him and His work in Melbourne). It rests with Denis as to how he carries out Baba's wish.
- 2) Those who whole-heartedly love Baba and wish to share their love for Baba with others in Australia are *the links* between individuals (aspirants) and Baba.
- 3) The use of intoxicating drugs in general is prohibited by Baba; however, He permits the use of wine within limits. As such wine may be used — within limits — to celebrate Baba occasions like birthdays.
- 4) In the absence of Francis, Baba wants you and His other lovers in Australia to ask Bill (Le Page) for any advice with regard to Baba-work or guidance. Baba has explained to Bill different points while he was recently (this February) at Meherazad for 14 days, and Baba wants him to base Baba-work in Australia on these points. Hence beloved Baba wants you to consult Bill when you feel confused. Baba would want all His lovers in Australia to sink their petty differences, and to remain united as one Baba-body in the interest of His (the Avatar's) Cause.

With love,

Yours brotherly,

*Adi K. Irani*

N.B.: From 1st of April 1967, beloved Baba will not hear any correspondence unless it is very important and only related to His work. Any correspondence connected with

personal difficulties and problems will not be entertained.

Baba wishes to be absolutely undisturbed from 1st April to the end of this year.

[Extract]

Guruprasad  
7 June 1967

My dear Bill,

Beloved Baba was happy to receive your two letters:  
May 19 and May 25, and your cable of June 4:

NOW WE WILL SING MIGHTILY ON THIS AND COMING  
ANNIVERSARIES FOR YOU WHO LAID YOUR LOVELY  
HAND ON OUR HEARTS AND LIVES AND BLESSED  
THEM TO BECOME INSTRUMENTS FOR YOUR WORK  
JOHN JOAN BERNARD JOANNA ROBERT LORNA RADHA  
REG BILL JOAN RUTH MICHAEL JENNY MAY

In answer to this beloved Baba dictated the following:

YOUR CABLE RECEIVED MY LOVE BLESSINGS TO ALL  
WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANNIVERSARY CARRY OUT  
MY INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN AT MEHERAZAD AND  
THOSE I GIVE FROM TIME TO TIME 100% REMEMBER  
THE TIME IS FAST APPROACHING SO NO SACRIFICE  
WILL BE TOO GREAT FOR MY WORK ENTRUSTED TO  
YOU

BABA

Love,  
*Francis*



Meherazad  
20 December 1967

My dear Bill,

Your letter of Dec. 13 has been read to beloved Baba.

Baba approves of your trip to Tasmania [to talk about Him on television], but says that this is not the great opportunity about which He has spoken.

Because of His present Work in Seclusion, this opportunity may be delayed for a while, but, He says, it will definitely occur much before 21st Feb. When it does, grab it with both hands.

Love,  
*Francis*

AHMEDNAGAR  
27 JANUARY 1968

LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRES  
BEACON HILL

CABLE ABOUT BRISBANE SPLENDID RESPONSE RECEIVED  
BABA SAYS GOOD OLD BILLY BOY AND THAT MANY MORE  
OPPORTUNITIES WILL SOON ARISE

LOVE  
FRANCIS

AHMEDNAGAR  
5 FEBRUARY 1968

LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRESCENT  
BEACON HILL

YOUR LETTER TO FRANCIS 29TH JANUARY ABOUT MY WORK

IN BRISBANE MADE ME HAPPY BE PREPARED FOR MORE  
OPPORTUNITIES IN NEAR FUTURE LOVE TO YOU MICHAEL  
JOANNIE RUTHIE JENNY MAY DIANA

BABA

The above two cables were in response to our group's sponsoring a float in the Warana Festival procession. The float carried large photographs of Baba, and we handed out many leaflets afterwards.

AHMEDNAGAR  
12 AUGUST 1968

LE PAGE  
KALIANNA CRESCENT  
BEACON HILL NSW AUST

LOVE FROM GODMAN TO BILLYMAN ON HIS BIRTHDAY  
AND TO JOANNIE RUTHIE MICHAEL JENNY

BABA

AHMEDNAGAR  
7 OCTOBER 1968  
LE PAGE

KALIANNA CRES  
BEACON HILL NSW

BELOVED BABA IS VERY HAPPY WITH YOU AND MAY AND  
ALL COWORKERS FOR PUTTING HIM ON BEAUTIFUL FLOAT  
AND TAKING HIM THROUGH BRISBANES STREETS HE  
SENDS LOVE TO YOU ALL AND SAYS YOU WILL DO  
GREATER THINGS YET

LOVE

FRANCIS

Meherazad  
22 March 1968

Dear Billy-boy,

The *Meher Baba News* came as a lovely surprise yesterday afternoon and I cabled you:

MEHER BABA NEWS MAGAZINE BEST THING YET  
DONE ANYWHERE IMPATIENT TO SHOW BABA  
74 CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL CONCERNED  
FRANCIS

I am beginning to wonder seriously whether beloved Baba *is* in Seclusion or not. No letters, no cables, no reports, no nothing are to be shown to Him. But this morning He asks, "Any news from Bill?" "Yes," I reply, "a new nice Baba magazine." Looking somewhat like a child anticipating ice cream, He asked me to bring it. And He was very happy with His "ice cream!" He confirmed my words, "best thing yet done anywhere." I also read out to Him the names of the workers including the family on this job. So I didn't have to bear for very long my impatience to show the new work to Him. (When I cabled, I naturally thought that I would have until the end of May. There's no keeping up with this God-Man person at all, is there?)

The copy that beloved Baba handled, I am returning to you air bookpost. I take it you will be sending, say half dozen more by sea mail.

Your Melbourne meeting will be over now. I hope it went well.

I hope Jenny-penny liked my Birthday song for her — it was written specially for her.

Love,  
*Francis*

## UNTITLED POEM

The world is being run on time, by time, for time, and at no  
time are we free  
Just to sit and enjoy even the outward forms of the  
Beloved's beauty.

Each drop-bubble in time is a sphere bounded, but infinite;  
So fragile, yet the whole of creation is in it.

It is a mirror, never reflecting truth, but the drop-soul's  
desires,  
No matter how deep one dives in the truth-quest or how  
high one aspires.

Good man, bad man — economy-tailored or king-sized —  
Each gazes in his bubble-mirror self-hypnotized.

Since the blows of my will are too feeble to break my  
looking-glass,  
At least, Beloved, let it reflect only your beloved face.

Then, though still in time, I will no longer be a fool  
Under time's tyranny, but under your benign rule.

The amazing universe and this beautiful earth will vanish,  
leaving not a trace behind,  
When your glance shatters this so-unbreakable mirror of  
my mind.

*Francis*

Guruprasad  
May 1968

Meherazad  
19 August 1968

Dear Bill,

Beloved Baba was happy with your letter of August 12. He says to tell you that still greater opportunities in His Work will come to you, and you are to seize them with both hands and speak boldly from your heart; but at the same time you must not neglect Joannie and the children.

Baba wants you to tell His May (show her this letter) that she is very dear to Him, and He wants her to co-operate fully with you in the Brisbane work. Beloved Baba sends His love to you and the family and to May and Bernard.

*Francis*

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## 1969: 31 JANUARY

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**ON 31ST JANUARY 1969**, Avatar Meher Baba dropped His physical body, to dwell in our hearts forever. I for one had never even thought of a world without Baba being physically in it. He seemed simply to be not only an essential part of life but Life itself. The shock on receiving the news was perhaps intensified for me by the fact that on that day I had had ten teeth extracted, and I found the next week difficult with all the inevitable phone calls, meetings, and discussions. Although much has been written of this event, a letter from Francis provides a touching picture and is therefore given here; but first let me reprint the "true account" of Beloved Baba dropping His physical body.

This is the true account of Avatar Meher Baba's dropping His body, according to the resident *mandali*.

The three years of intense work in seclusion had had an untold effect upon His body, and a faint reflection of this on us caused a deep depression among us. But beloved Baba warned us that this was disobeying His order to be always cheerful in His presence. And He quoted, as He had many times over the years, Hafiz's couplet: "Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what."

On 13th October 1968 Baba told us that He would give

His *darshan* to all His lovers all over the world from 10th April to 10th June 1969. Considering His physical condition, we were apprehensive of His body standing such a strain. But He said, "It will be easy for Me to give My lovers My *darshan*, so you are not to feel concerned about it. I will give *darshan* reclining and that will be no strain on My body. It will be different from all previous *darshans* and it will be the last in silence. Although I will be reclining, I will be very strong. My physical condition now is because of My work, but by then My work will be complete and My exultation will be great. A very poor man winning a rich lottery can become so excited over his fortune that he collapses and dies. My fortune will be in My work being finished and in the knowledge of its certain results; but My exultation will not cause My collapse — it will be My glory."

Despite these assurances, Baba's health became worse. But the symptoms were completely confusing to the doctors we called from Poona and Bombay. His blood urea was so high that the doctors said usually an ordinary man in such a condition would go into a coma, but there was not even the least sign of mental confusion or the faintest trace of uremic odour. Similarly, when muscular spasms were occurring, when a specialist from Bombay examined Him, he asked why he had been called, because there were no symptoms at all — Baba's condition was quite normal.

Outwardly, to our eyes, Baba's condition deteriorated still further, and we wanted to take Him to Poona so that further tests could be carried out, but He refused to go and warned us that we should not try and take Him against His wish. He said, "If you want Me to drop My body now, then take Me to Poona. My condition has no medical grounds at all; it is due purely to the strain of My work. Do not call the doctors again until I tell you." And so, helpless before His

will, we had to obey His will.

Over the last days Baba's body manifested severe spasms, and He told us, "This is My crucifixion." Two days before He dropped His body, He told us to call the doctors. The one from Poona came the next morning and said he could do nothing until further tests were done so that a definite diagnosis could be arrived at; and this could only be done if Baba went to Poona. Baba said to him, "My time has come."

The next day the doctor from Bombay came, and also one from Ahmednagar. By the time they arrived a great spasm shook His body, the pulse rate fell to nothing, and breathing ceased. This was at 12:15 P.M. At 12:00 noon He had been joking with us about all the medicines He had been given.

In the evening we brought His body to Meherabad. The sun was setting and the moon was rising as we placed it in the tomb for His lovers to take His *darshan*, fulfilling beloved Baba's word that He would give His *darshan* reclining."

This now brings us to Francis's letter of 10 February 1969:

Meherazad  
10 February 1969

My dear Bill,

By now you will have received the "true account" of beloved Baba's dropping of His body. This was issued to counteract such reports as *The Times of India*: "Meher Baba found dead in a cave." And, anyway, it was as well to record it while it was still clear in our minds.

Following the pronouncement that beloved Baba's body was dead, Eruch, Pendu, Bhau, I, Don, and Dr. Ginde came to my room to decide what to do. Ginde said that the body



should be interred within 24 hours. Don concurred, and Eruch agreed. I objected, quoting what Baba had said some days before: "Even though my condition so worsens that I lose consciousness and go into a coma, I will come back." I said that we should wait three days. But I soon saw that I was confusing coma with death. Baba was not in a coma, His body was dead. Then Mani came over from the women's house. They wanted Baba kept for three days. And I joined the others in persuading her that it could not be done. The time of interment was set for 10:00 A.M. the next day.

Eruch went over to the pumping station, rang Adi, and told him what had happened and told him to arrange for an ambulance. It came two to three hours later, and we took the body to Meherabad and placed it in the tomb.

The next morning some of the 'Nagar lovers headed by Sarosh arrived at the tomb demanding that the interment should be delayed for some days so that lovers from other places could see their Beloved's physical form for the last time. When he was told the medical opinion, he declared that the doctors had no say in the matter, their part was finished, the body belonged to the trustees of the tomb (of which he is one), and that he would take full responsibility if decomposition set in. He and the others who had come with him also protested that the body should have been taken in procession through the city and laid in state at the 'Nagar Avatar Meher Baba Centre — a comparatively recently established centre — before being brought to the tomb. The *mandali* agreed to put off the interment. As long as the body remained fresh, the tomb would not be closed.

By now the stream of lovers had begun to flow and phone calls and telegrams to pour into Adi's office asking had the interment taken place? Was there still time to come? Baba's brother Adi cabled from London that he and

Delia [DeLeon] were coming and wanted transport from Bombay arranged. Don Stevens also cabled he was coming and had arranged his own transport.

Now on the second or third day, Sunday or Monday, Mehera said that when, some days before beloved Baba dropped His body, she was imploring Him to make Himself well and strong, He had told her that seven days after the end of January He would be well and strong. She now took this to mean that the tomb should be kept open for seven days. Also the 7th February would be His birthday according to the Parsi calendar, and the interment — to her His actual death-day when she would be separated from Him forever — should be on the same day. She would not be dissuaded from this even though the grave risk of decomposition having set in before this was pointed out to her. And it would seem that her Beloved indulged her wish and kept His body fresh for seven days.

If I had believed that this would be, I could have cabled you to come. But I did not believe it and only had the thought that it was better for you not to come than come and find the tomb closed, or worse, that decomposition had begun and the tomb remained unclosed. During the first few days there was much sweet singing by various *bhajan* parties and *qawwals*, but after a generator had been brought to make light for the photographers the singing was amplified to the point of distortion.

For myself, I took little part in it all. I just sat, and when tired of sitting stood or walked about, and when people came at me, often in batches of twenty or thirty, I folded my hands in greeting and said Jai Baba. I felt friendly, but detached. I had nothing to say, and wanted to hear nothing. I thought often of you and the other dear ones over there.

But Eruch remained beloved Baba's indispensable and

beloved right hand all through, caring for His body all day as he had cared for it for the last thirty years, and keeping watch at the door of the tomb at night. For three days and nights he did not eat or sleep. But after that Bhau shared the night watch, and Eruch had two to three hours sleep each night.

By the third day people were arriving from as far north as Delhi and Dehra Dun and as far south as Vijayawada and Gunter in Andhra. On the sixth day Rick Chapman and Allan Cohen along with Aneece Hassan came from San Francisco. Aneece, a Sufi-Reorientist, had brought a whole range of cameras and after taking *darshan* of his Beloved began photographing and filming everything, even coming out here to film the room where Baba dropped His body and the surroundings.

At 11 o'clock on the last morning, the 7th, *darshan* was stopped, the floor of the tomb was swept, and the resident *mandali* and then Mehera and the women took their last *darshan* of the Beloved. Then we brought in a lidless plywood coffin. The press of people outside the door was so great that I had to fight to keep my hold on it as we brought it in. We inverted it and lowered it over Baba. Ropes of flowers were laid along it, and the women came once more and wept. Then the men, including those who had come from overseas, each took a handful of earth from a basin and sprinkled it on the coffin, and then all the other lovers filed past and touched the remaining earth before it was filled in.

It is now Monday night, the 10th. Mehera refused to return here Friday evening and is still at Meherabad with the women and a crowd of other women who have been close to her for years. She and they want to stay on there permanently. But at last she has been prevailed upon to return tomorrow with the resident women, and the others

will return to their homes.

I have received your two cables; the first, acknowledging the cable informing you of beloved Baba's dropping of His body and advising that you had sent word on to Queensland, Melbourne and New Zealand; the second (which has only just been handed to me), "Cable received Yes beloved Baba lives eternally in the hearts of his lovers everywhere Avatar Meher Baba ki jai." Yes, brother, the victory is His.

Always in Him,

*Francis*

P.S. In reply to a number of lovers in U.S. who have got the idea into their heads that they should still come to Poona for *darshan* April 1 - June 10, a long cable has been sent out, copies of which were sent also to you and Denis. If any approach you about this, tell them that the better plan would be to come next year or the year after that, when some accommodation will have been built. There is absolutely none now. If they come this year, they will be allowed to visit the tomb for half-day only. When there is proper accommodation, they will be able to stay for a week or two. What would be the best thing would be the expression of love through practical service. Baba has left no provision for the people here and for many outside who were dependent upon Him for years for their everyday needs. It would be a grand thing if all in Australia who *were* coming for the May *darshan* contributed a portion of their cost of the trip towards the continued maintenance of these people. But such contributions should not be sent until you get word from me to whom to send. It is not yet clear who will be the manager and purse-keeper here. It might be best not to bring up the

matter *generally* yet, but only with any who have the idea of going to Poona in May. But you will know best. — *F.*

They came anyway, including the new young lovers Baba had called His "jewels," thousands from India and almost seven hundred from other countries, determined to honour His invitation.

The following extract from a letter written to an Australian Baba lover, a carbon copy of which Francis as usual sent to me at the same time, gives a further poignant account.

Meherazad  
16 February 1969

My dear \_\_\_\_,

Your letter of Feb. 7 came yesterday evening. I can quite understand that it seemed inconceivable at first that beloved Baba had dropped His body. So it was to us here.

For hours, in relays, we had been pressing His limbs. Suddenly Goher cried, "No, Baba, no!" And I became aware that our Beloved had stopped breathing. Goher recovered sufficiently to prepare and give an injection. Eruch began mouth-to-mouth respiration. Mehera came in and collapsed at the head of the bed, moaning, "*Baba khuda cher*" (Baba, you are God), "You can come back if You will." Goher said to me, "Why don't you try resuscitation? You know how to do that." I knew nothing would be of any use, yet I kept wondering why the other doctors had not come. *They* would do something; Goher was too distraught to think.

Then the doctors arrived, and just stood about. I was thinking, Why don't you fellows do something? They gave oxygen and a cardiac injection, apparently in a show of

doing something. But the Lord of the universe had finished with His body and did not resume breathing. Eruch had collapsed from sheer physical exhaustion, but had soon recovered. He was caressing his Beloved's face and I noticed him lightly pressing His eyelids down; and I wondered why he was doing that, one only did that to someone who had died.

God does not die, and it was not the time for Him to drop His body. We were not ready for Him to do that; so much had yet to happen before He did that. But at the same time a pale gladness, as you did, old friend, that He no longer had to support His pain-racked body.

No doubt when the time is ripe by His Grace we will know what He said we would. It is up to each of us now to become worthy of that Grace by trying to love Him as He should be loved, by living as He would wish us to live.

That evening we took the body to Meherabad and placed it in the tomb, where it remained fresh for seven days, and thousands of His lovers were able to see Him. At 12:00 noon on the seventh day the tomb was closed. If I had known this would be so, I could have cabled you and others to come. We had decided on the advice of the doctors to inter the body the next morning after Baba had dropped it, but the next morning it was agreed that so long as decomposition had not started, the tomb would be kept open. This went on day by day for seven days ....

Love,

*Francis*

Early in March 1969 I received another letter from Francis which is relevant to the entombment of Beloved Baba's body, and so I give it here.

Meherazad  
27 February 1969

My dear Bill, :

Today at noon, Kaka, the giant, came out of his room and sat down in his chair; a momentary spasm seized him and his heart stopped beating. He had, through the years, battled through five heart attacks; now his heart was tired and just stopped. We buried him at sunset here at Meherazad, where he had lorded it over all for twenty years.

Although small of stature, only 5' 2", he had been one who would fight anybody at the drop of an ill word. And after he came to Baba he was a giant in hardships in his Lord's service and a great source of entertainment to Him.

Over the last year a great change took place in him: he became a happy child and the playfellow of all — especially of beloved Baba's — although now and again the old fire would burst into flame and he was again momentarily the lord of Meherazad. During the last few months he used to entertain beloved Baba nearly every day with a nonsense Name-repetition in which we would all join, with Baba beating time. The tempo would get faster and faster until, out of breath and with our arms aloft, we would finish on a great "Ho!" Beloved Baba would be doubled up with laughter, and would tell us that Kaka took away for a moment His great burden. Then He would have Kaka kiss Him on both cheeks as a reward.

Although he was taken to the tomb at Meherabad every day during the Seven Days, he never knew that beloved

Baba had dropped His body. He thought, it seems, that Baba had gone into His tomb to give the people His *darshan*, and that we were keeping Him there. Only yesterday he demanded that we bring Baba back here.

Well, now he has gone to his Beloved, and I don't think he will be chucked back here again. We and about fifty from 'Nagar and Pimpalgaon gave him a good send-off with shouts of Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!

Much love to you  
and to all,

*Francis*

JAI BABA — the victory is His.



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## THE GREAT DARSHAN

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**IN MAY 1969** forty-seven of us from Australia honoured Beloved Baba's invitation for what has become known as the Great Darshan, held at Guruprasad, Poona. (Francis and I took great delight in working out while there that the number of Australians attending was proportionately greater than the number of Americans!)

In a Family Letter (Mani would perhaps send five or six letters a year giving news of Beloved Baba to the West) Mani said, "How Beloved Baba will give His *darshan* to the thousands who will come, yet remains to be determined; but it will be. He will give His *darshan*."

That Baba did give His *darshan*, I can testify: as I knelt before His chair in Guruprasad, I felt His arms around me as though He were physically there. And I know that so many who also took His *darshan*, perhaps all, would echo Francis's words: "What a Beloved is our Beloved; what a mighty Beloved."

As Mani said in the Family Letter after the Great Darshan: "You had the Beloved's *darshan*. And you had His *sahavas*, seated for hours before Him in Guruprasad, communing with Him in silence and in speech. Often you crowded the hall, yet you were never a crowd to us. It was not a sea of faces we saw, but so many shining drops in His Ocean.... You brought Baba with you and He was already here to receive you, you took Him with you and

He is as ever with us — such is the profound God-humour that makes life's joke bearable."

During these days we greeted Beloved Baba's beloved Mehera, and she greeted us with a soft, shy "Jai Baba!"; we listened to Francis reading his talk "The Mighty Beloved"; we listened to the women *mandali* singing the Gujarati Arti, for which Baba Himself had written words and music; we listened to songs, music, and poems in praise of Beloved Baba; we listened, too, to Adi K. Irani give a talk on Baba; and all through ran the thread of commentary by Beloved Baba's "mouthpiece," Eruch, helping in his own devoted way to embroider the tapestry of each day.

At other times, the Australian women spent time with Mehera and the other women *mandali*, while the men were with the men *mandali*. On one day we all travelled from Poona to Ahmednagar and spent time at Meherabad and Meherazad. On another day we were taken by Baba's jovial brother Jal to Sassoon Hospital, where Baba was born; to the tomb-shrine of Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters who brought down God on earth; to Baba House, where He lived for a period, and to His room where set into the floor is the stone on which in 1921 He would repeatedly knock His head, explaining years later that this physical pain helped relieve the spiritual agony He was experiencing then. On the centenary of the hospital, 9th December 1968, Baba gave a special message which was also published in several newspapers: "I give My blessings to the administrative, medical, worker staff of this hospital in which I, the deliverer of the world, was delivered to the world."

As we left Guruprasad for the last time on 20th May morning after saying goodbye to the *mandali* and taking Baba's *darshan*, Mehera farewelled us with folded hands and quiet "Jai Baba!" And so we returned to Australia.

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## AMARTITHI

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**A HIGH LIGHT OF THE YEARS** following Baba's dropping of His physical form was the gathering centred on the 31st January each year commemorating this event — called Amartithi, that Eternal Day. This is what I wrote in 1981 concerning these occasions:

For me there is no occasion throughout the year like the occasion of Amartithi, that "Eternal Day," and no occasion that does not feel more like a pilgrimage. This is simply a personal statement, one that arises from reflection on all the previous Amartithis that I have been to, and my dreams of the one coming which I hope to attend: it is not meant as a definitive statement on Amartithi and pilgrimage. In dropping His physical body it is as though Beloved Baba has released the perfume of His Presence freely throughout the world, but particularly so at His tomb-shrine at Meherabad, and on this day when so many come from around the world, it is even more greatly activated by the love and longing which each brings.

I wish every Baba lover the opportunity of being at Meherabad on Amartithi Day at least once. In the early years the line for *darshan* was not very long, and the crowd was such that one could spend ample time with each one of Beloved Baba's precious family from around the world,

Sometimes it was the only time when one met some members of the family. Now, as Beloved Baba's Manifestation grows, the numbers are sharply increasing, but still not to such an extent that one loses that extraordinary feeling of openness that prevails amongst all. Such is the force of Beloved Baba's Presence that it seems impossible for one to come and remain closed, or for one to bring continued thoughts and feelings of grudges and resentments. At other times, perhaps, these take longer to dissolve, but in the magic of that one day all is left aside and one dives happily into that pool of love which exists because He said, "I love you."

This reminds me of some words of Eruch. In recalling what he has gathered at the feet of Beloved Baba, Eruch said: "Baba often brought home to us that we should all come together and be one heart in His Presence. But then Baba would point out that it is impossible for you to cut yourself off from the mind. It is the mind that creates divisions, that creates separateness, confusion, and limitations. Mind is at the root of all these things; and to annihilate the mind His Grace is essential. But you can remember to do one thing: when you gather together in His love and in His Name, enter the gathering place leaving the mind outside. You should enter with the heart only; that would make Him very happy. If you bring your differences into His Presence, then you will not be there with Him. You can witness His Presence, or be a witness to your presence near Him, only when you are there with your heart predominating."

Francis sent me this poem in the early 1970s as part of a letter written while he was on a visit to Melbourne, and just prior to returning to Meher House, where he was staying with us for a short period.

## I WOULD SPEAK OF LOVE

I would speak of love.  
But no man has yet spoken of love or God  
Without bringing more trouble and wretchedness  
To those who would love.

Love is the first word and the last in the scriptures of  
knowledge.  
The first bud and the full-ripened fruit in the orchard of  
existence.  
The first kiss and the enrapt night in sphere of bliss.

Love is the boulevard of the mad  
And the gutters of the down-and-out —  
Yet none can enter the place of lovers who is not sane,  
Nor has not the wealth of the world to despise.

I would speak of love.  
But no man yet has spoken of love or God  
Without bringing more trouble and wretchedness  
To those who would love.

To love is to taste a fresh bitterness every moment,  
Yet this bitterness is a sweetness which the lover craves;  
To burn and melt,  
To be fire and wax and water at the same time:

To have the keen sight of the blind,  
To have the acute hearing of the deaf,  
To have the sweet speech of the dumb.

I would speak of love.  
 But no man has yet spoken of love or God  
 Without bringing more trouble and wretchedness  
 To those who would love.

The lover is an exile without passport or hope of returning to  
     his own country,  
 Yet at every moment he feels himself to be before the door  
     of his beloved.  
 Idle, yet full of enterprise, he is engaged in a business  
 Which each year shows a balance-sheet of increasing loss.

Every step of his journey is a new bliss.  
 At every moment a fresh wonder unfolds itself before him.  
 Behold this marvel of a man of no sense —  
 The final perfection of the creation of God Who  
 Woke up one morning drunk and created a universe.

Oh, I would speak of love.  
 But how can one speak of love, when lover and  
     Beloved,  
 Baba Himself, is in the world at this moment?

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## STORIES FROM THE *MANDALI* RETOLD

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**WHENEVER TIME AND FINANCE PERMITTED** we went to India to stay at Ahmednagar, go to His *samadhi*, and listen to the *mandali*, particularly Eruch, tell of incidents in the life of God-Man, of spiritual stories Baba told them, and stories that were told to Him. One such was this story that Eruch told to Baba:

It happened that while at Mahabaleshwar one time a hut of straw was built for Baba at His direction for His seclusion work and He stayed in it. He said He was doing His universal work and did not permit anyone to see Him. Eruch was serving Him, attending to Him. One day, suddenly He said, "Tell Me a good story." And this is what Eruch told Him: the inner story of the Taj Mahal.

The emperor, Shah Jehan, and his wife, Mumtaz Mahal, were fond of art. They respected artists and welcomed those from other countries, paying them well. It so happened that a sculptor called Shirazi came to India, his name meaning that he was from Shiraz in Iran. He told the people of Delhi about his work and that he was seeking employment with the king because he had heard he was so fond of art. News of his arrival in the capital came to the ears of the king, who then invited Shirazi to the palace. "Is it true that you are a sculptor from Iran?"

"Yes, it is true."

"Can you give us an idea of your art?" the king asked.

"It would be a great privilege, sire, but there is a condition."

"What is that condition?"

Shirazi answered, "Give me the hand of a damsel, just her hand without my seeing her face or any other features, and I will produce her whole image in stone. Such is my skill which I would like to demonstrate before you!"

"Can you do that?" the emperor asked, astonished.

"Yes, I can; that's my art!"

The empress had been listening to all this and urged her husband to agree to the sculptor's request. Again the emperor asked, "Can you really do that?" and the young man replied, "Yes, provided my condition is complied with. You may give me many hands to select from. I will choose only one. If I am true to my art and reproduce the exact image of the whole person from that hand, my condition is that that damsel belongs to me — in short, I will have a bride from India, from this palace!"

The emperor talked again to the queen. She said she would arrange it, and gave an order that about twenty-five of the maidens of the palace were to place themselves behind a screen, and each one was to put only her hand through the screen. The emperor, the empress, and all the courtiers were present as Shirazi moved slowly along the line of hands.

One, two, three, four.... and so on — he touched each hand briefly through the curtain, proceeding without stopping. Coming to the next hand he touched it, examined it, and then slipped a bangle onto her wrist. This was the sign that he had selected the one whose exact image he would create in marble.



Soon afterwards the empress went behind the screen to find out whose hand the sculptor had chosen. Who was the one he had found so beautiful? But she became very displeased. It was the princess who had been selected — she had been persuaded by the other maidens to put out her hand also, just for fun.

The princess's name was Rehana. She was actually the daughter of a general who had died on the battlefield fighting for the emperor, and his last wish was that the emperor should accept his little daughter whose mother had died earlier and take care of her. So she had grown up in the palace; the emperor and empress brought her up as their own daughter and she became the princess. Naturally they did not want this commoner, this sculptor, to have her hand in marriage. But what was to be done? They comforted themselves by thinking it was not possible for any artist to make an exact image without seeing the person.

Shirazi was given a room and a block of marble. He was eager, working day and night to finish his image, satisfy the king and queen, and win the hand of the damsel. Two, three months passed by, and then one day he sent word to them that it was finished. And what did they find when they came to see the sculpture? The perfect image of Rehana!

The king and queen were stunned. What were they to do now? They felt very depressed. How could they give their princess to a commoner? The king's mind rebelled at the thought, and desperately he invited Shirazi to ask for anything else in his kingdom. The sculptor replied that it didn't matter in the least. He would not insist on having the princess, and he would willingly depart without her. But the king protested that this was not right. It was a matter of great importance — he had given his word as a king — and

he asked Shirazi to accept any other damsel from his kingdom. But he said, "No, I am satisfied. I will go back to my country, to Iran."

By now not only the king, the queen, and the sculptor were unhappy, but also Rehana. The situation had come about through her mischief, and she was sad because of it. The queen, who was pregnant, was very upset, and her health, already poor, was further affected by the matter. The king sought solitude in the forest to think about it; the queen made an unusual exception and called the sculptor to her chambers. She told him she was in poor health and did not know what to do. She wanted him to have someone, but not the princess. Shirazi replied, "Please do not worry. You are the mother of the whole country. Do not be upset. I will go happily." But the queen was unable to accept this. How could they go back on their word? What would other countries think of them?

Soon afterwards, in the midst of all this sadness, the empress died in childbirth. The emperor was heartbroken. He loved his wife dearly and pined for her. But he still had the problem of the sculptor. Then his chief minister suggested a solution: "Create a beautiful monument for your empress, one worthy of your love for her, and of her beauty. Ask this young man to create a design, a model for you. He is a sculptor, an architect. If he is able to create a model that you know immediately is perfect, then he should be given the hand of Rehana." The king agreed, and asked the sculptor to produce a design that would be for all time a truly fitting monument for the empress.

So day after day Shirazi created designs and models, but none touched the heart of the emperor. He was never satisfied. The confusion in the palace and in the country continued; the king, and Rehana too, were still unhappy.

Again the minister came to the emperor. "Even though this sculptor is a master craftsman, you will never be satisfied with his work because your heart is broken. But his heart is not, and therefore he cannot produce a model to satisfy you. You must wound his heart as yours is wounded." The king agreed, but was perplexed, "Yes, but what should we do?"

The minister considered a few minutes, and said, "Very gradually, let the rumours spread that Rehana is ill. While he is working on the models, in the second week let it be known that her condition has worsened; the third week her ill health is serious, and in the fourth, she dies!" So this was done.

The first model Shirazi created after he was told of the death of Rehana became the Taj Mahal. This building continues to attract people from all over the world because it was created from a heart broken in the intensity of love for an unattainable beloved. It is, and remains, the supreme example of the beauty that arises when such love inspires and pervades the act of creativity, revealing the power of love.

On various occasions Mani also talked to us in Mandali Hall. She often recalled stories about Baba's family life. Here is one of them:

Mother was very upset when Baba became absorbed in and totally devoted to Upasni Maharaj, the Perfect Master to whom he had been directed by Sai Baba, the Master of Upasni. You see, Mother always regarded Merwan, as Baba had been christened, as her first-born, although Jamshed was actually her first-born. She loved Merwan very much and had such dreams and aspirations for him in life. She imagined a successful education, including later studies in

the West, followed by an important business or professional career. So she was very pained that Merwan had become unworldly and withdrawn from her and her plans for Him.

She was a very spirited woman and did not take the situation "lying down," as it were. She would go to Upasni Maharaj and have a good tiff with him. "The world is full of mothers," she would say, "with so many sons. Why can you not find another boy as your son? Why do you have to choose my son of all the sons on earth? Why do you not go and get another boy?" And Upasni Maharaj would say, perhaps looking at Merwan nearby, "But I have told him to go! And he doesn't do so!" Then he would call to Merwan, "Mother says for you to go home. She has a nice girl for you to marry, and you could do business and cheat and lie, and do all those things people do in the world. Go, go.... have a fine time." And he would add: "And while you are about it, Mother, won't you find a wife for me too? One for Merwan and one for me." Mother would angrily answer, "Don't talk rubbish! And don't call me Mother. You are too old to be a son of mine."

But she had great respect for Maharaj. There was love there, but always also the wrangling over Merwan. She accepted him as a spiritual personality, and would take a garland with her to offer him. On one occasion as she neared Maharaj's station, she held the garland in her hands and in her mind rehearsed all the things she would say to him. When she arrived she bowed to Maharaj and put the garland around him. "Fine, fine," said Maharaj, "a wonderful garland of old shoes." "Shoes?" she said, "Maharaj, these are flowers." "How much did you abuse me while you held these flowers in your hands?" Mother had to laugh and admit it. This increased her respect for him, knowing that he knew what she was doing.

It was the same with Hazrat Babajan, another of the<sup>1</sup> Perfect Masters who brought about God's Advent as Meher Baba. But in this case Mother would send my Grannie to fight on her behalf with Babajan over Merwan: Why did Merwan go to Babajan so often? He was neglecting his home duties, he was late for supper, he wouldn't do this and wouldn't do that. All this Grannie was instructed to say and to ask that Babajan discourage Merwan from seeing her. So Grannie would agree with all good intentions, but as soon as she was with Babajan she would completely forget, and instead spend the time talking and singing and exchanging poems and songs in Persian with Babajan. Suddenly, as she was about to go, she would remember her duty and say hurriedly to Babajan, "And my daughter wants to know why you are keeping her son here so much." Babajan would smile and say, "Tell her he is not her son. He is for the whole world." So Grannie would come home and assure Mother that she had certainly spoken forthrightly to Babajan.

One subject that Eruch was frequently asked about and on which he also often spoke was Meher Baba's New Life. I recall the following from what Eruch shared with us:

What meaning can be attached to the New Life? It was Baba's New Life. Baba gave the New Life to us all. One day He told us that on a certain day He would leave the old life and go out in the New Life. And we who were around Him just followed Him, whether it be new life, old life, past life, or present life. We didn't care, except just to follow Him, to be by His side, to do whatever He wanted us to do.

But then He said that those who wanted to follow Him in the New Life must be prepared to live a life of absolute helplessness and hopelessness. He said it would be a life of

wandering and begging for food. We should follow Him without any expectation of reward, spiritual or material, and without expectation of Him being our Lord and God. He said He would remain as the companion of the companions in the New Life. And the most important thing, He said, was above all to obey His orders implicitly, whether the orders were good or bad. And to top it all, whether we were happy or unhappy, miserable or elated, we had to put up a very cheerful front under all circumstances. We had to have always a cheerful face, never morose, sullen, or anything like that. Whatever might be happening inside us we had to keep a cheerful smile for Him. That was a condition of the New Life.

In the old life of Baba we took Him to be the God-Man. In the New Life did we discard Him as the God-Man? No. It was a new way of life. We had to have Him in our hearts. All our feelings remained intact. All our faith and conviction and our love for Him as the God-Man, all these were there, but outwardly He remained to us as our companion. We led a life with Him as one of our companions, staying with Him, wandering with Him, following Him. In our old life we were following the God-Man, the Christ. In our New Life we followed our companion. In our hearts we carried Him as our most close one: one took Him to be the beloved, another took Him to be the friend, another the father, mother, sister, every kind of individual aspect of Him was there for every individual.

And He told us that in the New Life we had to leave everything and everyone behind us, whether it be our mothers, fathers, sisters, wives, children, friends, relatives, brother-disciples, brothers in faith, all, all, everything. We were not to expect any reward, spiritual or material. And He added that if we were unable to follow Him and we lagged

behind, unable to catch up with Him through sheer sickness or exhaustion, well, we would have to bear the consequences and be left behind.

But at the same time, what the New Life companions felt, what we experienced, was quite different because in all sincerity, with the fullest conviction that the New Life was to be a life of helplessness and hopelessness, we left this place to follow Him, and with that conviction was born a life which was something beautiful. There were no strings to fetter the companions. There was hopelessness and helplessness. The feelings of freedom in the New Life cannot adequately be expressed, they had to be lived; and that is only possible when one really leaves behind all hope, and has not the least thought of any help.

And what a wonderful thing that the weather, the climatic conditions, never affected the companions, young and old. We would sleep out in the open with no shelter, or just under a tree. It was constantly drizzling in Northern India and it was bitterly cold. But we were there to follow Baba, that's all. He was our shelter. We were under His wing, so to say. Yet Baba was not the Baba of the old life, the God-Man, but Baba the Companion. The companions were forbidden from disclosing to anyone who He was. We could believe whatever we felt within our hearts, but we were ordered never to express our feelings outwardly. Such was the flavour of the New Life.

Eruch one day related this intriguing episode in his life with Baba:

The Manonash phase of Meher Baba's work began after the wanderings in the New Life. But before beginning the Manonash phase, Baba asked me to have a model made

in soft marble of each of the churches — a church symbolising Christianity, a Hindu temple, a [Buddhist] pagoda, a Parsi fire temple, and so on, one for each of the major religions. A long, drawn-out correspondence was needed, and money, but there were Baba lovers in Agra who helped us to eventually obtain them and send them to Baba. He had us keep the models with us during the New Life, and we did so, not knowing their purpose. Those models are still kept in one of the Trust offices.

After a while, Baba said it was time to begin the Manonash phase and for that He needed an isolated area on a hill, a cave by the side of the hill, and that water should be available. We were in Hyderabad at the time. So Pendu and I went out in search, and we did find a good hill, bald, entirely of stone with no grass whatsoever, and in summertime it would be so hot that one could not walk on it with bare feet. And to our surprise we found on the other side of the hill a nice cave. All in all, it was ideal. On the top of the hill there was the shrine of some saintly person, but it had only four pillars and no roof. We wondered why. The local people explained that they had tried time and again to erect a roof, but each time it was blown off. The hill was perhaps ten miles from Hyderabad.

Beside the cave which Baba would use for His work, Baba wanted a small room in which He could relax. We did this, constructing the room out of matting. Baba was now ready to begin the Manonash phase. He sent all who were with Him in Hyderabad back to their home places, except for four of us who were to accompany Him. A car was sent to Hyderabad for Baba's use.

Baba instructed me to take the box containing the models in the car, put them in His cave, prepare the place generally for His arrival, and then have the car return to



fetch Him the next day. So I set off with my three companions, and our small amount of luggage with the box of models was in the trunk of the car.

At the foot of the hill there was a good parking space. Because we were leaving the car and there were village lads wandering around, I carefully locked it and then proceeded towards the rear to take out the models. But as I started to do so, the car moved forward and away from me. It was a great shock. What was happening?

Now, you might wonder if I had put the handbrake on. I had no doubt of it. I was very, very particular about such things. Baba had taught us to be so, and I had travelled so much with Baba. The habits connected with cars and driving were ingrained.

The car started to go faster and faster, as though someone were driving it, and I ran frantically after it. Never did I imagine a car could behave in such a manner. I was frightened, for the first time in my life very frightened. I tried to grasp the door so that I could unlock it. There were no footboards such as you had in early cars, so I had to run alongside. I was frantic and frightened.

Suddenly it stopped. Imagine my relief. But as I tried to unlock the car, it went into reverse, and again moved faster and faster away from me. Not just in reverse, the car went in all directions, and I didn't know which way to turn or what to do. I was sweating with effort and fear. In the meantime my companions were rivetted to the spot, aghast at what was happening and unable to act.

The car reversed quite some distance. Again it stopped. Then it went forward with a sort of jumping motion and gathered momentum, and literally jumped over fallen logs and rocks, and palm trees that were lying horizontal to the ground. I was even more distressed and shocked because

of course such treatment would ruin the whole bottom of the car, especially the engine sump. It went on and on, jumping over all sorts of obstacles, probably covering a distance of about half a mile. Well, I had lost all hope for the car, and in addition I knew Baba was expecting me to return with it that evening in preparation for bringing Him to the hill the next day. What a sad beginning to the Manonash work!

Finally the car went into a rice paddy field and became bogged. Cautiously, fervently taking Baba's Name, I approached the car. I opened the door and started the engine. As I expected it made a terrible noise and I thought, "Naturally, all the oil has drained from the engine."

In the meantime a truck arrived. It was loaded with logs for cooking fuel that Baba had asked me to order. I asked if the driver would help me pull the car out of the paddy field with his truck. He did so, and pulled it until it was on the flat parking space where I had first stopped. Then I asked the driver to thoroughly examine underneath the car and determine whether, how, and where it could be repaired. He looked carefully, especially at the sump, and said there was not a scratch. I did not believe him. I went under the car myself and it was true, there seemed to be absolutely no damage. So then I started it, and although for a while there was that grinding noise, soon it stopped and I found it was paddy grass only that was causing the noise.

I drove the car backwards and forwards. Everything was perfect, there was not even a scratch or a headlamp broken, nothing. With a sigh of relief I emptied the luggage and the models, set up camp, and then I drove the car back to Baba. He asked the reason for the delay, and when He heard the whole story, He chuckled silently.

In recounting these incidents in the life of Baba as given by Eruch, I recall now another incident which I think occurred at the end of the 1958 visit to Australia. We were waiting at the international terminal in Sydney for the call to board, and Baba, surrounded by others, appeared occupied and indifferent to our presence. So Eruch, Francis, and I slipped away through the crowds, and relaxing at some distance, enjoyed a welcome smoke, which we naturally would not do in His presence. And this reminds me of an interesting episode in Eruch's life with Baba.

During the time when Baba would send him out *mast* hunting, one of the injunctions He gave Eruch was "If any *mast* offers you anything, accept it with reverence." One day during those years he was trying to persuade a certain *mast* to come with him to Baba, and to coax him to do so Eruch began massaging his body. The *mast* was smoking a cigarette at the time, and perhaps the massaging pleased him because he took the cigarette from his mouth and offered it to Eruch. Eruch had never smoked before and had no idea at all how to do so: he inhaled too deeply and began to choke. But he remembered Baba's words to accept anything from a *mast* with reverence, so he continued to smoke and choke.

After a few similar occasions Eruch started to enjoy the cigarettes, would accept them whenever offered by *masts*, and so began to crave for them, always hoping that cigarettes would be given to him. In this way he acquired the habit of smoking, and among the men *mandali* he was called "smoking chimney man." Even on car journeys Baba would turn to him and gesture, "It's time now — wouldn't you like a smoke?" Eruch would feel embarrassed and try to disclaim the need, saying "It's all right, Baba," but Baba would have him stop the car and let him smoke.

Gradually more people came to know that Eruch smoked. An American, Harry Dedalchow, who became known as Baba's sailorboy, would specially bring to Baba boxes of cigarettes for

Eruch when his ship docked at Bombay. He would bring various brands, and Eruch particularly remembers State Express tins of cigarettes. So he smoked more and more.

Years passed by. From time to time Baba would stay with the women *mandali* at Ashiana, the home of Arnavaz and Nariman Dadachanji in Bombay. On one such occasion Eruch was sitting on the balcony at night enjoying a cigarette, unmindful of making smoke rings, just happy in the darkness, absorbed in smoking and being quiet and alone. Suddenly he got a sharp shock: someone landed on his shoulders. In the darkness he had no idea at first who it was but soon realised it was a little boy, Meherwan, the eldest son of Rhoda and Jim Mistry. This was typical of the child — he was always into pranks and mischief, jumping out of windows, climbing and jumping from trees, so much so that he looked like a leopard, the wounds all over him covered with yellow or red acroflavin or mercurochrome.

He slid down from Eruch's shoulders onto his knee and said, "Eruch uncle, Baba doesn't like anyone smoking, so why do you smoke?" Eruch saw this as an opportunity to perhaps have a quieting effect on the boy, so he replied, "Baba also doesn't like all the sores on your body, so when you give up your ways, I'll stop smoking." His approach was, you could say, a form of child psychology.

Years passed by. Young Meherwan graduated from school and decided to do medical studies. At that time Baba was staying in Poona at Guruprasad. Eruch's "office" was at the end of the open verandah. He had no table and would sit with a pad on his knee, right hand writing and left hand holding a cigarette. There was a bin beside him for the ash.

One day he was thus occupied, sitting on the floor, and did not realise that someone had come and was sitting on a nearby sofa. Suddenly a voice said, "Eruch uncle." He looked up. It was Meherwan, all dressed up and quite grown up, you could say.

"When did you arrive?"

"I've been here some time."

"Where are you going?"

"To the U.S.A. I am going to be a doctor."

Suddenly that long-ago scene came to Eruch's mind and his words to young Meherwan: "When you mend your ways, I'll mend mine." Immediately he put out the cigarette he was smoking. That was the last time he smoked.

But he hesitated to disclose this to anyone. He was not yet confident that he had really given up smoking for good. A little later, Baba's sailorboy, Harry, visited Baba at Meherazad. Harry had that privilege. He could come and visit Baba whether He was in seclusion or not. Again he brought a large suitcase. "What have you brought?" Baba asked innocently. Harry opened the case with a flourish. It was filled with packets of cigarettes from all round the world, collected wherever his ship docked. Baba gestured, "Eruch, look what Harry has brought you! Aren't you happy? Take them!" Eruch finally had to blurt out "Baba, I have now stopped smoking." And that put the seal on it.

On another occasion, Mani spoke of a time shortly after Beloved Baba had dropped His body:

Seeing this picture of Baba with a lamb reminds me of a little incident. Soon after Baba dropped His body, Eruch made it very clear that we just had to continue doing what Baba wanted us to do. Eruch said, "It is not the time to start thinking of ourselves. We have to continue to please Baba, to continue to do what He wants us to do." Eruch saying this helped. It brought us back to a proper perspective.

After that so much happened. There was little room in our hearts for our own feelings. But after the 1969 Darshan in Guruprasad, Poona, when we returned to Meherazad

there seemed to be for the first time the chance to think of ourselves, of our feelings, to reminisce, to allow our feelings to express themselves in private.

About two days after we returned, Eruch asked me to bring to him some papers Baba had given in my keeping. I said yes, and returned to the women's quarters and promptly forgot all about it. He had told me in the morning. Now the sun was setting and lanterns were being lit, and I suddenly remembered those papers. So I quickly opened my trunk, found the papers, and even though by then the visibility was poor, I walked over to the men's side. But Eruch wasn't in his room. I found him washing his face at the tap outside his cabin. So I said, "Oh, Eruch, here are the papers." But he didn't answer. After washing, he wiped his face with the towel hanging outside his cabin. I waited patiently. But instead of turning to come towards his room, he turned his back on me and started walking towards the field, past the mango tree, and so on to the edge of the field.

I was puzzled, but all Eruch said was, "Come," and I followed. One could barely see, it was so dark, but Eruch stood at the edge of the field and I stood beside him, and he said, "Can you hear?" and I strained my ears. Sure enough, because it was so still, from the other side of the field I could hear Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, a continuous calling out of sheep, and it sounded like a calling of Baba's name. I said, "Yes, I hear." I realised that some shepherd had put his sheep in an enclosure for the night on our field. They do that sometimes on some field or another. They make an enclosure of thorny branches so that the sheep are protected.

Eruch said, "Can you see?" I strained my eyes, and because some of the sheep were white and because they were restlessly moving about, I was able to see them. I

said, "Yes, I can see the sheep." He said, "No, to the left. Can you see it to the left?" There was nothing to the left. It was quite dark, but as I looked I saw a darker shape which seemed like a big rock, a little distance from the sheep pen. Thoughts raced through my mind. How can there be a big rock in the middle of the field? No, it's not a rock. I suddenly realised it was a human being. It was the shepherd, and he was sitting there, still as a rock, and covered with one of those homespun blankets.

And Eruch said, "The sheep think that their shepherd has deserted his flock, that he is not there. They are restless, calling after him, searching for him, but the shepherd is sitting there keeping his gaze on his flock, protecting them, looking to them, looking at them. He will sit like that, still, facing them, seeing to them, all night long. He will not move from there. And when the dawn breaks, the sheep will see that their shepherd had never left them. He was there all the time."

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## FORMATION OF MEHER COMPANIES

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**ON OUR RETURN FROM THE GREAT DARSHAN** I suggested to one of the young men who had been making moccasins in order to finance his visit to India, that he and others who had been doing the same should come together and develop their activities into a business. I was prepared to help, especially with finance. I suggested the name Meher Handcrafts. At the time I simply thought that by Baba's Grace, I might earn a few extra dollars that could be used at Avatar's Abode.

Early in my stay with Him in 1967, Baba had questioned me on my finances and on my income. I do not remember now what figures I gave Him, except that I know I had little capital and a fluctuating income because of my work as a self-employed consultant. Baba then specified an amount of £5000 per annum which I was to earn. Later, some days after this discussion, and totally unexpectedly, Beloved Baba suddenly said to me, "If you should need money, come to Me and I will see to it." In establishing Meher Handcrafts I did not remember these words but simply saw it as an interesting and possible avenue of earning money for Avatar's Abode. But with time I realised that this venture could be His answer to my fundamental drive to develop Avatar's Abode, and I remembered His words. He has been absolutely true to His word, and much money has come through Him and been expended at Avatar's Abode and in His Cause generally.



Very early in the enterprise I formulated four objectives for it:

- 1) The development of Avatar's Abode
- 2) The spreading of Baba's Name and message
- 3) Helping Baba lovers establish themselves as firm pillars of society in order to assist His cause in Australia
- 4) Helping Baba lovers develop their creativity

By Baba's Grace, these objectives have borne results, and continue to do so. The money He has given me through our efforts in the business has been used around the world, but mainly in Australia and India. Many Baba lovers, too numerous to mention, have helped in Meher Handcrafts — now called Meher Australia — but one who proved a major foundation stone for the first ten years should be named: John Borthwick. He and his wife, Wendy, were wonderful companions in our work for Baba.

Soon after its establishment, Meher Handcrafts began to import garments, and later textile homewares, from India, and this continued until recently as an Australia-wide wholesale distribution business.

Parallel with the establishment of an economic base for Avatar's Abode, Francis (who returned to Australia in mid-1969) and I actively pursued a means of legally protecting Avatar's Abode. During the previous two years, 1967-1969, I had obtained legal advice on the possible alternatives for legal protection, and was at the time told that a Trust was not possible, and that the best method was the formation of a proprietary limited company. This necessitated two directors only and at least ensured the property's safe, economic, and legal continuation from one generation to another. Meher Baba was informed of all this and approved the formation of such a company. Two names were submitted to Him, Meher Holdings Pty [private] Ltd and Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd, and Baba said that He preferred Meher Holdings. After Francis's return we proceeded with the formation of the

company, Francis and I became the two directors, and I became chairman.

In the beginning of Meher Handcrafts I envisaged, rather vaguely, a type of cooperative operation, but by Beloved Baba's Grace, the enterprise rapidly grew, and it quickly became clear that I would need a formal legal and financial structure. So I formed a company called Meher Handcrafts Pty Ltd in early 1973, with the objectives of the company being expressed in legal terms. But I was not satisfied and sought better legal advice on Trust formation. Finally in 1976 a private trust, acceptable to the government, was completed and named Meher Baba Foundation Australia, and the two companies, Meher Holdings Pty Ltd and Meher Handcrafts Pty Ltd, were made a part of it. The objectives of this Trust were as follows:

The Trustee shall hold the whole of the trust funds both capital and income upon trust for the spreading of the message of Meher Baba, being a monotheistic doctrine and faith (relating to the belief in following and love of God) as expressed by Him (inter alia) in the following words:

I am that same Ancient One who has always come to redeem man from his bondage of ignorance and to help him realise that which, consciously or unconsciously, he is always seeking. The object of this quest is called by many names — happiness, peace, freedom, truth, love, perfection, Self-Realisation, God-realisation, union with God. It is essentially one thing, the quest for conscious and continual experience of his unity with God, the Source of infinite Knowledge, Power and Bliss.

And the establishment, initiation and development of any form of service to individuals and to mankind generally

whether of a physical, intellectual, cultural, or spiritual nature which Meher Baba Himself encouraged, initiated, or assisted during His lifetime and specially for the advancement and benefit throughout Australia of the precepts, philosophy, life, example, and faith of Meher Baba among all persons resident in Australia through whatever media the Trustee may in its absolute discretion deem fit, with the object of encouraging such persons to accept the tenets of the precepts, philosophy, life, example, and faith referred to above as the proper creed by which their lives should be governed.

In 1983 I was requested by some members of the Australian Baba family to allow the formation of a new Trust holding Avatar's Abode directly and solely instead of through the prevailing structure. After considerable thought and discussion with the *mandali*, I finally agreed, and so Avatar's Abode Trust was formed in 1984, with myself as chairman. I still retained the earlier Trust, Meher Baba Foundation Australia, together with Meher Holdings Pty Ltd and Meher (Australia) Pty Ltd, and it is through the Foundation that I have continued to finance or contribute to various Baba projects around the world.

Many and varied have been the projects undertaken in Australia through the foundation and its trading company. Some of the more prominent projects have been a range of greeting cards called Meher Visuals, written by me based on Baba's words or as gathered from Baba, and beautifully illustrated by a Baba lover artist; a range of posters called Meher Posters, some of which were directly of Baba's words and a few of Baba's face; the publication and funding of many booklets and leaflets, and also large printings of six books as well as contribution to the cost of publishing several others; the making of three films by a mix of professionals and Baba lover amateurs; the free distribution of at

least three thousand books by and about Baba to public libraries and prison libraries around Australia; the provision of financial assistance to students in difficulties; regular contributions to halfway houses and particular welfare groups not receiving government funding, in Sydney and Queensland; and a number of self-contained flats/apartments called collectively Meher Palms and Meher Oceanic, situated on the Queensland coastline and used for distressed individuals and families who need a change of environment to help them "get their lives together" again. This latter project was directed by Baba lovers, one a professional counsellor and the other a qualified nurse and experienced child therapist. There are many other, more minor activities too numerous to detail, such as stalls at many large festivals in various areas and the preparation and publication of regular newsletters.

Over the years, through all this activity I tried to keep in mind all that Baba had said to us about working for Him, how a real worker should be, and what Baba had meant by "real work." At a special meeting of His lovers and workers in Andhra, India, in March 1954, Baba told them the following, which I have often remembered and thought about:

Now let us switch to the main points on My work and Baba's workers. Each and all should listen very carefully. Those who have assembled here have been called "workers" of Baba; therefore you must first understand what My work is.

You Andhra workers, from all walks of life, have done your best to make these mass *darshan* programmes successful. I know that you have tried to express your love for Me by spreading My message. I am happy about that. I feel, however, that something deep down is wrong. There are bound to be differences of opinion among workers of any cause, political, social, or spiritual; that is natural. But

these very differences of opinion and feelings of competition and jealousy lead to the breakdown of the very foundation of work.

You have been called "Baba's workers." But is it necessary for you all to work for Baba? If I am the Highest of the High and God-incarnate, then where is the necessity for Me to have workers, organisations, and centres?

If I am not the Infinite One, but just one like you, then thousands of centres and such programmes would be of no avail. If I am Baba, which definitely I am, can I not in My own silent way do the Universal Work? Even if the whole world goes against Me or worships Me, it is all the same to Me.

The reason why I call upon every individual to work for Me is to make each one share the Divine Cause, and the programmes, such as mass *darshans*, are created just to give an opportunity for the expression of individual and collective love. Therefore, if you are prepared to share My Universal Work then it must be done with 100 percent honesty.

First of all, bear in mind that you should not at all seek appreciation from Me or from others. Though this sounds easy, it is so difficult to put into practice. Remember this much, that work in itself is its own appreciation. The moment you seek appreciation, the work is undone. Therefore, seek no appreciation for the work you do for Me.

Secondly, do not depend upon anyone or any outside help in your work for Me. It is true that you are ready to work for Me and for My cause 100 percent, but because some are poor and have large families, they cannot devote any of their time and means for My work. But then why work beyond your means? The moment the worker depends upon anyone or anything, the "real work" is undone. Therefore, do as much as you can, but do it honestly.

Thirdly, if money is collected for the work and spent

without being accounted for, then all work in the name of the Divine Cause must be stopped immediately by the so-called workers. One pie (penny) raised in My name, without true necessity, is dishonesty and will be the cause of millions of re-births. So today, I want every one of you to pour out your hearts and decide once and for all either to work or to stop the work for Me.

My dear friends! If you want to make people love Me, show them that you really love Me. Don't merely make them read My books and messages, but live such a life of sacrifice that others may naturally begin to love Me....<sup>13</sup>

If you are doing only propaganda for Me, it is absurd. I don't want propaganda or any kind of false publicity. Never. I want love and honesty. If you cannot do that, then stop what you call work. I am quite capable of doing My Universal Work....

I have often mentioned that I have not yet found one who can love Me as I should be loved. Yet there are those who have surrendered to Me in such a way that they will do anything I say. It is a fact. Each of the *mandali* would give their lives at My bidding. What I am trying to explain is that to surrender to Me is higher than to love Me. And, paradoxical as it may seem, to love Me as I should be loved is impossible, but to obey Me, though very difficult, is possible. So, to call yourselves My workers and yet not obey Me is hypocritical....

Your enthusiasm led you astray. I understand you want to spread My name and you did it with the best of motives, but not gracefully. You were not humble....<sup>14</sup>

It is only without money that Baba's real work can be done. What do you mean by propaganda? The very word belittles Me. Since ages My work has been done without money.... Money comes and money goes. If you depend

upon money for My work, then do not work for Me, because how will you get money? Let us be very practical.... Live such a life that you show others that you love Me. To ask people to give money and then in return to propagate Baba's "message of love," how does it sound? Absurd! So unless you have something else to suggest other than raising funds to disseminate My message, it would be better if you stop what you call work and begin to live the life of love. Let there be no compromise in this, otherwise the whole thing will merely be a show, a mixture of honesty and dishonesty....

Let each Baba lover be a Baba centre radiating My message of love through living the life of sacrifice, love and honesty for the divine cause. Let every lover, whoever and wherever he may be, be Baba's centre in telling people Baba's message that God alone is real and everything else is unreal and that therefore all should love Baba.

Let true workers become Baba's centres. And for God's sake, for Baba's sake, beware of money. One pie taken from others with false pretensions makes one die a million deaths! Let principle in work and honesty in life prevail.

I know also that every one of you here tonight loves Me. So I feel very happy. The unique love expressed in Andhra during all the programmes, big and small, has really touched me deeply.... If you really love Me, even a little, I want your hearts towards each other to be clean. Forget your past differences, clean your hearts and live for Baba if you love Baba....

All those who love Me and want to work can share My message with others. Those who have money and can afford to go from place to place should spread My message of love in distant nooks and crannies. Those who have little money can easily go around their own towns and, by living the life

of love, inspire others to love God. Those who have no money, large families and no spare time, should share their love with their own family members and friends. Let Baba's love be the centre, the office, and the work....<sup>15</sup>

Love Me wholeheartedly; that is the real thing. Love Me; love Me; love Me; and you will find Me.<sup>16</sup>

I am also reminded of a comment of Eruch's, based, as always, on what he has gathered in Beloved Baba's company:

I do not say don't do good deeds: but it is better not to do them than to dwell upon having done them and becoming presumptuous. In the same way, don't feed your ego by saying to yourself that, for example, you are doing business because that will enable you to do "Baba work" all the better.

Again and again we come back to the same truth — live a normal life. All these questions: what is good, what is bad, should I do this, should I not, will it feed my ego, but if I refrain am I being selfish? And so ad infinitum.... There is no end to questions and no end to answers to these questions. Drop it all, Meher Baba tells us, and lead a normal, simple life in accordance with how you are guided inwardly, as you feel intuitively; do that, but based on the one firm premise that you are His. Whatever you do, whatever you undertake, dedicate it to Him. Don't think, Is it right or wrong, good or bad, strength or weakness? Dedicate everything to Him. Gradually dishonesty will fade, gradually other things will fade, and more and more unadulterated love and honesty will glow.

How can you begin with a clean slate, as it were? And certainly a clean slate will not come by analysing, dissecting, trying to understand what you are doing, why you are doing, is it selfish, unselfish. Take an example: you pick up paper junk from the street to create tidiness, but there is



also, you say, the strong motive to attract attention to your actions. Continue that action even mechanically, and in time the selfish motive will fade, you will forget why you are picking up the junk, and do so simply for the sake of keeping the place clean.

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## SPREADING HIS NAME AND MESSAGE

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**PARTICULARLY DURING THE 1970s** and early 80s we continued to make every effort to spread Baba's Name and message, and organised public meetings in all major cities in Australia. The basic formula that I used was a short welcoming talk, a film of Baba, then either a formal or an impromptu introductory talk on Baba, another film or possibly two, depending on the audience's receptivity, and finally supper. A typical formal talk was the following.

### CHALLENGE OF AVATAR

You have been watching now for an hour or more the face and figure, gestures and actions of One who says emphatically, categorically, in all circumstances, even through severe accidents and incredible bodily ailments, that He is God in human form .

This is a very big statement to make, yet even a most superficial study of Meher Baba makes us realise that we cannot dismiss His statements lightly.

There are many in the world, it is true, who state they are the same. Some are in mental hospitals; some flare up like a meteor, attract thousands, and then die away, but during the period of their ascendancy many do believe their claim.

What should we think about Meher Baba?

In each manifestation of God, He has warned us: "Beware of false prophets. Do not run after bright pieces of glass when the pearl is available." He says it in loving-kindness and compassion for us. So we should pay heed, but it would be a pity if we used it as an excuse not to face the challenge of God's manifestation.

There are some during His physical life on earth who heard His Name, saw His face, and instantaneously acknowledged Him as their Lord, the One Who has always come, and dedicated their lives to Him. But there are also many who do feel a response, who are touched deeply by contact with Him, but whose minds continue to question, "Yes, but is He the one? Can I take Him as my God Ideal, my Saviour, and know that He will lead me to union with Himself and therefore realisation of Godhood?"

Again there are some who, even after their mental questionings and doubts have been answered, continue to doubt; but eventually that doubting creates the question, 'Why do I continue to doubt?' And that becomes a key to the opening of the door to one's innermost being.

Let me talk about some of Meher Baba's qualities and characteristics and way of life that struck me particularly on my first meeting with Him in 1954 in India. These impressions were confirmed over the subsequent times that I spent with Him. Just as a man is deeply moved by beauty in nature, by a gesture of genuine self-sacrifice, of compassion, of loving-caring about others, and in that moment longs to live more lovingly himself, more meaningfully, more creatively, so in meeting Meher Baba I understood why He is called the Awakener. He stirred me, made me aware of depths in my being that I had not experienced before, and made me long for heights of endeavour and

service that I had not thought possible before.

And He has remained ever with me, continuing to stir me to try harder, to try yet again to live in accordance with the ideal that He inspired. Yet in meeting Him there was no emotional conversion, no sense of being swept off my feet and being at the mercy of a more powerful force than myself. He stirred, but in stirring also gave a strength that I had not previously experienced.

He offered nothing, He enticed me with nothing, made no promises, but in the first few minutes asked if I was prepared to obey Him in whatever He might ask; for example, if I would immediately return to Australia if He so ordered.

He did not work miracles, gave no wondrous displays to dazzle me, but touched deeply with personal, intimate responses to me, and obviously to each individual who met Him.

This reminds me of a story that Eruch Jessawala recounted one day in Meherazad:

I remember the story of a friend of Norina Matchabelli. She, the friend, was an alcoholic. She was a beautiful person, but everything about her life had gone wrong because of her drinking. No matter how her family and friends pleaded with her, it made no difference and she continued drinking. Norina was one of those friends.

Then Norina thought of Baba, and asked Him if she could bring her friend to see Him. Baba agreed. Norina was delighted, thinking that now this woman would be saved because of course Baba would tell her to stop drinking. So she told Baba about the problem, and that only His love and blessings could save her friend.

Well, Norina brought the woman. Baba very lovingly welcomed her and made her sit down and be at home with Him. Baba asked if she drank. She looked very anxious but said, "Yes, Baba." Baba replied, "You know, I drink too." While this shocked Norina, it relaxed her friend and made her come more out of herself. Baba continued, "How do you feel the next morning?" The woman replied, "Oh, Baba, I feel terrible, and all I want is another drink immediately." "I know," said Baba, "but there is a difference in My drink. There is no let-down with My wine."

She really sat up now and took notice of Baba and His words. Then He began to speak of the difference between His wine of Divine Love and alcoholic wine. It was as though only the two of them were present, she so attentive and Baba so sympathetic and loving, like two close ones exchanging experiences. Then Baba said, "All right, now you can go." Not once had He said "Don't drink," or "It is not good for you, you must stop drinking." Norina was very disappointed but accepted the outcome as Baba's will.

A month later Norina heard from the woman. "Norina, I have a problem." "What is it?" "I just can't manage to drink any more." "What do you mean?" asked Norina. Her friend said, "I put wine in my glass, I sit before it, I take it in my hand, but I just don't feel like drinking it. I have no desire left to drink." Norina replied, "Fine! Keep right on doing just that!"

Then she realised how silently Baba had dealt with her friend. He had not said "Don't do it", but through His love and grace she had given up drinking. She never touched wine again.

Now to return to my meetings with Baba. His responses were in themselves miracles of genuine caring for others. For example, I was sitting before Him with a group of other Westerners, and in the midst of a discourse His face took on a certain expression. I was so moved that silently, spontaneously I said, "Please, Baba, stay like that." The next moment Baba stopped giving the discourse and said we should just sit and look at Him for five minutes, and He assumed that exact expression that I had liked so much.

He had nothing to gain for Himself. He was so obviously self-sufficient. He ate practically nothing, dressed most simply, owned nothing except the small piece of land on which His tomb is situated, and He never touched money except whilst giving it to the poor, and only accepted money from His close ones. He left no organisation, no established rituals, ceremonies, or creed, saying that the only thing that mattered was love for God.

I quickly found that there was no need to ask anything of Meher Baba. He knew what was best for me, knew what I really needed, knew when to praise and when to chastise, and in time I thanked Him for what He had given me.

He was most loving to all, but did not try to bind people to Him. On various occasions He even gave His closest disciples the opportunity to leave Him. He suffered when there was no advantage to Himself to suffer. Men suffer in their pursuit of desires. God in human form suffers in order that man might avoid suffering.

He exhibited under all circumstances, in innumerable ways, attributes of loving-kindness, tolerance, patience, forbearance, the ability to be one with everyone at all levels, a presence that caught people up into a desire to love purely, live purely, and respond to their fellowmen with honesty,

forgiveness, and charity.

He displaces nothing except one's useless mental baggage. He does not say not to follow Krishna, Rama, Jesus, or Mohammed, but He lovingly points out that the message is the same, but the freshest utterance of that message is His.

There is unmistakable bliss in His presence and there is unquestionable knowledge in His awareness.

How do you know that these are not just my impressions, my personal observations, which would not be supported by others? Apart from seeking out those who lived with Him, and observing them and talking with them and questioning them, one may also read extensively detailed accounts of His life given by those who were close to Him.

In the end, conviction arises from the heart. He reaches out in His own way through His own means, inexplicably but unmistakably, and touches the heart; and one knows, whatever the mind continues to say, that He is the One that one's innermost being consciously or unconsciously has always sought.

The above talk was more in the nature of and part of an introduction to Baba, but the following was written to be used by a study group that met for a time in the early 1980s.

### THE AVATAR AND THE PERFECT MASTER

In the beginningless beginning God Is.

Avatar Meher Baba refers to this primal state of God as the Beyond-Beyond state of God, about which nothing really can be said, not even that God Is, because any word limits this limitless, infinite Being called God.

In this state He was neither conscious nor unconscious. He had no awareness of Himself, no knowledge of His own nature. Then, as Meher Baba went on to say, an inexplicable

motion or whim took place within this infinite, indivisible, divine Ocean of Being, and this whim was the desire to know Himself. He asked Himself, "Who am I?," and instantaneously two things occurred.

Naturally, because He is everything, He became immediately conscious of Himself and conscious of His own attributes of infinite Knowledge, infinite Bliss, infinite Power; and at the same time He was infinitely unconscious of Himself and His attributes.

But the desire to know Himself continued, and so out of the unconscious aspect of this infinite ocean Creation came into being. Meher Baba likened this occurrence to a wave arising on the infinite, still, Ocean of God, and in doing so creating innumerable bubbles, each bubble a soul inhabiting a world, a body, a universe.

So we could refer to the infinite Ocean of God as the Oversoul, and the numerous droplets or bubbles that were created through the rising of the whim to know Himself could be referred to as souls. Each soul inherited, naturally, the desire to know itself, and the long process of creation, that infinite journey of unconsciousness to consciousness, of unawareness of its nature to conscious experience of infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Bliss began.

Each soul acquired consciousness through the process of evolution of forms from stone-form into iron-form, into vegetable-form, into fish-form, bird-form, beast-form, and finally into man-form. As a human being consciousness is complete, but it is consciousness of itself as body, consciousness of the world, consciousness of limitation and finiteness.

But again, through the long process of reincarnation — that is, birth upon birth, the one soul continuously taking on fresh forms and experiencing and evaluating those experiences of limitation in the search for the answer to its first



question, "Who am I?" — finally it gains that knowledge.

The first soul in the process of creation to do so was the first Perfect Master. In other words, the soul had gained mastery over itself, over its own process of creation, the universes, the forms, the various bodies that it had taken on during its journey. That first soul to become a Perfect Master continued, from that infinite beginningless beginning, to take form time and again in order to help other souls to gain Self-knowledge. That Perfect Master became known as the Avatar, the Christ. He assumed in that awakening the office of Awakener. Through Him, other souls gained perfect-mastery and in turn could be referred to as Perfect Masters, but there is a difference between the first Perfect Master now known as the Avatar and all subsequent Perfect Masters.

The Avatar is the same Being Who first attained Realisation whilst in a human form, and He continues to descend into a human form from time to time in order to live amongst us as man, to awaken us to our own true nature — that of Godhood. When we do, through His Grace, become Realised, we are, as it were, absorbed in the experience of infinite Knowledge, Power, and Bliss, and have no longer awareness of the world and the bodies.

However, those few who through the Will of God are destined to remain for work on this earth, retain the body in order to function in this world. They know that they are not the body, but remain in body in order to function as Perfect Master.

Meher Baba states that there are always five Perfect Masters on earth, a Board of Directors of five who control and administer the affairs of the universe and of this world. They are not the body, but act as though they are the body, and act, according to Meher Baba, as though experiencing

all the human attributes of the body — joys, satisfaction, pain, and so on.

On the other hand, that first Perfect Master who became the Avatar, in His descent as the Avatar becomes the body. He does not act out the experience of the body, He actually becomes the experiences, and suffers and enjoys the attributes of the body just as we do.

The Perfect Master who remains on earth acting out the existence of man, when He finally drops that cloak which He has taken on, does not return. There is no point in His doing so; He has fulfilled His duty and retires into Self-awareness of His own glorious state.

But the Avatar never severs completely His connection with this world. He is, was, and ever will be, infinite Consciousness, and He remains infinitely conscious of His infinite Creation.

Meher Baba has used the figure of an electric ceiling fan to illustrate something of the nature of His Avatarhood. When the five Perfect Masters deem that the world needs the manifestation of the Managing Director of Creation, Avatar descends into a man-form, and during the period of His life on earth and for a certain period after He drops His man-form, takes full and sole control of Creation. Once the five Perfect Masters, that is, the Board of Directors, have brought about the presence of the Managing Director on earth, they put aside their authority and their function, but not of course their infinite consciousness of being infinite Knowledge, Power, and Bliss.

After that certain length of time during which the Avatar is in sole control, He retires gradually, and the five Perfect Masters take over the supervision of the world and Creation, and become publicly prominent once more.

The Avatar, like an electric ceiling fan which has been

turned down from its full power, simply slows down and yet never stops. Between one Advent and the next He maintains His link with the world, responding to all those who love Him to such an extent that He cannot ignore their love. As Meher Baba says, "I am the slave of the love of My lovers."

And now, during the time when Meher Baba is no longer in the body, many touching stories continually arise of His Hand of Love touching this one and that one, sometimes one who consciously loves Him, and sometimes one who has unconsciously loved Him and unconsciously sought Him — but He, the Avatar, is always seeking them.

So Meher Baba has told us that, like the ceiling fan, the movement of His Presence never becomes completely still. And He has also said that between Advents, every so often He takes what He has called a minor advent: in His own case He cites the example of having become Shivaji, a remarkable figure in Indian history who was a perfect combination of devotee, humanitarian, and man of action.

How can Avatar be God and man simultaneously? How is it that He can manifest at one and the same time infinite Knowledge and finite ignorance? There are many beautiful stories concerning this mystery. Let me mention one that happened to be related recently in Mandali Hall in India. Eruch Jessawala, the "right hand" of God-Man in this Advent, began as follows.

The five Perfect Masters of the time precipitate the God-Man's Advent. Advent means giving Reality a veil or a shroud. A mask is put on, and that mask is known as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Meher Baba. So Baba says, "I am the same Ancient One come again and again." Infinite efful-

gence of Knowledge descends into infinite ignorance.

He uses ignorance to draw us out of ignorance. Just as a man who has a thorn in his foot uses a needle or another thorn to remove it, so Baba uses something sharp to remove that which is in us. Baba told us that ignorance is His favourite weapon. In manifesting total ignorance He is able to make His infinite love, infinite charity, mercy, all His infinite attributes tangible to us.

This is so because man in ignorance feels that Baba is also man. When a visitor comes, the first thing Baba says is, "I am happy to see you." It is so very natural: "I am happy to see you. From where did you come? How did you come? How is your health? How did you sleep? Have you eaten?" If Baba is All-knowing, why should He need to ask? But the visitor replies, "Oh, Baba, I came by plane [or bus or rickshaw]. Thank you, I have slept. But I have a headache and I feel dizzy." Then Baba says, "You must take medicine," and He may call someone for an aspirin and give it to him. So a closeness is established, and the visitor feels that there is somebody who is concerned about him. This draws him closer to Baba. In professing ignorance, Baba is able to draw the visitor close to Him.

If, on the other hand, Baba were to greet a visitor as the All-knowing One, saying, "I know you, I know what a scoundrel you are, I know what you have done," what will happen to that visitor? He will feel himself totally naked before the crowd and before Baba. But Meher Baba is not there to expose; He is there to transmute into purity and truth. So He does not express His All-knowingness; in fact, He takes great pains to hide that attribute.

Baba comes as man amongst men to make His infinite love tangible to men, and allows man to share that love. Amusing examples of how Baba would express ignorance were at those times when parents would bring their newborn children to Baba. The mother brings the two- or three-month-old child to Baba, saying, "Baba, by your blessings I have this child." Baba takes the child in His arms, plays with it, and then says to the mother, "Very handsome child. Is it a boy? or is it a girl?" The mother says, "No, Baba," very shyly, "it's a boy." "Oh, a boy! That's very good. You are blessed with a son." Then Baba turns to the father, "Are you not proud of your son?"

All this brings the people closer and closer to Him. He does not make mistakes, and any apparent mistake that He may commit is committed with the purpose of bringing us closer to Him. But sometimes even we who lived with Baba for so many years were embarrassed and felt, "Does He know? Why does He do that?" Let me give you a good example.

Each morning was spent reading correspondence, cables, and such matter to Baba — a child is born, someone is getting married, someone is dead, someone has obtained a job, someone has lost one. The correspondence was full of such things, and through it we were made to feel convinced of the ephemeral nature of this existence, everything passing, a shadow, never lasting. As I read, birth, death, joy, and sorrow and misery became one, an illusion, having no meaning whatsoever. But all that is another matter. Let us return to our example.

Well, I read a letter to Baba, and He seemed concerned to hear all of it. Then He said, "Oh, is that the

person who has been transferred to a distant place? Who has not had any communication from us? He did not want to go and was very sad about the transfer?" I thought, "What is all this?" I read the letter again, read the name of the letter-writer, and I had to say, "No, Baba. It's not that. You are mistaken. You have mixed up the whole thing." He replied, "Yes. It must have been a mix-up."

But I had become disturbed and wondered what was happening. I went on reading other letters for about an hour, and then Baba dictated points to make in reply. While all this was going on, my mind kept harping on that person in the distant place. In the midst of it, I suddenly realised that his birthday was within the next few days. I said, "Baba that person you remembered — his birthday is four days from now." Baba replied, "Is that so? Well, send him a telegram for his birthday."

So Eruch's mind now feels good, having arranged that Baba sends a birthday message to the man. I think how happy the man will be, and how I, Eruch, had been instrumental in doing this.

Here now is the visible drama on the stage, but behind the stage the real drama is being enacted all the time by Baba. There might be delays in the manifestation of His justice, but there is no such thing as imbalance.

After two or three years, this man to whom the birthday telegram was sent, comes on his holidays to see Baba. Before he is called in to see Baba, he naturally greets all of us. He embraces us, he is happy, and we are happy. Then he says to me, "Oh, this grand old Man, this Meher Baba, He is conscious of each and

every one of us. I was in that remote place, and He remembered my birthday." Then he told us the story of that birthday three years ago.

"It was my first birthday in that distant place, and my family were not with me. All day I wondered if they would remember my birthday. I longed to hear from them, and there was no word. Then I wondered — my Lord who is supposed to know everything, will He remember me? It was very sad for me, no news, no greetings from here or from my family. In the evening I returned from my office work. After an hour or so a telegraph messenger came and while I opened it, he waited." In India these messengers do so, and if the news is good, they may receive a tip, and if it is sad then they just bow down in sympathy and go. "So I opened the telegram, and tears of great joy filled my eyes. The messenger, seeing this, said, 'Sir is there sad news? I am sorry.' But I said, 'No, no! It is a message of greatest joy to me.' And I embraced him. Because my Lord God had remembered me that day. My family, those who are kith and kin to me, did not remember me at all, but my Lord did so."

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## DEVELOPMENT OF AVATAR'S ABODE

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**IT WAS NOT UNTIL** the beginning of 1979, after my 1978 divorce from Joan and my marriage to Diana Morton, that I finally moved permanently to Avatar's Abode. It was also then that I began in earnest a development of Avatar's Abode. Some of the work done included renovation of Baba's House, and renovation and extension of the Meeting Hall; a new road encircling the summit like a great necklace around the heart of Avatar's Abode, Baba's House; creation of a large central children's play area, car park, and adult game area, and, separated from Baba's House by some distance, gardens; accommodation for Francis, Reg, and Judith in cottages, and for pilgrims in a simple, large building with communal facilities; reforestation, orchards, and water systems for irrigation and firefighting were commenced; gardens, and forest walks that doubled also as fire trails were created.

In addition, about 185 acres were acquired on the borders of Avatar's Abode for several reasons: to create a buffer zone between it and the ever-encroaching housing developments, and with a view to the long-term future, when Meher Baba had indicated that thousands of people would be visiting Avatar's Abode, and that at the same time a large, permanent community would gradually establish itself. Naturally provision had to be made for such developments, and so further adjoining small farms were added to the original property.



To help provide an economic base for all this future development, particularly Avatar's Abode itself, it was decided that the land should be put to use. Finding some way of farming the land near Avatar's Abode, without detracting from the general atmosphere of the area, posed an interesting problem. The project should not interfere with the wildlife, pollute the streams, or upset the neighbours, and yet of course it had to be commercially viable in the long term. The idea of an orchard immediately sprang to mind as the most aesthetically pleasing, and it seemed also to fit in with the other criteria. The decision was finally made that macadamia nuts would be grown. There are now about forty-five hundred macadamia trees located in eight separate orchards, surrounded and linked by bushland and bush trails. There is also a sizeable plant nursery, with both in-ground and potted stock. It all provides, apart from the objectives mentioned, some very picturesque walks.

Since writing this, the extended recession, with its consequent adverse economic climate in Australia, led to such financial pressures for me that I was forced around July 1992 to sell this land surrounding Avatar's Abode. The family, and particularly Meher House, the family home which Baba had said never to sell, had become seriously threatened, and in the end the decision to sell the land was very clear and definite. It has hurt, but the deep joy that Beloved Baba has given me over the thirteen years of land development and beautification sustains me. "Man proposes, and God disposes." It was His blessing that gave me the land in the first place, and it is His blessing now that its sale means continuing security for Meher House and the family.

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## AVATAR'S ABODE AS SPIRITUAL CENTRE AND PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

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**I MADE MY FIRST VISIT** to the United States, and to the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in 1974. I had had contact with American Baba lovers since 1954; and especially during my visits to India in recent years, during which I was able to observe them even more closely, I had grown to admire and absorb their outgoing, expansive, and expressive nature. But this visit and my impressions of the centre in 1974 really started me thinking afresh of the development of Avatar's Abode and of His Cause in Australia.

I was aware that Baba had hinted during my time with Him and in His messages to me, and also in studying the history of Meher Baba in the U.S.A. in contrast to that in Australia, that His establishment and development throughout Australia and at Avatar's Abode would be slower than in America. This I could accept, but still I sought to interest and inspire Australian Baba lovers through my reports and thoughts on the Myrtle Beach Center.

I constantly re-lived the time in February 1967 at Meherazad when Francis and I sat on the small carpet spread before His chair and said yes to Beloved Baba as He reminded us once more to take very seriously His Wishes for Avatar's Abode. But what were His Wishes? He emphasised again and again, like hammer blows on my heart, the development of Avatar's Abode as a place

of pilgrimage. But what did He mean? Physical development? Yes, but obviously more than that.

I considered more and more, especially as I continued to experience the atmosphere of the Myrtle Beach centre and noted the organisation and administration of it, that the task at Avatar's Abode was to create an environment in which the devotee had the maximum opportunity to awaken Baba within the heart, if it so pleased the Beloved. That environment meant adapting and weaving into the very fabric and statutes of Avatar's Abode all the things which Beloved Baba had made clear at Meherabad and Myrtle Beach would be pleasing to Him, or which were orders to be carried out there.

It was clear that the rules, structure, and organisation of Meherabad and Meherazad in India, as developed by the *mandali* based on Baba's instructions, would be most helpful in clarifying my understanding of what to aim for at Avatar's Abode; but I felt the structure that Baba had laid down, so detailed and wide-ranging, through Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli, and Kitty Davy, was perhaps even more pertinent for Avatar's Abode, being as it is a part of the West. Thus I considered essential the absorption of all relevant material on Meherabad and the Myrtle Beach centre. This material, I felt, could clarify what Baba had wanted in the development of Avatar's Abode as a place of pilgrimage. Over the years I have felt increasingly that Baba had left unsaid what He meant by development of Avatar's Abode *because* He had given so many detailed instructions for Meherabad, Meherazad, and Myrtle Beach centre.

While I thought that I should be careful about copying the Myrtle Beach centre, and should take into account differences that do exist between the two societies — U.S. and Australia — I was also wary of any tendency to reject help out of pride and reluctance to be beholden in any way to another people, especially Americans. The fact that Baba gave me the job of developing

Avatar's Abode did not mean that I should be closed to anyone who could contribute to the task, especially my elders in service to Baba such as Elizabeth and Kitty, not to mention Eruch and Mani. Such people, steeped as they are in wide responsibilities with many people impinging on them, have often set me thinking of forms of government, and what form seems closest to perfection. Basically my stance has not varied since I read Plato's *Republic* forty-five years ago and first responded to his government by wise men — men who had to be persuaded to govern — as the best of all governments. My belief that this is so has been clarified by Baba's statements on self-interest and the effect of self-interest on life at its best, and by reading the life of Shivaji, the great Indian leader who only governed his kingdom at the order of his spiritual Master.

To clarify these comments in general terms, I give here an article that I wrote a few years ago on the question of decision-making at Meherazad.

#### MEHERAZAD 1981

When all the Meherazad family speak their minds freely and strongly, how do they reach a decision?

It could be said that each of the family at Meherazad are leaders. For example, Naja is the undisputed senior cook; Goher is the medical authority, even though so many of them have acquired medical knowledge during their lifetime with Baba; again, Mehera is Baba's beloved, and Eruch is His "right hand"; Mani is chairman of Baba's Trust. But for us to question as to who emerges as the leader or leaders is not as important as our observation and assimilation of the qualities that Beloved Baba awakened in His Meherazad family that enable them to function effectively in all situations.

I observed that they do not quarrel amongst themselves about the pros and cons of this versus that, that they do speak their minds openly, and that finally they accept happily the decision that is often reached through the words of one or another of them. Their whole life, down to the most minute and mundane aspect, is based upon the fervent wish that His Will will prevail. So it makes the resolution of any discussion easy, because no one has anything to gain for himself. That one who is best equipped to place the best perspective on the issue at hand in the light of Beloved Baba's Cause becomes the resolver. If one wishes, one can use the term *leader*, but this seems irrelevant when one observes the process at work.

All conflict has its basis in self-interest, and the resolution of conflict has its basis in diminution of self-interest. Perhaps relevant to this comment are the following remarks by Eruch, as gathered from Beloved Baba:

Now, when there is something to be done in the Name of Baba, something to be organised, naturally a form of organisation, a guiding force is needed. But unfortunately people think that the ones who organise and lead think of themselves as great. On the contrary, greater risk, greater burden, is shouldered by these leaders.

The helpers, on the other hand, should have a soft corner in their hearts for the person who shoulders responsibility; they should want to help the leader, to suffer for that person, and see that he is comforted and helped. That is the greatest service that can be given in Baba's cause, to help the one who is organising the work. Instead, people speak out against the leader, asking why he speaks so loudly, or says the things he

does. But he can be so preoccupied with Baba's cause that he doesn't realise what he is saying. He is simply aware that if such things were carried out, the program and the place would enhance Baba's glory.

To continue these thoughts regarding Avatar's Abode as a place of pilgrimage, I give here the transcript of a talk Eruch and I had in Meherazad on 1st November 1982 about Avatar's Abode. At the time, the controlling legal body for the property was Meher Baba Foundation Australia. These comments of Eruch's, gathered from a lifetime with Baba, are, I believe, essential reading.

TALK BETWEEN ERUCH JESSAWAIA AND  
BILL LE PAGE, MEHERAZAD, MANDALI HALL,  
1ST NOVEMBER 1982

BILL: Eruch, I'd like to talk about Avatar's Abode, which Baba described as both the spiritual centre for Australia and as a place of world pilgrimage.

ERUCH: We have been talking about it since the inception of Avatar's Abode, and yet we have to talk about it a lot more.

Avatar's Abode means where the Avatar resides, has His headquarters, His place, His house. So it is *the* centre. How blessed are you people who created this place, which Baba Himself named as Avatar's Abode. It becomes a place of pilgrimage now that Baba has physically passed away from our midst, a place of pilgrimage for people from all parts of the world. Avatar's Abode has been sanctified by His visit and by His living Presence, and blessed are they who have associated themselves with Avatar's Abode as they should. But with that blessing is the greater responsibility to maintain the atmosphere, to see that the Lord Himself is made comfort-

able and is pleased through the efforts of all who wish and endeavour to keep the atmosphere of the place.

It is bound to attract people from all parts of the world and locally from Australia: there is no doubt about it, in time to come it will be so, because nobody does His work; as He says, He alone does His own. But some trust is reposed in the ones who were directly involved with the inception of it and who are involved with it now, and it is their duty to help in the cause of Avatar's Abode.

People get drawn by His love, by His universal work, which means to shower His love upon His creatures and creation, and which helps eventually to draw hearts towards Him. Hearts do get drawn towards His places where He stayed, and which have His atmosphere. So places like Avatar's Abode, Meherabad, Meherazad, Myrtle Beach, become the centre of focus of humanity, and naturally people from all parts wish to converge to these places, and so they become places of pilgrimage.

Places of pilgrimage are sanctified because of the Lord's Presence. How great is the responsibility for the persons concerned to keep it sanctified, not to defile it or pollute it, to keep the place clean by manual labour, and to keep the place clean by allowing good thoughts, good words, and good deeds to permeate the area. That is how you keep the place clean: not just by cleaning out the leaves, or weeding, or mowing the lawns, but by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

But man is apt to be weak, and in his weakness many things happen in spite of good intentions. This is the experience of us all. We are weak, but we should also be mindful of His Compassion. In His Compassion He forgives us, and He wants us to forget our weaknesses totally, and to brace ourselves in our determination to maintain the atmosphere

through good words, good thoughts, and good deeds. This will keep the place sanctified as a place of pilgrimage, because it has become the centre of focus of humanity.

BILL: What rules should be laid down for a place of pilgrimage, and whom should they be laid down by?

ERUCH: Listen, rules are inherent in us. When a place becomes public, naturally rules come into force. But Avatar's Abode is not just public, it is a place of pilgrimage, and pilgrims are expected to be automatically disciplined. Pilgrims are guided, drawn, by their love for Baba and His place to come there on pilgrimage. Rules are meant for discipline, meant for guiding. Yes, rules are inherent in a pilgrim, and when a pilgrim comes for the first time he comes with reverence, and real seriousness, and is genuine about his pilgrimage. Then he begins to feel at home, and he takes the atmosphere into himself in such a way that he feels that the place belongs to him and that he belongs to the place. It is his place, because he is drawn by the love of the Lord, and he has come there to place his head at Baba's feet. It should be so, that the pilgrim has that feeling that the place belongs to him and that he belongs to the place. But I am telling the pilgrims that while they should not lose sight of their belonging to this place and the place belonging to them, they should also not lose sight of the trust that the Lord reposes in each pilgrim when the pilgrim comes to the place of pilgrimage.

When the pilgrims come to pay their respects and while they are paying their respects and homage to Him, that respect and homage should not be vitiated by extraneous thoughts. I have found here at Meherabad and at Meherazad also that the pilgrims *do* come with great love,



with reverence, with the sole motive of paying their homage to Baba. But somehow or other it seems that the Western mind has not been trained to regard the sanctified places as permanently sanctified. They do have a vague idea of the sanctity of the place. Yet the Western mind would light a cigarette and create smoke in the *sanctum sanctorum*. The Western mind would not mind hugging and kissing the woman of his heart who is not his wife. All this is fine for the Western mind because it is regarded as being all done in love. But love is not that. Inherent in love is great respect and regard and reverence, and this latitude that the pilgrims tend to take is not respectful, and so naturally here also we have the necessity of formulating certain rules: to leave your shoes outside the hall, not to smoke nearby, to behave properly, to observe silence, that these are the regular times of visit, and so forth and so on — all this is necessary. Rules should be made in order to guide the pilgrims to the Beloved at the place of pilgrimage, and during their stay at the place of pilgrimage, rather than for regimentation or discipline or anything of that sort. The pilgrims should not be made to feel that this is the order or this is the law, but it should be made very clear that it is for their benefit that the rules have been formulated. So in a way it is necessary for the ones who come on pilgrimage to have set rules as guidance. Eventually these rules become the very life of the pilgrims, and they do not think or feel that these have been forced upon them. The rules become a part of their life, and they naturally know how they should express themselves, how they should present themselves to Baba.

Now who should make the rules? Naturally, those who are responsible for the upkeep of the place, the people who have shouldered the responsibility. It is a great responsibility, it is a great headache, it is not a happy thing for those who

make the rules, for those who have accepted the responsibility of maintaining the place. It is a blessedness, no doubt about it, but it is not a happy thing, because from all sides the persons concerned will be blamed. Suppose you make a rule that you shouldn't smoke here; naturally the smoker will feel, "What sort of thing is this? Why can't we smoke?" And they ask, "Where should we smoke, then?" So a board is placed: here smoking is allowed, and here smoking is not allowed. So the pilgrim may ask, "What is this? Is Meher Baba not there where smoking is allowed?"

There are many people who would have such thoughts. So what I am saying is that those who are responsible for making the rules cannot expect to remain happy. There are bound to be such criticisms. But the responsible ones should rise above these things, they should not brood and feel hurt about the remarks that are passed against them. But this does not mean that those who sit on the seat of responsibility are above criticism and that no one should criticise them. What I mean is that criticism should not affect them. So when a person is responsible and true, and out of love for the cause of Beloved Baba formulates rules as guidance to the pilgrims, he should expect a lot of criticism, but he should not be affected by this criticism. He should make himself above criticism.

BILL: What about the question of unmarried couples, when such people wish to stay for a time, even for a night?

ERUCH: Here we have made it a rule that even those who are married cannot live together. Men are to live separately and women likewise, that is the rule that we have made for the Pilgrim Centre. This is as Baba wanted it. So likewise at the Amartithi it was Baba's wish and pleasure that men

stay in separate tents, women stay in separate tents, and we even suggest that they should therefore bring their separate baggages, not bring a common suitcase or hold-all.

Why is it His pleasure that they should remain separate even though they be married? Baba wants that nothing should distract the individual from coming to Him as an individual. The lane of love is so narrow that one has to go through that lane by oneself, and approach the Lord individually. That is so ordained. That is what He revealed to us. It is good to get married, He said; live together and jointly love Me. But when you approach Me, it is through single file.

So the rule for a place of pilgrimage such as Avatar's Abode should be that men should live separately and women live separately. When you create housing facilities on His Abode, then see that the pleasure of Baba and His Wish is maintained, respected, and honoured. Those who are responsible for it should see to it.

And the ones responsible should remain above criticism in the sense that criticism should not affect them. Let the world criticise — so what? Our pleasure is to please Him, and He is pleased when we carry out what His pleasure is.

Now with the couple that you find are not married, they can of course visit the House of Baba, they can be at Avatar's Abode together, but if they are going to stay overnight or longer, make it a rule that they stay separately, men with men and women with women. And if the children are below seven years of age and the child is attached to the mother, even if it be a male child he can stay with the mother, and the female child below seven years of age can stay with the father. Just use discretion, that is what Baba would want us to do.

BILL: You have now mentioned married and unmarried couples. Does the rule apply in both cases?

ERUCH: Both cases. But if they cannot stay separately, then it is best that you provide separate facilities for the married ones to live in, and for those who are unmarried there should be facilities provided in motels or such, outside the premises of Avatar's Abode. If those responsible can afford to provide accommodation for the married couple and family to stay together, then this can be done. So if it can be afforded, and it is practical, then each family can have a caravan or small cottage, for a short stay. But the unmarried couple must be separate. If they don't wish to live separately, then they should live — that is, stay — off Avatar's Abode. Unmarried couples cannot be called couples. But if they have coupled themselves, then they should get married. If they don't wish to get married, nobody is going to thrust marriage on them, but when they come to the place of pilgrimage, in honour of the sanctity of the place they should live separately for the duration of their stay.

But what will happen in time when thousands come to Avatar's Abode? People are coming here now by thousands, and we cannot afford facilities for married couples, nor is it practical. I say to you who are responsible that eventually the time will come when men and women will have to be segregated. It is bound to take place. You will have to have separate accommodation for men and women. That becomes the most practical thing. And there is nothing derogatory about this. On the contrary, it is an honourable way to stay at a place of pilgrimage, where all men congregate together and all women congregate together, and they come together at the common place of the Altar of the Lord. So they come together at the Altar of the Lord, but

while staying, for practical purposes and to carry out His wish and pleasure, they live separately.

To elaborate on this theme: we have a peculiar notion that a church is a church, and a place of pilgrimage like Avatar's Abode is not a church. We are so entrenched in churchianity, that man maintains a discipline greater in the church, which man himself has created, than in the church which the Lord Himself has created, such as Avatar's Abode. Would you copulate in a church or a temple? If anyone did that, naturally the world would go against them. This is what Baba wants us to become aware of; He doesn't say it in so many words, but it is inherent in a man to observe such a discipline. Again, no one would think of staying in a church, not even in the grounds of a church. In visiting the church, a man stays in a hotel, and pays a visit to the masters or meetings or the services of a church. Of course, Baba doesn't mind that you go together, whether you are married or unmarried. In the case of the place of pilgrimage such as Avatar's Abode, perforce you have to stay there because you come from long distances, and He has created a place for that purpose. But you should maintain the dignity of the House. The atmosphere has to be maintained. This is what He has advised us, His Wish is this, that men live separately, women live separately, for the time of their stay at the place of pilgrimage. Why is it? If you are questioning, you are not worthy of visiting the place of pilgrimage created by Baba.

BILL: Baba permitted certain people to live on Avatar's Abode as caretakers. Now others have come forward who have expressed the wish to be caretakers of Avatar's Abode. Accommodation could be created for them on Avatar's Abode or on the adjoining properties.

ERUCH: Better at the periphery of Avatar's Abode. Have you sufficient land?

BILL: Yes, a considerable number of sites are available.

ERUCH: So it would be a good thing to be not too far away and yet not too close, just as they have done at Myrtle Beach centre, as we are doing here at Meherabad.

BILL: Yet at the same time there will always be need for caretakers on Avatar's Abode itself to welcome people who come.

ERUCH: There should be caretakers whose duty is to come to Avatar's Abode every morning, while staying in their own houses on the periphery of Avatar's Abode. And there will be certain staff quarters on the premises.

BILL: Yes, there is need for some to be there twenty-four hours a day.

ERUCH: Caretakers and staff.... caretakers are also staff, but all staff are not caretakers. There are those who keep the place clean by mowing the lawns, seeing to the water system, to the electricity supply, and necessary repairs. These may be staff; but caretakers must be there to take care of the property.

BILL: And naturally only those people really dedicated to Baba should live on Avatar's Abode.

ERUCH: It is natural. That goes without explanation. How can any stranger come and live there? Those who are living

there must uphold the trust that Baba had placed in them when He permitted them to continue to stay there. They must share in the work, lend a hand in taking care of the place, diligently, honestly, without rancour, without bickering. They must share in the work. Otherwise, what is the sense in their continuing to live there? If they do not wish to lend their hands and want to just have their own way, it is a sad affair; it was not for that purpose that they have been permitted to stay there. Baba had allowed them to stay so that they can be on the property as hosts.

BILL: And if they have children, whether now or in the future, this does not automatically mean that those children have the right to stay on.

ERUCH: No, no. It was only meant for the persons who were told by Baba to stay on Avatar's Abode.

Now, take as an example those living in the staff quarters at Meherabad. Jehanglimaster and his wife were permitted to stay at Meherabad as caretakers. They continued to do so in spite of Baba having gone on the New Life, and they continued thereafter as caretakers. After Baba passed away, naturally we respected and honoured Baba's wish and, as the Trustees, allowed them to live there. In the meantime they had had children and so needed a cottage, not a palatial building, but a cottage adequate for their needs. It is known as the Caretaker's Cottage. Well, the children grew up and got married, but Jehanglimaster and his wife had the good sense to know that Baba only permitted them to live in the cottage, and so their children who had married found their own houses outside. Sometimes these families come and visit, and that is permissible.

It is but natural, it is common sense. Because Baba has

permitted caretakers to be there, it does not mean that it has become an hereditary house for the family. It is not a permanent thing. It is meant for that couple who have linked themselves to the Lord through their past, and who were then permitted to come and live on His place. But then they must exercise their integrity and say that their children, as they marry, should stay outside.

Is there anyone living there who is married? Have the children of the original couples married?

BILL: The original couples were of course John and Joan Bruford, Robert and Lorna Rouse, and then later were added myself and certain individuals such as Reg Paffle. Of the two children of John and Joan Bruford, one has remained single, and the other has married and lives on Avatar's Abode in John and Joan's house. Robert and Lorna's child is now grown up and lives away. She has not married.

ERUCH: Bernard is continuing to stay there with his wife and children?

BILL: Yes.

ERUCH: Bernard should not expect that *his* children should continue to live there. He should have that integrity to see that the children go out and manage their own affairs, live in a different house, and all that sort of thing.

BILL: What activities can be carried on in a place of pilgrimage, such as Avatar's Abode? Baba, in the case of Avatar's Abode, indicated that economic activity was permissible.

ERUCH: Baba didn't say no to farming, to poultry, to cattle.



Such things were there at the time. Baba chuckled over these and had no objection, provided the dignity of the place was maintained, and Avatar's Abode was not turned into, for example, a cattle-breeding centre. It is His Abode, not a cattle-breeding centre or a poultry farm, but He has permitted that which will enable the people and the place to be self-sufficient.

In short, all these clarifications and explanations are needed when a person who is responsible doesn't understand his responsibility. One who understands his responsibility *knows* what is to be done. If he is honest about his responsibility, he knows what is to be done. Otherwise, pride comes in the way. People expect to be privileged, and naturally this will lead to strife all the time. This is why rules and regulations need to be made. If it were not so, there would be no need for such things, because all is inherent in man.

How it began, it should be continued in the same way. But this does not mean that you should take advantage of how it began. It doesn't mean that you have special preferences and privileges because of that. Restrict your privileges and preferences to yourself. It is a great privilege to be permitted to live there. It is not part of that privilege that with that permission you bring the whole world with you.

BILL: And permission is given by the Foundation?

ERUCH: It has to be, of course, by the Foundation. Same thing here, the Trustees have been entrusted by Baba to use their discretion, use their power, use their responsibility to see that His wish prevails. It devolves on the Foundation now to carry on on behalf of Baba.

The Foundation should also take care that those like

the Rouses, who have been directly told by Baba to stay at Avatar's Abode, continue to do so. The Brufords — Joan, John with Bernard and Joanna — were told by Baba to stay there. It is so. So in keeping with the wishes of Baba, the Foundation should act accordingly. Now, after Baba has passed away, it is left to the Foundation to decide about the others continuing to stay on Avatar's Abode.

But those who have been told by Baba, they should continue to stay there, they shouldn't be disturbed. The Foundation should take care about that. But that does not mean that Bernard should have his great-grandchildren establish themselves there. No. Bernard and his children, that's all. But when these children get married, they should find different homes. When Radha gets married she should find a different house, go to her husband's house. But Lorna and Robert have the right to stay there until the end. Joan has the right to stay there till the end. Bernard has the right, Joanna has the right, if she wants to. But the children of Joanna or the children of Bernard, they don't have that right.

It depends upon the Foundation. We do the same thing. The Trustees here do the same thing — permission can be given for them to stay if they are Baba lovers and provided they want to give a helping hand in the development of the place, continue to remain as hosts, receive the guests and pilgrims, provided they wish to help.

Reg has the right to stay there, to live there till he dies. He has that right because Baba has permitted him to stay. But that does not mean that Reg should say that he has the right to stay. It does not mean that he has the right to overrule the Foundation's rules. Just as he wouldn't overrule Baba's pleasure, so he should not overrule the pleasure of the Foundation, because whosoever is responsible, whoever

has been made responsible for the upkeep of Avatar's Abode — that *seat*, not that person, has to be honoured.

That *seat* has to be honoured. It is not the person.

I know that Baba has given the responsibility to *you*. It went to Francis, and from Francis it went to *you*. That does not mean that you should be honoured. On the contrary, they should honour the seat where you have been installed by Baba. This means that whatever you want them to do, you have the responsibility to see that you steer the situation in such a way that it upholds Baba's pleasure.

You wouldn't want to drive away somebody who had been placed there by Baba. You know your responsibility. And those who have been allowed to stay on Avatar's Abode, they should know their responsibilities likewise. So mutually you all should continue to maintain the atmosphere, to maintain the pleasure of the Lord, for Whose sake the whole thing is created.

BILL: There is a great deal of discussion about the need for democracy, for people to be involved in what goes on. People seem to be resentful of the fact that the Foundation determines....

ERUCH: It is but right for the Foundation to determine. There should be a democracy, no doubt about it, but the policy has to be chalked out by the Foundation.

Democracy exists as people give their suggestions and opinions. But they should be unmindful of whether their suggestions and opinions are implemented or not. They have nothing to do with that. Their responsibility *ends* when they say: This is how we feel; I say this; I say that; no, I say this; it should be that. It is good that all of them give their own suggestions and opinions.

But for anything to work, there should be a central force which chalks out the policies, after taking into consideration the opinions and suggestions and objections. The voice of the Foundation has to be there. The Foundation should not be a dictatorship; it should be a benevolent dictatorship.

BILL: The opportunity should be created by the Foundation to ensure that everyone is able to state their opinions and give their views.

ERUCH: They should. But not everyone, mind you — not any Tom, Dick, or Harry. No, no. Otherwise there would be no end to it. It would be impossible.

BILL: Avatar's Abode is for the whole of Australia, not just for....

ERUCH: Not just for those who are living there, or nearby.

BILL: Avatar's Abode is *the* spiritual centre for Australia. We have been speaking of Avatar's Abode as a place of pilgrimage and of pilgrims coming there, but now, as the spiritual centre for Australia, what role does the Foundation play?

ERUCH: It is the place that we should consider: always have it in mind that it has been established by Avatar Meher Baba. It is the House of the Lord.

There have been other places visited by Baba, like Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. There will be many more such places, although not visited by Him, but visited by His lovers, and so many centres will be created: centres meaning intrinsically focused directly upon Baba. Now this place, Avatar's Abode feeds and should continue to feed all

yearning hearts throughout Australia, and it is the duty of the Foundation to see to that. Feed on what? On the love of the Lord. Lovers in Melbourne, lovers in Sydney, lovers in Brisbane, in Perth, Adelaide, Canberra — these lovers should be given the opportunity to hear about Baba as much as possible. The Foundation is doing that by way of the newsletter; that is a very good way. Very recently you have brought out a publication called *Who Is Meher Baba?* That is a good thing. So Avatar's Abode should be the place from which news spreads out to different Baba centres and Baba hearts. Films should be provided, speakers, publications; finance comes into the picture. Finance is most important, even though it is not only through finance that His work will be done, but it plays an important role when the finance is put to good use.

These are the activities that the Foundation should take up in order to maintain and sustain Avatar's Abode as the central focal point for all Australia. Arrange for get-togethers, as many as possible in the year. There is the Amartithi, the anniversary of Baba's visit, Silence Day, Baba's Birthday. These provide opportunities when all hearts can congregate. Formerly the central place was Meher House, Sydney. It still has its own importance, there is no doubt about it, Meher House has to be there. But it could be said that Avatar's Abode is the parent and Meher House is the baby. Or Avatar's Abode is the father and Meher House is the mother, and the children are the other centres in Australia. Meher House was offered to Baba completed as a labour of love, and Baba liked the place. Meher House cannot lose its importance because of Avatar's Abode. It is not possible, and it is not proper.

Here also we have people come and ask us: Which is more important, Meherabad or Meherazad? Meherabad is

where His *samadhi* is, where His body rests; Meherabad is the headquarters of Avatar Meher Baba, where He worked and first established His headquarters. Meherazad came into being later on, and He lived there and dropped His body there. Which is the better of the two? Which is the more important? I said to people, it is ridiculous for a Baba heart to differentiate between Meherabad and Meherazad. Likewise, it is ridiculous for one to differentiate between Sydney's Meher House and Woombye's Avatar's Abode.

I told those people that Meherazad and Meherabad are like your two eyes — do they see two different Babas at two places? Although you have two eyes, what do you see when you see Meher Baba? You see one image. Never differentiate between the two places: they are equally important, just as your two eyes are equally important in order to have a clear and sharp image.

So also Meher House and Avatar's Abode. But because Avatar's Abode has large grounds, many more facilities, it is the parent place for all Australia. But that does not mean you should be indifferent to Meher House; maintain it and take advantage of celebrations and get-togethers for the Sydney group.

Likewise Melbourne. Baba had visited Dr. O'Brien's house, and Dr. O'Brien still continues to hold Baba warmly in his heart — and Mrs. O'Brien. We have not forgotten them. A little visit we paid them, and they were our hosts. And hosts of the Lord means what? To us they are great people, and how blessed they are. They may not be knowing it, but it is true. So if that place can be maintained, and if it can become a place of meeting, that is good. Baba paid a visit to Ossie Hall's place; that is a good place too. Mind you, there will not be a dearth of places and a dearth of centres; many more will spring up in the future. We have

no idea. We do not know what is to happen, and here we are faced with the trials and tribulations of one place called Avatar's Abode, and our whole concentration is on how to develop the place, how to maintain it, its responsibilities and all that.

But greater is the responsibility for those who are trying to develop Avatar's Abode now, because it is the parent place. The duty of Avatar's Abode is to feed the other centres, to nourish them and nurture them. It has a very prominent place in Australia, the whole of Australia. Why the whole? There are many people who visit it from India, from the United States, because Baba visited it, not because you all are continuing to hold the place. No. It is the place where Baba paid a visit.

Why do we go to Seclusion Hill? To see the rocks? It is nothing but rocks, yet we hold it in high reverence and regard, and go there with all our love; even octogenarians climb it. And do what? There is nothing there. There is the scorching heat, the wind blowing, rubble and loose stones, but in spite of it all we wish to go, to follow the footsteps of the Lord.

Here at Avatar's Abode, He abided. Even though it was only for some days, it is a place of great sanctity. So Avatar's Abode is meant not only for the whole of Australia, but also for the whole world. Posterity will look to it — like Meherabad, Meherazad, and Myrtle Beach in America.

Great, therefore, is the responsibility for those who are living there now, and for the Foundation to maintain the atmosphere. That is why I recently sent out a letter. Do you want to hear that letter?

Meherazad  
28 October 1982

My dear Francis and Bill and all my dear brothers and sisters in Australia, JAI MEHER BABA!

It is indeed a matter of utmost concern for each of us when bias and prejudice call for each other's support. Meher Baba lovers should keep aloof from such deception and remain exclusively supported by their own total dedication to the Pleasure of their Beloved Avatar Meher Baba.

Francis, Bill Le Page, all residents at and around Avatar's Abode, the Meher Road community, and all Meher Baba lovers in Australia, it is imperative for you all to live united in love of your Eternal Beloved. Even now it is not too late to honestly strive to uphold the trust of harmony and concord reposed by the Avatar in all of you.

Resolve anew to live together harmoniously in the Cause of Truth with one heart for the love of the most Beloved Lord of all our hearts. Be determined to drown for His sake all differences and doubts, all bitterness and hatred and grudge against one another in the Ocean of His Love and Compassion.

Resolve now to begin to live a new life seeking His Pleasure. Let us pray to Beloved Avatar Meher Baba to give us all strength to live for Him happily and harmoniously without giving any room to hatred and prejudice and to avail of the opportunity to love and serve Him.



AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!!!

Yours lovingly,

*Eruch*

P.S. I have written to you all, dear ones, as mentioned above, in response to your repeated expressions of concern for Avatar's Abode.

And this is an apt reply to your question, don't you think so?

BILL: Yes.

ERUCH: What I have to say is just this: In the Name of Beloved Baba, that if you all love Baba, just uphold the trust He has placed in you. And nothing pleases Him more than harmony, concord, honesty, and happiness all around, and especially at His Abode. What else is there to please Him? And all that is a sure sign of the expression of your love for Him. You must slog, you must sweat, you must pour money into it, all would want to do that. But of what avail if there is no concord or harmony and hearts are not together? It's like a house divided against itself. How will it stand?

And I have added another P.P.S. to it: "I will appreciate no further correspondence on any matter concerning Avatar's Abode."

So there is nothing more now to be said about it. It is left to you all. And much more so to the Foundation, that not only sees to its development and furtherance through finances, but also through labour of love. That's the end of it all. Jai Baba!

BILL: Jai Baba!

[We continued after a break.]

BILL: A question has arisen regarding the Foundation beginning weekly meetings on Avatar's Abode. Previously there were some meetings off Avatar's Abode, and the Foundation felt that it was appropriate there should always be a regular weekly meeting, so that any outsider as well as Baba lovers could come, knowing that there would definitely be a meeting.

ERUCH: There should be a day fixed for the meeting and it should not change every so often. Weekly meetings are very healthy. Why? Because through them we remain in tune with Baba, we think of Him, remember Him, sing His glory and praise, and carry on discussions, debate, dissertations, etc. All this is a very good thing. It creates a healthy atmosphere, acting as a ventilation for fresh air to come inside.

I remember years back, Harry Kenmore in New York created a Society for Avatar Meher Baba, and naturally he arranged to hold meetings. Now, there was also at that time the Monday Night Group, and people used to go there also. I still remember Baba saying, "Hold a meeting, it is a good idea to hold meetings, get people together in My Name and My love. I am there, when two or more people gather in My Name and love." But do one thing, He advised — and we should take it as a guideline in fixing the day for the meeting at Avatar's Abode — see that there are no other meetings elsewhere in the neighbourhood on that same day. Take into your confidence the people who are holding meetings on their own, and make it a point that they do not clash with the day that you fix for the meetings at Avatar's Abode.

And I would go out of my way to suggest that it would be a nice thing that all the neighbourhood, especially those who want to love Baba and who want to obey His wishes and pleasures, come together at the Avatar's Abode meeting, and that in coming together that they remember Him, talk of Him, forgetting all differences, drowning them all at least for that occasion once a week, and go out refreshed without any rancour or other feelings of bitterness, just filled with love for Him. Gathering and congregating for the sake of His love, and our love for Him — that's how it should be.

It is most important to hold a meeting once a week at Avatar's Abode; that will be a very healthy thing. But be very practical, and see that that day doesn't clash with any other days when meetings are held in the neighbourhood. Stick to the one day that has been decided. Take into confidence the others who may be involved, and ask if a particular day will be all right for Avatar's Abode. If the majority or all agree, that's very good. There should be a consensus of opinion to have a common day at Avatar's Abode. Avatar's Abode *is* the proper place for meetings because it is *the* Centre.

This does not debar others from having centres at their place, or meetings at their place. But they should bear in mind that Avatar's Abode should be the central focus of all our attention, all our love, all our dedication.

BILL: There has also been a meeting for some years once a month, a meeting of at least some of the Baba lovers that has been called an Activities Meeting, but which I call a Community Meeting in the sense that it is the Baba community that have got together to talk of various things affecting the community and Avatar's Abode, etc.

ERUCH: Very good. Continue with that, in addition to the

weekly meetings. There should be a fair exchange of opinions and suggestions, and voices of different hearts should be heard. And the Foundation should attend, of course, because it is the community around Avatar's Abode, and the Foundation plays a major role in that.

Gather all the information, gather all the criticisms, and then work out the policy. What is to be done, taking into consideration the information and criticism? Should we discard this? Accept this? How should it be done? Compromise; do this, do that. It is healthy to have such meetings in a sense, and encourage the community to come together, sit together, and have a nice, friendly chat. The Foundation could even stand a little tea party on that day, so that it becomes a nice little get-together, and everyone can have freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and relaxation from their daily chores. Come together like that. Anything, everything, should revolve around that one point, to maintain the atmosphere of harmony and concord. Strive for that, by hook or by crook. Remember: "Not by hatred is hatred appeased. Hatred is appeased by nonhatred."

I don't know why there should be hatred in our hearts for anybody. There is reason for one to feel upset or disappointed, but why should it be so deep down that these differences root themselves into hatred? It should not be so. It is ridiculous. It verges on absurdity that on the one hand we would want to love Meher Baba, Who is nothing but Love and Compassion personified, and on the other hand harbour hatred for one another — and amongst one's own community, amongst one's own fold. It's ridiculous, it's absurd. It is far better for one to just leave Meher Baba in peace for all time and find your way elsewhere than to be called a Meher Baba lover and a follower of Meher Baba, yet harbour hatred in one's heart.

There are differences of opinion, differences of suggestion, lifestyles and all that, it is bound to be, because we have got minds, and minds differ, it is but natural. But there should not be deep-seated hatred for one another.

BILL: And as you pointed out in your letter, there should not be activity directed towards getting the support of others against another.

ERUCH: What is the worst thing, that prejudice and pride comes into the picture. Bias for somebody, prejudice, hatred — it is my pride, it is my reputation at stake; I must have my say; I will stick to my say; my principles are like that.

What the heck is your principle? Who lives by one's principles? Today you are this and tomorrow you are that. At present we are not capable of asserting our principles, because we do not have principles. Men *should* live by their principle, and that principle is harmony and concord prevailing and pervading. If that be your principle, sure, live by that principle, and stick to it. Otherwise forget your principles and your pride and prejudices. Don't create parties. It is not a political forum. You have to sink all these things and become one, in the oneness of His love for us all.

He doesn't differentiate, that you merit His love greater than somebody else. No. He does not bestow His love upon your merits. He just loves all, irrespective of whether you merit His love or not.

BILL: So it has nothing to do with personalities or with a history that this one is close to Baba, or has been close....

ERUCH: Nothing. It has nothing to do with that. We all are

equally close to Him, and equally distant from Him. There is no such thing as "I am closer, I am the chief, I am the head, I am this or that." Nothing. All are equal in His eyes.

But there is the responsibility that has been given to the Foundation. Because He has given that round your neck, you have to uphold that responsibility and discharge your responsibility. There is no way out. He has bestowed upon you that responsibility. He has said so. At that time when He gave that responsibility He said, "I know what a burden you will be carrying."

So you have to be very brave. He gives the strength when you leave everything to Him. Don't take it to your heart, don't feel despondent, don't feel frustrated. Go ahead, take His Name with every step and every breath in your life, and He will surely help you. Just as He will help all others also. But all that we are to do is to sink our differences, and genuinely implore Him to bring us all together in His love. Each one should call out, genuinely. When there is a common cause of distress, then that cry, that call, should be there from Avatar's Abode imploring Him, beseeching Him, to get you all together in the oneness of His love.

And if that atmosphere prevails, you may have the Manifestation of Meher Baba at Avatar's Abode.

Nothing more to be said.

JAI BABA!

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## AN END AND A BEGINNING

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**"I WILL TURN THE KEY". . . .** The turning of the key. . . . What an enigmatic phrase, yet without understanding intellectually, how profoundly moving it is, a door opening to the furthest reaches of the imagination.

When Beloved Baba turned the key in 1967, I simply accepted it as His loving assurance to me that the results would be according to His wishes. I did not ponder over or question His words — I never have — and I have never wondered about and awaited, concerned, the outcome of His words. One thing is certain: I accept in the core of my being that He knows exactly what He is doing. Yet when He would send me a message, as He did, that something momentous would happen on such and such a date, I must admit that I never waited with baited breath for that date. In a real sense every moment was momentous when one felt His loving hand in one's life.

At the same time I regret now my somewhat casual attitude to His words. I feel that I missed something then that could have meant an even deeper experience of His loving-kindness, of His touch in the heart. I regret now, mind you, so many moments of His love taken too lightly. His turning of the key was one such moment. Did it involve Beloved Baba in more strain in His work? Did it add to His burden? Meher Baba is God, but He is also God-Man, and during His life on earth He must attend to every

minute detail of His creation for the coming seven hundred years until He returns again. So I wonder and regret; but for Australia the results of that moment in time manifested, and continue to do so.

In hindsight, as I think about it, I see His early links with Australia — sending Rustom Irani here in 1932, although Rustom was not allowed to land; agreeing to Margaret Craske's invitation in 1939 to conduct ballet examinations and classes, although it was never fulfilled; and again in the early 1940s asking that a package of His printed messages be sent to Australia, and a woman pupil of Margaret's who had met Baba in England in 1932 readily agreeing to receive them; the dispatch of His *Discourses* to the Sufi Society here in the mid-1940s — all this as the preparation of the ground; His first and second visits as the planting of the seed; and the turning of the key as the crucial impetus of the germination of that seed of love. It was certainly a most significant moment in the spiritual history of Australia. This of course includes myself and my own history.

And what effect, has my Beloved Meher Baba had on me after some 45 years? It is indeed difficult to see one's self objectively, and in any case I have little interest in doing so to a definitive degree. At best I like the feeling of losing "useless mental baggage" over the years, of lessening concern for this ephemeral personality, and the returning again and again to the goal of "being true to the trust He has reposed in me."

But then, in thinking on this question, certain things do stand out. When Beloved Baba says that the answer to all one's problems is to love Him more and more, I find this increasingly to be true. The often overwhelming preoccupation with the world and its affairs that I have created for myself, the frequent absorption in the kaleidoscope of my mind-impressions — all this fades as the effort increases to measure up in love to that which He wishes of us. With this effort, fear of the known and unknown



also fades, and it helps to remember the Buddha's words: "Before I became the Buddha, sometimes while walking in the forest the great fear would come upon me and I would continue walking; sometimes I would be sitting and the great fear would come upon me and I would continue to sit." Again, as the effort increases to rely solely on Beloved Baba, to make Him my constant companion, so the need to have intermediaries decreases. The *mandali* and close disciples continue, whether alive or dead, as a source of clarification and inspiration of what Baba wishes of us in life; but the relationship with Beloved Baba is one-to-One. He is the Reality within every being and thing. All this I try to remember.

In the early 1970s an old Parsi man told me something of his life which I remember often, and which I pray I will remember and take to heart in future lives. He recounted with great depth of feeling how as a young man he would entertain Meher Baba in the early 1920s with his singing of songs of love for God. He said, "I had a fine voice in those days and Baba would often ask me to go to Him at the hut on Ferguson College Road, Poona, and sing to Him. On one such occasion Baba seemed especially moved, and said to me, 'Come and be with Me and I will make you a man.' " The old man in regret struck his forehead with force, saying how he thought of his mother and sister at that point and their dependence on him, and he declined Baba's invitation. This reminds me of Adi K. Irani saying to us at a late hotel meal in Brisbane in 1958, "We all must one day die, so die now to Meher Baba before death."

I have reached the end of the story of my life with Meher Baba — at least to the time of writing this, February 1993. What lies ahead for me I do not know, but I pray that He continues to hold me within His turning of the key. I pray too that my life, and my future lives, continue to be one long opportunity to serve Him. Perhaps it is a general experience, but for myself I feel that

I am only now ready — ready to try once more — to begin to serve Beloved Baba. By His Grace this will happen.

That God is the only Reality I can accept because Baba has said so and because I do feel this to be true. But the reality of God that I experience is the beautiful face and form of Meher Baba, Who seems to be nothing but love and truth. As He is my Master, I accept also Baba's statements that there are seven planes of consciousness and that we all will in time experience God as infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Bliss.

For myself, I like to shelter in the safety of His feet, and long to become a man in His service. That is forever sufficient.

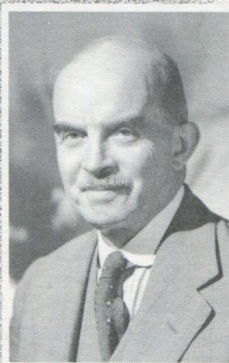
And always I am overwhelmed with the realisation of all that I have received over the years from Him. It is not something I could detail. That would be impossible, and in any case it is as though it is constantly changing, an endless treasure chest. But more, it is a sense of being filled with Him, and in the midst of the shadows and mist of this person called Bill Le Page, ever within is a pool of joy and well-being and enthusiasm that I know is both His creation and Baba Himself. That I do not always experience that pool, that so often I seem to forget its existence, that I wonder frequently where is my service to Him — all that I can accept, content to have what He has given me, knowing that He is there, and that I happily await His call.

As He has said, and I paraphrase, I love you. Do not worry about your weaknesses. Eventually they will go; even if they linger, love will one day consume them. Everything disappears in the Ocean of Love. Because I love you, you have a pool of love within you. When you feel wretched, when you fall in your weakness, have a dip in that pool of My love within you. It is always there. Even if you wash your weaknesses every day in that pool, it will remain clear. Don't worry. Baba loves you, that is what really matters.

He has said another very beautiful thing: "Don't worry. Be

happy. I will help you." Beloved Baba has done just that. He has given me a happy life through the seed of love that He planted in this land down under; and He has given me a family (and this family within a wider family) who love Him, so that I can witness and bear witness to His abiding and growing love for all of us in His Australia.

# A PHOTOGRAPHIC RETROSPECTIVE



## THE BEGINNING

*Top:* Meher Baba and His mandali, Adi K. Irani, Eruch Jessawala and Dr. Nilu, in the doorway of Meher House at Beacon Hill in 1956, during Baba's first visit to Australia.  
*Bottom, from left:* Rabia Martin; Baron von Frankenburg; Francis Brabazon in the 1940s; and Bill Le Page in his mid-teens.

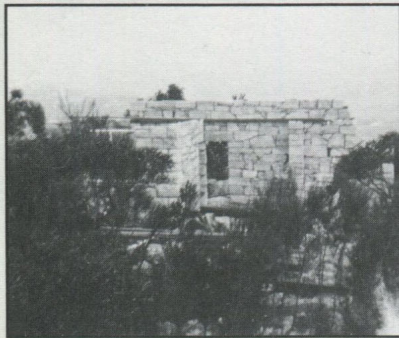
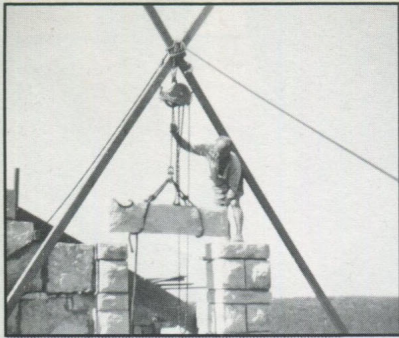












## 1954 - 1956 MEHER HOUSE

Meher House being built on Beacon Hill, eleven miles from Sydney, in time for Meher Baba's 1956 visit to Australia.

*Top left:* Francis Brabazon guiding stone into place.

*Lower left and bottom:* Two views of Meher House under construction.

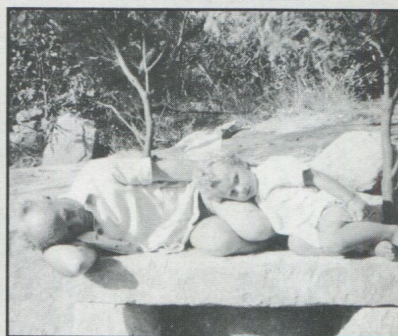
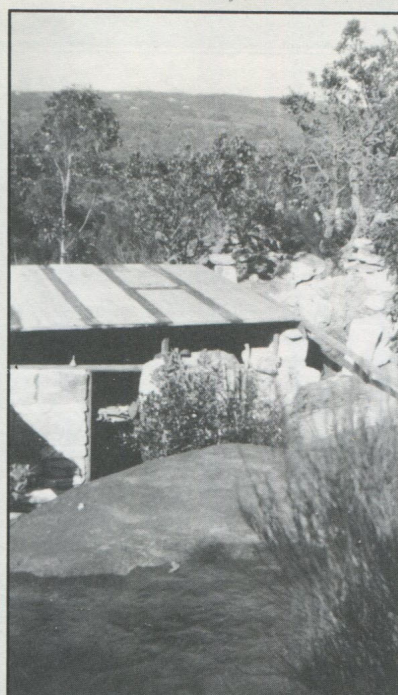
*Right:* Francis Brabazon's cabin at rear of Meher House.

*Far right, top:* informal gathering in lean-to kitchen.

*Far right, bottom:* Francis resting with Michael Le Page.









*On August 11th, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., Meher Baba  
the great spiritual leader, recognised by an increasing  
number as the Spiritual Authority of the Age, will hold  
a Reception at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Le Page  
Kalianna Crescent, Beacon Hill.*

*You are cordially invited to attend.*

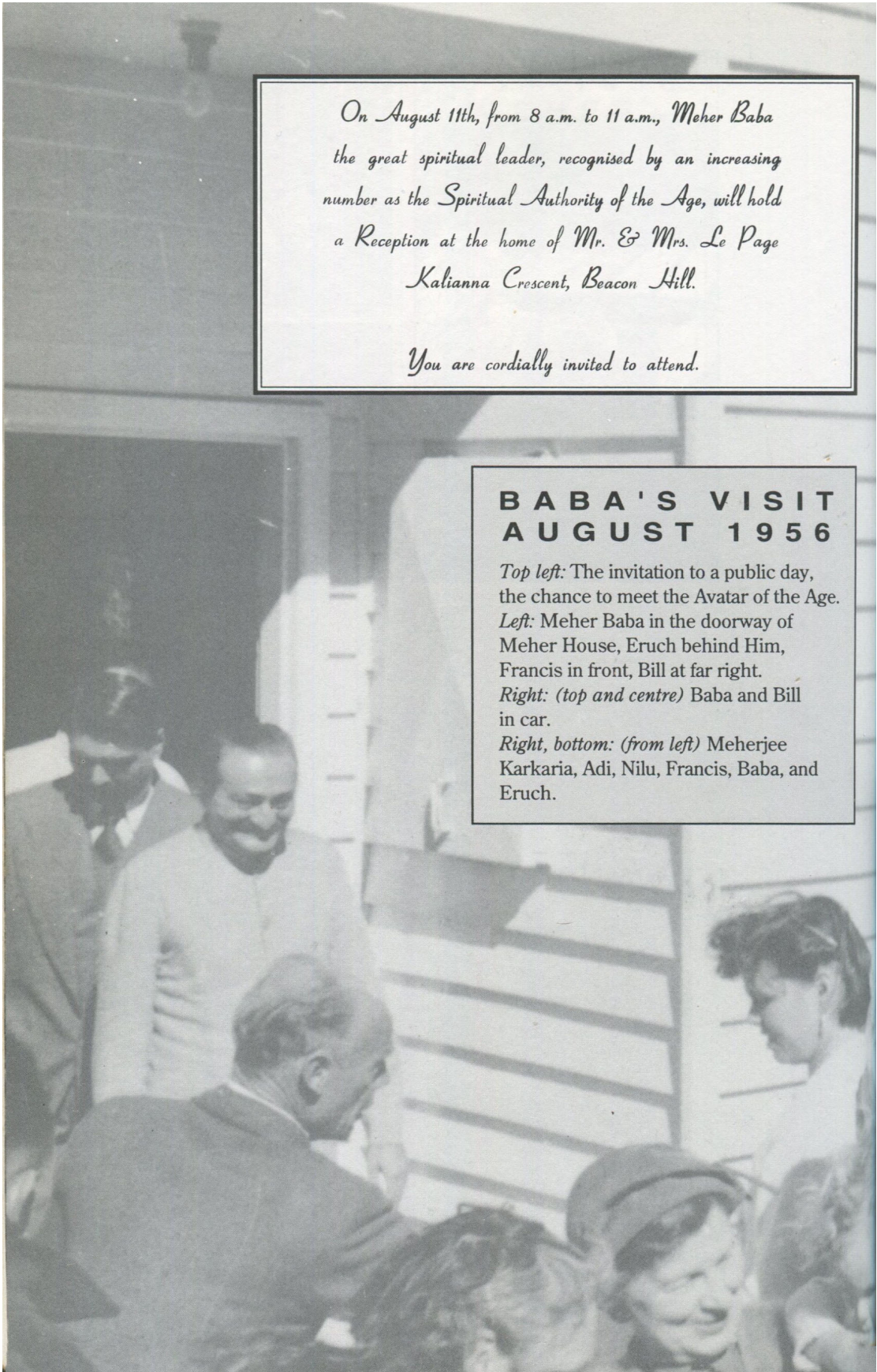
## **BABA'S VISIT AUGUST 1956**

*Top left: The invitation to a public day,  
the chance to meet the Avatar of the Age.*

*Left: Meher Baba in the doorway of  
Meher House, Eruch behind Him,  
Francis in front, Bill at far right.*

*Right: (top and centre) Baba and Bill  
in car.*

*Right, bottom: (from left) Meherjee  
Karkaria, Adi, Nilu, Francis, Baba, and  
Eruch.*





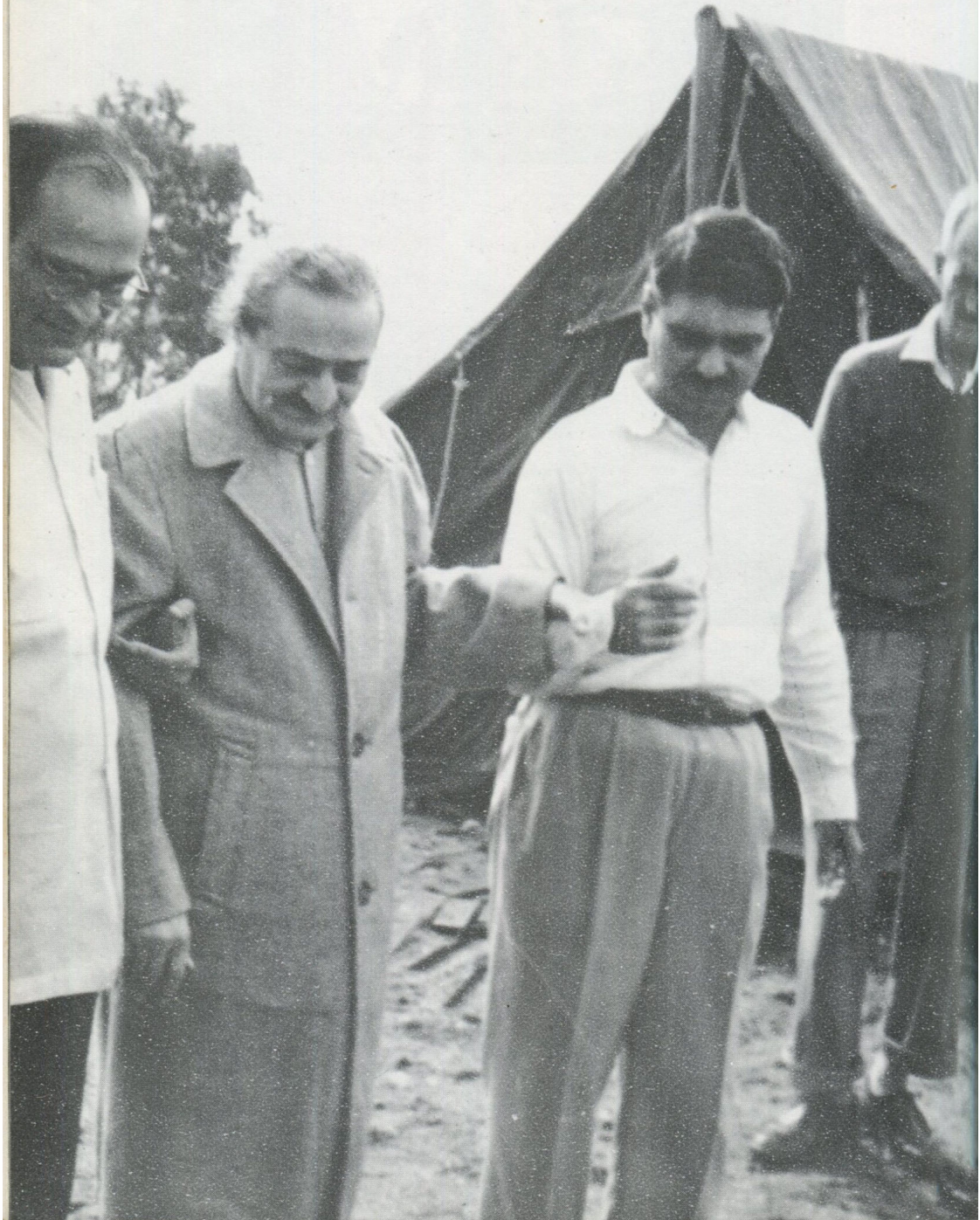




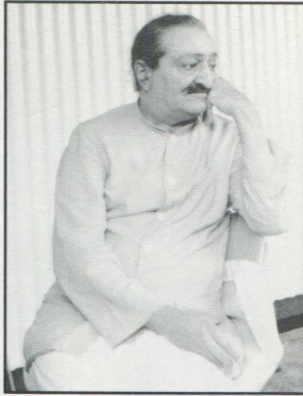
1958  
JUNE SAHAVAS

*Left:* Meher Baba with Nariman Dadachanji and Eruch Jessawala at the men's tents at the eighty-acre Avatar's Abode on top of Kiel Mountain, north of Brisbane.

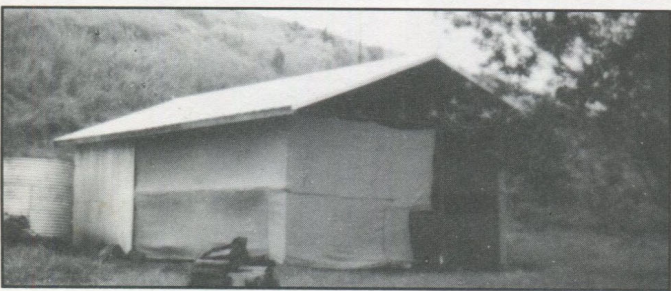
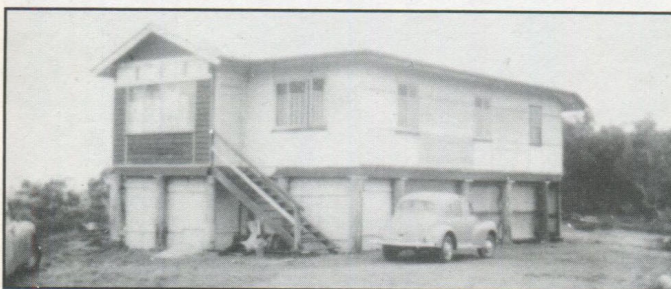
*Top right:* Meher Baba in varied moods on the verandah of His house at Avatar's Abode and visiting the men's tents. *Lower right:* Denis O'Brien leans to kiss Baba's hand.











## 1956 - 1958 AVATAR'S ABODE

*Top to bottom:* Original farmhouse at Avatar's Abode is moved to its new location downhill from the new house built for Baba; Farmhouse in its new location on a ridge 150 yards from Baba's House; Baba's House upon completion; Meeting Hall, which was almost completed when Baba came.





## 1 9 6 2 E A S T - W E S T G A T H E R I N G

*Top:* Bill Le Page's family greeting Baba on arrival at the East-West Gathering:  
(from left) Ruth, Jenny, Joan (Michael behind Joan) and Bill.

*Bottom:* Australian and New Zealand Baba lovers who went to the East-West Gathering.  
*Standing from left:* Anthony Thorpe (New Zealand), Nell Burke, Beryl Giddens, Marjorie Donaldson, Denis O'Brien, Bill Le Page, Craig Woodford, Diana Snow, Hazel Shipway, Judith Humphries. *Seated centre:* Gladys Hewitt, Joan Bruford, Lorna Rouse, Judith Garbett, Grace Swan. *Seated front:* Francis Brabazon, Norman Shipway, Reg Paffle, Bernard Bruford. The children: Michael Le Page, Radha Rouse, Jenny Le Page.





## FAMILY AND FRIENDS

*Top:* Adi K. Irani, Sarosh Irani and Bill Le Page at Meher Baba's 1967 birthday procession through the streets of Ahmednagar.

*Bottom left:* Judith Garbett, whose vivid description of the East-West Gathering is used in this book.

*Bottom right:* (1992 visit to Meherazad) *back row:* Ross Keating and Buz Connor; *middle row:* Diana Le Page, Nadia Keating, Joan Le Page, Jenny Keating, Mani and Dr. Goher; *front row:* Roshan Keating and Bill Le Page.

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## **S U P P L E M E N T**

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## TWO INTRODUCTORY TALKS

### LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

When I think of Avatar Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958, my thoughts naturally seem to begin with the first formal meeting of those four days. It was our one and only meeting in the Meeting Hall. Baba had been carried across in His chair and was seated on a raised concrete platform with the four men *mandali* who had accompanied Him grouped to the back and to the side of Him.

Baba was most serious, with fewer smiles than He had given us on His first visit to Australia in 1956. Even in the beginning of the meeting, when He asked Francis who had helped in the work, who had contributed financially to it, it was as though He gave extra weight, substance, to each remark or question.

But He became much more serious when He then reminded us of the conditions of the *sahavas*, that is, this period of time spent in the company of God-Man. He asked if there was anyone present who was less than nine years of age, and then whether there was anyone present who was not prepared to obey Him. Baba said, "I do not want anything else from you but the gift of your obedience. Greater than love is obedience."

It was not the first time that I had encountered the importance of obedience to the Master — but more than importance, the very essence, of love for the Master. This had been brought home to me through my readings and from my earlier meetings with Meher Baba. All such moments made a deep and indelible impression upon me, and I knew that love is not love unless there is obedience to the Divine Beloved.

Let me go back in time for a moment and recount my first contact with Meher Baba in 1947. I was twenty-two, and I was lent one of the volumes of His *Discourses*. At the time I was told nothing of Him, and His life and His work, of His spiritual status, but I was immediately enthralled by His words. The truth of them struck deeply within, and I felt that here was One who really knew the Truth, that He loved mankind, and that He had the authority to say that which He did.

Seven years of reading and thinking about Him, longing to see Him, culminated in the opportunity to travel to India to be with Him. My first encounter was a glance directed towards me in the midst of an immense crowd at Ahmednagar. It was like an arrow that pierced me. Then later I was with Him, and He asked me if I loved Him. I said yes. And then immediately He said "Will you obey Me?" Again I said yes, and He said, "Even if I tell you to walk in the streets of Ahmednagar naked, or if I were to say to return to Australia immediately?"

From that time of my first personal contact with Baba, I found that there was no need to ask anything or to question anything. He knew best, and all I had to say was, "Yes, Baba, I will carry out what you say to the very best of my ability." And in doing so, I have found that His love for me and for us all became more and more a reality and gave an understanding of the truth of His statements.

I did ask Baba one question in the very first interview I had with Him. I said, "Would you please come to visit us in Australia?"

He looked at me quite sharply and said, "Do you think that [ am not already there?" This made me realise and remember to leave everything to Him, that the universe was in the palm of His hand, that He was there in every minute particle, and that what I should concentrate on was not asking Him about His work, but obeying Him and seeking to please Him. Of course, it is one thing to say that. I know it to be true, or I feel it in my heart to be true, but it is another thing to experience and live it moment after moment, irrespective of the circumstances of that moment.

Some things at least I absorbed over the years. When Meher Baba said, "Obey Me," in His compassion He accepted "Try to obey Me." In trying to obey Him, and particularly at those moments when the trying continued but the hope of obeying had seemingly disappeared, He was there to make it possible. I found in trying to obey, in the effort to carry out not only His Wishes, but also the Ten Commandments that are engraved within each one of us, that life is experienced as fulfilling, worthwhile, and uplifting.

But when I allowed my mind to vitiate my heart and assert its independence and willfulness, things simply did not go well. Resignation to His Will, a constant seeking to please Him, is the keynote to life at its best.

In fact, I found that any attempt to turn aside from His Wish brought dire results, as on one occasion when I expressed unhappiness over a task that He had given me, and He said in no uncertain terms, "Do you wish to work for Me or not?"; and I found that no matter how bitter the medicine may seem, the drinking of it turns it to nectar.

To me the more one tried to live up to the ideal of loving and obeying Him, the more He extended His loving-kindness, the more He made His Presence felt, and the more He gave one strength and endurance to continue the efforts.

During His life on earth He sent loving reminders, little words of encouragement, and gentle tasks that equipped us to tackle and endure more. Now He has placed Himself within each one of us. It seems as though we perceived Him alive in India during His life on earth, but now we can experience Him alive in our hearts. We have only to try to do so and He in His compassion awakens.

What specific injunctions did He give us? Over the years Meher Baba gave for humanity in general four orders:

1. No drugs except under medical supervision.
2. No sexual relations outside marriage.
3. No involvement with other spiritual masters or gurus.
4. No dishonesty.

Speaking of Baba wanting us to have no involvement with saints, gurus, or spiritual teachers reminds me of a very beautiful talk that Eruch Jessawala, Meher Baba's "right hand," gave us in India recently. This is what Eruch told us:

Baba would tell us now and then about His humiliation, or of His glorification which would follow the humiliation. But we all missed the point. We thought that the New Life period was His period of humiliation, a time when there were many humiliations, such as gossiping and backbiting, being mistaken for bandits or political agitators, and so on; and that His period of glorification was the period following the New Life when hundreds of thousands throughout the country hailed Him as the Ancient One. We felt that was His glorification. We had led a life of great seclusion, and we were quite unprepared for the spectacle, time and again, of a sea of humanity adoring and worshipping Him as the Highest of the High, the Expected One.

But I remember one occasion that gave me a fright. We

were in the south of India, considered the stronghold of orthodoxy. Brahmins, the highest class, have great power there and control the minds and hearts of the people. Baba was seated on a dais, I was with Him, and we were surrounded by an immense sea of humanity. It would have been impossible to escape if the emotion of the mob were to be against us, or even if they all sought to hug and kiss Baba.

As usual on these occasions, the successful councillors, the leaders in each profession and branch of life, gave Baba welcoming speeches. Then Baba said, "Remain seated. I am going to bow down to you. Do not think that this bowing down is for you individually; I bow down to your love for Me. That will avoid any necessity for each of you to physically approach Me."

After doing that, Baba had me read or give out a short message, which had been prepared beforehand. On such occasions Baba might give a further impromptu message. This was now what happened, and that stands out in my memory of my life with Baba.

For the first time in public Baba said, "I am the Ancient One," and He went on, "I am the same Ancient One come once again in your midst. My message is of love, I have come now, this time in your midst, to do away with all rites, rituals, and ceremonies."

As I read out His gestures, I became frightened. I was aware of all the people there entirely surrounding us, so many of them being those Brahmins whose power rested in the rites, rituals, and ceremonies of the religion. I shuddered at what might now happen.

But Baba pulled a little corner of my coat and said. "Don't get frightened," and He gave me comfort. As I spoke and finished, there was an immense pin-drop silence; and

then came a sign of total acceptance, conveyed through tremendous ovations.

We thought such occasions were part of His glorification. But Baba smiled when I said so: "This is not My glorification. Wait, wait; My humiliation will come, then My manifestation, and My glorification. This enthusiasm and emotion that you witness is not My glorification."

Then I wondered, what will be His humiliation? What form will it take?

Things continued, and there were no signs of a new form of humiliation. But once in a while a report would come to us that ones close to Baba had gone to see and pay homage to a saint or guru; or such ones were expressing thoughts of seeing a saint or master. Out of the blue, not in connection with His humiliation, Baba remembered a story.

A woman, judged guilty of adultery, was sentenced to death. Before her execution, according to the law she was exposed to the general public in the market square, and the people were required to throw rocks and filth and rubbish at her. So each passerby in that thoroughfare threw something at the woman. But she never cried out. She made no sign that she was being hurt, but stood there, radiant and beautiful as ever.

It happened now that her daughter passed by, and by law she was required to throw something at the alleged adulteress, her mother. She had no heart to throw a rock or suchlike, so she purchased a rose, and as she passed she threw the flower. When the flower hit her, the mother shrieked, although no stone or filth until then had caused her pain. She had not uttered a single sound, but the light touch of a rose thrown by her own daughter brought forth a cry from the depths of her being. How the mother must have felt that accusation from her daughter! "How much

more," said Baba, "will I feel, when My own ones hurt Me even with the petal of a rose!"

We said that we did not understand, and Baba went on, "Although you all have been with Me for many years, if in your ambition to aspire more and more for the Truth, you seek blessings of a saint, that action would be the equivalent of the daughter throwing a rose at the mother."

Then, when we did hear about close lovers of Baba not coming to Baba meetings regularly, and instead going to see this master or that saint, we would feel sad. We would ask ourselves, how is it possible, when Baba has said that He is the Root of all creation, and that once we have contacted Him there is no need to go anywhere else? There is no need to go even to the Perfect Masters, because Baba is the eternal Perfect Master of all Perfect Masters.

This brings me full circle back to our first meeting here with Meher Baba in 1958. In that meeting He emphasised that He wanted our love and obedience 100 percent, and that there was no room for compromise. We cannot expect Meher Baba to emerge as the sun in our hearts if we do not wholeheartedly endeavour to obey His precepts and orders. It is by His Grace if He does emerge from the recesses of the heart. But it is for us, as we declare our love for Him, to be true to Him as the Divine Beloved.

## THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

The pursuit of happiness is a good title for a talk because it does seem that the main pursuit of man in life is attempting to attain happiness.

Baba has said that consciously or unconsciously every living creature seeks one thing. In the lower forms of life the quest



is unconscious. In advanced human beings it is conscious, and the object of the quest is called by many names, one of which is happiness.

Certainly in human terms it is a quest for happiness, and although we do attach other names to it, such as peace, freedom, truth, love, perfection, or God-realisation, it all amounts in our minds to the fact that any of these will lead to a state of happiness.

In another discourse Baba says every creature in the world is seeking happiness, and man is no exception. He goes on to point out that everything that we undertake in life is really for the seeking of happiness: power because of the happiness that will be derived from its use; money because it will secure the conditions and means for happiness.

It is the same with man's pursuit of knowledge, health, beauty, science, art, because he feels that his pursuit of happiness is directly dependent upon them. Through everything, in other words, that he does in life, all his endeavours and pursuits, man wants to be happy.

But Baba points out that truly happy people are rare in spite of the smiles which are usually the brave front for varying degrees of internal misery. Man longs for happiness and searches desperately for some means of breaking out of the trap which his life has become and which denies him the happiness that he seeks.

Why does man not achieve this happiness that he seeks? Baba goes on to say that suffering, the very thing that man tries to avoid, comes to him because of the very manner in which he seeks happiness. He equates happiness with pleasure. He equates happiness with the avoidance of suffering. He is goaded by multifarious desires, and in trying to fulfil these desires he is unavoidably preparing for suffering from their nonfulfilment. He gains satisfaction at times and momentary happiness, but the happiness does not last because the desire goes on and soon

leads to a reaction of depression. Fulfilment of desire invites the opposite experience of nonfulfilment. We could go on and on on this subject because there is no end to the catalogue of unhappiness that comes from the pursuit of happiness through fulfilment of desires.

So what is our answer to this? Baba continually exhorts us to be happy. For example there is a very lovely account of an interview with Baba in which He says:

Everyone is unconsciously tired of this life, because everyone seeks happiness, but knows not how to get it. But life is so beautiful. It is meant to be happy. I will help you. Then things will appear changed. You will see it. It is always the outlook that counts, and not the object. Today you feel tired, upset, seeing nothing beautiful in the things around you in life. If tomorrow you do not feel bored but cheerful, the same things that appeared black yesterday will seem changed. It is all due to changed mentality and outlook. The easy way is not to make much of things. Take them lightly. Say to yourself, "I am meant to be happy, to make others happy," and gradually you do become happy yourself and make others so too. Don't suggest to your mind, "I am tired, haggard, depressed." That will make you feel worse. Always say, "All is well and beautiful. I will be happy." I will help you spiritually.

In another interview He said:

Try to be always happy. Never think that "life is dreadful," "I am tired of life." Such thoughts really make life miserable. But if you think, "Life is worth living," all difficulties will appear insignificant. I will help you try to develop love. Never think, "I am alone, I have so much to do, I am poor," and so on. All are poor. The whole world is poor. Even millionaires

are poor, because they have greed and want more. Love someone and I will help you. Do not worry; My blessings.

So how are we, apart from these words of Baba's, to pinpoint the vehicles by which we may achieve that which Baba directs us to do, to be happy?

To simplify the subject, we could say that very positive steps should be taken, and in a sense negative steps, that will overcome the barriers of the task of achieving happiness. With regard to positivity, Baba has first of all pointed out the significant idea that if man would suspect that his ideas of achieving a successful and happy life were wrong and that he must try some new way of living, then the stalemate might be broken. If man takes life boldly in his hands, breaking up the old patterns and insisting on the creation of something new from his own inner vision, a new life can certainly be achieved. Here man has to be prepared and have the courage to strike free of the attachments which he has formed to the old life, and the courage to begin a new one.

Baba has also pointed out that the quest for happiness is inextricably enmeshed in the problem that man has become identified with the body. He identifies himself with the physical form and in doing so identifies satisfaction of bodily desires as necessary for the achievement of happiness. For instance, Baba has pointed out that a man may think himself a coward and may live a lifetime of misery based upon this incorrect belief. All his actions are shaped by this belief, but a real crisis, some outstanding event in his life, challenges him so deeply that he may suddenly awaken to a sure knowledge of a different being to become, not one of cowardice but one of real courage.

So man can be wrong in his convictions regarding his own nature, and he can be wrong concerning his convictions of the world about him. It is a world of illusion, a world of falseness which

separates him from his true and natural birthright of freedom and happiness.

It could be said that happiness, true lasting happiness, comes from complete detachment. From complete detachment from desires, man no longer creates the conditions for suffering which comes from nonfulfilment of desires. Desirelessness makes a man firm like a rock. His steadiness and equanimity remain unaffected by any upsets. He no longer craves fulfilment and then suffers a reaction and the feeling of thralldom to that craving.

Yet while this must be the ultimate picture, we can ask ourselves again: What do we do in the meantime, burdened as we are with desires, in fulfilling Baba's injunction, "Be happy"? Here Baba points out that true happiness begins when a man learns the art of right adjustment to other persons; and right adjustment involves self-forgetfulness and love.

### **THREE PRAYERS GIVEN BY MEHER BABA**

#### **THE MASTER'S PRAYER**

Given by Baba in August 1953

O Parvardigar, the Preserver and Protector of all,  
 You are without Beginning, and without End;  
 Nondual, beyond comparison; and none can measure You.  
 You are without colour, without expression, without form, and  
 without attributes.  
 You are unlimited and unfathomable, beyond imagination and  
 conception; eternal and imperishable.  
 You are indivisible; and none can see You but with eyes divine.

You always were, You always are, and You always will be;  
 You are everywhere, You are in everything; and You are also  
 beyond everywhere, and beyond everything.  
 You are in the firmament and in the depths, You are manifest  
 and unmanifest; on all planes, and beyond all planes.  
 You are in the three worlds, and also beyond the three worlds;  
 You are imperceptible and independent.  
 You are the Creator, the Lord of Lords, the Knower of all  
 minds and hearts; You are Omnipotent and Omnipresent.  
 You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite, and Bliss Infinite.  
 You are the Ocean of Knowledge, All-Knowing, Infinitely  
 Knowing; the Knower of the past, the present, and the  
 future; and You are Knowledge itself.  
 You are All-merciful and eternally benevolent;  
 You are the Soul of souls, the One with infinite attributes;  
 You are the Trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss;  
 You are the Source of Truth, the Ocean of Love;  
 You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High; You are  
 Prabhu and Parameshwar; You are the Beyond-God, and  
 the Beyond-Beyond-God also; You are Parabrahma; Allah;  
 Elahi; Yezdan; Ahuramazda; and God the Beloved.  
 You are named Ezad, the only One worthy of worship.

## THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

Given by Baba in 1952

We repent, O God Most Merciful, for all our sins;  
for every thought that was false or unjust or unclean;  
for every word spoken that ought not to have been spoken;  
for every deed done that ought not to have been done.

We repent for every deed and word and thought inspired  
by selfishness, and for every deed and word and thought  
inspired by hatred.

We repent most specially for every lustful thought  
and every lustful action; for every lie; for all  
hypocrisy; for every promise given but not fulfilled,  
and for all slander and backbiting.

Most especially also, we repent for every action that  
has brought ruin to others; for every word and deed that  
has given others pain; and for every wish that pain  
should befall others.

In Your Unbounded Mercy we ask You to forgive us,  
O God! for all these sins committed by us, and to forgive  
us for our constant failures to think and speak and act  
according to Your Will.

A PRAYER FOR BABA'S LOVERS AND *MANDALI*

Given by Baba on 25 August 1959

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

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## TWO

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### **MY COMPLETE NOTES TAKEN DURING MEHER BABA'S SESSIONS WITH WESTERN MEN AT MEHERABAD, SEPTEMBER 1954**

Christ and His Inner Circle, and the Christian mystics all stressed purity of heart. Mohammad and His Imams, Zoroaster and the Magi, Krishna and His Companions, the Vedantists, all stressed purity of heart. So does Baba stress purity of the heart. Today we will see what this means, and what the heart is, and what the mind. Does the heart mean only the organ or something deeper? One Sufi said, "The Abode of Love is infinitely higher and above the domain of intellect." He alone out of millions and billions of people can touch and kiss the threshold of the Beloved who has his life on his sleeve." This is a literal translation. But what does it mean? It means that if you want to see your Beloved God, go before Him with your heart on your palm; thus it means that the intellect can never reach the One who transcends the mind. So we come to the understanding that God cannot be understood. He is not visible because He is infinitely visible to that eye which has no curtain or veil over it: veil off — elimination of desires; veil off — elimination of I-ness or ego.

The mind has dual function. (This matter has been emphasised in the book *God Speaks*.)



1. First function — that of thoughts. Impressions that lie dormant have to be worked out, and so they appear as thoughts. This thinking function of the mind is known by Vedantists as *manas*.

2. Second function of the mind is (perhaps) emotion, and is called *antahkarana*, which means heart. So what is known as heart is actually this second function of the mind itself. The impressions called *sanskaras* are spent both through thinking and feeling. To the first function of the mind belong just thoughts, any kind of thoughts; and to the second function of the mind (i.e., heart) belong the feelings and desires. All feelings of joy, pain, disappointment, happiness, shocks, etc., belong to this functioning. Now, in sound sleep the impressions are in a dormant state. (We won't talk of dreams; these are discussed in *God Speaks*.) Now, what wakes you up from sleep are the impressions of actions done; and these impressions are spent first by thoughts, then by desires, and then by actions. So Krishna said, "Let impressions be spent only through thoughts, then no strong impressions will be formed." But if you cannot do this, then let impressions be spent through desires and feelings. But not through actions. Impressions spent through desires, feelings, create new impressions but not so deep. But if impressions are put into action, then new, deeply ingrained impressions are formed.

Thus we see that the first functioning of mind is not important; it is natural and will continue, but is not important. The second function is, however, important, because it is the seat of desires, and unless the heart (which I have explained to be the second functioning of the mind) is void of all desires — meaning the heart is pure and naked — God as your innermost Self cannot reveal Himself. Now, God is your innermost Self. Behind this body, this limited body, this figure, you have in you energy, and a mind with two functions. You as you are these — that is, ego — and behind all this, imagine God as Infinite in space. The "you" that experiences change, different ages, strength, weakness,

etc., is an inner self, and we find this to be "I." Now, who am I?

"I" might be energy, but then I do not move, do not act when I am unconscious, and yet "I" exist, so I am not energy. I might be mind, but here again, in sound sleep, unconscious, mind is not functioning, yet "I" exist, so I am not the mind. Then who am I? I am that which is not body, energy, or mind; so that which is not body, energy, or mind, I am that.

So in sound sleep, what do you experience? Nothing. I will tell you something that is not written. I am sound sleep; if I am not body, energy, or mind, then I am That which has no body, energy, or mind, and only sound sleep answers that. Yet in sound sleep, body is there, energy is there, mind is there, but the consciousness of body, etc., is not there.

The first state of Beginningless Beginning was of the Infinite Sound Sleep State of the Infinite One. In the Beginningless Beginning when there was no creation, no universe, not even nothing — only a state of "was" — then began the ten states of God. And during the evolution, incarnation processes, impressions were gathered, and so body, mind, and energy developed and the soul in spite of the Infinite state experienced its Self as finite body, etc., all due to impressions. In sound sleep one is not conscious of body, etc. The important point is that in sound sleep one exists as "I am" and is absolutely unconscious of that "I-ness." This ego in sound sleep or absolute unconscious state is called the natural ego. So we have firstly the natural ego.

Now, what wakes you up are the impressions that lie in your mind. They say "Wake up!" so we wake up and spend the impressions through thinking, desiring, and acting. And in spending the impressions we think, "I am this body, etc."; this "I" is called the false ego.

You have to become what you already are. You are God, but you have to become God; and Christ crucified Himself to teach this. Through love you become what you already are.

*Samadhi*

Trance, which Sufis term *haal* and Vedantists term *bhav*, is just momentary ecstasy, which in the true spiritual sense has no great value. During this state of *haal* one feels unconscious of his surroundings and of the body, but is conscious of overpowering force of bliss pouring in on his soul. As soon as this *bhav* ends, one is just one's ordinary self.

*Samadhis*, which I have described in *Discourses*, etc., have spiritually no importance. These include *Yoga-Samadhi*.

One in these *samadhis* feels at peace with everything and everyone and finds his mind still, but as soon as this *samadhi* is over, one is one's ordinary self. Many yogis after these *samadhis* usually feel the stream of illusion more, as when taking intoxicating liquor one feels happy with everything, but afterwards, headache. So *Yoga-Samadhi* and *Tantrika Samadhi* is like getting drunk completely — when one feels like an emperor, but afterwards one suffers for it. *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, which Sufis call *fana*, means union with God. The soul identifies itself with God. This *samadhi* is the real *samadhi*. Here one becomes God. God's Knowledge is his knowledge, God's Bliss is his bliss, God's Power and Beauty are his power and beauty. One during this *samadhi* has no consciousness, mind, or universe, but is only conscious of self as God. It is said very few get this miracle of *samadhi*. In cycle after cycle, one gets *fana*, and this one is called *fana-fillah*, One who has been made One with God. Very few of such ones regain normal consciousness, and such a one has *samadhi*. *Sahaj Samadhi* means spontaneously and simultaneously. This one is always in *samadhi* and yet is fully conscious of the universe. Such a one, when he talks, walks, is enjoying *samadhi* simultaneously. He is called *Qutub*, meaning centre of everything, or pivot. He now is on every plane of consciousness, One with God, on level with ant and simultaneously is in the

gross, subtle, and mental worlds, and yet he is above everyone and everything. *Sahaj Samadhi* is without effort.

How to think of Me while doing everything? Meditating while working, while doing anything. I will explain tomorrow if I am in the mood.

Before, I used to bend down and throw a stone with every step. Now I sometimes do that. Why do I throw stones? Babajan used to stroke her arm.

### *Planes*

This present state is gross conscious state, and gross senses are used to experience all the gross experiences of seeing, smelling, etc. This is the gross world. The consciousness you have now is gross.

*Manzil* means destination. *Mukam* means place of stay. These terms must be distinguished. Now you are in the gross *manzil*, and in the gross *manzil* there are innumerable places of stay, e.g., with all of you here in Meherabad, your *manzil* is one and the same. You experience in Meherabad with the gross senses all the gross things; when you are in America or Australia, *manzil* is the same, gross, but *mukam* is different, and according to *mukam* you have different experiences of the gross world itself. A man in Arangaon village, one who seldom goes even to Ahmednagar, if he were to be blindfolded, made to sit in an aeroplane, and put on Broadway, eyes open, at night — his experiences would be wonderful, yet it is of the same gross world. Therefore, the innumerable experiences of the different *mukams* in different circumstances are due to one and the same *manzil*.

Now, even in the gross *manzil*, i.e., gross conscious state, glimpses of the first *manzil* of the subtle plane are possible. Just try to grasp now, even in the gross *manzil* it is possible to get glimpses of the subtle. The subtle plane has three *manzils*. Now

what happens: this human being with gross senses experiences the first *manzil* of the subtle in his own way, because the senses are gross. But experience of the subtle cannot be fully gained except through the subtle senses. So this human being sees colour, circles of all kinds, smells, hears music, becomes inspired, but all vanish, disappear.

Now we must understand that all *manzils*, *mukams* are illusory and only God is Real.

When one through his Herculean efforts and by the Grace of his Guru gets into the first plane, it does not mean that he enters another world or sphere. No, that is not the thing. His consciousness is raised and he can use his subtle senses directly, fully, so what he smelt, heard, etc., temporarily before, now he sees, smells, hears continuously. He is now in the first *manzil* of the subtle world; and just as the gross world has innumerable *mukams*, the subtle world has also *mukams*. The first *manzil* has *mukams* where through subtle senses one sees, smells, hears music, etc., just as in the gross world one hears music, etc. So in the subtle world the first *manzil* has innumerable *mukams* where one sees different things and one feels different — e.g., you see and feel differently at Meherabad than at your home. So in subtle *manzil*, one sees wonderful sights, and if one gets entranced, then one loses gross consciousness.

But if one is wise through fortune and past *sanskaras*, and if the Guru is capable, then one leaves the first and enters the second *manzil* in the subtle world. This *manzil* is more intense, and one sees, hears all through the subtle senses, but more intensely. The same *mukams* of the subtle world now appear more real. The second *manzil* is a talisman, and one becomes overpowered by what one sees. But all this rebounds upon him, and he cannot get free of it. The light that he sees is a billion times more brilliant than the sun and a million times cooler than the moon. He gets enveloped in this light and so he feels he is light. But it is delusion.

In the same way, he feels a voice so intensely it overpowers him, and he gets into it from head to foot. He has no gross consciousness, and if the body is not capable and if past impressions do not allow, he remains in that state and drops his body. When he is reborn, he returns to that same state.

But if he has sense — spiritual talisman — or if the Guru is adept in this spiritual line, he advances from this state and the third *manzil* is reached. Consciousness is still subtle and again there are innumerable *mukams*. The subtle senses are used in this *manzil* to the maximum. Now what he sees are the innumerable sights of the innumerable *mukams*, but what he sees does not overpower him. He now controls the senses and experiences all this with full control not only over the senses but also with full control in the gross *manzil* and the two previous subtle *manzils*. He is now energy personified. He still has gross body, is still in the gross world, but also simultaneously in the subtle world — i.e., he uses his gross and subtle senses simultaneously. If Francis were in the third *manzil* of the subtle world, you would see him sitting, but at the same time he would be experiencing the third *manzil* of the subtle world. He now has infinite energy in his hands and he can use this energy for the gross world; but this is still illusion, it is not the Truth.

Now the pilgrim goes to the fourth plane of consciousness. This plane is known as the junction between the subtle and mental planes. It is also called *astana*, meaning threshold, and there is no *manzil* and no *mukams*. It is just a junction where all the infinite energy and the desires, emotions, and feelings of the mental plane influence directly. The soul is now neither in the subtle nor in the mental planes, but all powers of the subtle, and all the influences of the mental are continually with him in this fourth plane. Remember, this plane has no *manzil* and no *mukams*. Here one is overpowered with desires, and one is so powerful that one can accomplish whatever he desires; and so in this plane the

soul is said to be in the greatest danger of falling down. If the desires control him, he falls down. He can do anything — raise the dead, create new forms, etc. Desires are influencing him, and if he succumbs, he falls down. If he does not succumb to desires to use his infinite energy for selfish ends, then he is pushed on to the fifth plane, the fifth *manzil*.

### Summary

In the gross world, there is first *manzil* and innumerable *mukams*.

In the first plane of the subtle world, there is second *manzil* and innumerable *mukams*.

In the second plane of the subtle world, there is third *manzil* and innumerable *mukams*.

In the third plane of the subtle world, there is fourth *manzil* and innumerable *mukams*.

In the fourth plane of the subtle world, there is no *manzil* or *mukams*.

In the fifth plane there is fifth *manzil* and *mukams*.

In the fifth state of mental conscious (fifth plane, which is in the mental sphere), the soul is working directly from the mental plane. So now he is master of mind. The whole mental plane is now governed by him, he knows the thoughts of all, and knows the desires; and yet he is now said to be safe, to have passed the dark spiritual night of the fourth plane, and he cannot now fall. But with what section of the mind does he control? He knows thoughts and desires, but he cannot control desires. In this fifth plane when he controls thoughts and knows thoughts, he cannot have that intense longing for God that lovers who do not care for the planes have.

When he is pushed on to the sixth plane, meaning the second section of the mind, he is now feelings and desires personified; and as all infinite feelings come out of God, Who is in the seventh

state, this man of the sixth directly sees God in everything and everyone. Yet he feels himself aloof from the world.

Now there is the great abyss where the lover sees the Beloved, but in between there is a great valley. The Beloved says, "Come to Me," and the lover replies, "I cannot; You come to me." This glorious state is described as a length of hair between the Beloved and the lover, one end in the lover's hand and the other in the hand of the Beloved, with each pulling. This tussle goes on and on for years and years. If millions of such lovers were to long for union, one out of these can reach the Beloved; and on the sixth plane, very, very few lovers are found. When one crosses the valley and unites with God, he finds that it was himself that he loved and was seeking. He now declares, "I am God." It is said that out of thousands united with God, only one comes down to normal consciousness. Such a one is called *Qutub*. So the seventh plane has *manzil* but no *mukam*; while the sixth plane has *manzil* and one *mukam* — God.

### Summary

There are seven *manzils* in all, and there are *mukams* in six of the *manzils*.

[The following notes include free translations of some Indian song records which were played on the old gramophone. A few popular Western music records were played at first (for example, R Crooke's "Ah! Sweet Mystery" and a Marian Anderson record), and then a little later a series of Indian records. Baba stated He liked the highest and lowest in music. Later He asked for one of Bing Crosby's records and "Begin the Beguine."]

[Record:] "Lovers of God do not care for the circus." For



example, yogis of the first *manzil* can bury themselves in the earth, but it is all spiritual farce.

Our eyes are small, yet the world seen is so large; and we project all of it from ourselves. God is the sole producer of phenomena, and yet we get entangled in them. We produce everything and we, like fools, become the slaves of what we are really the masters of. When we breathe, we do not pay attention to it. In deep sleep we are unconscious of our breath, and in the same way in waking life it is our constant companion, but we do not pay attention to it. Again, with our sleeping clothes, we put these on and take them off automatically. So Baba is with you all, all the time. The thing is, how to pay attention, to be aware so naturally that you don't have to pay attention. In other words, how to feel Baba all the time.

[In the process of enquiring after our health, how we slept, Baba said, "I put questions of health to you but not questions of God."]

[Record:] This is a wonderful state of the lover. Remember, a lover is not concerned with the planes and with the different states of consciousness. He only knows of God and loves only God. He arrives now at the stage when this love spreads over his world, and the pangs of separation are so unbearable that he says now: "I want to forget You, but the more I try to forget You, the more I remember You. This torture is unbearable."

"O my beloved God, only he is fortunate and big-hearted who cannot stop shedding tears for Your love."

"O you who are claiming to be lovers of God, beware! In this path you will be shown innumerable supernatural sights. So beware you only love God, and don't be ensnared by these visions, sights, and powers."

"O you who dares to talk of love, you do not know the difficulties and hardships facing you. The Master tests you at every step you take on this path."

Your shadow is always with you, according to the rays of the sun. At twelve o'clock where is shadow? So shadow is semi-eternal.

God enjoys illusion; God as God-Man enjoys illusion but is not bound by it. He governs illusion.

[Words based on experience — that much solace you have at least.]

[Another record:] Here the Sufi of experience says, "Oh, you who have arrived at the Goal and known the Secret of God, see that you do not reveal that Secret to all, only to the few select ones." The singer tells of a man who said, "I am God," and the Moslems got wild and hanged him. "O my Soul even if you are hanged for having said that you are One with God, do not reveal the Secret. Because you raised the dead and the Moslems were furious and skinned you alive, do not reveal the Secret." At the end the singer says "Lovers of God, do not let what is in your heart come to your lips."

The singer says, "Remember, the one who really loves God, God elects him and mixes him with dust, and this was true of the Apostles of Christ and of the Saviours."

"O lover, beware! God tests you by being cruel, by giving you false hopes, by even cutting you to pieces, but love God."

Master ties you on plank, ties your hands and feet to plank, fully dressed, and throws you in mid-ocean with the injunction, "If you love Me, let not one drop touch your dress." Possible?

Christ told Peter, the most elect and select, "You will deny Me." Why? Why did He say that and have it done, too? Jesus took the whole burden of the world, and to allow Peter to share the burden He made him deny Him. So, in short, to love means to lose your whole self with all its paraphernalia in the Beloved, and that means torture, suffering, pangs. If one does this, one becomes the Beloved. To deny was the height of suffering for Peter, and this suffering was his share of Jesus's suffering.

[Another record:] Lover says, "Now the effect of Your Love

has so infinitely widened my vision that wherever I look, whomsoever I see, I see no one but You."

The singer says, "I know, Beloved, I will not be able to stand your glory, and yet I am ready to die — just show me Your Face."

This noise, *Om*, made with the lips closed, is the seventh shadow of that Original Word. Sanskrit is based on *Om*. Personally Baba likes the Persian language.

[Another record: Of Miss Akhtari Bai, a *qawwal* (singer), Baba said, "Some of you might or might not like her voice, but she is the greatest *qawwal* in India. She always sings about lovers of God."] Here she sings about *masts* who through love for God have discarded everything, do not care about anything, and appear as mad. So the *mast* says to the Beloved, "If You want to make me mad for You, do not let my fortune make me fun for the onlookers. Don't make me a laughing-stock. O you people of the world who think me mad and throw stones at me, if you were fortunate and had this love, you also would be mad."

"O you who talk of loving God, you have to bow down to Him at every step as though each particle of dust were a threshold to Him."

"Do not have procrastination. Start to love from this very moment; do not forget the Beloved one moment. *Do not forget.*"

The Master of Hafiz, Attar, had long tresses of hair. In the song Hafiz says, "Do not let your hair flow freely, because at every flowing, my heart receives an arrow."

"O Hafiz, these tears which I shed are tears of blood, but so precious that you should consider them as pearls and use them as earrings."

God says, "O lover of Mine, if you want to enter My Lane, just let your heart roll under My Feet and be kicked by Me as My ball."

The singer says, "I have been so killed by Your Love, and yet You are cruel. Beloved, You do not even glance at me."

So today we have tried to love God. We talked of love, and sang songs of love to God.

### *Miracles*

Today I shall explain why I think that from the spiritual point of view miracles are nothing but farce.

Jesus said, "I and My Father are One." He meant that He was and is God. This is true; He was and is God. Now God is said to have created all this phenomenal universe. This is God's miracle and therefore the miracle of Jesus. It means innumerable beings created and destroyed according to His Will. Yet they lay down that Jesus's greatest miracle was in raising a few dead to life. How ridiculous it sounds unless it is given some inner meaning. Raising the dead to life is insignificant illusion amidst His greatest illusion, and to say that Jesus was Saviour because He raised the dead is ridiculous. But He did raise the dead to life and many other miracles. Why did He do it? [One guest suggested that it was a means of impressing people. Baba answered this by saying, "You are saying in effect 'I am God, I am Saviour. I am everything and people are not impressed; but if I raise the dead these people are impressed; in other words, people are not impressed with My Self but with miracles.' "] Now, why did He do it? If He had not raised the dead, take it from Me, He would not have been crucified, and He wanted this.

Many miracles have been attributed to Me, and since My Andhra trips people have been writing of Baba's miracles, and believe Me, it is all news to Me. I do not perform or attach any importance to miracles. Their faith does it all. But one miracle I will perform, namely when I break My silence. My miracle will not be to raise the dead, but to make one dead to self. I will not give sight to the blind, but make one blind to the world.

This explanation about miracles is because of Sakori [where

Upasni Maharaj lived and died]; the group with Baba and a large number of His *mandali* had visited Sakori the previous day. Baba went on to discuss Sakori: You have witnessed a different atmosphere at Shirdi to that of Sakori. [Shirdi is where Sai Baba lived and has His tomb.] Everywhere in India now there are postcards, pictures, etc., of Sai Baba; and in Shirdi itself, this Great Divine Being is now being commercialised: ashes are sold, contributions sought, tickets sold for admission to temple. All this was due to one very good soul who made a mess of things because of ignorance. (I don't want to call anyone bad, because all are Mine and all happens according to the Will of God.) Sai Baba was Perfection, and I do not like this present state of affairs, and soon I will change the whole atmosphere there.

This dear erring soul came first to Me at Nasik and said he wanted to stay with Me and write My biography. I told him that I didn't want a man like him to write My biography. I said that he could go to Sakori and write of Upasni Maharaj. This dear fellow got upset, and he went to Sakori, stayed, and wrote a book which is half good and half nonsense. In the book he gave his own interpretations.

Later he came to doubt Upasni Maharaj, left Him, and spread numerous rumours and tales about Him, e.g., keeping young girls. His book was published. He then went to Shirdi, where he gathered information about the miracles of Sai Baba, and wrote a book which was also all about miracles, e.g., that women obtain children through blessing of Sai Baba, oil was obtained from water. There was great publicity, and people are now flocking from all over India to Shirdi. Now this man had written that book about Upasni Maharaj and about His *ashram* for girls before he began to doubt.

But now another interesting episode. At the time I was in that superconscious state for nine months, Sai Baba at Shirdi used to have a procession to accompany Him to the latrines every

morning. While Sai Baba walked along the street, a band would play, people lined the street, and dancers and people formed a procession. The whole procedure would last an hour. I came to Sai Baba with bloodshot eyes, while the procession was in full swing. The first thing that happened was that I bowed down at Sai Baba's feet. He did the same, and then said, "Parvardigar," meaning "You are God the Sustainer." He also pointed out the spot of Upasni Maharaj [Sakori]. I went there and as soon as Maharaj saw Me, he picked up a stone and hit Me with it. I was with this Father of Mine for seven years. At this time Sakori was just wasteland, and there was only one small hut for Upasni Maharaj, and one old woman who looked after and loved both Maharaj and Myself equally. Then people gathered round Maharaj more and more, and many came to hear Him, mostly Brahmins, because Maharaj was Himself a Brahmin. They came for the Master's *darshan*. And in time, bit by bit, a proper structure and buildings were erected at Sakori by the people who came to see Him.

John the Baptist was the Master of Jesus, and there was a conflict between John the Baptist's and Jesus's disciples over different conditions of living. I will tell you now how history repeats itself.

Maharaj and Baba sat together many nights, and this, with hints of Baba's divinity given by Maharaj, made the Brahmins around Maharaj very jealous. Some accepted it, but some resented it. But the daily sittings of Maharaj and Baba continued, and the *darshans* continued, and some buildings and temples were erected. Then one day Maharaj declared to all *mandali*, "Merwan is now Perfect." From that day Baba did not go to Sakori, and from that day the atmosphere changed. Maharaj encouraged people to be jealous and resentful; some He encouraged for and some against Baba. But both Maharaj and Baba remained unaffected by these happenings.

At this time Godavari Mai came to Maharaj, and Maharaj

said that He did not want the Brahmins with Him, and He gathered girls of pure character with great longing for God to live at Sakori like nuns. Later on Maharaj sent word by Adi's mother [Adi is one of the *mandali*] to Baba that He would soon drop His body. Baba sent word that He would not set foot in Sakori and so a meeting was arranged in a hut. There Maharaj cried, "You are Adi Shakti" [the Supreme Power]. Baba placed His head on Maharaj's foot, and Maharaj asked Baba to keep His eye on Sakori. Three or four months later, Maharaj dropped His body.

The *mandali* would visit Sakori, and the Brahmins got more and more annoyed. The present manager of the Sakori *ashram* used to spit when anyone spoke of Baba. Now the atmosphere is quite different; and it was all due to the loving influence of Godavari Mai. She came eventually to Me at Ahmednagar and asked Me to visit Sakori. As I had promised Maharaj to keep an eye on Sakori, I went. The hostile group there were very nervous over this visit and whether Godavari Mai would bow down to Me. At the visit, Godavari Mai welcomed Me, placed her head on My foot, etc., and gradually the group got over their nervousness. I am infinitely shrewd. I called the manager and embraced him, and then all the group eventually melted. Godavari Mai showed her love for Me openly, and the whole atmosphere changed. Yesterday you saw the position now.

But that miracle instinct that Maharaj created is still at Sakori, but not to the same extent as at Shirdi. So if anyone goes to Sakori, they get books, and in order to avoid confusion I collected all the books which were given to you. There is too much emphasis on Maharaj's miracles, and confusion ensues. [To illustrate this Baba told the following story.]

There was a man, good at heart but not very intelligent, who used to tell his wife everything, and she would in turn tell everyone else. A friend of this man warned him not to tell his wife all his happenings or one day he would get into a mess

through it. But the man would not listen, believing that his wife would not cause him any trouble. However, to satisfy his friend, he told his wife one day that when sitting in the lavatory, a crow issued forth from his bowels, but asked her not to tell anyone. Soon, of course, everyone knew of the occurrence, and that it was a dozen crows that came forth. The man became famous through it. But he did not blame his wife, believing that she meant well and that she had done it for his good.

So [it is] with these followers of Upasni Maharaj, who have spread rumours of all the miracles performed by Him. But I will end all this.

As I said the other day, we breathe all the time — *sahaj* manner, that is, unconscious of it. The same with clothes. While you have been listening to Me you did not think of clothes; that is the meaning of *sahaj*. If you want to think of Me continually, to remember Me, the easiest and shortest way is to do as I tell you now. This will be something of a task. At first you will have to do it with an effort, but later you will do it in the most natural way. There are said to be four main periods in the day, just as there are four main periods in man's physical status — childhood, young man, middle age, and old age. So four periods in the day, which Kabir called signposts:

1. First thing in the morning as soon as you get up, before doing anything, for one second think of Baba and then begin the day. Then Baba has covered your soul just as dress covers your body. So put on your soul's clothes in the morning. Do it honestly and you will feel He is with you.
2. Secondly, at exactly 12:00 noon, for one second think of Baba.
3. Thirdly, at about 5:00 o'clock, for one second think of Baba. Then you can do anything else you like — do anything, but at 5:00 o'clock think of Baba for one second.
4. Fourthly, just before you lie down on your bed, give thought



for Baba. Then you will feel Baba's companionship.

Be practical in the world and yet have Baba with you all the time. So for four seconds think of Baba. One who does this honestly will be keeping Baba constantly with him.

This is the beginning of *sahaj dhyana*. When you do this at first you will have to be on guard, but then it will become automatic.

[In mentioning the time at Sakori with the group, when He sat on a swing and was rocked by the women there, Baba said:] The swing is attributed to Krishna. His mother used to rock Him as a child, and then when He grew up, the *gopis* used to rock Him. The idea was "Krishna, now sleep and don't make trouble." Krishna was very active, mischievous, and yet One with God. Christ had a different personality, and I have something in between: mischievous, but not as much as Krishna. Now it is customary for Avatars and Perfect Masters to be rocked in a swing.

Babajan was sharp, quick of eye and movement. Even when very old she could walk and move quickly. She gave Me Divine Bliss, while Upasni Maharaj gave Me Divine Knowledge.

To sum up, we have to feel in our heart of hearts that only God is Real. He alone exists. He is in us all. He alone is to be loved. God and God alone.

In God's Work, Maya always opposes. Always Maya is necessary for Realisation of God, as Maya's forces in opposing give strength to the Work. The greater the opposition from Maya, the better the result.

Just before the mass *darshan*, Ahmednagar had a record rainfall. It poured down, and Sarosh came rushing to Me at Poona about it. I simply said what God wants will happen; and it so happened the day we reached 'Nagar the sky cleared. Nonsense to call it a miracle, and I do not say that to demonstrate humility.

It might rain on the 29th, 30th [the meeting days; it actually poured down on the 28th and early morning of 29th but had generally cleared by the time of the meeting]. But it won't matter, the

meeting will still go on. Why worry about it? If the people get wet, they can change their clothes; if they get wet again, change again.

The clouds of the world are closing in on My head. And ill health among you will be an extra burden on Me, so keep well. Don't go out in the sun between 12:00 and 3:00 o'clock without a hat. Sleep well. If you don't feel like eating, then eat little.

When you say I want this or that, I am old, young, thirsty, hungry, do you not identify this "I" with body? E.g., I am healthy, weak, I am not feeling hungry — we all identify this "I" with body. When you say this, you mean this face, chest, etc., you don't mean one part of the body. In this "I" are included all parts of the body. If, for example, legs are cut off, arms are cut off, you still say I am hungry, thirsty. So even after losing legs, arms, which you included in this "I," you still identify "I" with body. So this definitely means that "I" is not the body, so why this continual identification of this "I" with the body, even after understanding "I" is not the body?

Body cannot be "I," so why for twenty-four hours per day do you identify "I" with body? When a child, one says, "I am hungry, thirsty," and again when old, one says, "I am hungry," etc. If one is body it would mean that one grew from childhood to old age and one would be only the limited body.

The reason for this false identification is not because people wouldn't understand. In dreams we eat, drink, fight, etc.; in the subtle world, gross senses are used: so "I" is not the body, but we continually identify because since ages past the Self, which is not limited and is infinite, has been, due to the first illusion, in the habit of identifying itself with body. In the early states, intellect was not evident, but now in the human form, when intellect is present, the Self still identifies itself with the body. This is due to the habit of ages, when intellect was not present. Hafiz says, "You who do not come out of the age-old habit of being ignorant can never realise your self as Infinite."

It is said, and truly, God has no beginning and no end. He is Eternal. If He had no beginning, what was there before Him? God. What was before God? God. One can never reach beyond "no beginning." The answer is always God.

What will there be after billions of years? God. So this means actually in eternity there is no time; nothing has ever happened or will happen.

You all were there, are today, and will be in billions of years. Why do you not remember what happened billions of years ago? Because nothing happened. Only God is.

To say that God is, was and will be is wrong, because we depict time in saying so. Just God is. So I have said that nothing has happened, nothing will happen. All happenings, in eternity, happen now. There is no time. This is a secret which even I cannot express. It must be experienced, but I do what I can through intellect.

Today, due to impressions of yesterday, produced certain results. But actual happenings of yesterday have stopped, so nothing has really happened.

Illusion says everything happens. God says nothing happens.

When you are in the grip of this "I," which due to ignorance identifies itself with the body, illusion governs you; but when you know the Truth, you govern illusion.

All this you see, hear, experience in this world is *not* God. Lover says to the Master, "Yes, You have taught me something which has made me forget everything. You have created in me a desire which says, Do not desire for anything. You have given me that One Word which says, Words mean nothing," and so on. In the end, the lover says, "O Master, I was seeking God and thought Him to be this or that. Now you have given me something that even my imagination could not produce — its shadow." So it is all words.

When we say self, what do we mean? Nothing. And then to

understand by hearing, reading, would be an insult to God, Who is beyond understanding. It would be like lowering His status, so [the] only solution is love; if we love God, we definitely become God. No question about it. But we must love so that only God exists for us.

Only if you love God, you become One with God. And you *can* love God. You only don't know you are loving God. God loves Himself through us all.

When I wash the feet of the poor and bow down, I do it with all heart in it. I do not play part of one who bows down; I actually become that.

[During the mass *darshan* programme, Baba washed the feet of seven old men, placed His head on their feet, and gave them gifts. In connection with this procedure, Baba said:]

In washing their feet, distributing gifts, I am doing it to seven Perfect Ones. I become devotee, disciple of seven Perfect Ones, so I place My head on their feet. I am everything, but I become all this, and honesty demands that what I am I must express.

God is Infinite Honesty, and unless we love Him honestly, we cannot find Him. God is not understandable, and only the heart full of love can understand the un-understandable.

*Talk Given by Baba before Visiting Arangaon Village*

I love these poor people of the village very much. I am the poorest of the poor, I always say that and I am really that. Emperor and beggar at one and the same time.

This reminds Me, from the day I stopped speaking, I also stopped touching money. I don't touch money, but money comes and goes; disciples everywhere give money. Only when I give to *masts* and special poor people on special occasions do I handle money. On these occasions I wash their feet and give the money

with My own hands. Sometimes I distribute grain, but always the feet must be washed first, and then the gifts handed over, because I do not only play the part, but I become that.

So this village is very dear to Me. Years back there was a dispensary and hospital here, also leper and *mast ashrams*. I supervised everything. For example, in the boys' *ashram*, I bathed them, washed their clothes, cleaned latrines. The same with the *masts*. I did these things not for show, but I became that part.

The people of this village are very dear to Me. You will see how they live. [He had previously forbidden us to visit the village because of the "germs, worms and microbes," but said that with Him we would be safe.]

Try to absorb Baba in Baba's every mood; My moods constantly change.

[Baba then told us of a man, very devoted to Baba, whom we saw on our visit to Sakori.]

When Upasni Maharaj came first to Sakori, a hut was built for Him. Baba sat in that hut every night with Maharaj. Maharaj told this man that Merwan was God Beyond and to do whatever Baba told him to do. Baba did not sleep during the time with Maharaj, and after being with Maharaj until 1:00 or 2:00 A.M. went to a small hut where this man would press Baba's feet, and give Him betel nuts and leaves. And although Baba was not eating, He would ask for more every five minutes, and a great mound would grow in the small hut. And of course the man was not able to get any sleep. For seven years the man served Baba with such love very rarely found.

Then when that hostile atmosphere [previously mentioned in these notes] prevailed in Sakori, it was this man who was the target for adhering to Baba. But he was adamant in obeying Baba and Maharaj, and so he was put to great mental and physical suffering. Now that the atmosphere has changed, the man does not remind anyone about the earlier period. He helps the

people with corn and money and he loves them. So this man has Baba and Maharaj as One in his heart. He would lay down his life for Me. [During our visit to Sakori we had morning tea which was more like a dinner than morning tea, and this was due to the man's financial help.]

[In telling us of this man of Sakori, Baba was fulfilling a promise made during our Sakori trip. In connection with this Baba said, "I am above promises and seldom keep promises, but *mandali* remind Me to keep them and so I try to keep them."]

We are all meant to be as honest and loving and happy as God.

Only the Christ suffers for humanity, although He is the Source of all happiness. You see Me in physical form, but every moment I am crucified, and very few in the world know this. I suffer as no one could suffer because I love.

Godavari Mai is most steadfast; here is a story to show how she loves Me and what a virgin she is.

A month or two ago, a man came to the tomb of Upasni Maharaj at Sakori to pay homage. He told the people there that he was an astrologer and palm reader. In the meantime I had circulated in India that I would suffer My humiliation, etc., very soon. Sakori too received that circular. Godavari Mai was very upset by the circular and came to the man with My birth date details to try to learn of ways of lessening My sufferings. He said that the months of November and December of this year would be very hard for Me, and he told Godavari Mai that the one solution to relieve Me of suffering was to fast, go without sleep, repeat *mantras*, and various other rituals. So the people of Sakori carried out these things for a fortnight without My knowing about it. Then the chief priest wrote to Me and asked Me to complete the ceremonies by putting ashes on My forehead and eating ashes and various other things, which I did.

Only if people love God as I want them to do will My Work be accomplished.

*Impressions*

Illusion is just a temporary passing phenomenon as long as it seems to exist. Something that is not, but appears to be, is illusion. The first illusion creates innumerable other petty illusions, and the experiences of each illusion leave behind it the mark of experience in the form of impressions. E.g., during dark night, during sleep, you wake up and, reaching out your hand, you touch a certain thing near the bed, and you at once think it is a scorpion. You have created something which is not there. You shrink with fear, then get out of bed, grab a stick, and kill the imaginary scorpion. But all the time there was no scorpion at all. But all these impressions are now stamped on the mind, they must be spent sometime, and so illusions continue, all due to impressions — gaining impressions and spending of impressions. All the time illusion is retained and continued.

[Here is another true story Baba told us in connection with impressions.]

Meherabad was at one time a big colony, but it was later partly dissolved and partly shifted to another site. A few older *mandali* were at Meherabad, and one (a bit goofy) was detailed to keep guard at night. Every night he would shout out at intervals, "All's well," both to keep awake and to reassure the others.

There was at this time a very notorious thief who both robbed and murdered, and had terrorised the whole district. The night before this funny story, news came to the few *mandali* left at Meherabad that this robber had struck again close by. That night, the guard (the goofy one) heard some noise, something happened in his head, and he rushed in to the other *mandali* and cried out that the robber had come. All the old *mandali* could do was to frantically embrace each other and huddle together in one room. One fainted, but when he recovered, he lit a lamp and, opening the door, saw that the cause of the noise had really been a donkey and not the robber.

[Baba said of this story, "This illusion even beats the universal one I created ages ago."]

When Baba returned, He sent a message to the robber to come to Him. This robber was very strong and proud and lived with a gang about seven miles from Meherabad. The messenger was told to get out, and the robber abused Baba. Then he came to Baba, saying that he had a dream of Baba sitting on his chest. He prostrated to Baba and wept like a child. Baba said to him, "I want you to give up from today robbing and killing. I will maintain you in food." This the man did, but once there was a lapse. He was tempted to rob the house of an absent money lender, but as soon as he entered the hall of the house, he saw Baba standing there, and he rushed back to Baba and begged His forgiveness.

When Baba entered on the New Life period, He left a family at Meherabad and maintained them. But in this period Baba gave up everything, and there came a time when He had nothing left with which to support that family. This former robber heard of the plight of the family and thereafter maintained them and himself in food.

[Baba continued:] Many other incidents are attributed to Me. People write that they see Baba in physical form, yet I have not performed a single miracle; it is their faith that does it.

The breaking of My silence, the uttering of that One Word, My Glorification, will be My first and last miracle in this Incarnation. So if people tell you of miracles, listen with one ear. Baba's greatness lies in His suffering for the universe because of His Love for all.

Symbol of the coconut. The hair of the coconut represents outer body of men; the outer crust, the subtle body; the kernel, the mental body; and the water of the coconut represents the Self.

The placing of a coconut at the feet of a Master symbolises the surrenderance of one's all. The disciple says in doing so, "Everything is Yours."



John and Peter, the disciples of Jesus, knew how to do this, not by ritual, but by their every action.

The slightest degree of hypocrisy prevents God from showing Himself. He knows what you will think tomorrow. When one loves Him honestly, then He becomes One with you. So my last message is:

Be honest and love God and you will find that Baba is God.

I am definitely the Ancient One, and you all here, love Me more and more and see Me as I really am.

This body, form is not really Baba. Just a glimpse of My Real Form and you would lose consciousness. You love Me and you will be loving God.

The villagers of Arangaon are very poor and very dear to Me. So many poor people in India. Some have only one meal a day and sometimes no meal for three days.

I am infinitely restless and infinitely at peace simultaneously.

Jesus was humiliated and physically hurt, and He knew it would be, because He had planned it all long ago. He did it for all; and to have the right result He had actually to experience the helplessness and the suffering. Do not think that because He was omnipotent, He did not suffer the humiliation and the crucifixion. If He had not, it would not have had the desired effect. Some people think that because Baba is One with God, His body is also omnipotent and not affected by anything. It is not true.

*Meeting on 29 September 1954*

May you all be worthy of My Love, and may you all not let Me down. Do not sell Me.

God is deaf to the dictates of the mind, but hears the dictates of the heart, so put all your heart into this prayer of Mine for you all and for the world.

What is known as virtue and sin is nothing but strength and weakness.

Baba says: Before I give My Final Declaration I want to give a few words on other matters.

Baba says that He will leave the meeting at exactly 6:00 P.M. All those who want to get full benefit and want to return home fresh from the atmosphere of the place should go direct to their destination. This is My Wish.

If Baba lovers from north or south want to stay at Bombay, etc., they didn't come only for Baba, but for business too. They should go home with this atmosphere fresh in them.

One man asked whether he should go to Punjab after the meeting, but he should go home first, and then, if he wishes to, go to Punjab.

What I am, was, and will be — the Ancient One — is due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age: Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba, and Narayan Maharaj. I bow down to Them. Only Babajan and Upasni Maharaj played directly the main roles. Babajan, in less than a millionth of a second, made Me realise that I am God. Upasni Maharaj, in the period of seven years, gave Me the Divine Knowledge that I am the Avatar.

Before Upasni Maharaj dropped His body, we physically met in a secluded place. So before I drop My body, I had to meet Him, and so I went to Sakori, bowed down before His shrine and told Him, "You know that I am the Ancient One."

Upasni Maharaj was Perfection Personified. Godavari Mai, whom I call Yashoda, is now head of the Sakori *ashram*. She is a unique female personality and she loves Me beyond words, and to Me she is the dearest of the dear.

From the 7th October 1954 I will give up using this alphabet board; and I won't make signs like Gustadji with his fingers to convey thoughts.

So from 7th October I will not be speaking, writing, making signs, or using the board. I will be as if withdrawn within Myself. This is because now at last the so-long-promised and repeatedly

promised time of My breaking of My Silence is very near. From 7th October I shall completely retire from My present activities.

No more mass *darshans*, no programmes or meetings, no correspondence or messages, so take this seriously and do not write to Me. Only as I have promised, I will go to Pandharpur with Gadge Maharaj, if he has the fortune to do it soon. I shall not be long in dropping My body. *Mandali* have asked Me to tell in a few words exactly what will happen to Me.

In October at Satara I will appear to lead a retired, normal life, eating, going out for walks, etc., but from the 7th I will not use the board. By end of April 1955 I will definitely drop this body.

During the six months — November, December, January, February, March, and April — three phases of the Avatar life will manifest themselves.

1. A very strange, serious disease will attach itself to this body. That will be the cause of My humiliation that I have been speaking about.

2. Humiliation will end in My sudden breaking of My silence and uttering that Word which only God can utter.

3. Glorification will replace humiliation. All the pent-up Infinitude in Me will splash and spread over the Universe.

Just as when an atom bomb blows up — the atom which is so tiny — so when I break My silence, the spiritual earthquake and upheaval will be something unimaginable in its havoc. It will happen in a second, just like an earthquake; no one will be prepared and all in the area will be affected. It will create spiritual havoc and everyone will feel it in their hearts. But, unbelievable as it may seem, those people very near My physical presence will not feel My universal Glorification. The Glorification will not be manifested near My physical presence. But all others will feel My Glorification.

At this time [i.e., of His Glorification] those surrounding

Me will be only those not interested [in] and hostile to Me. Not one of the *mandali* will be near Me at that time.

For example, the place could be Poona, and thirty to forty of the hostile group there will be surrounding Me, but not one of the *mandali*. The hostile group will not feel My Glorification, but the rest of the world will. Not one of My *mandali* or lovers will be near Me when I am beaten and finally stabbed.

Yet I never die. I am always the Ancient One, and you should all remember that God alone is Real and all else is illusion.

Your attending this meeting and hearing in precise, definite terms about these happenings will be worthwhile if all of you, or some of you, or at least a few, spread the message of My Love to others. From 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. will be read My Final Declaration in four languages. From 5:00 P.M. you are all free to depart, and you must depart from tomorrow noon.

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## THREE

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### MY FIRST BOOKLET: "THE GOD-MAN" (1956)

*"I HAVE COME NOT TO TEACH, BUT TO AWAKEN."*

*- Meher Baba*

As long as man seeks something, he affirms the principle of purpose in creation. As long as man does not deny his very existence, he testifies to the existence of God. Man thinks at one time or another that the acquisition of information, abilities, material objects, constitutes the purpose of life, and thinks that absorption in life as activity is the proof of existence; but for every man, whether he believes or disbelieves, seeks or does not seek, God manifests Himself from time to time in the form of a man to state the only true purpose of life — Self-realisation; and to demonstrate in His every word, gesture, or action that Existence is not the ever-changing activity on the surface of life, but is the Reality underlying it.

The God-Man (Avatar, Christ, Rasool) is the total manifestation of God in human form, when God knows Himself as God whilst living the life of man amongst mankind. God is One, "without a second," and He as the Avatar or Christ is always one and the same, but the manifestation is repeated from time to time, "in different cycles, adopting different names and different human forms, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and

different languages." He comes as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, whenever "the spiritual law has been lost sight of and materiality is rampant." As a great saint of India stated on first meeting Meher Baba, "You are Allah; You have brought forth the creation, and once in a thousand years You come down to see the play of what You have created."

The God-Man is the sole spiritual authority of the age, "the only one infinitely capable of leading others to Self-realisation," and of bringing to the whole creation "a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life." He is the light, the security, and the love which every form of life is struggling to realise in all activity; He is the heart of which everyone speaks, but in which so very few consciously dwell; He has nothing to gain for Himself, and He touches with blessing any endeavour to achieve creativeness in work, beauty in art, or intelligent service to others. He has been likened to the mighty banyan tree, giving shade and shelter to travellers (cf. Mohammed's statement to His disciple, "Come in under the shade of this tree, for the way is beset with dangers"); and, as with the banyan tree, which continually perpetuates itself through its descending branches striking deep into the ground to take root and create another tree, the God-Man possesses the power to make anyone "like unto Himself."

"When God becomes man, it is due to His love for His beings"; and so it is "possible through love for man to become God."

In his life as a man, the Avatar lives as other men, as a king or a carpenter or a charioteer — but within the particular circumstance which He chooses as the arena for His work, He continually, openly and subtly, demonstrates a meaningful "livingness" which is applicable to all irrespective of their station in the world. "The Avatar is like a gauge against which man can measure what he is and what he may become. He 'trues' the standard of human values by interpreting them in terms of divinely

human life. He is interested in everything, but not concerned about anything. The slightest mishap may command His sympathy; the greatest tragedy will not upset Him. He knows that men do not cease to exist when they die, and therefore is not concerned over death. He knows that destruction must precede construction; that out of suffering is born peace and bliss; that out of struggle comes liberation from the bonds of action. He is only concerned about concern.... In those who contact Him He awakens a love that consumes all selfish desires in the flame of the one desire to serve Him. Those who consecrate their lives to Him gradually become identified with Him in consciousness. Little by little their humanity is absorbed into His divinity, and they become free."

It was this life of the God-Man, this miracle of spring in the midst of a seemingly never-ending winter, that set the feet of Indian devotees of Krishna dancing upon the path to God; it was this life in the form of Jesus that bred the humility, heroism, and steadfastness of the desert fathers of Egypt and Syria; it was this life that established through Mohammed the brotherhood, purity, and beauty of the Sufis of His time. It is the living example of Meher Baba that has inspired His disciples to endure incredible hardships and unceasing labours over so many years. These men and women have seen the slight, quiet figure of Baba bathing lepers, grinding corn, cleaning latrines, washing clothes of persons of all castes and creeds; sitting for ten hours a day giving food and clothing to the tens of thousands that file before Him; weeping over the plight of one of His gifted pupils; fasting, working as no one else works; Baba as friend, father, beloved, and spiritual guide to all who come to Him — and the narrow humanity of these men and women watching and helping Him has become transformed in depth and colour and fragrance. Baba once said, "My true greatness will be seen in the transformation I effect in My disciples."

As the saints and sages of the forest greeted Rama on His journey in exile as the Christ, and as the three wise men paid homage to Jesus while He was yet a babe in a stable, so the saints and Perfect Masters of this age have declared the status of Baba. Hazrat Babajan, who awakened Baba to His Godhood, said of Him, "My beloved Meher! My Son! Someday the whole world will call out, 'Meher, Meher,' all the trees will cry out, 'Meher,' all the birds will sing, 'Meher' "; and Upasni Maharaj, who brought Him down to consciousness of the physical world again without loss of divine consciousness, declared to his disciples, "Follow Merwan [Baba's birth name], do as He says, the time will come when He will move the world. Humanity at large will be benefitted at His hands."

Of the statements of the saints, among the most striking was one made before actually meeting Baba: "Meher Baba has in Him the whole universe, He is the Master of everyone, and He is within every disciple. He is this world, that which is above it, and below it; in one glance He sees the whole continent of India." While perhaps the most beautiful, containing as it does the quintessence of lyric of all ages, was spoken by one on first meeting Baba: "I gave my heart to One, but that One disappeared.... I have searched for Him all these years.... Now I have found Him.... To love is no easy task.... Love is for those who are heroes, who have courage, patience, who can suffer...."

Meher Baba Himself has stated, "Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false. I have only one message to give and I repeat it age after age to one and all: 'Love God.'"

"Live not in ignorance. Do not waste your precious life-span in differentiating between and judging your fellow man, but learn to long for the love of God. Even in the midst of your worldly



activities, live only to find and realise your true Identity with your Beloved God. This love can belong to all, high and low, rich and poor. Everyone, of every class and creed, can love God. The one and only God Who resides equally in us all is approachable by each one of us through love. But one must love God with all sincerity to such an extent that one loses one's self completely in love.... And how does one love God?... One can love God as He ought to be loved by trying one's utmost to make others feel happy even at the cost of one's own happiness.

"Religion is for man, not man for religion. If religion does not help man to emancipate his soul from illusory bondage and realise God, it has no useful purpose. It is time then for religion to go and for God to come. I belong to no religion. Every religion belongs to Me. My personal religion is My being the Ancient Infinite One, and the religion I impart to one and all is Love for God, which is the Truth of all religions. Religion, like worship, must be from the heart. If instead of erecting churches, fire temples, mandirs, and mosques, people were to establish the House of God in their hearts for the Beloved God to dwell supreme, My work will have been done. If instead of mechanically performing ceremonies and rituals as age-old customs, people were to serve their fellow beings with the selflessness of love, taking God to be equally residing in one and all and knowing that by so serving others they are serving God, My work will have been fulfilled.

"The breaking of My silence — the signal for my public manifestation — is not far off. I bring the greatest treasure which it is possible for man to receive — a treasure which includes all other treasures, which will endure forever, and which increases when shared with others. Be ready to receive it!"

## THE SEVEN REALITIES OF MEHER BABA

- 1) The only Real Existence is that of the One and only God, Who is the Self in every (finite) self.
- 2) The only Real Love is the Love for this Infinity (God), which arouses an intense longing to see, know, and become one with its Truth (God).
- 3) The only Real Sacrifice is that in which, in pursuance of this Love, all things, body, mind, position, welfare, and even life itself, are sacrificed.
- 4) The only Real Renunciation is that which abandons, even in the midst of worldly duties, all selfish thoughts and desires.
- 5) The only Real Knowledge is the Knowledge that God is the inner dweller in good people and so-called bad, in saint and so-called sinner. This Knowledge requires you to help all equally as circumstances demand, without expectation of reward, and when compelled to take part in a dispute, to act without the slightest trace of enmity or hatred; to try to make others happy, with brotherly or sisterly feeling for each one; to harm no one in thought, word, or deed, not even those who harm you.
- 6) The only Real Control is the discipline of the senses from indulgence in low desires, which alone ensures absolute purity of character.
- 7) The only Real Surrender is that in which the poise is undisturbed by any adverse circumstances, and the individual, amidst every kind of hardship, is resigned with perfect calm to the will of God.

## PUBLICATIONS

*God Speaks.* Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz says of this book: "No other Teacher in our own time or in any known past time has so minutely analysed consciousness as Meher Baba has in *God Speaks*.... This enlightening treatise adds much to the sum total of learning and contributes incalculably to the enrichment of mankind, for as the Sages of Asia teach, the most intrinsically valuable of all riches, and greater than all mundane wealth, is Right Knowledge."

*God to Man and Man to God.* Throughout this series of discourses by Meher Baba, upon subjects ranging from the root cause of social disorders to the nature and stations of the Spiritual Path, runs the common theme that all mankind "consciously or unconsciously seek one thing," namely, Self-realisation or the realisation of one's own intrinsic Divinity.

*The Wayfarers.* This incredible book by an English medical doctor gives a closely detailed account of Meher Baba's work with the insane, with spiritual aspirants, and with those who are immersed in love for God and are totally or partly unconscious of the physical world. Outstanding personalities contacted during the course of this work have been extensively studied. This is a most valuable book for any student of human nature.

*Listen, Humanity.* Meher Baba's latest book, *Listen, Humanity*, again presents the universal challenge: if Meher Baba is, as He states, the Avatar or Christ, the one Self in each and every one of us, then He is the only real object of study and pursuit. The 400 pages of *Listen, Humanity* contain a wealth of discourses by Baba on a wide variety of subjects in simple, practical terms, and a first-hand account by Don Stevens of a stay with Baba in India, which makes this book a valuable addition to *The Perfect Master* and *The Wayfarers* in providing one with a "personal" view of Baba.

*The Perfect Master.* In this biography of Meher Baba,

C. B. Purdom, noted English writer, gives an account of Baba's parentage and youth, how He became a Master, and describes in detail His methods, His long fasts and periods of seclusion, His journeys in India and around the world, together with extracts from the diaries of some of those who accompanied Him.

*Messages.* Meher Baba's messages at public gatherings in the East and West given over a number of years, and collected here in a single volume, form an excellent introduction to His philosophy, and provide some understanding of His appeal to widely divergent classes and types of persons.

*Journey with God.* The well-known Australian poet, Francis Brabazon, presents in this booklet a fine study of a "work tour" through India with Meher Baba, including an excellent essay on the concept of the "God-Man" with some recent messages by Meher Baba.

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## FOUR

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### SOME MATERIAL FROM MY ARCHIVES

#### NOTES FROM LONDON GROUP MEETING, 1951

*"I HAVE COME NOT TO TEACH BUT TO AWAKEN."*

*- Meher Baba*

*London Group Meeting, 18 July 1951*

Eighteen friends met to welcome Nariman Dadachanji,<sup>1</sup> who had come direct from Baba at Hyderabad, where he had heard Baba's declaration of His irrevocable step read aloud on 28th June 1951, before the seventy men devotees in India He had selected.

In spite of Baba's not having been at all fit during the past few months, He looked radiant and happy during all the meetings<sup>2</sup> which lasted throughout the week, and the atmosphere was happy for everyone.

The declaration had already been received in London, and circulated according to Baba's order, but it was very impressive to hear it again, read by Nariman so soon after he had been present with Baba on the first occasion, when all had stood during those solemn moments.

Baba's declaration concerning the irrevocable step:

"In the Presence of God<sup>3</sup> and bearing in My heart all the Perfect Masters<sup>4</sup> of all times as witness, I declare that by the Help and Will of God, I shall definitely take a step on October 16th of this year that will result, if God wills it, in My attaining the old-life Meherbaba state by February 16th 1952, and in My manifesting Myself universally."

Nariman said how happy he always is to meet others who love Baba, and especially those who had not met the Master, and who, in spite of all difficulties, maintain their belief in Him, and their love, unimpaired. Thinking of his own good fortune in having met Baba in boyhood through his uncle, with many further visits to Him during his subsequent business life,<sup>5</sup> and working under His guidance, he sometimes wondered whether he would have been as constant, had he not met Baba in person. He knows, from a deep inner experience in his own heart, through Baba's grace<sup>6</sup> that Baba is God-Realised, which cannot be explained or expressed in words.

The place of Perfect Masters in human evolution is widely recognised in India, but their ways<sup>7</sup> are often unpredictable by ordinary human standards, and Baba is no exception. The changes in His plans, His deferred promises, and manifestation make some people, who do not understand, wonder whether He will ever "deliver the goods," and question His methods. Genuine enquiry<sup>8</sup> on the part of an earnest seeker is praiseworthy but argument about matters beyond the scope of the intellect<sup>9</sup> is to be deprecated, as it tends to confuse the mind and thus becomes an obstacle to real progress.

His closest devotees and the *mandali* in India freely admit that often they cannot understand Baba, and yet they believe He is the real thing, and are happy to be with Him, and serve Him, and accept the suffering — as well as the joy — which it brings. Baba's training is so intensive that karma is speeded up tremendously, but He feels their sufferings in Himself, and they are sustained by

His love and grace. Similarly in His universal work He feels the sufferings of the whole world and is sustained by the bliss of conscious Divinity that the God-Realised enjoy uninterruptedly.

At the meeting of June 28th Baba called for a few volunteers to accompany Him in October next, when He puts His irrevocable step into operation. As if to prepare them for the suffering<sup>10</sup> it would bring, He said that there was but a one percent prospect of His surviving, and those with Him up to February 16th, 1952 must be prepared to die four hundred times, until His "step" came to full fruition, which would include the annihilation<sup>11</sup> of the mind.

The *mandali* in India and those who heard these words, feel that they can regard Baba's New Life as a symbol with tremendous import, but inexplicable by intellectual standards. It is impossible to account for a Perfect Master (Who had transcended the mind, and thus had no mind, but the Infinite consciousness) annihilating the mind.

As throwing some light upon this and other questions arising out of Baba's New Life and the transition to the Old Life,<sup>12</sup> Nariman recalled what Baba had told them nearly twenty years ago, which is also embodied in the discourse of January 1942 as follows:

The God-Man, in the performance of His Universal Work, has infinite adaptability.... For showing the way to divinity, the God-Man may often play the role of a devotee of God, though He has obtained complete unity with God, in order that others should be able to know the way.

The *mandali* were not dismayed by the apparently slender chance of Baba's surviving. They felt it was also a symbolic statement, and that actually He would certainly complete 100 percent the work for which He had come.

In the discussion that followed, questions were raised as to the means, the time, expression, and effect of Baba's forthcoming manifestation, with special reference to the last phrase in His

Declaration. Nariman said that a little while before Baba's New Life, he had remarked upon Baba's going bald, and Baba had said, "So are you, but I shall be growing fresh hair."

Delia DeLeon had just recalled that Baba said some years ago, in India, that He would manifest in another body,<sup>13</sup> which reminded Nariman of the above apparently trivial incident. Putting the two together, it might be that Baba might use a vehicle recognisable by all, though not necessarily physical.

It was emphasised, too, in the discussion, that such interior realities were beyond their full expression in words. They had only come into existence to convey the experience of the physical senses, and it was most important to bear this fact constantly in mind. Hence, too, the impossibility of explaining the New Life. Baba's appeal was to each individual, and each one was given his or her own experience, designed to awaken the Truth within.

An interesting reference was made to one of the better-known occult movements in America and Europe, whose leader rejected Baba as the coming Messiah because it was held, from information received through occult means, that the coming manifestation would be on the etheric plane. Nariman emphasised that Baba had already manifested Himself to many who did believe in Him, inwardly, in unmistakable ways, suited to each individual, for each one had a direct personal approach to Baba, Whose Real Life is Universal and Infinite, from which none can be excluded. Baba had said that when His Universal Manifestation is made, all mankind will feel Him and know that it is Baba; even the very stones and nature in all its manifold forms will feel the divine outpouring. But Baba has said, too, that all mankind must be ready to receive this spiritual gift, for if bestowed prematurely, it will not be as effective in meeting the world's need at this stage of evolution. The time will be ripe when the whole of humanity says, "O God"; thus their call upon Him will be met.



In connection with this universal spiritual upheaval, Nariman remarked that war, terrible as it now is, did not bring such great suffering as some natural disasters.\* Baba's promises to manifest on previous dates, had the effect of drawing the bow further and further, so that the arrow might speed all the further too, when released.

*"GOD SPEAKS TO THE PROPHET IN HIS DIVINE TONGUE, AND THE PROPHET INTERPRETS IT IN THE LANGUAGE OF MAN."*

*- an illuminated word of Inayat Khan*

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\* After what was evidently the climax of Baba's seclusion in 1945 in the jungles near Raipur, Adi was the first to see Him, and he was shocked to see Baba's face, so much more weary, drawn, and full of anguish than he had ever seen. Before he could reconcile himself to the sight, Adi had another shock when Baba remarked, quite spontaneously, that a gigantic disaster would overwhelm the world and affect three-quarters of mankind.

## NOTES

These notes have been selected from Baba's own words and some other material bearing on Nariman's address, for the benefit of other friends not familiar with them.

1) Nariman's uncle, lovingly known to us all as Chanji, accompanied Baba on His travels and conducted His worldwide correspondence and reports. We in the West are specially indebted to him, as his work for Baba brought him into such close personal touch with us from the outset. He mastered the complex arrangements for Baba's tours, with their large parties and luggage, and continual alterations in plans en route, which almost baffled Thomas Cook and all his company until Chanji unravelled the tangles. Once, good-humouredly, they suggested in London that Chanji should bring his bed to their office. His tenacity and steadfastness in Baba's service at all times were unshakable and always he radiated Baba's spirit in his tact, patience, love, humour, and understanding. Baba said after Chanji's death: "He was more than My disciple, he was My friend," and during Baba's Great Seclusion in 1949, He spoke of "our dear old blessed Chanji, and his deep undying love for Me."

2) The atmosphere at meetings of Baba with His devotees was thus conveyed by a Westerner on 27th December 1942:

Many of the close disciples present had been members of one or other of Baba's earlier *ashrams*, but some had not seen Him for years.

Everyone gathered in the early morning sunshine outside the opening of the tent specially erected for the spiritual meeting. All were very quiet, and each waited to enter when his name was called, a signal that he could go to his place in the tent.

When all were seated, Baba was sighted crossing the road, and everyone stood up to greet Him as He entered the tent. He looked very happy and vital, as He strode across to the platform welcomed by cries of "Shri Meher Baba Maharaj ki jai."

*Baba's gaadi*, covered with yellow silk, stood in the centre of the spacious green-carpeted platform, and you can all imagine what a picture it made when Baba, dressed in clear white and looking His most radiant, sat there, facing this group of tried disciples, some of whom had given Him faithful service ever since the beginning of His work. On His right were seated four disciples, who acted as interpreters for English, Urdu, Gujarati, and Marathi, respectively, to translate Baba's Message, "Work for the Spiritual Freedom of Humanity." [See *Discourses* (1987), pp. 340-343.]

It was an illuminating experience to attend a meeting where those present were so united by a single motive — to fulfil at any cost to themselves any instructions, however difficult, that might be given them by their Master — that one had the illusion they were just one solid block, just one person. It created a great calm in the sunlit tent, a peace which remained all through the proceedings.

The contrast between this scene and one described by Chanji in his diary of the following month, is also illuminating:

The *sadhu* saw Baba some fifty paces away and danced for awhile, as if he were in the happiest moment of his life. He walked a little, and then sat down, almost overpowered. He was completely naked and covered with dust and sand, but Baba treated him as if the dirty body was of no consequence and embraced him like a loving Mother her dearest child. He said afterwards that the *sadhu* was a soul merged in the "Ocean of Divine Love," and remarked, "If someone

were to ask Me what makes Me happiest, My reply would be, 'Embracing a *mast* [God-intoxicated soul] like the one you saw today.' Such love as his consumes the false ego and annihilates the lower self, in the superconscious state, wherein the Highest asserts itself."

3) "God the Absolute, Whom those who have realised, know as their own Self, and Whom believers believe to be All-pervading, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-loving, and All-merciful."

- Meher Baba

4) "It is the One Supreme Soul who is playing the different parts of the Almighty, the Creator, and the God-Realised Man who has attained the Christ-conscious state and is a Perfect Master. The Perfect Master knows He is in every man and that every man is in Him — the Perfect Master is Love, Lover, and Beloved.

"Only three things are of real worth: God, Love, and the Perfect Master. These three are almost one and the same."

- Meher Baba

5) Nariman was at Meherazad in 1949 during Baba's seclusion there preceding His New Life; Baba's sister and others there observed how much Baba was suffering, and Baba Himself said of the first nine days of July, "No one except Myself and God knows what I went through during these nine days." But the more He suffered, physically and spiritually, the more He was in the best of humours, because it was in the most crucial phase of His work and seclusion when He also became most communicative. The spiritual benefit to others there who did not see Him is illustrated in Jal Kerawala's diary:

Although I did not see Baba, He seemed to be always with me, during these most happy days in my life. Problems and questions arising in my mind used to get themselves solved in such a manner and to such an extent as I never

seemed to have experienced before. Above all, Baba seemed to have kindled some spark of His love somewhere in me; and many a time I felt an ecstasy, difficult to describe. One day, this feeling took such a hold upon me, thinking of my total unworthiness of Baba's pure love, and the following lines from a Hindi couplet came to my mind: "On an unworthy person like this, thou hast bestowed thy Grace, out of thy Infinite kindness. My eyes get full of tears of love at the idea."

*Nine Proofs Upon Which the  
Coming of the Great Master Is Based*

1. That Great Master will be the educator of the world of humanity.
2. His teachings must be universal and confer illumination upon humankind.
3. His knowledge must be innate and spontaneous, not acquired.
4. He must answer the questions of all sages, solve the difficult problems of humanity, and be able to withstand all the persecutions and sufferings heaped upon him.
5. He must be a joy-bringer and the herald of the kingdom of happiness.
6. His knowledge must be infinite and his wisdom all-comprehensive.
7. The penetration of his Word and the potency of his influence must be so great as to humble even his worst enemies.
8. Sorrows and tribulations must not vex him. His courage and conviction must be God-like. Day unto

day he must become firmer and more zealous.

9. He must be the establisher of universal civilisation, the unifier of religions, the standard of universal peace, and the embodiment of all the highest and noblest virtues of the world of humanity.

6) Mr. C. L. Agrawal, M.A., L.L.B., President of the Bar Association, Jaipur, participated with Baba, who washed, clothed, and gave *prasad* to fifty destitutes, beggars, and *sadhus*, whom Mr. Agrawal had helped to find in the vicinity and bring to the Master.

At these moments when the Master gives His grace, He is in His full divine element towards those who have the privilege to participate and to be present to receive His august blessings. That is undoubtedly a great treasure which remains a deep spiritual experience.

Mr. Agrawal's immediate and spontaneous expressions of his own experience in participating in this real service, reveal the divinity and love which Meher Baba radiates:

I was asked to pour water and hand the soap, but I had to be constantly reminded because my mind had become absolutely blank. I felt such extraordinary joy, which was contagious. While looking at him, in that state of ecstasy, a vision of Lord Krishna which I had had came back in detail, and I saw Him coming along a wide road, followed by Arjuna. Meher Baba had that same expression of joy as I saw in Lord Krishna, Who, in my vision, stopped in front of me. He opened His mouth and showed me the entire universe, as He once showed it to Arjuna. My joy was so great that even in my dream I clapped my hands loud enough to scare my family, who immediately came and asked what had happened, an incident that gave my dream a greater reality.

I had not recalled it for years, but it came back in its stern reality in Baba's presence, and I feel so happy today as I have never felt before.

His companion, Mr. C. G. Nair, the Rajputana representative of the United Press of India, added:

I understand now the meaning of the word Awakener. He touches you and something happens inside you — I believe He could be a genius in all departments of life. He works so systematically, and with such precision. I am sure He knew how much water to pour on one, and how much on the other. When He was bathing the poor in that little dark room, it seemed filled with light, and I was deeply touched by the experience, and His truly divine personality, that this meeting will be the turning point of our lives.

- from Chanji's diary, February 1941

### *Grace and Love*

What is Love? To give and never ask.  
 What leads to this Love? Grace.  
 What leads to this Grace? Grace is not cheaply  
 bought It is gained by being always ready to  
 serve and reluctant to be served.

There are many points which lead to this Grace:

1. Wishing well for others, at the cost of one's self.
2. Never backbiting.
3. Tolerance supreme.
4. Trying not to worry. (Trying not to worry is almost impossible, so try.)
5. Thinking more of the good points in others, and less of their bad points.

What else leads to this Grace? Doing all the above. When Christ said, "Love your neighbor," He did not mean "Fall in love with your neighbor." If you do one of these things perfectly, the rest must follow. Then Grace descends. Have Love, and when you have Love, the Union with the Beloved is certain.

When you love, you give. When you fall in love, you want.

Love is pure as God. It gives and never asks; that needs Grace.

- from Baba's discourse on "Love"  
28 May 1937 at Nasik

7) If you read the life of Krishna, you will find that He often said, did, and ordered things which seemed to go contrary to common sense. He used to tell one thing to one person and contradictory things to other persons, and used to give different orders to different people at the same time.... He was Perfect and One with God, and so found Himself in everything and everyone; and so He had to use different methods for different things and people.

I have to use Maya to draw My disciples out of Maya. The West does not understand this, but the East understands. That is the difference between the East and the West. I have to use infinite ways for My infinite workings, all different and all at different times. So when I tell you to do something unusual, it is always for your good. If you do anything which is out of the ordinary, you are bound. But the One who is beyond good and evil never gets bound; He uses Maya to draw you out of Maya. It is as if when you are having a long, beautiful dream, you must have a short shocking dream to wake you up.

Krishna made the two armies fight and ordered Arjuna to kill the enemy. Arjuna said, "I can't kill my own brothers," and Krishna replied, "Do as I tell you." But Arjuna would not listen.



Then Krishna said, "Look into My face," and Krishna opened His mouth, and Arjuna saw in it all his brothers and relatives whom he had not wanted to kill. So then he took up his bow and started killing them, but Krishna said, "If you had had full faith in Me, you would never have doubted or asked questions," and He then delivered the lecture which is now known as the *Bhagavad Gita*.

- Given by Baba at Portofino, Italy  
18 July 1933

8) "Mere questioning is not sufficient. It must not be out of idle curiosity, or with any improper motive or attitude — e.g., to catch at mistakes in the answer, or to trap the Guru. The object must be pure desire to attain progress and liberation."

- Sai Baba

9) "Intellectual explanation can never be a substitute for spiritual experience; it can at best prepare the ground for the appearance of that experience."

- from "The New Humanity"  
(discourse by Baba)

QUESTION: Do intellectual attainments help or hinder man's progress on the spiritual path?

BABA: It is impossible to reach Spiritual Truth and Realisation by talks, arguments, or by reading books. It can be reached by the heart alone; but that would be a very slow process. But when the heart and the head are equally developed and balanced, then man's progress is much quicker.

The man in whom the head (intellect) is more developed than the heart is liable to get fixed ideas, and he becomes attached to his own intellectual achievements.

The man with a warm heart is more likely to have faith, and for love and truth to give up all.

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Intellect is the lowest form of understanding, and is developed by reading, listening, reasoning, and logic. These processes create an illusion of the real knowledge.

The higher form of understanding is permanent illumination, through which one experiences and sees things as they are. In this state one feels in harmony with everyone and everything and realises Divinity in every phase of life, and one is able to impart happiness to others. And although performing efficiently and intelligently all duties and material affairs, one feels mentally detached from the world. This is true renunciation.

The last and the highest state of understanding results from the merging of the soul into the limitless Ocean of Infinite Knowledge, Bliss, and Power. One who has himself attained to this can enable thousands to attain Perfection.

- from *Questions and Answers* by Meher Baba (1933)

10) In the course of a general conversation, while some members were sitting about Baba near the fire (*dhuni*) at Meherabad, after returning from a journey by car, Baba conveyed some hints, through signs, about His spiritual workings. According to what was understood then, Baba said that the worry and troubles of the whole world were all due to thinking; that soon He was going to take over this thinking of all upon Himself, and as a result thereof, most probably His health would be seriously affected. It would be no wonder if He would be so pulled down and weak that some of the *mandali* would have to administer food and water to Him.

When asked as to why there should be such an awkward and painful process, Baba further conveyed, "It is beyond your intellect to understand. You won't understand that, and yet *that must* be done: it is essential for the future workings, which would be tremendous, and affect the whole world. It is the duty of the God-Realised Saliks (who are also *conscious* of the world) to give

an onward push to the subtle universe, but 'the Head' has also to prepare the Circle, make the members realise God, as well as give an onward push to the gross Universe too. When they — Perfect Masters — give such a push, they have to work for it; they have to come down from the *nirvikalpa* (*ananda*, or Eternal Bliss) state, which is located in the human body at the *top* or crown. of the head, and take their position in the *brahmand*, the centre position. This point is also called the junction between the upper Bliss state and the lower human form, from where one can see the whole of the lower parts of the body (equivalent to the seeing of the whole chain of past lives and forms, that one had to pass through before God-Realisation).

"The uppermost (crown) state is only Bliss state.

"A duty is imposed on some selected few of these God-Realised Ones (those who are in the topmost Bliss state) to come down to the junction and bring up those in the world who are worthy to be taken up, that is, worthy to be God-Realised, because of their preparedness.

"But *this* [preparedness] does not come off-hand and quickly. It requires ages and ages of suffering and sacrifice, and deep connection with a God-Realised Master. It is after all these age-long sufferings that one is deemed worthy of being admitted into a Circle for God-Realisation.

"God-Realisation means the absolute destruction of all *sanskaras*, the absolutely stopped state of the mind, void of all thinking. This is very, very difficult, for, if the mind tries to stop thinking, it goes to the sound sleep state, i.e., unconscious. Even great yogis are unable to attain to this stopped state of mind for good. They can at the most stop thinking (*vichar*) temporarily during meditation, concentration, or *samadhi* state (and this creates new *sanskaras*). But no sooner do they come down from the *samadhi* state than at the very moment their minds begin to work again, and the huge store of the past undestroyed *sanskaras*, gets additional quantity

added through this transitory stopping of the mind.

"Hafiz has finely likened the body to a pot, the soul to smoke, and the *sanskaras* to a huge stone lying on the top of the pot. For all its attempts, how can the smoke ever succeed in removing and throwing up the stone? For this, a sage must come and lift it away. Similarly, a bird may go on trying to open the cage closed from the outer side, but it will never succeed until help is received from outside. In short, those who desire to gain something — even a little benefit in the spiritual line — must have as strong a chest as that of iron (i.e., be very brave and patient, like iron) so as to withstand severe blows."

- from Behli J. Irani's Indian diary (in English)  
30 March 1927

11) "Through the operation of the mind, which is the seat of the ego, a man regards himself as a separate individual, a limited being. The problem of Self-realisation, therefore, presents the dilemma of how the mind is to consciously destroy itself, and yet for the consciousness which it has evolved, to remain, so that the real Self may gain Self-consciousness whereby the soul can become fully conscious of its own Infinite nature."

- Baba's discourse at Nasik  
18 January 1937

The effect of the divine outpouring which will redeem humanity by spiritualising the consciousness and life of the world (Baba's divine mission) is outlined in Baba's World Message, 1932 - 1933, embodied in the following letter in the *London Forum*:

Self-interest caused by low selfish desires is the root cause of contemporary world chaos and individual misery.

My manifestation will embrace the religious, economic, social, and political aspects of life. It will spiritualise all

human activities in art, science, music, stage and the cinema.

In the new future, a great Universal Divine Drama is to be enacted, the theme of which will be Pure Love and Selfless Service.

I will play the leading part in this world-awakening drama.

Shri Meher Baba's work for the world will become apparent when He manifests, and for this even His long silence is a preparation.

He explains in His message to the American press that "the benefits then accruing to the different countries will be largely determined by the amount of energy they possess. The greater the energy, the greater the response; the Master merely diverts the current into the right channel."

Elsewhere He says, "This is the age of activity."

You will appreciate more readily than the general public that such work entails preparation on the inner planes as well as in the outer world; we who are in close touch with Baba have ample evidence of His inner workings, and realise the divine love that radiates from Him. Having seen its power to awaken the individual consciousness, we can look forward with assurance to the effect of His speech and manifestation upon the world.

All students with esoteric knowledge and mystical understanding will realise that the speech of a Master affects the outer planes of manifestation.

When the Perfect Master manifests to the world, He will show that world the true nature that is dormant in it, and which has been brought to fruition in One who has attained to conscious union with the Divine.

12) This reversal to the Old Life occurred for four hours on 16 October 1950.

13) A *sadhu*, who saw Baba on one of his journeys, testified to having seen Him previously elsewhere, crossing a bridge, when at that time Baba was physically miles away. Several of Baba's disciples, including some present at the meeting, had not seen Baba physically, but had done so interiorly, and recognised Him thus, from photographs; but it was noticeable that the consciousness with such a vision was its outstanding feature, and as that deepened subsequently, the visions ceased.

MEHER BABA'S VISIT TO LONDON IN AUGUST 1952  
(INTERVIEWS 3RD AND 4TH AUGUST)

Meeting someone for the first time, Baba said: "You have had My love for years. I know, that is why I tell you this and I give you My love. The best way to help is to follow your conscience, and what I am happy about is to see your love for Me. Your love is precious to Me."

Two people who had had a long period of suffering, mental and physical, told Baba how happy they were to see Him, and He responded saying, "But not so happy as I am to see you two dear souls, and I give you My love." They brought to mind the words of one of Baba's Indian devotees: "Through suffering, we understand Baba more and more; sufferings open the heart's doors for Baba to enter."

In reply to some words of loving sympathy about His broken leg [from an accident in the U.S.] Baba said, "The accident is of no importance. The only important thing is to see God everywhere and in everyone, and to become one with Him. The goal of life is to know God, the Infinite One, in everyday life, and all this existence is to gain that goal."

To others, Baba said:

What else is life meant for but to love God and become

one with Him? God is the Only Reality; we have to go on and on until we arrive at a stage, when we must love God, because we know all life leads to Him.

When one loves God, one is eternally young, because God is eternally young, infinite, and everlasting, and to love Him and know Him as He is is the goal of life. To love God, to feel God, to know God, to be one with God, is the only thing that matters in life.

Let Me tell you this fact. There is nothing to worry about, nothing to be disheartened about. We are all, each of us, meant to be happy. Our life is by God's Grace, and happiness is that which makes us feel that we are one with God. Know that all else is illusion.

I am really happy to see you today, and God, Who is within us all, is to be experienced as Infinite Happiness, and that can be done only through love for Him.

Look for God. God loves those who seek Him, and when we seek Him with all our hearts, we find Him in ourselves. Baba gives you His love, that love which will eventually help you to find God.

To find the Truth, one has to depend not only upon analysis and intellect, but on the heart. Intellectual understanding is not so important as experience through the heart. God is the only Reality, and He cannot be analysed. Reason cannot reach Him. When one finds Him through Love, one finds Him in everyone. We must seek God in everyday life. The goal of life is to know God, the Infinite One, in everyday life. My love will help you to love God as He ought to be loved.

Do your work selflessly, and you will be doing it for God — God will have you very dear to Him if you serve your pupils, knowing that God is within them, as within you. I will

help you with My love, so that you can do this perfectly.

Don't worry. My love will give you that strength and conviction which makes you feel that you belong to God. Seek Truth with all your heart and Baba will help, because God alone is real. I am in the world to help people to love God, to find Him, and to see Him.

I have been repeatedly telling people for ages that only love can bring us near to God. God, Who is within us, can be realised only through love, and I give you both My love. I am very happy with your understanding it, and Baba gives you His love.

Truth, when it comes, comes in a flash within. When knowledge comes, one knows everything, but Truth and its Knowledge are not found unless one seeks with all one's heart, and when one feels that one cannot live without it, then one finds it within the self. I give you My love, and this love will help you find the Truth.

LETTER TO IVY DUCE  
MURSHIDA OF SUFISM REORIENTED  
FROM MEHERJEE KARKARIA, A CLOSE DISCIPLE

147 Cumballa Hill  
Bombay26  
26 February 1953

My dear Mrs. Duce,

Baba's Fiery Life: I have already informed you how it started after a few days of meetings at Meherabad. Baba left Ahmednagar on the 15th November last, came to Bombay with about twenty men disciples, stayed for a day in Bombay where He contacted some *masts* and gave *darshan* to about five hundred Bombay devotees in the afternoon of 15th for about three hours.



On His first lap of the tour I accompanied Him, and we all left Bombay on the 16th November and arrived at Kanpur (United Provinces, now known as Uttar Pradesh) on the 18th morning, from where we drove in cars to Hamirpur, a distance of about forty miles from Kanpur. This is a district town, and according to local people and also Baba, though this town is so backward and neglected, having no connection practically with the outside world for nearly three months of the monsoon, being surrounded by two large holy rivers, the Jamana and Betwa, it is of great spiritual importance and according to legend was a temporary abode of Ram during his enforced fourteen years' jungle wanderings.

Wherever Baba goes during this Fiery Life, He at first washes the feet of several poor people, bows down to them, and gives them cash help. Once Baba explained the significance of His bowing to the poor, that He does not bow to these particular persons brought to Him, but through them He bows to the poor and suffering humanity all over. He says that these poor people are greatly sharing the burden for the spiritual upliftment of the humanity and as such they are a help to His work, and He bows to them in gratitude. After this bowing is over, He gives mass *darshan* to all people who gathered at various places. Here too He bows to the crowd first and then the people are permitted to have the *darshan*. Each and every individual — men, women, and children — come to Him one by one and by His own hands He gives them some sweet or fruit, which we call here as *prasad* from the Master. His messages and statements are read everywhere He goes and translated into local languages. Thus at every place thousands flock to take His *darshan* and people from very far-off places came to this place to see Him. One man came from a distance of twenty-seven miles just rolling on the ground, without taking any food till he met Baba. It was really a sight to witness the man overpowered with joy and love to see Baba. Baba embraced him and gave him some fruit, with which he

broke his fast. In this district of Hamirpur, He visited different places for ten days and left for Delhi on about 28th November.

Delhi: Baba from the beginning for His own reasons was reluctant to go to Delhi, but under pressure from some of His very devout disciples He agreed to go there. The only significant program there was a meeting at a Sikh College where about three thousand students under the guidance of their principal had gathered to meet Him. The principal was a quite unknown person and had not met Baba before, but was drawn to Him by some invisible force. As a rule Sikhs are very fanatic and would not follow any other master than their own, but here in this meeting the principal with his three thousand strong students, mostly Sikhs, were just held spellbound by Baba's presence, heard patiently His message of love which ultimately brought tears to the principal's eyes. In short, Baba was particularly happy in this meeting....

At Amraoti, besides public *darshan*, Baba visited Shivaji Arts College and made the opening ceremony of a hall there named after the famous saint Shri Ramana Maharshi, whose photo also was unveiled there at Baba's hands. The meeting here was organised under the auspices of Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh, the Union Minister of Agriculture. Baba also visited another university in Amraoti, the Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya. Just like in Delhi, the principal of this college was so much drawn to Baba that in all humility he came to see Baba several times at Baba's residence.

From Amraoti, Baba came to Saoner, a small place but very rich in love and devotion. Thousands of disciplined villagers from all around came to have a glimpse of Baba from great distances. The programs were identical with those of Hamirpur. Messages were read and fruits distributed by Baba to each and every individual. This is actually the personal contact which Baba makes with people of all shades at a time. We feel this is His main spiritual work.

From Saoner, we came to Nagpur, and from there Baba and

party went to Allahbad to contact *masts*, saints, and *sadhus*. There were no public *darshans* at Allahbad. From Allahbad He went to Madras for a couple of days for *mast* work and came to Tadepalligudam in Andhra Pradesh, practically on the east coast of India. These last ten days were the climax of the whole tour. The love and the spiritual longing we witnessed in this district was unsurpassed. Though no one was permitted to come to Baba's residence, which was always kept aloof from the town, people from early hours of the morning till late at night used to gather and clamor for just a glimpse of Him. Baba visited several villages and towns in this district. At Rajamundri, a place of spiritual and political importance, a gathering of about four thousand intelligentsia and elite of the town waited upon Him, and though Baba had a very short time there, the people were given proper *darshan* individually and some statements and messages were read.

The last place visited was Ellore, where on the last day more than 60,000 people out of a total population of about 120,000 visited Baba. The most significant thing we witnessed in this district has been the spontaneous outburst of love and divine longing amongst the people of all shades. From judges and ministers and educationists to farmers, villagers, and depressed classes (untouchables), all came to see Baba in one human mass. Another thing, Baba had never visited this place before and how could such a large mass come to know of His greatness all of a sudden? None of us could talk in their language, which is called Telegu, and yet how well we were received at this place. Everybody was vying with each other. Several people in this district had visions of Baba; some had even seen Him there when He was actually in America. A boy of about nine used to go into trance and say things about Baba, and some such spiritual experiences by various people seem to be the cause of such sudden outbursts. The people are all very intelligent and the standard of education is very high in comparison with many other parts of

India. Perhaps it is Baba's work that far off from His own place, His work is carried out unseen and unheard by many. We all returned back on the 31st January.

Baba's birthday according to the Parsi calendar was celebrated on the 11th February at Pimpalgaon (Meherazad) in the presence of a very few disciples. No one from outside was invited. Early morning at 5:00 God's name in different languages was recited, and at 7:30 Baba started washing and bowing at the feet of some one hundred or more poor people of Pimpalgaon and Ahmednagar to whom He also distributed sweets and cash. Yes, at Ellore on the 27th night everybody was kept awake the whole night, and after baths in the morning Baba washed and bowed down to the feet of fifty-six disciples who had been with Him there. He explained that He did not bow to His disciples, but through them He bowed down to fifty-six God-Realised ones who are always on this earth.

Baba left with about ten men and six women disciples to Dehra Dun on the 16th instant. Thus He has now moved towards the north. No more public *darshans*, but His *mast* and saint work is continuing. By March end He will be going to Kashmir and the Himalayas. I am joining Him by the middle of April in Kashmir.

Yes, we are in the midst of unprecedented turmoil and confusion, and the darker it all seems, the sooner the light should appear and Baba's recent wanderings in remote places contacting personally such diverse masses at great personal inconvenience and hardships to Himself, must bear fruit soon. *Insha'allah*, the day is not far when the suffering and tortured humanity will soon feel the divine call of love and unity.

Yours sincerely,  
*Meherjee*

Baba's leg is now fairly strong and He walks freely alone.

AN EXPLANATION BY MEHER BABA  
FOLLOWING A LETTER FROM JEAN ADRIEL  
SENT BY MANI IN OCTOBER 1955

[Jean Adriel, who was following a saint, spoke of the "fundamental technique of meditation," which the initiation she had received provided.]

There are various retreats in India where meditation classes are held and different but set techniques of meditation are observed, which, if followed faithfully and for a long time, result in slight occult experience such as seeing flashes of light, colours, even visions, etc. These occult experiences by themselves are nothing, are in the domain of illusion, and not only have no direct bearing on the incomparable reality of God-Realisation, but can actually become a hindrance and obstruction to the aspirant's path to God.

The direct path to God is the path of love. Love is not derived from meditation; it has nothing to do with it. Love is a grace of God, one in many have it, and it is all-sufficient. Love does not depend on anything but itself. Love without meditation is enough; meditation without love is not. That is why *Sadgurus*, i.e., the Perfect Masters, do not set meditation for their disciples as a necessary routine; they stress on the aspect of love and selfless service. The masters of the path on the other hand, not having reached the goal themselves, advocate meditation to the aspirants following them. In the Prem Ashram (Baba's unique school for boys) the boys were touched with the spark of His love and there was such a tumult of divine emotion and tears of love! Then when the phase of intensive meditation followed (with the resultant flashes of occult experience), the love aspect began gradually to decline. One boy (Chota Baba) did not meditate, did not cry for God-Realisation. He just loved Baba and automatically thought of Him every moment. When love comes, the lover does

not even think, "I am loving, I am thinking of Him," he just loves. This boy found Baba within himself, in everyone. He is a *wali* on the fifth plane, and is in Iran where Baba sent him later....

There are many *walis* and *sants* (saints); Gadge Maharaj is one of them. He (and others) love Baba, and have a following of their own. Baba says Sant Kirpal Singh is a very nice man; he loves God, is on the path, and saw Baba twice in Delhi. He is a follower of Guru Nanak and has a following of his own. He is a true saint and loves God. Baba does not in the least mind Jean leaving Baba, Whom she followed all these years, and following the saint instead. Baba is the Avatar and, as God, knows all as parts of Himself. Baba loves Jean as He loves all aspects of His own Self, as He loves all.

God is within us all; He is also unfathomably beyond all. Those who love Baba are fortunate — they derive much by merely loving Baba. It does not affect Baba's Godhood whether we love Him or oppose Him. The Sun always shines whether we bask in its rays or shun it. In "The Die Is Cast" Baba says that we must not *ask*, for He knows without our asking Him. But He also says, "I will give to each when I deem fit." Let us prove worthy of the Gift. "The Die Is Cast" is in a supreme way a test for us all. Those who are strong in their love will cling to Baba against all hardships and opposition. Those who hold His *daaman* lightly will automatically be shaken off.

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER FROM HAMIRPUR  
CONCERNING BABA RAMDAS NAGA  
SENT BY MANI IN OCTOBER 1955

Eruch at present has the role (plays various ones in Baba's service) of indefatigable secretary and is submerged in correspondence with Baba lovers all over India and Pakistan. When he gets something outstandingly interesting, Baba asks him to

pass it on to me, saying, "Mani, write to the West; they might like to have some of these things" — so you see?

This is from a letter of 6th October from Hamirpur. Eruch had written to this Baba lover asking him to include Baba Ramdas Naga in the *sahavas* group. Baba Ramdas is of the *naga* community and loves Baba. (*Naga* means "naked," and in the Kumbh Mela of holy pilgrimages these *nagas* form part of procession.) After seeing Baba before August 1st (i.e., before His period of three months' seclusion was completely over), he felt guilty of having disturbed the rule and as a penance fasted for a month, the first fifteen days on milk or curds and the latter fifteen on water only! During this last fortnight he sat in a cave on a hillock near the village of Akthauhan, continuously repeating God's name day and night. During the last twenty-four hours *akhand kirtan* (continuous chanting) of Baba's name was observed. This person continues to relate about Ramdas:

On his way to Satara that time, he had arranged twenty-four hours of *akhand kirtan* in the village of Malhara, leading the procession with the seven-coloured flag, all chanting the *kirtan* (as above), stopping at some of the houses to continue it in there.... It so happened that the small daughter of the man in whose house the *kirtan* was going on, and who had been ill for days, died during the *kirtan*. When Ramdas heard this, he asked them not to stop the *kirtan* in any way, and he himself (symbolically associating the incident with the *kirtan*) fetched the body of the child and with it in his lap sat concentrating deeply on Him and praying to Him, and after a time life was restored to the child. On hearing this, people of that town ran in thousands to the spot, and joined in the *kirtan* of Baba.

What has Baba to say of this? He says, "These 'miracles' are performed by the people's love and faith — I don't know anything

about it. The only incomparable miracle I will perform is when I speak. Precious to Me is the love for Baba that prompts these miracles, but miracles in themselves are nothing. Even God's greatest 'miracle' — the Creation — is in the domain of illusion...."

Incidentally, this man (Ramdas) has built a little Baba-temple on the hillock I mentioned and is preparing to wage a loving "tug-of-war" with Baba till his love can draw Him to visit the temple and once again the devoted people of Hamirpur....

When Baba talks of the miracle and you say you feel the breaking of His silence is not so far away, it makes me think of something Baba said very long ago. He said, "I am like a lion, but at the moment a caged lion. Those who recognise Me feel the strength of My power but only in a small degree. When I speak, I will uncage Myself, and then you will know My Divine strength!"

#### EXCERPT FROM A LETTER TO NEW YORK CONCERNING ARNAVAZ DADACHANJI'S BROTHER NOZER

WRITTEN BY MANI IN OCTOBER 1955

And now I want to tell you of a recent incident that proved a test for some Baba lovers who came out with flying colours. Our hearts are so touched by their love we cannot think of it with dry eyes. Such are the prayers God listens to, the meditation He accepts....

Before I get too incoherent, let me get down to the story. You must know of the Dadachanji family (Filis knows Arnavaz, Nariman); they are the most truly devoted family you can imagine — from tots to grandparents, aunts, brothers, sisters — and all love Baba so that He is not just a part of their lives; their life is a part of Baba.

Arnavaz's youngest brother, Nozer, scarcely twenty-two



(a handsome boy, as are all the family) went into the air force. Baba had given full sanction, told him to go ahead, and whenever he got into a plane to do so with Baba's name. Being a bright lad, he got through easily and some time before the tragedy occurred was promoted to an officer's rank, holding the responsible job of instructor. He was stationed in Hyderabad and about a month ago came to see Baba at Satara. On the 13th (when Baba left for Poona for a couple of days rest), Nozer's father (who is over seventy) got a telegram from Hyderabad to say the plane Nozer and another instructor had started in many hours before was missing. They wired Baba (according to His orders when anything very serious occurred)....

More telegrams followed as more news came through — in short, Nozer's plane had an accident, and he and the sole other occupant were feared dead in the big lake. Nozer's body could not be located for some days, and the tension of uncertainty for the family was terrific. What shone through the darkness of all this suffering was their unflinching devotion to Baba, their "deep love and gratitude for the strength and peace of mind You have given us through it all, dearest Baba" (quoting telegram). They asked Baba re the religious ceremony for Nozer. Baba had Eruch give the message by phone that in the first place they should not have asked. But as they had, then if the body was in a position to be moved, it should be brought to Meherabad. If not, it should be disposed of according to the Zoroastrian rites and prayers, observed only for four days....

Then came telegrams to say how deeply they regretted their having asked; they did not in the least care for any religious ceremony themselves, but it was the officers in charge [who] were asking to know.... They would do exactly what Baba wished, and they were deeply sorry about having disturbed Baba in any way by asking the question, ending again with, "We send our unbounded gratitude and love and ask You to forgive us our

lapses." When Baba sent a message that Nozer was happy and they should not worry, they replied, "We will do what You wish — we believe and accept all You say." Then when Baba got to Meherazad (for a day), He called Nariman, Arnavaz, the father, and another member of the family, on condition that they did not cry or mourn....

They came... and went.... Eruch said afterwards it was like their usual meeting with Baba, and we couldn't help mentally taking off our hats to their love and courage.... (They also made an offering of a sum of money which Baba will give to a certain number of poor, after washing their feet as usual.)

Here are some bits that Baba said to them there, and as I remember Eruch explaining afterwards:

I am never sorry for anyone who dies. He who dies with My name on his lips, with Me in his heart, never dies. I never worry about them, for theirs is no loss. If I am ever worried, it is for those that suffer through the death which they might allow to alienate them from Me — that would be their loss indeed. Why suffer unnecessarily? My "dead" live in Me. That should make you happy, so why not rejoice in his happiness? Loving Me as you do, knowing Me for the One I am, you should be only happy to know Nozer is happy in Me. Knowing this, any mourning you may do therefore must be for yourselves only, from selfish motives. You don't know how fortunate they are who die with My name on their lips and in their heart....

I can say little after this, except that may we be as worthy of His Love when our test comes....

ERUCH'S NOTES ON A *DARSHAN*  
GIVEN BY MEHER BABA  
POONA, 8 DECEMBER 1957

Pimpalgaon, Meherazad  
12 December 1957

It is difficult to assess the number of times Baba has visited Poona during the past thirty-two years of His silence, but on several occasions He has given the opportunity to thousands of men, women, and children of the place of His birth to come within the orbit of His physical presence. As Baba permits comparatively very few to come for His *darshan* except on these marked occasions, Baba lovers, devotees, and interested ones can ill afford to miss the chance of having His contact during these mass *darshans*. The result is a rush of many thousands, during which many ardent lovers who have waited patiently for His *darshan* and who come from distant parts of India for the occasion fail to have more than a glimpse of Him and at times not even that.

Hence the Poona *darshan*, on Sunday December 8th, was exclusively arranged to provide the Poona Baba lovers and those members of their families and friends who have loved Baba and followed His instructions without having seen Him physically, the opportunity of Baba's *sahavas* for a few hours. Over four hundred men, women, and children gathered at Guruprasad bungalow long before the appointed time on the morning of the 8th, and Baba spent four hours, from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon with them. This happy band of lovers desired nothing from their Beloved. They were happy just to feel the warmth of His divine presence, and to sit adoringly in His close proximity. During this, Baba had the Prayer of Parvardigar recited and then gave short discourses on types of obedience.

When later He asked them to disperse for tea and refreshments, they did so with obvious reluctance, not wanting to miss

even a few minutes of His *sahavas* when such an opportunity had at last been granted them after long waiting, for some, of years. But the discourse on obedience had had its effect on each, and Baba was alone with the *mandali* for a while. The rest of the morning with Baba was spent in singing songs to Him, several being composed for the occasion in praise of Baba the Ancient One, the Beloved, the Master, the Father, and Friend. Exactly at 12:00 noon Baba ordered the *arti* to be sung and soon after this left the hall, to join the group again at 3:20 P.M. For over a half-hour Baba was exclusively with the group of His workers, the main point of His explanation being that the most important work that one can do for the Avatar is to love Him most sincerely from the heart.

From 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. Baba gave *darshan* to about two thousand men, women, and children. The number was restricted to afford all who approached enough scope of having His *darshan* without rush or confusion, and to avoid the physical strain on Baba as He had promised Dr. [Harry] Kenmore He would try to do.

During the afternoon programme the Baba *Bhajan* Group was singing songs in His praise, and among these were at least three radio singers. One of these was a Bengali girl who is blind and had come with her parents for Baba's *darshan*. Baba gave her special instructions, to fast for forty days on milk, tea, coffee, and bananas, and during this period to repeat His name 1001 times daily. She was also told to participate in the February *sahavas* with her parents and to break the forty-days' fast on the day *sahavas* commenced. Later Baba made it clear to the girl and her parents that He does not perform miracles and that His instructions to her must not lead them to form the impression that by carrying them out her sight would be restored. Baba explained that the eyes of man see things which are not worth seeing, and that which is Real is not seen by the physical eyes. By her following His instructions, He would help her inwardly to see that alone which is worth seeing.

The day's programme ended at 6:00 P.M. after Baba had the *arti* recited again, before parting from His family, yet remaining within the hearts of all who love Him.

[Given by Eruch]

P.S. from Mani:

... On the 20th we're going with Baba to Bombay for His *darshan* programme on 22nd, and will stay on a few days, spending Xmas at the Dadachanjis'. Sometime after our return (probably end of the month) Baba will hold another meeting, will decide on the details, and then I will let you know where and how the arrangements should be made for His [1958] stay in Australia, etc.

In the meantime, hope this reaches you in time to send you and the family and each dear one of the groups our lovingest greetings for Christmas, one of the most beautiful and unique Birthdays of our Wondrous One.

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# FIVE

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## AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPANTS IN VARIOUS SPECIAL OCCASIONS WITH MEHER BABA

1956 *SAHAVAS*

ATTENDEES  
AT BEACON HILL, SYDNEY  
Francis Brabazon  
Bill Le Page  
Joan Le Page  
Ruth Le Page  
Michael Le Page  
Jenny Le Page  
Robert Rouse  
Lorna Rouse  
Reg Paffle  
Beryl Giddens  
Marjorie Donaldson  
Grace Swan  
Judith Humphries  
Diana Snow  
Milly Chant  
Emily Firmstone

John Grant  
John Ballantyne  
Jack Paynter  
Betty Stoltenhoff  
Grace Zander  
Frances Lee  
Norman Lee  
Their 3 children  
May Lundquist (*from Canberra*)  
Gladys Hewitt (*from Armidale*)  
Malcolm Stannett (*from Newcastle*)  
John Bruford (*from Melbourne*)  
Joan Bruford (*from Melbourne*)  
Joanna Bruford (*from Melbourne*)  
Bernard Bruford (*from Melbourne*)  
Clarice Adams (*from Melbourne*)  
Frank Cordell (*from Melbourne*)  
Roy Le Page (*from Melbourne*)  
Alma Le Page (*from Melbourne*)

*John Grant's wife, Mona, their two children, and her father came the last evening; Baba visited their home that morning. She met Baba on public day.*

ATTENDEES  
IN MELBOURNE

GROUP FROM SYDNEY  
(by plane with Baba)

Francis Brabazon  
Joan Le Page  
Robert Rouse  
Lorna Rouse  
Reg Paffle  
Beryl Giddens  
Judith Humphries  
Diana Snow  
John Grant  
Jack Paynter  
Grace Zander  
Frances Lee  
May Lundquist  
Gladys Hewitt

MELBOURNE PEOPLE  
(Returned to Melbourne  
by plane with Baba)

John Bruford  
Joan Bruford  
Joanna Bruford  
Bernard Bruford  
Frank Cordell

Stan Adams  
Cynthia Adams  
Noel Adams  
Colin Adams  
Denis O'Brien  
Joan O'Brien  
Doris O'Keeffe  
Ena Lemmon  
Elsie Smart  
Jean Smart  
Bill Smart  
Oswald Hall  
Betty Hall  
Ethel Woodford  
Tom Woodford  
John Burston  
Betty Burston  
Giff Alston  
Roy Le Page  
Alma Le Page  
Lee Buchanan  
Beth Buchanan  
Gordon Daniel  
Mrs. Cahill  
Nettie Parker  
Peter Dawson  
Graham Farrant  
Vincent Jolley

*Note: These lists are as accurate as can be ascertained now. They do not include people who came on the public days in Sydney and Melbourne..*

Clarice Adams

1958 *SAHAVAS*  
 AVATAR'S ABODE  
 WOOMBIE, QUEENSLAND

Francis Brabazon

Bill Le Page

Joan Le Page

Ruth Le Page (9)

Michael Le Page (7)

Jenny Le Page (4)

Roy Le Page (*my father*)

Alma Le Page (*my mother*)

Robert Rouse

Lorna Rouse

Radha Rouse (*19 months*)

Ken Davis (*Lorna's brother*)

John Bruford

Joan Bruford

Joanna Bruford (*17*)

Bernard Bruford (*15*)

Roy Baulch

Meryl Baulch

Peter Baulch

Joan Baulch

Phillip Baulch

Reg Paffle

Diana Snow

May Lundquist

Marjorie Donaldson

Jack Paynter

Stan Adams

Clarice Adams

Noel Adams

Cynthia Adams

Colin Adams

Oswald Hall

Ena Lemmon

Milly Chant

Emily Firmstone

Dr. Denis O'Brien

Frank Cordell

Beryl Giddens

Giffen Alston

Robert Buchanan

Ethel Woodford

Craig Woodford

Jean Woodford

John Grant

Dot Harris

Elsie Smart

Renee Rose

Eleanor Jennings

Judith Humphries

Doris O'Keeffe

Celia Callaghan

Betty Burston

Lawrence Adolphus

Wallace Ainsworth

Frances Lee

Dr. Norman Lee

Grace Swan



THE EAST-WEST GATHERING IN POONA  
NOVEMBER 1962

BY AIR FROM SYDNEY:

Bill Le Page  
Reg Paffle  
Craig Woodford  
Anthony Thorpe (*New Zealand*)

BY S. S. *STRATHMORE*  
FROM SYDNEY:

Grace Swan  
Milly Chant  
Emily Firmstone  
Dulcie Morris  
Judith Humphries  
Beryl Giddens  
Judith Garbett  
Nell Burke  
Norman Shipway  
Hazel Shipway

*This group travelled by the Qantas  
flight from Colombo to Bombay  
30th October, thence to Poona by  
train 31st October.*

Joan Bruford  
Joanna Bruford  
Bernard Bruford  
Robert Rouse  
Lorna Rouse  
Radha Rouse

May Lundquist  
Diana Snow  
Marjorie Donaldson  
Joan Le Page  
Ruth Le Page  
Jenny Le Page  
Michael Le Page

*This group had to remain on the  
ship to Bombay, and travelled by  
train to Poona on 2nd November.*

BY AN EARLIER SHIP FROM  
MELBOURNE:

Clarice Adams  
Ena Lemmon  
Gladys Hewitt

BY AIR FROM MELBOURNE:

Dr. Denis O'Brien

# WESTERN SAHARAS IN DECEMBER 1965

## DEFINITE:

John Bruford (*Avatar's Abode, Q'ld*)  
Joan Bruford (*Avatar's Abode, Q'ld*)  
Bernard Bruford (*Avatar's Abode, Q'ld*)

Robert Rouse (*Avatars Abode, Q'ld*)  
Lorna Rouse (*Avatars Abode, Q'ld*)  
Radha Rouse (*Avatars Abode, Q'ld*)  
May Lundquist (*Brisbane, Q'ld*)

Christine Shipway (*Woombye, Q'ld*)  
Bill Le Page (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Joan Le Page (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Ruth Le Page (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Michael Le Page (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Jenny Le Page (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Joanna Bruford (*Meher House,  
Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Reg Paffle (*Sydney, NSW*)

John Grant (*Sydney, NSW*)

Grace Swan (*Sydney, NSW*)

Diana Snow (*Sydney, NSW*)

Emily Firmstone (*Sydney, NSW*)

Judith Garbett (*Sydney, NSW*)

Roy Le Page (*Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Alma Le Page (*Beacon Hill, NSW*)

Malcolm Stannett (*Newcastle, NSW*)

Dr. Denis O'Brien (*Melbourne, Vic*)

Elsie Smart (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Stan Adams (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Cynthia Adams (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Rosemary Adam (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Ena Lemmon (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Peter Rowan (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Craig Woodford (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Oswald Hall (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Betty Hall (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Anthony Thorpe (*Christchurch,  
New Zealand*)

## 75% SURE:

Dulcie Morris (*Sydney, NSWJ*)  
Simon Angliss (*Sydney, NSW*)  
Doreen Angliss (*Sydney, NSW*)

## DOUBTFUL:

Marjorie Donaldson (*Sydney, NSW*)  
Milly Chant (*Sydney, NSW*)  
Leon Milasas (*Sydney, NSW*)  
June Faulkner (*Sydney, NSW*)  
Clarice Adams (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Gladys Hewitt (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
John Adam (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Lee Buchanan (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Beth Buchanan (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
Margaret Buchanan (*Melbourne Vic*)  
Meryl Baulch (*Melbourne, Vic*)

AUSTRALIAN LOVERS WHO WROTE ONE LETTER TO BABA  
SEPTEMBER 1965 – FEBRUARY 1966

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| John Adam ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )             | Oswald Hall ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )        |
| Rosemary Adam ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | Betty Hall ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         |
| Julie Adam ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )            | Gladys Hewitt ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )      |
| David Adam ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )            | Marion Huckle ( <i>Woombye, Q'ld</i> )       |
| Stan Adams ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )            | Ena Lemmon ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         |
| Clarice Adams ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | Bill Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>           |
| Cynthia Adams ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Colin Adams ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )           | Joan Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>           |
| Noel Adams ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )            | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Giff Alston ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )           | Ruth Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>           |
| Roy Baulch ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )            | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Meryl Baulch ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )          | Michael Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>        |
| Kathy Baulch ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )          | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| John Bruford ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> )    | Jenny Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>          |
| Joan Bruford ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> )    | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Bernard Bruford ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> ) | Roy Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>            |
| Joanna Bruford ( <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )      | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Lee Buchanan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )          | Alma Le Page ( <i>Meher House,</i>           |
| Beth Buchanan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | <i>Beacon Hill, NSW</i> )                    |
| Margaret Buchanan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )     | May Lundquist ( <i>Brisbane, Q'ld</i> )      |
| Robert Buchanan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )       | Denis O'Brien ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )      |
| Dorothy Buchanan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )      | Joan O'Brien ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )       |
| Celia Callaghan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )       | Doris O'Keeffe ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )     |
| Milly Chant ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )              | Reg Paffle ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )            |
| Frank Cordell ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | Robert Rouse ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> ) |
| Marjorie Donaldson ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )       | Lorna Rouse ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> )  |
| Emily Firmstone ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )          | Radha Rouse ( <i>Avatar's Abode, Q'ld</i> )  |
| Judith Garbett ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )           | Peter Rowan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )        |
| Beryl Giddens ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )         | Helen Rowan ( <i>Melbourne, Vic</i> )        |
| John Grant ( <i>Sydney, NSW</i> )               |  |

Renee Rose (*Sydney, NSW*)  
 Norman Shipway (*Woombye, Q'ld*)  
 Hazel Shipway (*Woombye, Q'ld*)  
 Elizabeth Shipway (*Woombye, Q'ld*)  
 Christine Shipway (*Woombye, Q'ld*)  
 Jeanne Simpson (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
 Elsie Smart (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
 Diana Snow (*Sydney, NSW*)  
 Malcolm Stannett (*Newcastle, NSW*)  
 Grace Swan (*Sydney, NSW*)

Eve Syers (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
 Diane Tsoukalas (*Brisbane, Q'ld*)  
 J. A. Winn (*Brisbane, Q'ld*)  
 Ethel Woodford (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
 Craig Woodford (*Melbourne, Vic*)  
 Anthony Thorpe (*Christchurch,*  
*New Zealand*)  
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THE GREAT DARSHAN – GURUPRASAD, POONA  
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*This group of 20 all came to  
 Meher Baba as a result of Baba's  
 'turning the key.'*

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## ANNOTATIONS

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1. "The Awakener," Vol. XIX, No. 1, p. 67.
2. *Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba*, pp. 41-42.
3. Ibid, pp. 88, 90.
4. *The Wayfarers*, p. 79.
5. *The New Life of Avatar Meher Baba and His Companions*, p. 66 (New Life Circular No. 5, March 10, 1950).
6. "The Awakener," Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 16-17.
7. Ibid, pp. 17-18.
8. Ibid, pp. 18-19.
9. *Practical Spirituality with Meher Baba*, p. 95.
10. Ibid, p. 94.
11. *Tukaram*, translated by Justin E. Abbott, pp. 250-259.
12. *82 Family Letters*, p. 169.
13. *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba, Vol. V*, pp. 237-239.
14. Ibid, pp. 240-241.
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Sheriar Press Book Division  
3005 Highway 17 North Bypass  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
U.S.A

Meher Baba Association  
228 Hammersmith Grove  
London W6 7HG  
England

Meher Nazar Books  
Khushru Quarters, King's Road  
Ahmednagar, M. S. 414 001  
India

Meher Baba Foundation Australia  
Avatar's Abode  
P.O. Box 22  
Woombye, Queensland 4559  
Australia

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## GLOSSARY

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**Ahuramazda:** Almighty God.

**alphabet board:** A board with English alphabet letters and numbers 1 to 9 and 0. Shortly after Meher Baba began His silence He pointed to letters printed in a newspaper to form words. The first board was made by one of the early *mandali* to make it easier for Baba, and He used this method until October 1954.

**Amartithi:** The Eternal Day, commemorating the day Meher Baba dropped His physical form, 31st January 1969.

**arti:** An ancient Hindu method of concluding worship. Traditionally, at the time of *arti*, small lighted lamps of camphor are slowly waved in a circle before the person, idol or picture of the deity, saint, Man-God or God-Man being worshipped, while a special

song with a theme or refrain of offering oneself to the One worshipped is sung. Meher Baba's lovers do not necessarily do this when His *arti* is sung.

**Avatar, the:** "God-become-man." The incarnation of God, the infinite, in a finite human form. The God-Man, Messiah, Christ, Rasool.

**Bhagavad Gita, the:** "Song of the Lord." A section of the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, consisting of a colloquy between Krishna and Arjuna on the eve of battle. It was in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the Avatar, as Krishna, revealed the Avatar's status as being everyone and everything, and also beyond everyone and everything.

**bhajan:** A devotional song, or the singing of devotional songs.

**Buddha:** The Enlightened One, the Avatar who lived in India around 560 - 480 B.C.

**daaman:** The hem of a garment.

**dal or dhal:** A common preparation made from any of several types of lentils grown in India.

**darshan:** Literally , "seeing."  
Taking *darshan* implies approaching a saint or a Master, offering presents (flowers or fruit, etc.), paying respects by bowing down, and receiving blessings and love. Meher Baba said that to have His real *darshan* is not easy: "To have My real *darshan* is to find Me. The way to find Me is to find your abode in Me. And the only one and sure way to find your abode in Me is to love Me. To love Me as I love you, you must become the recipient of My grace...."

**dhuni:** A ceremonial fire using sandalwood and ghee. It is known as a purifying fire when lit and used by a Master. Meher Baba permitted or ordered the lighting of the *dhuni* at Meherabad for special occasions, and later on a regular basis.

**Elahi:** The One God.

**Ezad:** Worthy of worship. One of

the Zoroastrian 101 names of the One God.

**gadi:** A seat or throne.

**guru:** A spiritual master.

**Hafiz:** 14th century Perfect Master and poet of Shiraz, Persia.

**Imams:** Officiating priests of mosques.

**insha'allah:** Literally, "if God wills," the traditional reply to a question in Muslim countries, rather than "yes." It implies that none but God can empower one to carry out anything.

**jamali:** Always mild-tempered, never abusive.

**Kaaba:** The cubical shrine in Mecca, towards which all Muslims face at prayer. It is the goal of the pilgrimage to Mecca (the *hajj*).

**Kabir:** 14th century Perfect Master from Benares, India.

**ki jai:** Literally, "Victory to," "Hail to." In a greeting such as "Jai Baba!" or "Jai Ram!" it is used in the sense of calling on the name of the Avatar, or in remembrance of the Avatar.

**kirtan:** A performance glorifying God or the God-Man through songs and stories.

**Koran:** The holy book of the Muslims.

**Krishna:** The Avatar famous in literature with His consort Radha, associated with India, dates unknown.

**Magi:** Members of ancient Persian priestly caste.

**mandali:** The intimate disciples of a Perfect Master or the Avatar.

**manonash:** The annihilation of the mind (self).

**Manzil-e-Meem:** The house in Bombay which Meher Baba used for work with His *mandali* in 1922 - 1923.

**mast** (pronounced "must"): A God-intoxicated person on the spiritual path.

**Maya:** Literally, illusion — that which does not exist. The principle of Ignorance which makes the Nothing appear as everything. In a general sense, false attachment.

**Mohammed:** The Avatar known as the Prophet, born in Mecca, Arabia, about 560 AD., whose teachings are embodied in the religion of Islam.

**pandal:** A large temporary pavilion, erected on upright poles with roof of cotton cloth and open sides.

**Parabrahma:** The Supreme Spirit, God.

**Parameshwar:** The Supreme Lord, Supreme Being, God.

**Parvardigar:** Vishnu — The Preserver, The Sustainer.

**Prabhu:** Literally, master, lord, king. A name for God.

**prasad:** A gracious gift, usually edible, given by a saint, Perfect Master, or the Avatar to followers as an expression of His love. Also anything, usually edible, that is first offered to a saint, Perfect Master or the Avatar and then distributed in His name.

**qawwal:** One who sings *qawwalis*.

**qawwali:** A characteristic type of singing, usually in Urdu, accompanied by musical instruments. Often these songs are addressed to the Beloved in a very intimate way.

**Qutub:** Literally, hub or axis. A Perfect Master.

**Rama:** The Avatar who lived in India, dates unknown. His consort was Sita.

**Ramayana:** The ancient Hindu epic recounting the life of the warrior-hero Rama, the Avatar.

**Rasool:** The Christ, the Saviour, the Avatar.

**Sadguru:** A Perfect Master, Man-God.

**sadhu:** A pilgrim, an advanced soul.

**sahavas:** Literally, close companionship. An opportunity given by the Avatar to spend time with Him and to intimately feel His presence. A gathering held in His honour where His lovers and followers meet to remember Him. Meher Baba said, "*Sahavas* is the give and take of love." The keynote to a *sahavas* programme is love, an exchange of love, the giving and receiving of love. When asked once, "What is *sahavas*?" Meher Baba replied, "It is companionship with God. It means I come to your level or you rise to My level. We are not on the same level. Either I come to yours or you come to Mine. *Sahavas* means God becomes human." Again He said, "The intimacy of *sahavas* — the intimacy of love, lover, and Beloved in the silence of that word, *sahavas*."

**samadhi:** In a general sense, a trance induced by spiritual meditation.

**samadhi:** a place where the

body or the last remains of a saint, a Perfect Master, or the Avatar are interred.

**sanskaras:** Impressions. Also impressions which are left on the soul from former lives and which determine one's desires and actions in the present lifetime.

**Sikh:** literally, a disciple. An adherent of the teachings of Guru Nanak who was born into the warrior class of Hindus in the Punjab, India, in 1469.

**Sufism:** The mystic discipline which has its roots in the Middle East; its origins are lost in antiquity, but known to have existed at the time of Zoroaster, and revitalised by Mohammed.

**Vedanta:** This philosophy is based on the essence of the four Vedas, which date from the earliest period of known Indian scriptures, as well as other sacred books written later including the *Upanishads*. The central subject matter of the Vedantas is knowledge of the Supreme, which will unite the individual with the universal Godhead. Modern expressions of Vedanta may be found in the life and teachings of Ramakrishna and his chief disciple Vivekananda.

**Vishnu:** The Preserver.

**wali:** Literally, friend. A friend of God; a fifth plane saint.

**Yesdan:** Almighty God.

**yogis:** Souls who are traversing the spiritual Path. Those who practise yoga.

**Zoroaster:** The ancient Avatar who lived in Iran, dates uncertain.

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# INDEX

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**THIS IS A MODIFIED INDEX**, designed to assist the reader to establish major areas of interest. It is felt that a full index would be too detailed.

Meher Baba's close *mandali* are listed under their first names, with surnames given in brackets.

Certain aspects of Meher Baba's life are listed under His name, and many other headings give more information about Him, His life and work.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Abraham 203  | Airport, Sydney 58, 72, 133, 134                             |
| Abu Said 153   | Airport, Brisbane 110, 129                                   |
| Adams, Clarice 12, 75, 100, 115, 122, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408  | Alcohol/Wine 193, 216, 269                                   |
| Adams, Colin 77, 115, 116, 404, 405, 408   | Ali Shah 36  |
| Adams, Cynthia 77, 146, 404, 405, 407, 408   | Aloba (Ali Akbar) 185  |
| Adams, Stan 12, 76, 115, 404, 405, 407, 408  | Alphabet Board 51, 53, 208, 359                              |
| Adi, Jr. (Irani) 226   | Amartithi 236-237, 292, 302                                  |
| Adi, Sr. (Adi K Irani) 47, 50, 74, 78, 90, 100, 103, 124, 126, 128, 129, 140, 165, 194, 195, 197, 214, 226, 235, 314, 348, 374 | Andhra 13, 228, 261  |
| Letters 51, 56, 74, 88, 92, 94, 98, 100, 215   | Arangaon Village 35, 36, 353, 354, 358                       |
| Adriel, Jean 394, 395  | Arjuna 379, 381  |
|  | Arnavaz (Dadachanji) 253, 397, 399                           |
|  | Art 68, 211, 363, 380  |
|  | <i>Arti</i> 55, 174, 175, 235, 401, 402                      |
|  | Avatar's Abode: 45, 47, 61, 73, 141, 212, 215, 257, 258, 260 |
|  | 1958 Preparation 104-109                                     |
|  | 1958 <i>Sahavas</i> , 3-7 June 110-137                       |

- Buildings: Accommodation, residents and pilgrims 281, 293, 294  
 Baba's House and Room 105, 106, 107, 113, 117-122, 127, 128, 133, 146, 281  
 Farmhouse 105, 113, 120, 125  
 Meeting Hall 105, 107, 113, 116, 119, 281, 319  
 Development 117, 137, 258, 281  
 Meher Baba's expressed wishes 117, 118, 120, 137, 191, 193, 194, 197, 198-199, 213-214, 283, 299, 300, 311  
 Place of pilgrimage 117, 198, 199, 281, 283-311  
 Avatar's Abode Trust (1984) 260
- Babajan 76, 174, 204, 235, 246, 337, 350, 359, 365  
 Backett, Mary 82, 95  
 Backett, Will 95, 374  
 Baidul (Agabaidul - R. B. Baiduliyan) 80, 185, 192  
 Ballantyne, John 13, 24, 25, 26, 46, 53, 56, 58, 403  
 Baron von Frankenburg. *See* Frankenburg.  
 Baulch, Meryl 405, 407, 408, 409  
 Baulch, Roy 107, 109, 114, 405, 408  
 Baulch family 142, 405, 408  
 Bayazid 148  
 Beacon Hill, Sydney. *See* Meher House.  
 Beheram (Irani) 79, 81, 100  
*Bhagavad-Gita* 56, 201, 382  
*Bhajans* 55-56, 227, 401  
 Bhau (Kalchuri) 84, 185, 225, 228  
 Birthday, Meher Baba's 56, 177, 182, 185, 192, 196, 216, 227, 302, 393  
 Bombay 20, 37, 74, 76, 80, 135, 160, 161, 184, 253, 389, 402
- Borthwick, John & Wendy 258, 410  
 Brabazon, Francis. *See* Francis.  
 Bruford, Joan 77, 109, 118, 122, 159, 164, 217, 297, 299, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Bruford, John 107, 109, 110, 114, 118, 128, 164, 195, 217, 297, 299, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408, 409  
 Bruford, Joanna 58, 108, 109, 118, 121, 164, 182, 197, 214, 217, 297, 299, 403, 404, 406, 407, 408  
 Bruford, Bernard 108, 109, 118, 164, 198, 214, 217, 222, 297, 299, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Buddha 154, 186, 276, 314, 363
- Cables from Meher Baba 93-94, 104, 108, 126, 134, 141, 160, 182, 200, 214-215, 217, 218-219  
 to Meher Baba 126, 127, 134, 141, 145, 217  
 to Mehera 127, 131  
 Cars used to drive Meher Baba:  
 Triumph 50-51, 58, 132-133  
 Peugeot 110-111, 112, 128  
 Chevrolet 194-195  
 Car story 248-251  
 Centres in Australia 9, 47, 104. *See also* Avatar's Abode; Meher House.  
 Chaplin, Charlie 60  
 Chapman, Rick 194, 228  
 Chanji (Framroze Dadachanji) 370, 375, 376, 380  
 Children 39, 59, 67, 69, 76, 95, 114, 119, 139, 151-153, 167, 171, 211, 277, 278, 292, 296, 297, 299  
 Christ, the 186, 202, 247, 274, 333, 336, 345, 350, 355, 362, 365, 377.  
*See also* Jesus.  
 Coconut symbol 357-358  
 Cohen, Allan 194, 228  
 Companion, Meher Baba as 74, 111, 163, 175, 247, 248, 314



- Conviction 46, 65-66, 210, 247, 248, 272, 389
- Craske, Margaret 313
- Cricket 83, 91, 195, 203
- Crucifixion 225, 345, 355, 358
- Daaman* 48, 116, 332, 395
- Dadachanji. *See* Arnavaz; Chanji; Nariman.
- Dadachanji, Nozer 397, 399
- Darshan*:
- September 1954: 12-13, 17, 20-44, 51, 333-361
  - December 1957: 330-331
  - December 1965: 177
  - The Great Darshan, April-June 1969: 224, 225, 228, 229, 234-235, 254, 257
  - Amartithi, 31 January Eternally 236-237
- Davis, Ken 109, 333
- Davy, Kitty 284, 285
- Death 153, 314, 345, 361, 364, 372, 397-399
- Dedalchow, Harry 252, 254
- Dehra, Dun 228, 393
- DeLeon, Delia 95, 227, 373
- Delhi 228, 391
- Dhuni* 383
- The Die Is Cast* 48, 395
- Discourses* 67, 313, 320, 376, 412
- Discourses:
- "Worry" 60-61
  - "Two Types of Ego" 62-63
  - "Three Seekers" 63-64
  - "Obedience" 115-116
  - "Real I" 124-126
  - "Four Journeys of the Soul" 168
  - "God" 170. *See also* Messages & Statements.
- Donaldson, Marjorie 109, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409
- Donkin, Dr. William 29, 35, 36, 54, 128, 134, 149, 163, 184, 199, 206, 225, 226, 227
- Drugs 216, 322
- Duce, Ivy 8, 10, 11, 389
- East-West Gathering 1, 45, 102, 104, 159-175
- The East-West Gathering* 176
- Ego 23, 25, 62-63, 265, 333, 334, 377, 385
- Ekhnath 15
- Ellora Caves 53, 199
- Eruch (Jessawala) 13, 15, 16, 23, 28, 32, 34, 47
- 1956: 50, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 76, 78, 84; 1957- 96, 103
  - 1958: 111, 114, 128, 129, 130, 136, 138
  - 1961: 143, 147, 150; 1962- 160, 162, 165, 167, 168, 179
  - 1967: 185, 193, 194, 199
  - 1969: 225, 226, 227, 230
  - 1970s: 240, 247, 252, 254, 255, 269, 276, 279
  - 1980s: 285, 286-311; 322, 395, 398, 399, 400
- Letters 13-14, 15-16, 17-19, 47-49, 52-54, 305
- Stories & Talks 150-153, 162, 194, 237, 240-244, 246-248, 248-251, 252-254, 265-266, 269-270, 276, 280, 322, 400-401
- The Everything and the Nothing* 163, 176, 412
- Farewells to Meher Baba 61, 71-72, 127, 133, 134, 173, 174, 199 .
- Fasts, Baba lovers' 45, 84, 97, 147, 355, 390, 396, 401
- Fasts, Meher Baba's 40, 78, 80, 83, 84-85, 88, 189, 190, 208, 364, 369
- Fear 27, 28, 63
- Films 37, 70-71, 260, 267, 302

- Finances. *See* money.
- Food/Drinks for Meher Baba and others 34, 72, 87, 91, 119, 120, 128, 129, 131, 132, 136, 138, 205, 208
- Francis (Brabazon) 7, 8, 9, 10-11  
 1954: 12, 13, 14, 15-16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 28, 31, 36, 37, 44  
 1956 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 58, 65, 66, 69, 75, 82, 83, 88  
 1957: 93, 97, 99, 100, 102  
 1958: 104, 106, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119, 120, 122, 123, 126, 128, 130, 131, 136  
 1959-1961: 140, 143, 145, 146  
 1962: 150, 160, 164, 168, 175, 176, 183  
 1967: 185, 192, 194, 195, 198, 199, 212, 213, 216  
 1968: 219  
 1969: 223, 235  
 1970s: 252, 258, 281, 283  
 1980s: 300, 305; 319, 339, 369, 403, 404, 405  
 Letters 15, 16, 178, 179, 217, 218, 220, 225-229, 230-231, 232-233  
 Poems 44, 178, 180, 183, 221, 238
- Francis of Assisi 27, 148
- Francis Xavier 27
- Frankenburg, Baron von (*Momin*) 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 50
- Frederick, Filis 82, 397
- Gadge Maharaj 52, 360, 395
- Garbett, Judith 143, 144, 149, 159, 164-175, 179, 197, 214, 281, 406, 407, 408, 409
- Ghani (Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff) 5, 91
- Giddens, Beryl 403, 405, 406, 408
- Gifts from Meher Baba 67, 69, 86, 122, 175, 199, 315, 353, 354, 395.  
*See also* Prasad.
- Gifts from Mehera 122, 173
- Godavari Mai 348, 349, 355, 359
- The God Man* vii, 32
- God Speaks* 47, 65, 101, 333, 368, 412
- Goher (Dr. Goher Irani) 77, 149, 166, 191, 285
- Goldney, Lt. Col. 98
- Grant, John viii 115, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408, 409
- Gulbarga 84
- Guru Nanak 324-325, 395
- Guruprasad (Poona) 1, 161, 165, 191, 234, 253, 254, 400
- Gustadji (Hansotia) 55, 195, 360
- Hafiz 31, 73, 168, 185, 209, 223, 344, 351, 385
- Hall, Oswald and Betty 303, 404, 405, 408, 409
- Hamirpur 390, 391, 395, 397
- Hotels: Grand, Bombay 20, 184  
 Bellevue, Brisbane 110, 128, 129  
 Wellesley, Poona 164, 173
- Hyderabad 78, 249, 370, 398
- Impressions. *See* *Sanskaras*.
- Imams 22, 333
- Ingram-Smith, Donald 64
- Jal, (Irani) 235
- Jamshed (Irani) 244
- Jessawala, Eruch. *See* Eruch.
- Jessawala family 135
- Jessawala, Meherwan 185, 194
- Jesus 4, 22, 71, 82, 178, 200, 201, 203, 204, 206, 272, 276, 336, 343, 345, 347, 350, 358, 364, 381. *See also* Christ, the.
- Jesus, Meher Baba as 147, 368
- John, Saint 206, 358
- John the Baptist 204, 347
- Journey With God* 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 369

- Kaaba 157, 158  
 Kabir 80, 349  
 Kaikobad (Dastur) 50, 78  
 Kallas Temple, Ellora 199  
 Kaka (Baria) 185, 232  
 Kenmore, Harry 307, 401  
 Khan, Hazrat Inayat 5, 10, 11  
*Kirtan* 396  
 Kite-flying 203  
*Koran* 201  
 Krishna 22, 155-156, 272, 276, 333, 350, 363, 364, 379, 381-382  
  
 Lee, Frances 68, 100, 122, 126, 127, 403, 404, 405  
 Lee, Dr. Norman 76, 127, 403, 405  
 Lemmon, Ena 75, 80, 81, 90, 91, 100, 146, 215, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Le Page, Diana 281  
 Le Page, Jenny (now Keating) 10, 59, 67, 96, 97, 141, 145, 182, 195, 214, 217, 219, 220, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Le Page, Joan 10, 46, 50, 57, 67, 69, 73, 77, 79, 82, 88, 90, 93, 99, 100, 119, 122, 141, 145, 149, 150, 163, 182, 193, 198, 213, 214, 217, 219, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Le Page, Laurie 3, 72  
 Le Page, Michael 10, 67, 82, 90, 119, 123, 141, 145, 148, 182, 198, 214, 217, 219, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Le Page, Roy (my father) 3, 127, 128, 133, 147, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408  
 Le Page, Alma (my mother) 3, 128, 133, 147, 198, 214, 403, 404, 405, 407, 408  
 Le Page, Ruth (now Maree) 10, 89, 90, 141, 182, 195, 214, 217, 219, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
 Letters from *mandali*. See *Adi Sr.*;  
 Francis; Eruch; Mani.  
 Letters from Meher Baba 47, 137-138  
 Letters to Meher Baba 9, 45, 89, 127, 168, 408-409  
*Life At Its Best* 69, 412  
 Lion, Meher Baba as 72, 397  
*Listen, Humanity* 94, 101, 368, 412  
 Longing 36, 38, 58, 65, 112, 137, 154, 158, 165, 184, 187, 212, 268, 315, 320, 340, 367  
 Love for God 30, 31, 34, 43, 48, 63, 65-67, 153, 156, 212, 332, 342, 352, 353, 365-366, 387, 388, 394  
 Love for Meher Baba 2, 27, 59, 61, 64, 70, 118, 121, 172, 190, 191, 207, 262, 263, 275, 292, 305, 313, 316, 322, 323, 325, 358, 371, 377, 378, 394, 395  
 Love, human 42, 63, 66, 244  
 Love, Meher Baba's *vii*, 2, 9, 11, 20, 22, 28, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 43, 46, 61, 66, 70, 72, 79, 99, 112, 116, 118, 121, 127, 132, 137, 139, 163, 165, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 197, 198, 207, 209, 210, 212, 237, 255-256, 268, 271, 276, 277, 280, 312, 315, 316, 319-325, 354, 358, 387, 398  
 Lundquist, May 77, 85, 86-88, 100, 107, 121, 143, 146, 159, 164, 173, 197, 214, 217, 219, 222, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
  
 Magi 22, 333  
 Mahabaleshwar 15, 53, 174, 240  
 Mandali Hall, Meherazad 184, 199, 244, 276, 287  
 Mani (Irani) 47, 49, 52, 74, 122, 140, 166, 226, 244, 254, 285, 395, 402  
 Letters 49, 54, 56, 75, 78, 80, 83, 84, 86, 89, 91, 95, 99, 103, 126, 135, 140-141, 144-150, 397-399, 402  
 Stories 244-246, 254-256

- Manonash 248  
 Manzil-e-Meem 128  
 Marbles 116, 203  
 Martin, Rabia 5, 8  
*Masts/Mast* Tours 31, 35, 36, 56, 78, 80, 84, 85, 88, 91, 186, 195, 252, 344, 354, 377, 389, 392, 393  
 Matchabelli, Norina 5, 97, 269, 270, 284  
 Maya 78, 79, 350, 381  
 Mecca 157  
 Meeting Meher Baba 21, 58, 111, 114, 165-167, 185  
 Meher Baba's biographical details 173-178  
   Compassion 40, 43, 112, 127, 189, 191, 207, 268, 288, 305, 309, 322  
   Glorification 48, 322, 324, 357, 360, 361  
   Grace 62, 70, 79, 231, 237, 258, 274, 315, 379, 394  
   Humiliation 322, 324, 355, 358  
   Humour, examples of 41, 60, 122, 123, 192, 209, 232  
   Manifestation 87, 237, 311, 362, 366, 371, 373, 385, 386  
   Orders to His lovers 34, 84-85, 89, 95, 97, 116, 120, 127, 137, 138, 172, 216, 246-247, 322  
   Orders to me 24, 25, 27, 58, 60, 69, 70, 73, 117, 129, 130, 131, 133, 159, 163, 198, 199, 213, 217, 257, 283-284  
   Physical attributes 21-22, 28-29, 31, 35, 38-43, 68, 72, 73, 75, 90, 111, 123, 128, 130, 131, 133, 163, 166, 170, 184, 185, 189, 190, 191, 208, 209, 223-225, 268, 271, 315, 320, 374, 376, 377  
   Physical death 6, 61, 116, 212, 223, 224, 225, 230, 232-233, 236, 254, 360  
   Physical pain 29, 98, 191-192, 235  
   Presence *vii*, 1, 20, 24, 39, 40, 69, 133, 174, 236, 237, 271, 272, 287, 288, 321, 400  
   Statements about Himself 29-30, 68, 111, 199, 224, 225, 226, 276, 397  
   Statements to His lovers 34, 42, 43, 64, 116, 135, 173, 191, 375, 399. *See also* Messages and Statements.  
   Statements to or about me 9, 24, 25, 58, 70, 139, 177, 213, 257, 311  
   Suffering 29-30, 111-112, 129, 207, 271, 355, 357, 377  
 Meher Baba Foundation Australia 259, 260, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 304, 307, 309, 311, 413  
*Meher Baba News* 212, 220  
 Meher Handcrafts/Meher Australia Pty Ltd 257, 259, 260  
 Meher Holdings Pty Ltd 258, 260  
 Meher House, Beacon Hill:  
   Building 9, 10, 12, 25, 28, 46, 47, 50  
   August 1956- 58, 59, 61, 68, 69, 70, 73  
   1958: 121, 122, 123, 129, 130, 132, 198, 237, 282, 302, 303  
   Place of pilgrimage 69, 73, 301  
 Meher House Publications 176, 179  
 Mehera (Irani) 54, 77, 122, 127, 146, 149, 166, 172, 227, 228, 230, 235, 285  
 Meherazad, February 1967: 24, 29, 61, 68, 117, 137, 177, 184-199, 216, 217, 257, 283  
 Meherjee (Karkaria) 17, 50, 82, 96, 184  
 Meheru (Irani) 166  
 Messages and Statements 42, 202, 205, 206, 208, 211, 212, 235, 259, 333-361, 363, 364-365, 371, 372, 377, 380-381, 382, 383, 385, 396-

397, 399. *See also* Discourses;  
 Meher Baba's Statements.  
 Miracles 39, 206, 269, 345, 346, 357,  
 396-397, 401  
 Misery 63, 326, 328, 385  
 Mistry, Rhoda, Jim and Meherwan  
 253, 254  
 Mohammed (The Prophet) 5, 22, 152,  
 153, 154, 186, 201, 271, 276, 333,  
 363, 364  
 Mohammed *Mast* 36  
*Momin*. *See* Frankenburg.  
 Money/Finances:  
   Avatar's Abode 114, 116, 302,  
   306, 319  
   Meher Baba's use of 35, 40, 82,  
   209, 262-265, 271, 353, 354  
   Meher Handcrafts 257, 259  
   mine 2, 11, 12, 13, 102, 139, 159,  
   213, 214, 282  
 Moses 178  
 Music 47, 170, 171, 235, 338, 341-  
 344, 386  
 Myrtle Beach Center 10, 11, 115,  
 136, 281, 284, 288, 295, 304  
  
 Naja (Irani) 166, 285  
 Narayan Maharaj 359  
 Nariman (Dadachanji) 74, 128, 134,  
 253, 370, 371, 373, 375, 377, 397,  
 399  
 Nasik 346  
 New life, a 42, 175  
 New Life, the - Meher Baba's 42-43,  
 188, 246-249, 296, 322, 357, 370-  
 371, 372, 373, 377, 386  
 Nilu (Dr. Nilkanth Godse) 50  
  
 Obedience 45, 115-116, 123, 134,  
 135, 190, 247, 269, 319-325, 400  
 O'Brien, Dr. Denis 6, 76, 163, 216,  
 224, 303, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408  
 O'Brien, Joan 6, 100, 303, 404, 408

Paffle, Reg 1, 115, 117, 143, 160, 164  
 177, 198, 214, 217, 281, 297, 299,  
 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409  
*Pandal* 170  
 Pandharpur 51, 155-156, 360  
 Parvardigar 329  
 Pascal, Gabriel 19  
 Patterson, Elizabeth 5, 284  
 Paynter, Jack 109, 115, 403, 404, 405  
 Pendu (Irani) 115, 131, 149, 179, 185,  
 196, 225, 249  
*The Perfect Master* 368  
 Perfect Masters 25, 31, 34, 54, 90, 93,  
 125, 153, 155, 204, 235, 244, 272,  
 273, 274, 275, 276, 325, 350, 359,  
 365, 371, 372, 377, 383, 386, 394  
 Peter, Saint 343, 358  
 Pets: Sheba 82  
   Pegu 191  
 Pilgrimage 151-158, 236, 287, 288,  
 293, 294, 301  
 Pilgrimage, Places of:  
   Meherabad/Meherazad 73, 283,  
   284, 288, 295, 304  
   Myrtle Beach Center 73, 283, 284,  
   288, 295, 304  
   Avatar's Abode 73, 283-311  
   Meher House (minor place) 73,  
   302, 303  
 Poor, the 35, 53, 55, 76, 92, 204, 209,  
 271, 327, 328, 353, 358, 380, 390,  
 393, 399  
*Practical Spirituality with Meher  
 Baba* vii  
*Prasad* 21, 22, 92, 122, 171, 197,  
 379, 390-393  
 Prayers 32, 196, 209, 359, 397  
   Christian 29  
   Master's/Parvardigar 329, 400  
   Repentance 114, 120, 331  
   Beloved God 332  
*Prophets of New India* 4  
 Purdom, Charles vii, 32, 95, 369

- Qawwali/Qawwals* 30, 56, 227  
*The Quest* 57, 98  
*Qutub* 341
- Rama 186, 272, 276, 363, 365, 390  
 Ramakrishna 4, 5  
*The Ramayana* 147  
 Ramjoo (Abdulla) 47, 140  
 Rano (Gayley) 147, 166  
 Rasool 362  
 Real Work/Workers 261-265  
 Remembering Meher Baba 43, 191, 349-350  
 Renunciation 43, 64, 208, 247, 367, 383  
 Rites/Rituals/Ceremonies 43, 205, 209, 271, 323, 366  
 Rose, Renae and Family 142, 146, 405, 409  
 Rouse, Lorna 50, 67, 75, 83, 100, 109, 116, 118, 119, 122, 127, 128, 159, 164, 193, 217, 297, 299, 403, 404, 405, 406, 408  
 Rouse, Radha 83, 119, 141, 159, 164, 217, 297, 299, 404, 405, 406, 408  
 Rouse, Robert 75, 103, 109, 116, 117, 118, 119, 127, 128, 131, 159, 160, 164, 217, 297, 299, 403, 404, 406, 408  
 Rustom (Irani) 313
- Sadgurus* 93, 394  
*Sadhus* 376, 379, 387, 392  
*Sahavas*, Australians, India  
   November 1947 (later cancelled)  
   74, 78, 81, 89, 96, 97, 98, 102, 103, 112  
*Sahavas:*  
   Avatar's Abode June 1958: 45, 102, 104-137, 319, 325, 402  
   Meher House, August, 1956: 50, 58-74, 76, 78  
   India 94, 119, 124, 184, 234, 400, 401
- Sai Baba 143, 244, 346, 359, 382  
 Sakori 92, 346, 347, 348, 350, 354, 355, 359  
*Samadhi*, Meherabad. *See* Tomb Shrine.  
*Samadhi* 336, 384  
*Sanskaras/Impressions* 124, 148, 187, 334, 335, 338, 356, 384, 385  
 Sarosh (Irani) 197, 226, 350  
 Sassoon Hospital, Poona 235  
 Satara 16, 48, 51, 53, 74, 75, 78, 80, 88, 92, 93, 360, 396, 398  
 Seclusion Hill 188, 304  
 Seclusion, Meher Baba's 54, 55, 56, 74, 80, 84, 85, 88, 89, 122, 131, 178, 189, 208, 218, 220, 223, 240, 254, 369, 375, 377, 396  
 Serving Meher Baba 27, 28, 58, 190, 213, 246, 261-265, 305, 306, 314, 354, 364, 371, 375, 376  
 Shipway, Hazel, Norman & Family 164, 406, 407, 409  
 Shirdi 346, 348  
 Shirinmai 244-246  
 Shivaji 276, 285  
 Sikhs 391  
 Silence: Meher Baba's *vii* 18, 39, 43, 72, 128, 178, 179, 206, 207, 208, 345, 357, 360, 366, 386, 397, 400  
 Silence Day 97, 136, 146, 302  
 Smart, Elsie & Family 114, 128, 404, 405, 407, 409  
 Smoking 6, 36, 138, 193, 252-254, 290, 291  
 Snakes 27, 46, 64, 130  
 Snow, Diana 107, 109, 143, 214, 219, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 409  
*Stay With God* 109, 140, 146, 150, 176  
 Stevens, Don 94, 227, 368  
 Stories 41, 124, 152-154, 154-158, 206, 276, 324, 348, 354, 355, 356.  
   *See also* Eruch; Mani.  
 Suffering 41, 66, 203, 271, 326, 343,

- 364, 371, 384, 387, 393, 398, 399.  
*See also* Meher Baba's Suffering.  
 Sufi Society, Australian Branch 5, 6,  
 7, 9, 45, 313  
 Sufis 23, 111, 153, 154, 201, 364  
 Sufism 5, 6, 11, 51  
 Sufism Reoriented 11, 95  
 Swan, Grace 83, 87, 90, 100, 403,  
 405, 406, 407, 409
- Taj Mahal 240-244  
 Tajuddin Baba 91, 359  
 Talks, Meher Baba's 35, 64-67, 124-  
 126  
 Talks/Articles - mine *vii* 38-43, 186-  
 191, 200-212, 267-272, 272-280,  
 285-287, 319-325, 325-329  
 Thorpe, Anthony 160, 164, 406, 407,  
 409
- Three Incredible Weeks with Meher  
 Baba vii*
- Tomb-Shrine, Meher Baba's 26, 27,  
 34, 226, 227, 228, 229, 231, 232,  
 233, 236, 271, 303  
 Tukaram 154-156  
 Turning the Key 102, 199, 200, 212,  
 312, 314
- Upasni Maharaj 244-245, 346, 347,  
 350, 354, 355, 359, 365
- Vedanta 5, 51, 333, 336  
 Vieillard, Anita 89, 94  
 Vishnu (Deorukhkar) 149  
 Vivekananda 4, 5, 142
- Walis* 125, 395  
*The Way/arers* 36, 80, 163, 368, 413  
 Wine 193, 216, 270  
 Woodford, Craig, Ethel & Family  
 160, 404, 405, 406, 407, 409  
 Work in Australia 25, 46, 47, 50, 73,  
 74, 116, 117, 118, 137, 143, 144,  
 176, 178, 179, 193, 194, 197, 198,  
 199, 200, 212, 213, 216, 217, 222,  
 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 267, 283,  
 306, 321  
 Work, Meher Baba's 18, 53, 66, 80,  
 82, 83, 84, 92, 135, 139, 188-189,  
 191, 196, 204, 205, 207, 223-224,  
 240, 246, 247, 248, 261, 262, 263,  
 288, 312, 320, 321, 356, 363, 364,  
 365, 372, 377, 383, 386, 390, 391  
 Work, Real 261-265  
 Worry, 16, 60, 61, 167, 380, 383,  
 389, 399
- Yogis 1, 336, 342, 384
- Zoroaster 22, 276, 333





# The TURNING of the KEY

## Meher Baba in Australia

Meher Baba traveled to many places in the world during his lifetime, leaving behind his presence and his love. Many accounts have been written about those travels in Europe and America, and India. But stories of his visits to Australia — and their results — have been sparse by comparison.

Now Bill Le Page helps to fill that gap with a wide-ranging memoir of Meher Baba and "His Australia." This book is a wonderful addition to existing memoirs of Meher Baba, rich in atmosphere and detail and love, as the reader follows the 40-year growth of Baba's influence in the land called "Down Under."

That God is the only Reality I can accept because Baba has said so and because I do feel this to be true. But the reality of God that I experience is the beautiful face and form of Meher Baba, Who seems to be nothing but love and truth. As He is my Master, I accept also Baba's statements that there are seven planes of consciousness and that we all will in time experience God as infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Bliss.

c. For myself, I like to shelter in the safety of His feet, and long to become a man in His service. That is forever sufficient.

From *The Turning of the Key*

## Register of Editorial Alterations

Page 111, para 2, line 2, were changed to where

Page 135, para 2, line 6, "I is" changed to "I"

Page 329, para 3, line 3, fulfilling changed to fulfilling

Page 375, para 2, line 5, arrangement changed to arrangements