

My Life Story with Avatar Meher Baba

By Keshava Narayan Nigam

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My Life Story with Avatar Meher Baba

By Keshava Narayan Nigam

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My Life Story with
AVATAR MEHER BABA



KESHAV NARAYAN NIGAM

Life Sketch of Avatar Meher Baba

The Silent Master

Merwan Sheriar Irani, now known as Meher Baba, was born in Poona on 25th February 1894. He had his education at St. Vincent's High School and later at Deccan College. As a student, he was keenly interested in poetry and spiritual literature. At the age of nineteen, he was one day called by the Sufi Sadguru Babajan, who used to sit under a neem tree. Babajan kissed him on his forehead and he was taken immediately into a Super Conscious state and became God-realised. For three days, after this incident, he was unconscious and for nine months he was semiconscious of his worldly surroundings. After this, he contacted Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon, Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur and Sai Baba of Shirdi. When he saw Merwan, Sai Baba uttered only one word "Parvardigar". Sai Baba then directed him to visit Upasani Maharaj, who was staying at the neighbouring Khandoba temple at Shirdi. On seeing Merwan, Upasani Maharaj threw a stone, which hit him on the forehead exactly where Babajan had kissed him. From then onwards, Meher Baba began to regain his body consciousness, without any loss or curtailment of his divine consciousness. This descent was completed in 1921. After this, Upasani Maharaj asked some of his devotees to join Meher Baba. He also raised his hand and addressing Meher Baba, he said, "You are the Avatar, God in human form".

Avatar Meher Baba opened an ashram in Poona and later in Bombay, and finally at Meherabad, Ahmednagar, (M.S.). Here during the earlier period, He opened a school, a hospital, a mast ashram and Prem Ashram. On 10th July 1925, Meher Baba entered his great silence which continued uninterrupted till he dropped His body on 31st January 1969. For many years, He conveyed His thoughts through an alphabet board but on 7th Oct. 1954, the board was given up and since then He conveyed His thoughts only through hand gestures. He frequently entered into periods of seclusion and fasts, which were the occasions for his universal spiritual working on the inner planes. Avatar Meher Baba visited every nook and corner of India picking out and contacting masts (God-intoxicated ones) and helping them on their onward

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B.A., LL.B.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

BABU (MY FATHER) MY GURU

I feel myself very very fortunate to have Sri Keshava Narayan Nigam (whom we called as BABU) as my father and take it as a rare and loving blessing of my Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, which He has kindly bestowed upon me. From my childhood, my father has been and still today is my ideal for Baba's work and even for my day-to-day life. He occupies second place in my heart, just besides Beloved Meher Baba, who is unquestionably the first. Somehow, at an early age I realized that I have to obey my father implicitly like obeying Beloved BABA.

What I liked in him was his kindness, forgiveness, honesty, cheerfulness, great sense of humour, punctuality. To us he was very considerate, loving and caring in spite of his acute poverty and 24 hours busy schedule of Baba's Work. He looked after and cared for every aspect of our lives viz. illness. education, marriage, and was thoughtful of every minutest details. BABU had a high degree of forgiveness; so I used to share everything, good or bad, with him without any fear because I was sure that he would forgive me. He was a very good counselor and he was always there, whenever I needed him or his counseling. Most prominent feature of my parents' personality, which I still appreciate and find difficult to follow, was their cheerfulness and complete resignation to Baba's Will. From their mood or talk we could not even guess the real financial situation of the household. In this context. I wish to narrate an incident, which elucidates not only BABU's complete resignation to His Will, but also BABA's omniscience. It was September, 1969. Beloved Baba had dropped His body. My Junior Research Fellowship was to terminate on 15th September and my younger sister, Meher Mani, was studying in M.Sc. final and was residing with

me in the Kailash Hostel, University of Lucknow. The term of three years of my Ph.D. was going to complete on 15th and there was no hope of getting extension of my Fellowship. After my M.Sc. I used to manage both my sister's expenses and mine. So, now her M.Sc. and my Ph.D. both were incomplete. It seemed impossible to complete both because BABU was getting Rs. 150 per month salary as editor of 'Meher Pukar' a monthly Hindi Journal. I had applied for the post of Scientist B in CDRI, Lucknow, where I was doing my Ph.D. work. Its interview was in the end of September. I was very tense. I informed BABU telegraphically that I was not selected and set out for Hamirpur (My home). When I reached there, BABU gave me Rs. 1500 for our expenses. I refused to take the money because I thought that this amount must have been taken as loan and I hated to put extra burden on him. So, I told BABU that I would manage the expenses from my savings. BABU was quick to guess my hitch and narrated as follows:-

"When I received your telegram, I felt helpless and could think of no way how would you meet the expenses. After a while, I remembered Baba's message, "DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY..." and all my worries vanished and I left everything to Him. The moment I left everything to Baba, brother Pukar came and handed me Rs. 1500, telling me that when he had gone to Baba in January, 1969, Baba had given him this amount for my expenses; on his return he forgot to give it to me. He remembered it that very day, and came to give the money....." what a perfect timing typical of Beloved Baba! Hearing this, I accepted the money.

Beloved Baba called BABU in October, 1968 and asked to spread his both hands before Him, which were badly trembling because of Parkinson's disease. Then Baba told him to take best treatment and that nothing will help. I witnessed the truth of this statement. Even after every kind of treatment, Allopathic. Homeopathic. and Ayurvedic etc. it could not be

cured completely. True to Baba's statement, BABU got the best treatment in spite of financial problems. Dr. H.P. Bharucha of Navsari used to send the medicines, which were very costly, in advance. In 70s, Dr. Bert came to examine BABU on his own and after returning to USA, he used to send a medicine, and the name is still clear in my memory, 'Sinemet'; later a prominent Neuropath, Dr. Devika Nag at Lucknow was amazed to know that BABU was getting it here in India. Dr. Bert continued sending Sinemet well in advance until BABU's demise.

BABU accepted his suffering as Baba's 'Prasad' (Gift) and used to console me whenever I worried about his health. Once I noticed that his condition was very critical and his one eye was bulging out. I was so shocked that I started crying. Consoling me, BABU said, "Don't worry; this is Baba's Prasad, you don't know; I am in great bliss internally. This suffering is nothing."

Most important part of his character was his obedience to Baba and his dedication to 'Baba Work', which was never affected in spite of his disease. In spite of Parkinson's disease, Baba ordered him to translate "God Speaks" in Hindi, edit "Pathik". His memory was greatly affected due to disease and his hands severely tremored so much that he could not hold the pen. Therefore, he always needed someone to write. His speech too was not clear, and it was very difficult to understand his dictation. A lot of patience was needed on the part of the writer and it consumed a lot of time. In such condition, having been able to complete the translation of "God Speaks" by him was nothing less than a miracle of Beloved Baba. In spite of his impaired memory, whenever I used to ask BABU something related to Baba, his memory worked wonderfully and at the same time his speech became quite clear. He was actively taking part in Baba Programmes, guiding the arrangements etc. until his last breath. When he was confined to bed, Baba Lovers

followed his instructions in organization of the programmes. To commemorate the historical night vigil of 9/10th February 1954, when Baba declared Himself the AVATAR of the Age at Meherastana (Hamirpur-U.P.) for the first time, BABU used to go to Meherastana with Baba Lovers on that date every year for the night vigil. After his death on 8th February 1987, we, along with other Baba Lovers, took his body on 9th February in a hired bus to Meherastana, singing Bhajans, interned the body in the evening of 9th February and observed the night vigil. Thus BABU led the caravan to Meherastana for the night vigil even after his death.

MY MOTHER: THE VEILED ANGEL

Without a few words about my mother, Smt. Sudha Keshava Nigam, this narration would be incomplete. She played a very important role in BABU's life. She helped in every possible way to enable him to concentrate only upon his Beloved 'Baba Work'. I don't remember ever seeing her quarrelling or complaining to him about her sufferings and humiliations, which kept coming to her due to poverty. I always found her cheerful and loving to us. She used to tell us stories of her good and bad days, her sufferings when BABU was imprisoned while participating in freedom struggle movement. In those days, untouchability was very prominent. As BABU was the head of 'Baba Work' in Hamirpur district, Baba lovers of all castes used to come to our house and take tea, meals etc. Naturally, my mother, including us, used to wash the utensils used by them. Women of local Baba lover families used to humiliate and taunt us in special occasion programmes (Baba's Birthday etc) during lunch or dinner. On such occasions, they never sat near us. They did not even drink water at our home and not allow us to enter their kitchen. My mother had to face all this humiliation. In BABU's last days, my mother looked after him all alone. She played a very important role from the

background and BABU always acknowledged it. So, I cherish my mother as a Veiled Angel.

THIS BOOK: FROM ORIGIN TO PUBLICATION

Lastly, I would like to give a chronology of this publication. The following pages (the book) were written by the order of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba as an autobiography in English in the year 1970. Since it was in English (a language of Baba's communication), and the fact that BABU never liked his own publicity, therefore, the script was not published in his lifetime. After BABU's demise (1987), however, Sri Pratap Chandra Nigam, my cousin, translated it in Hindi and published it in the year 1988. Thus, the original words of the writer remained unpublished for about 33 long years. None other than the interpreter of the Avatar, Eruch B. Jessawala, has recognized the significance of such delay in its publication. When my cousin, Pratap Chandra Nigam, requested Eruch a foreword and BABU's photographs, if any, for Hindi translated book, Eruch replied as follows:-

Meherazad
4th October, 1988

My dear Pratap Chandra Nigam,

"Jai Avatar Meher Baba!"

Your loving letter of 24th September 1988 was received yesterday and shared with all Meherazad men and women mandali.

It was very heartening to note that by Beloved Baba's grace, the printing work of the Hindi translation of "My Life Story with Avatar Meher Baba" (by our dear brother Keshava Nigam) is underway.

I regret to inform you that I am unable to help you with a foreword for this precious publication. However much I would have to do so, it is not possible for me to accede to your very loving request. Kindly pardon my physical and mental ability to do so.

In regard to a photo of our dear Keshava with Baba, since Bal Natu's last letter from you requesting one, we have been searching our records and as yet have not succeeded in finding one. If we happen to find a photo, be sure that I will promptly send it to you.

We know how our dear brother Keshava Babu - a giant in Baba's cause - always remained in the background and that is the reason why it is so difficult to find a photo of him with Baba. By Baba's grace, perhaps we may find one, but, if we do not, then dear brother do not feel disappointed, because absence of Keshava's photo with Baba will be a testimony of his selfless service in the Cause of the Avatar.

With much love to you and your dear family from all Meherazad men and women mandali,

*Yours lovingly
Sd. Eruch*

This much for the chronology of the book's composition to publication; and I leave the readers to ponder upon the esoteric reason as to why Beloved Baba commanded to write an autobiography which was to be printed in original not earlier than the year 2003. Since last five years. I have been trying to get it published but only now, it has reached its destination in spite of every possible hurdle in the way. I feel so happy and grateful to my Beloved Baba for making me instrument for this work and hope that this book will rekindle the flame of Baba's Love in every heart that happens to read it.

Jai Baba! Meher Jyoti
The 11th January, 2003

"Jigyasa", B-2448, Indira Nagar,
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•————•

P.S. On great demand of this book from Baba-lovers all over the world, I thought of reprinting it for Baba-lovers benefit.

Jai Baba! Meher Jyoti
August 28, 2014

FOREWORD

I am writing the foreword of the book which deals with the life of Keshava Narayan Nigam who was completely dedicated to Beloved Avatar Meher Baba and who served Him until his last breath. He himself was a writer and a poet and he wrote "Meher Chalisa" in praise of Beloved Meher Baba.

Smt Meher Jyoti, the daughter of Sri Keshava Narayan Nigam has published the biography of her father Keshava Narayan Nigam, and she Knew him more than me. I only know that he was very much dedicated to Beloved Avatar Meher Baba and he was serving Him all along lovingly, sincerely, and honestly and Beloved Meher Baba was everything for him.

Keshava Narayan Nigam's contact with Meher Baba was really amazing. He was an eminent advocate at Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh and was later appointed as director of Public information at Nowgong, Vindhya Pradesh. He was made editor of "Meher Pukar" by Beloved Baba's orders. He would translate Baba's English circulars into Hindi. He would also translate Baba's messages and discourses, and he devoted his whole life in serving the cause of the Beloved. He led quite a simple life, the life of Love for the Beloved.

I congratulate his daughter, Meher Jyoti, who has presented her father's life to the world as told in his own words which remained unpublished hitherto since 1970s. She is really fortunate to become his daughter who served the Highest Of the High, The Awakener, the Avatar of the age, Beloved Meher Baba, throughout his life. I salute his Love for the Beloved.

Bhau Kalchuri
Chairman,
Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust.
Ahmednagar (MS), India
8th December 2001

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JUST A FEW WORDS ABOUT A KARMYOGI

This book is a wonderful history told simply and honestly by a true lover of God. It will be of great interest to anyone connected with Meher Baba.

Keshav is the Lover and Meher Baba, the Divine Beloved. The Beloved is exalted in His Love, Compassion and Grace; the Lover moves by stages to become humble Dust.

Keshav showered his warmth and affection on us, me and my wife, encouraged us and gave us advice so skillfully that we felt we had thought of it ourselves; and if we couldn't grasp it we felt free to ignore it. He did this all the time with whomsoever he met. He was no means an ordinary man. His brilliant intellect was dominated by a river of noble feelings. His absolute humility removed all barriers to approaching him.

It was no accident that Meher Baba first publicly declared Himself the Avatar before a small gathering of friends in a remote village by a fire in the middle of a long quiet night just after hearing Keshav's poem., "Meher Chalisa", rather than, for example, in a media event on the cover of "Time" magazine. For most of human history, most of humanity has lived in such a setting and we have all spent countless hours sitting through the watches of the night with friends. Keshav's simple natural relationship with Baba made it most natural for the Beloved to be the same way with him.

Spend some time with them now, feel the lover's human warmth and honesty, hear in simple plain clear words of the Beloved's Love and learn some of the details of one of the Heart's wonderful tales that was born in this Advent.

Meherabad

The 2nd, January 2003

Eric Nadel

•————•

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very happy to present this second edition of my father's autobiography, "My Life Story with Avatar Meher Baba" on great demand from Baba lovers.

First, I gratefully thank my Beloved God, Avatar Meher Baba, to enable me to undertake this great historical publication and clearing my way all through in His unique way. I am grateful to my brothers, Satish Chandra Srivastava and Samir Diljan for their valuable help in proof reading, supplements, translation of Welcome-Address to Baba on His first visit to Meherastana and printing etc. Without their help, it was impossible for me to even think of this publication. May Beloved Baba shower His grace on both of them enabling them to dedicate their lives for His work like my father. I am also grateful to brother Prabhakar Bhatt for his help in the translation of Urdu verses of the Welcome Address and Hindi verses in the life story.

I also express my gratitude to brother Rick Dryden for providing me my father's beautiful photographs for this book. I am so happy to thank my loving sister, Heather Nadel and her husband Eric Nadel for very diligently going through the manuscript and giving their valuable suggestions.

My heartfelt thanks are also to my dear mother, Sudha Keshava Nigam for encouraging me and taking keen interest in this work. My cousin, Pratap Chandra Nigam needs special thanks for his support and expert counseling.

Last but not the least deserved, thanks to Bhau Kaka for giving a foreword; late Eruch Kaka (may his soul enjoy permanent company of Meher Baba) and all mandali.

Jai Baba!

Meher Jyoti
August 11, 2014

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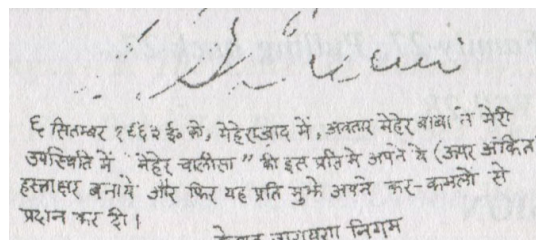
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Avatar Meher Baba with Keshava
(Sept. 1954)



Hail to Thee, Baba! Hail, All Knowing, Infinite One,
Prop of the Universe,
Thou Perfect, Ancient one, Sustainer of all Creation, hail!



On 6th Sept. 1963 at Meherazad, Avatar Meher Baba,
signed (as above), on this copy of "Meher – Chalisa" book
in my presence and gave it to me by his own hands.
Sd. Keshava Narayan Nigam

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INTRODUCTION - SHORT HISTORY OF MY LIFE

CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT LIFE

I, Keshava Narayan Nigam, was born at small village Mahewa (Kabrai), Tehsil Mahoba, District Hamirpur (Uttar Pradesh). Mahewa is now well known as Meher Astana-Mahewa, because Avatar Meher Baba stayed there twice in the hut called Meher Astana in November 1952 and February 1954. In the Same hut he Kept night vigil in the night of 9th February 1954 with His mandali and His lovers and workers of this district. During that vigil, at 00.50 hours Baba suddenly became in an extremely happy mood and He openly declared Himself to be The Avatar of the Age. This open declaration of His Avatarhood was made by Him for the first time in this incarnation at Meher-Astana. and this Avataric declaration has given an unique Universal importance to village Meher Astana-Mahewa.

I was born on Wednesday, 16th June 1909 A.D. at about 3 a.m. (during the night ending 15th June and beginning of 16th June). The name of my father was Nand Lal Nigam who died about 1945 A.D. My mother's name is Mathura Bai Nigam who is still alive (died in 1983 - Publisher).

My parents were poor, so they could not bring up their children properly with good food, proper clothing and other necessities needed for a healthy life. We were many brothers and sisters of whom seven brothers and two sisters are still alive. Thus I spent my childhood in sheer poverty and want - shabby clothes, bare feet, deprived of all necessities of daily life.

My fate also had brought no worldly wealth for life, which was once made clear by Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. Once He was sitting in the midst of His disciples and lovers and was

Introduction

giving them some discourse. During that discourse He remarked, "Some people are born with silver spoon in their mouth and (pointing towards me) some are born penniless." So, excepting a couple of intervals in my present life span I have felt and found myself penniless throughout my life. I well remember that whenever I got a single pice in my childhood I felt as though I had received a great treasure, and whenever I could hoard a few annas* I used to feel to be a wealthy man. I knew no toilets, no luxuries, no comforts. We faced poverty to such an extent that once our parents had no food-grains to eat, nor could they get food-grains on loan from anyone in the village. So we had to bring half ripe gram from the standing crop of our fields, perched it, and feed ourselves with it. We did so for a couple of days.

My education began in the Primary school of my native village Mahewa. I remained the leading student in all Primary classes, and I was loved by my teachers as an intelligent and promising student. After passing the Primary class 4th, I appeared in the scholarship examination and came out successful in it. It was in the year 1922 A.D. I got the scholarship for three years.

In July 1922, I joined the town school Mahoba (District Hamirpur) as a student of class 5th, and passed the Vernacular Final Examination from there in the year 1925. I Passed the Vernacular Final Examination with credit, for which I was awarded scholarship for five years up to class 10th. In the Town School Mahoba. I remained the leading student and monitor in each class. I joined the Govt. High School Banda (U.P) in July 1925 as a student of class Special A, which was equivalent to class 6th, and passed the High School examination from there in the year 1930. During the High School career of five years I

* Indian currency at that time was not decimal. One Rupee consisted of 16 Annas and one Anna consisted of 4 Pices – Publisher

Introduction

felt considerably relieved from the grip of poverty, because I was getting scholarship and also monetary help from my parents. This was the first interval in my life which gave me relief from poverty. From class special A to class 10th, I remained one of the best students and the monitor in each class. I lived in the Govt. High School Hostel, Banda and in class 10th I was the monitor of the hostel also. In the hostel I was made the mess manager for many times, as I had become known for my honesty and correct accounting.

In the High School and the hostel, I was loved by my teachers, classmates and hostel mates, and during the High School classes I had become a popular student of the school.

During the High School career. I had become a good player, sports man and athlete, and for the first time in my life I enjoyed the blessings of the best health. During the High School classes I was one of the eleven best players of the Hockey team of the school, one of the eleven best players of the football team and captain of the volleyball team. In sports, I won the first prize in the Senior's High Jump, first prize in the Seniors Long Jump, Second prize in the seniors three legged race, second prize in throwing cricket ball, and special prize in the cross country race.

I was also a prominent Scout of the School. I got first prize in signalling and Silver Medal in Scouts cooking competition. Thus I enjoyed a brilliant High School career all round.

In the early years of my life I used to toil in our agricultural fields - sowing seeds, cutting crops, collecting harvests, carrying the harvest on head to the threshing floor, etc. In short, I used to do all sorts of hard agricultural labour at home and in the fields. I continued doing this work even when I was a student in the Town School and Govt. High School, whenever I came home in the holidays. Thus it can rightly be said that in my

Introduction

early days I led the life of a poor toiling agriculturist, the memory whereof gives me now a pleasant sweetness.

I was married in June 1930. My wife's name is Sudha Devi. Four sons and five daughters were born to us. Out of them only three daughters have survived - Meher Prabha, Meher Jyoti and Meher Mani. They are now grown up and young and highly educated.

I passed my Intermediate classes from the B.N.S.D. Inter College, Kanpur. U.P., and remained one of the best students of the class. After passing my High School Examination I had again become into the grip of poverty. I got no scholarship and my parents could afford little to give me for my monthly expenses. So I had to struggle hard with poverty to carry on my studies and had to depend on my friends and well wishers for help. My father had an eager desire to give me higher education, but due to poverty he was helpless to do anything for me. He felt so worried those days due to poverty and family circumstances that he lost his mental equilibrium and became insane. He did not recover from that abnormal mental state till his death.

I had very good memory. If I read anything twice or thrice with deep concentration, it used to become wholly memorised in my mind and I could reproduce it word by word. A pleasant incident of this occurred while I was a student of Inter classes. My logic professor had examined my answer book of a logic test and found my answers reproduced from the Text Books word by word. So while announcing the result of the test to the class, my logic professor asked me, "Mr. Nigam, have you copied out your answers from the book." I replied, "No sir, I have written all my answers honestly from my memory." He believed me and spoke with great surprise, "Then you have got a very wonderful memory. You have reproduced the answers word by word from the book, not displacing even

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commas and full stops." Hearing this from him all the class laughed loudly and some students made humorous remarks. Thus I passed the Intermediate Examination in the year 1932.

Now, I felt a great impulse to receive higher education in some University, but I had no means for it. The grip of poverty on me was tight as ever. So I decided to learn tailoring and then to start a tailoring shop in the city to provide me with money, and to simultaneously join the University. But, this scheme of mine failed and my surging impulse for higher studies led me to an intimate friend of mine for guidance. He was then a student of Lucknow University, and was my friend and well wisher from my High School days. He belonged to a well-to-do family. He advised me to join the Lucknow University and happily offered to pay my tuition fee and other necessary expenses in the University. Accordingly he took me with him to Lucknow and got me admitted at his own expenses to B.A. Class in the Lucknow University, while a distant relative of mine offered me free lodging and boarding. Thus I became a University student in August 1932.

In the University, I used to sit quietly in one corner of the class wearing most simple and poor dress. My class fellows did not feel attracted to me, for most of them belonged to rich and high families. But soon the first terminal test was held and its result was announced in the class. I had obtained highest marks in Hindi and first or good second class marks in English and philosophy. These results attracted the attention of the whole class and of the Professors towards me and I became one of the prominent students in the class and this prominence was maintained by me. I passed the B.A. Examination in the year 1934, and I topped in Hindi for which the University rewarded me with "Sir George Lambert Hindi Gold Medal".

One event of my University career has special significance. While I was still struggling with poverty those days, I used to

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hear an inner voice within me to the effect that in future I will become extra-ordinarily great and will do substantially great work. I did not believe that inner voice, thinking that greatness could never come to a penniless man like myself. Yet, that inner voice was so definite and clear that I could not ignore it. It persisted in me and produced conflict in my mind. During that very period Mahatma Gandhi came to Kanpur in connection with his Harijan Uplift Work. So I went to Kanpur to seek his clarification and advice on this inner voice of mine, but the secretaries of Mahatma Gandhi did not allow me, or even my writing, to reach him. I returned disappointed from Kanpur.

I do not remember when and how that inner voice subsided, but its reality has become amply clear to me now. That inner voice was definite intimation of the rare fortune that I was to get later at the hands of the Divine Beloved Meher Baba. He compassionately accepted me as His own and also gave to me His whole time office duty and Divine work. What could be greater for me than becoming one of the chosen slaves of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba? And, what work could be greater and more substantial than living all the time in the Divine Universal Service of the God-Man?

Having become a graduate, I now thought of receiving some vocational education. I preferred legal profession. So I joined LL.B. Class in the D.A.V. College Kanpur of Agra University in the year 1934. My younger brother Mukund Lal Nigam, who is living at Meher Astana Mahewa under Baba's orders since 1952, was then employed in a petrol pump at Unnao. U.P. which is eleven miles from Kanpur. I stayed with him and used to come every evening to Kanpur to attend the LL.B. Classes. In the spare time of the day I used to do tuitions to earn money for my expenses as there was still no end to my struggle with poverty. I was leading a hard life. During that period my struggle with poverty had become so great that I

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could not prepare the course of LL.B. Previous Class and I lost hope of coming out successful in the examination. So in order to avoid the blot of being a failure I did not appear in the examination, and thus the year 1934-35 was wasted. This waste of the valuable time of life greatly pinched my heart and I mustered all my courage to continue the study of Law, and I passed the LL.B. Previous and LL.B Final Examinations in the first division. I became a Law graduate in the year 1937.

During these last years of my student career I felt drawn to God and a finer life. I was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's Truth and Non-Violence and his selfless benevolent life. I had started to put Truth and Non-Violence into practice in my life. I also began to do Vedic Sandhya regularly everyday followed by meditation for few minutes in my own way. In my meditation* I did not concentrate on any concrete object, but trying to picture the whole universe, I invoked peace and happiness for it. The result of these practices was that anger had totally vanished from me those days. I enjoyed delightful peace and happiness all the time - always cheerful, smiling, and laughing merrily. In spite of the life's struggle, that brief period was a very happy period of my life.

PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

After having become B.A., LL.B. I came to my home district Hamirpur to start legal practice. Accordingly I established at Hamirpur town (U.P.) in July 1937 with my family. I completed six months training under a senior advocate and from April 1938, I began to practice as a Pleader. I had been enrolled as a Pleader by the Allahabad High Court.

At the time of starting my legal practice I had no money, nor any Law books excepting a small booklet of Revenue Law costing eight annas. In the first month of my legal practice I earned Rs. 5/- or Rs. 10/- and I felt happy at my that first earning. In the next month, I earned few rupees more, and my income

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continued increasing every month slowly and steadily. In about two years I began to earn enough to maintain my family with ease and to purchase necessary Law books by and by.

It has been told above that I had become influenced with Mahatma Gandhi's life and ideals during my student career and a desire to serve my country had risen in me. I had come in contact with the chief political leader of Unnao, U.P. when I was a student of Law and had begun to take active part in politics there. So immediately after re-establishing at Hamirpur I joined local congress and began to take active part in the congress activities of the district. I worked in the congress as a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi. My work was selfless and it was motivated by my pure love for the country. I received its inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. In my legal practice also I tried to put Gandhi's principles into practice and adhered strictly to Truth. I refused to accept false cases. Consequently in the courts and in the political field I began to become known for my honesty and truthfulness.

Through my clients and through my political work my name began to spread in the district and I began to gain confidence of many people. Soon came the Freedom Movement of 1940. In that Freedom Movement I was made the Sanchalak (Conductor) of the District Satyagrah. I did that duty giving up my legal practice for that period and working all the time at the District Congress office which was situated in the interior of the district. For working in that political movement I was sentenced by the court to three months of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200/-, in April 1941. After serving that sentence I was released from Jail in August 1941.

I loved to read Bhagwat Gita, and its love used to touch my heart. Owing to that love for Bhagwat Gita I memorized the first five or six chapters of it during my imprisonment. And, even now I have a great love for Bhagwat Gita. In my then

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spiritual life I used to regard Lord Krishna as my only Guru and All. Later, my Lord Krishna came into my life in the form of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba.

After being released from Jail, I resumed my legal practice. My participation in the political movement and my consequent imprisonment gave me a sudden rise and I became one of the Prominent public men of the Hamirpur district. The number of my clients increased, my income increased, and parallel to them my public duties also increased. I was elected as a member of office bearer of many political or social organizations and institutions. Thus I commanded great popularity and respect in the district.

Time rolled on and there came again the political movement of 1942. It was a violent movement so I did not take active part in it. Still I was arrested in connection with it as a Security Prisoner in January 1943 and put into District Jail Hamirpur. I was released from Jail in May 1943.

During those days I also became joint editor of a political weekly Hindi Paper "Pukar", which was published at the Narayan Press Hamirpur. My editing raised the standard of the paper to a high level. The paper rendered notable services to the political movements and so it became well known and popular throughout Bundelkhand and its neighbourhood. It carried my influence to a wider field.

Now my professional work, political activities, and my public engagements began to increase all the more to keep me busily busy from morning till dusk. I got no time to do daily Sandhya and read Bhagwat Gita or otherwise offer prayers to God. This used to pinch my heart, and though my position and my esteem were speedily rising in the material field, spiritually I felt discontented with that life. That discontent continued growing. The legal profession began to prove burdensome to me. I began to aspire for a peaceful living. I loved God and

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Godly life and used to preach the same to the people even in the political meetings. I was a good speaker and I could impress the audience with my speech. Such preaching by me in the political meetings was not liked by many of my political colleagues. Yet, I went on my own way.

In August 1947 our country achieved Political Freedom for which it had been struggling hard, and with that achievement my political aspirations came to an end. Political Freedom had been achieved, what was to be done next? During the Political Movement of 1942 I had heard for the first time the name of Avatar Meher Baba. At that time I did not feel Drawn to Him. But, most surely His inner Divine working had begun in me unknown to myself. That working gradually withdrew me from political life and paved my way to establish direct contact with Meher Baba in the year 1948, in whom I found the highest ideal and highest aim of life.

I surrendered totally to the Divine Beloved Meher Baba. He compassionately took my life into Him and made it really worth living. I have already written in detail the account of my life with Avatar Meher Baba under Baba's orders and sent it to His dear disciple Francis Brabazon of Australia. I have also sent a copy of it to Avatar Meher Baba's Secretary Shri Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Sd. K.N. Nigam

Keshava Narayan Nigam

Avatar Meher Baba Hamirpur Centre

HAMIRPUR- Uttar Pradesh

21.10.1990

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MY LIFE STORY WITH AVATAR MEHER BABA

Prelude to my Preparation

EXTREME PREJUDICE - 1942 TO 1947 A.D.

I heard for the first time in 1942 A.D. of MEHER BABA and His Avatarhood from one of His men Babadas who was moving here and there in the country, making contacts with people and telling them about MEHER BABA. He came to Hamirpur and among many others also contacted me. I was then a legal practitioner here and one of the rising popular political leaders of this district as a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi. In the worldly field my revered deity and leader was Mahatma Gandhi, while within me I had Lord Krishna as my sole worshipped GURU and GOD - The only one Beloved of my soul. By nature I loved nonviolence, justice, honesty and truth, and I sincerely tried to practise them even in my legal and political life.

Hearing from me of my only one worshipped God Lord Krishna, Babadas showed to me a picture of MEHER BABA and told me - He is Lord Krishna who has now come down to this earth in this present Form of MEHER BABA. I ironically smiled at this declaration of Babadas and scornfully turned a deaf ear to it; for, my ignorance then would not let me recognise my Beloved Lord Krishna's Divinity in MEHER BABA. Nay, my whole being rebelled against this declaration of Babadas and I got extremely excited.

Babadas gave to me some beautiful pictures and books of MEHER BABA. I kept those books indifferently aside in my house and did not try even to look into them. And, as I had my outer and inner ideals of AVATAR in Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Krishna respectively, no third AVATAR could then enter

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into my heart. The declaration of Babadas about MEHER BABA's Avatarhood created such a great reaction in me that in the fury of it I threw one evening those beautiful pictures of MEHER BABA on the public road to be trampled down by the people. Such was the malice with which I first received MEHER BABA, the Beloved of all Beloveds, in my life.

I did not know then that the trampling down by me of BABA's pictures - an act of sheer madness - will have no effect on His infinite Love and compassion and that He would soon draw me to His bosom to give me His loving Divine embrace and accept me as an instrument for His Divine work.

However, time rolled on. On 10th January 1943 I was arrested under Rule 26 of Defence of India Rules and put into the District Jail Hamirpur U.P. as a security prisoner. I remained in the District Jail up to 31st May 1943. I had been put into jail in connection with the political movement of India. During the period of my confinement into jail the senior political leader of our District (Hamirpur) Sripati Sahai Rawat was also put into jail. He had been absconding since August 1942 in connection with the violent political movement which was then going on in the country. During his abscondence he had Meher Baba's Darshan at MEHERABAD. Baba had ordered him to surrender himself to the District Authorities, giving him certain instructions to follow. Thus we were put together in the District Jail Hamirpur as security prisoners in the year 1943 A.D.

After meeting MEHER BABA at MEHERABAD, Sripati Sahai Rawat had returned from there with a firm belief in MEHER BABA as being God Incarnate in human form. He used to relate to me in the jail the story of his meeting with God-Man, MEHER BABA. I used to get excited at Sripati Sahai's declaration that MEHER BABA is God Incarnate, and I used to say to him, "MEHER BABA is not the AVATAR. He lies idle without doing any work and declares Himself to be the

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AVATAR, so that people may worship Him as such. Mahatma Gandhi is the AVATAR who is dying for the country and suffering for it, having renounced everything for that sake."

I was released from Jail on May 31, 1943, and I resumed my political and legal career. My political leadership was gathering strength and my legal practice was steadily flourishing. Babadas had sent my address to BABA's office at Ahmednagar, so I used to get Baba's circulars from there from time to time. But, I was so prejudiced against MEHER BABA that on seeing the seal of Ahmednagar Post Office. over the envelope I used to throw it immediately into the waste papers without caring to look into its contents. However, I had begun to feel simultaneously discontented with my political and legal career, for in the present system of law and Justice I found it impossible to practise outright truth and honesty, while present politics recognises no place for honesty and truthfulness. Thus with the rising of my political and legal career discontent and inner conflict also kept rising in me simultaneously till 1947 A.D. I could have no peace.

THE FIRST STEP - 1948 A.D.

The year 1948 was the first really fortunate and extremely important year in my life story with MEHER BABA, when Meher Baba drew me into His outer and inner contacts without physically meeting me.

In the political field Parmeshwari Dayal Nigam, now called by BABA as Pukar, was my fast companion. We were known in the District politics as inseparable twins. We were jointly editing a weekly political paper called "Pukar". Parmeshwari Dayal was a political worker of the revolutionary communist faith, while I was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. So it was natural that we could work together only to a limited extent to which our fundamental principles would not clash. I could not compromise with him in my beliefs. My ties with the

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congressmen had begun to loosen on account of my honest and independent nature, so my friend Parmeshwari Dayal was trying to tie me with his leftist revolutionary tie which was repugnant to my very nature. The time for the breaking of both of these ties of mine was approaching fast. In the beginning of 1948 I dissociated myself from the editorship of the weekly Pukar journal, as differences of opinion and policy with Parmeshwari Dayal and myself could no more be bridged up. Parmeshwari Dayal was shocked at this sudden breaking away of mine, but I remained firm in my stand and he could not win me over again. Thus my tie with the Pukar journal was dissolved for ever.

In April-May 1948, District Board elections were held in our district. My friend Parmeshwari Dayal prompted me to stand for the District Board membership on the Congress ticket, hoping that I would carry out his communist policy in the District Board even as a Congress member, though I had clearly told him that if I were to sign the congress pledge for District Board membership, I would abide 100% by it. To this Parmeshwari Dayal had outwardly agreed. I was elected unopposed as a District Board member. I began to work there with perfect loyalty to the Congress pledge. and my influence grew higher and higher. This made Parmeshwari Dayal anxious to see me off the political field which I had captured, so that he might carry on his political work undisturbed by my influence and presence.

On May 11, 1948 I received BABA's circular dated 4th May. 1948. Through an inner urge I, for the first time, opened that envelope and read that circular. In that circular BABA had given five orders, and any one of those 5 orders was to be followed by His disciples, devotees and followers during 30 days, June 21 to July 20, 1948 - which BABA had declared to be the period of spiritual crisis. I felt much impressed by all the

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5 orders of that circular and thought to myself. "MEHER BABA may or may not be the AVATAR, but these five orders given by Him are really beneficial; the observance of these will surely do good." So my inner self voluntarily accepted to follow the 5th order, which laid four things:-

- (a) Do not touch money. Do not even carry it with you.
- (b) Do not touch members of the opposite sex. This need not apply to children under 7 years.
- (c) Do not hit anyone under any circumstances, even in jest.
- (d) Do not insult or abuse even when provoked.

I filled up the acknowledgement slip, which was attached to that circular, to follow the 5th order and posted it to MEHER BABA, with a short forwarding letter which is given below:-

Rev. Shri Meher Babaji,

At last your light seems to have dawned upon me. I paid no heed to your circulars prior to this. But, now I sign the 5th order of your present circular dated 4.5.1948 most voluntarily, and the above order shall be followed by me literally, most faithfully and without any compromise. I have a daughter about 8 years old. I do not know how I will be able to avoid touching her as she sleeps with me and remains with me for the major portion of time I remain in the house. I rely on your help in this.

Part of All - Pervading Soul,
Sd. K.N. Nigam

Having done this, I became engrossed with my life as usual.

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THE PREPARATION

BABA'S HEAVENLY CALL

Now that I had unknowingly established contact with MEHER BABA by accepting to follow order No. 5 of His circular dated 4.5.1948 and through my first letter of 12th May 1948, he actively began to work in my life though still unknowingly to me. A few days before the commencement of the period of 30 days mentioned in BABA's circular of 4.5.1948, I received the offer of the post of "The Director of Public Information" of the Bundelkhand Unit of the newly formed Vindhya Pradesh Government. This offer had been sent to me by the Chief Secretary of the V.P. Government through telegram. I was quite surprised to receive that offer, for I had neither applied for it, nor had I even expressed my desire for it to anyone. Nay, I had no knowledge of that post at all, and in the exaltation of my then political leadership and flourishing legal practice that post appeared as humiliating to me. So I was feeling no attraction to accept that heavenly sent offer, rather I was feeling inclined to refuse it. But, as BABA's silent will was behind it so circumstances took me to Nowgong, the then capital of Vindhya Pradesh, where I was successfully persuaded to accept the appointment order of that post just on June 21, 1948 - the date on which the observance of BABA's 5th order was to commence. I took the letter of appointment on that date and joined as Director of Public Information on July 1, 1948.

In the course of time I came to know that my friend Parmeshwari Dayal, who wanted to see me off the District, was behind this offer of post to me and my appointment to it for his own political ends. Through the acceptance of that post my ties with politics and political associations with Parmeshwari Dayal were broken for good. It was an abrupt and total change in my career.

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21st June 1948 was a very important date of my life. I began the observance of BABA's order from that date, and on the same date I got the letter of appointment to the heavenly bestowed post. That was the fortunate land-mark between my old life and the present life with BABA. It was the turning point in my life.

THE BEGINNING WITH SILENT WARNING

Thus did begin my active contact with MEHER BABA. When I returned to Hamirpur from Nowgong with the aforesaid letter of appointment, my wife felt specially happy because she had become bored with my too much engrossment at Hamirpur with the legal practice and politics. I began to wind up my business hurriedly at Hamirpur for going to Nowgong to join my new job. My wife left immediately with children for our native village MAHEWA to come to Nowgong when I had established there. They could not come to Nowgong till the end of that period of 30 days which was given in BABA's circular of 4th May 1948, in spite of my best efforts to do so. BABA was definitely keeping them away from me during that period to help me avoid touching my eldest daughter who was above 7 years of age, for which I had expressed my reliance on BABA in my letter of 12th May 1948. Baba did help me as I had desired of Him.

Thus, on His part MEHER BABA did help me in the observance of His 5th order of His 4th May circular, but on my part I twice deliberately violated the promise which I had given to Baba to follow His 5th order literally, most faithfully and without any compromise, for in that stage of my life I did not appreciate 100% the value of keeping my promise, which I had to learn in my association with MEHER BABA. While leaving for Nowgong I knowingly allowed a girl of about 14 years of age to paste 'Tilak' (Mark) on my forehead as a mark of loving good-bye and then fondly caressed her, and I also

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carried money with me and touched it with my hands during my journey to Nowgong. I did both of these things knowing well that it was violation of BABA's order which I had promised to follow 100%.

Immediately after these two deliberate violations of the promise which I had voluntarily made to MEHER BABA, an abscess developed in my right palm, the same palm that had caressed the young girl and touched money in violation of the promise. In spite of the best medical treatment that abscess did not subside, and it gave me severe pain day and night. With that abscess in my hand I started to work as the Director of Public Information of Vindhya Pradesh Government at Nowgong (Bundelkhand).

My right arm got swollen due to that abscess, and at last I had to undergo an operation for it in the Civil Hospital Nowgong on 12th July 1948. The wound kept healing up even after 20th July 1948, the date on which the observance of BABA's order was to end.

THE DIVINE GIFT

During the same fortunate period, I received the V.P. Parcel of the book 'AVATAR' written by Jean Adriel from Sri Adi K. Irani, on 15th July 1948, with Sri Adi's letter of 9.7.1948, which read as follows:-

"Under instructions from Shri BABA, I am sending you today by V.P.P. for Rs. 11/- (Rs. 10/- cost and Rs. 1/- postage) a copy of the book 'AVATAR' by Jean Adriel, printed in America.

"The book is being sent on the express wish of BABA. It is unusual that a Master desires, on his own, his devotees to buy a book, and as such it has a deeper significance beyond that of reading. It has the value of a prized possession. So the V.P.P. may be accepted.

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"With BABA's Blessing....."

The V.P.P. and the above words of Sri Adi K. Irani extremely provoked me. In great prejudice against BABA I thought that He and Sri Adi were doing money-making business with me and side by side wanted to prove to me that MEHER BABA is the AVATAR, and thus they wanted to befool me doubly. In the moment of that provocation I almost decided to dishonour the V.P.P., but the next moment I decided through an inner urge to take the intimation of the V.P.P. and then think of honouring or refusing it with a quiet mind. Later, during my unprovoked moments I felt the urge to honour the V.P.P. on 20th July 1948, so that it might ever mark the sacred memory of the last date of the observance of MEHER BABA's first order by me. Accordingly I took delivery of the V.P.P. on July 20, 1948.

I went through the 'AVATAR' and finished its first reading by the beginning of August 1948. Its reading punctured my hard ego-shell and did initiate me into a totally new world in which "my so far hated MEHER BABA" glaringly rose before me as the Be-all and End-all of my life - my only Divine Beloved who had till then remained concealed in all my activities and had been conducting my life unknown to me.

The reading of 'AVATAR' gave to me full and firm belief in MEHER BABA's Avatarhood. I got an invincible inner belief that my reading for the first time BABA's CIRCULAR OF 4.5.1948 and voluntarily signing its 5th order with a promise to follow it 100%, my unexpected and abrupt appointment as the Director of Public Information of V.P. Government without my knowledge, the moving away of my family (specially of my daughter who was above 7 years of age) from me for the entire period of 30 days covered by BABA's circular, and the abscess in my right palm as a merciful warning against the breach of promise that I had made to God Himself, were no

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haphazard sequence of events but were Divinely planned by MEHER BABA. My whole devotion and love and my entire being now turned to Beloved MEHER BABA the GOD-MAN, and He became the sole centre of my life and its activities, for in HIM I had quite confidently and spontaneously seen the goal of my life. My inner self voluntarily surrendered to Him in love, and in that surrender I felt real solace. My life took a complete turn to BABA.

I now remembered with great grief and pain as to how malignantly I had thrown my Beloved's pictures on the public road in 1942, to be trampled down by the passers by. I left no efforts to get Him ruthlessly trampled down, while on the other hand He spared no pains to Himself to raise me higher and higher to His bosom in order to give me His loving Divine Embrace. That insane action of mine has ever painfully pinched my heart and it does the same today. I have never been able to dare to ask BABA's forgiveness for it though I have keenly wished many times to do so. Now through this writing I beg to convey my deep repentance and apology to BABA's Lotus feet for that barbarous act of mine and ask His loving forgiveness to relieve me from that deeply long-lodged pain.

THE NEW CHAPTER

Thus did begin the New Chapter in my life - the last one as I felt it and even now feel it - into LORD MEHER BABA's Divine Kingdom. After the expiry of the period of 30 days (June 21 to July 20, 1948) my wife and children reached Nowgong on July 26, 1948 and soon after their arrival my wife became seriously ill. She became so seriously ill that the famous doctor of the Civil Hospital appeared to give up the hope of her recovery. I felt helpless but equally sustained by full faith in, and reliance on, the Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. In that moment of helplessness I showed to my wife the picture of BABA Which is printed on the paper jacket of the book

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"AVATAR" and told her, "Look here! He is God Himself who has descended on this earth in the form of AVATAR. Have His Darshan. Whenever you feel deterioration in your condition, just have His Darshan." Then I kept the book "AVATAR" by her pillow. One of the journalists under me, Shobha Chandra Joshi, who knew Homoeopathy began to give her homeopathic treatment, and, lo! she got totally cured in 8 to 10 days. such was the magic of BABA's Divine Grace, which besides cementing my newly born faith in Beloved MEHER BABA awakened deep faith for Him in the heart of my wife also, so that the two wheels of our lives began to roll, from the very beginning, smoothly together on the same Divine Path. This harmonious journey of our lives has ever proved to be BABA's great Blessing to both of us.

The book "AVATAR" became my uniquely "prized possession" because Beloved MEHER BABA, sending it to me of His own, awakened me to His reality without yet giving me His physical Darshan. I felt an inner urge to translate it into Hindi. So I sent a long 6-paged typed letter to Him on August 19, 1948, the Rakshabandhan Day*, narrating therein briefly my past story asking His permission to translate the "AVATAR" into Hindi in His Divine Service. I enclosed a copy of that letter for Jean Adriel also.

BABA's permission for me to translate "AVATAR" in Hindi was conveyed to me by Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D., Professor in Philosophy in the Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya AMRAVATI, who had been asked by BABA to look to the progress of that translation by me. I felt very happy to receive BABA's permission for that translation. C.D. Desmukh had written to me:

* Rakshabandhan.....A Hindu festival in which sisters tie a thread around their brother's wrist. put sweet into his mouth and perform prayer for his protection and long life. The brother in turn, gives gifts to his sister - Publisher.

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"I am very happy that you have decided to serve the Avatar. Through Love and Service you will realise Him as none other than God-Incarnate. This has been our experience."

"In ways mysterious, He communicates Himself to us and that is His Grace. You are surely lucky beyond words."

".....It seems to me that you are going to play an important role in the service of Mankind through the precious link which you have now established through surrenderance to Shri Meher Baba. Your faith will take you to the heights of spirituality."

On 2.9.1948 I received from Meherabad Jean Adriel's letter dated August 29, 1948, wherein it read:

"It gave me great pleasure to read the letter which you wrote recently to Beloved Baba concerning your reaction to the reading of "AVATAR" and your desire to translate it into Hindi. I have known for sometime past that Baba wished it put into the Indian language and am very happy for you that you are the one he has drawn for this purpose. I can only hope for you that your work on it will have the effect of drawing you as close to the Beloved Master as it did with me. More I could not wish for anyone. And since you are the one He has chosen for this important work I am confident you will do it well."

At that time Jean Adriel was present at Meherabad.

On September 6, 1948 I received BABA's first letter to me through Sri Adi K. Irani in reply to my letter of 19.8.1948. Adi had conveyed to me that BABA was very happy to hear the contents of my letter, that He had permitted me to translate "AVATAR" into Hindi and had given His Blessings to me. Oh, I was happy beyond words to receive all these communications in the world of my Beloved MEHER BABA.

TRANSLATION OF "AVATAR"

I began translating AVATAR into Hindi at Nowgong on 1.9.48. And, as the organization of the newly formed Province

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Vindhya Pradesh was still going on, there was not much work for me to do. I got much time for the translation work and I devoted it earnestly to that important work. Soon the Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand units of Vindhya Pradesh were fused into one with its capital at REWA. So I shifted with my whole office to Rewa on 25.9.1948. Here also I continued working day and night on that translation work, and I finished it on 26th May 1949. It was later published by me in series in the Hindi monthly 'MEHER PUKAR' during the period from September 1955 to September 1959 A.D. On completing that translation work I realized the truth contained in the words of Jean Adriel and Dr. C.D. Deshmukh which I had received from them in the very beginning in 1948.

CONTAGION SPREADS

On 12.9.48, my intimate friend Madan Mohan Lal Agrawal came to me at Nowgong. He looked into the book AVATAR and read the correspondence of mine with BABA and His lovers in my file, and he too got the contagion of BABA's Love through me. He immediately sent for a copy of AVATAR through me and became Baba's deep lover. Today he is BABA's Chief lover and worker at AGRA (U.P.), keeping regular contact with me ever since.

ON WAY TO REWA

As has been narrated above, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand units of newly formed Vindhya Pradesh Province were fused into one with their capital at Rewa. So we were now to shift from Nowgong capital to the new Rewa capital. I had fixed my programme to leave for Rewa on 25th September 1948 and to leave Nowgong early in the morning. But on the eve of our departure Baba put up a trial before me, for on 24th September my little son Subhash fell seriously ill, and it naturally caused us great worry. My friends and well wishers advised me not to leave on 25th under such condition of my son

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Subhash. But I was not ready to cancel my programme, for I had full faith in Baba's Grace and inner help, and so I replied to them, "I will not cancel my programme. I have full faith in Baba. He will look to everything of us." With this faith in Baba I went to bed on 24th and had a carefree sleep. Early in the morning of 25th September, while I was yet physically asleep, Beloved Baba appeared before me in what we call a dream. He met me very lovingly and poured out immense happiness on me. He very lovingly blessed me for my journey to Rewa and indicated that all will be well. My whole being got stirred with extreme happiness at this very first meeting in Dream Land with AVATAR MEHER BABA. This was my first fortunate meeting with the Divine in this life! In that happiness I woke up and at once told my wife. "Do not worry about Subhash. Nothing untoward will happen to him. Baba has just met me in dream and given me His blessings and love."

So according to my settled programme I loaded in the truck my personal luggage and also all the record of my office and left in the early morning to Harpalpur for catching the train. My family consisted of my wife, my 8 years old daughter Meher Prabha, my 4 years daughter Meher Jyoti and my ailing baby son, Subhash. We got into the train at Harpalpur with Subhash in the same condition. We were to reach Rewa on the morning of 26th September partly journeying by the train and partly by the bus. Baba's blessing proved to be true, as little Subhash got quite well during the journey on the train. We were giving him a homoeopathic medicine. We also inwardly felt that Baba was with us throughout the journey.

We reached Rewa on the morning of 26th September 1948 and put our luggage in the local Dharmashala, for a suitable lodge had yet to be found for us. Finding a lodge at that time at Rewa was a problem for us, but in this work too Baba's Grace helped us, and we got a palatial building to live in Ghoghar

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Mohalla on the bank of Ghoghar river and by the side of Ghoghar road. The landlord of this house had refused to let out this house to many people, but in my case he at once let out to me his house without even a single word, as if he had been reserving it for me. Really it was a very comfortable and healthy lodge for us.

BABA'S NAZAR

The spark of Baba's love had touched my heart deeply, so that I was getting closely drawn to Him. A great desire to serve Baba every moment was surging in my heart. Baba had become the be-all and end-all of my life although I had not yet physically met Him. His work appeared to me to be the only real thing worth doing and all else appeared to me false and illusory. I longed for Baba's physical contact which I began by writing a letter to Him every morning after reaching Rewa. I did this from 26th September 48 to 10th October 1948. I received a reply to some of these letters from Baba's Secretary Adi K. Irani, that contained the reply to my letters from 26th September to 4th October 1948. Baba had expressed His happiness at the contents of my letters and permitted me to write letters to Him once or twice in a month. In his letter Adi K. Irani informed me, "He (Baba) tells you and your dear wife not to worry about anything. He has His 'NAZAR' on you both and your children." How happy were we to have received from God Baba His Divine 'NAZAR'! for which the aspirants so fervently long and for which saints and yogis practise penance for ages and ages.

Baba's assurance of 'NAZAR' was clarified to me by an incident. Adi K. Irani's envelope which was addressed to me in English was pushed in through the door of my house by the postman on 10th October 1948 along with other letters. My 8 years old daughter Meher Prabha and 4 years old daughter Meher Jyoti brought all those letters to me shouting with joy,

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"Meher Baba's letter, Pappa! here is Meher Baba's letter!". Though none of them knew English at all, yet they sorted out from the lot Adi's letter, which was addressed in English. When I opened the envelope I found that my both daughters had truly sorted out Baba's letter, and this made me feel how Baba's 'NAZAR' was on my whole family!

Bearing the seal of Baba's Divine 'NAZAR' on me, I started my office work and Baba's work simultaneously at Rewa. Because Vindhya Pradesh province was still in the making and in the early stage of organization, I had not much office work to do and hence I had ample time at my leisure. So I used to devote much of my time in telling people, who came into my contact, about Meher Baba and give to them Baba's literature whatever I had. And, at home I used to translate into Hindi the book AVATAR by Jean Adriel, for which Baba had already mercifully permitted me while I was at Nowgong. Thus I used to remain busy in Baba's work both at office and at home. I used to tell my colleague officers and other officials of the Secretariat about Baba and about my contact and experiences with Him. I aimed at creating Baba-lover families there and through Baba's Grace I succeeded to bring 4 or 5 families in the orbit of Baba's love by the end of 1948. I started on my own initiative gatherings of these families once in a month in any one of the Baba-lover's residence. In those meetings we used to sing Bhajans etc. in Baba's praise, talk about Him and meet each other lovingly without any difference of high or low, rich or poor, etc. At the termination of this Bhajan, talking and meeting programme, we used to enjoy Community Dinner together as children of one Father Meher Baba. We used to invite other God lovers also in these programmes. In this way the number of Baba-lovers went on increasing.

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COSMIC MEHER-FAMILY

These gatherings of Baba-lovers' families brought into my mind the idea of "One universal Meher-Family" under Baba's Divine love, so that people may drop narrow feelings of being the members of individual small families with the distinctions of caste, creed, nationality, etc, and develop the broad feeling of being the members of only One Universal Family without any kinds of distinctions under Avatar Meher Baba's love. I named this proposed Universal Family as "COSMIC MEHER-FAMILY" or Meher Brahma Parivar. I conveyed this idea of mine to Beloved Baba through a letter. In its reply I received Adi K. Irani's letter of 26th December 1948, in which he conveyed to me :

"The idea of Cosmic Meher-Family is excellent. Shri Baba was happy to hear about it. He would like you to get on working towards winning over the people to form into Meher-Family. There cannot be a better idea than calling the group members a family." Thus came into being the Cosmic Meher-Family at Rewa, and its members went on increasing.

PULLING BACK

This idea of Universal Cosmic Meher-Family had its good effects in Hamirpur District to which I belong, and where I spent 10 glorious years of legal practice and political leadership. So all my associates and friends of Hamirpur District heartily welcomed my this idea of Cosmic Meher-Family. But, my friend and political co-worker Parmeshwari Dayal 'Pukar' was an exception to it. We had worked shoulder to shoulder in the political field in spite of his being a communist and myself a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Though he had been the main and direct cause of my leaving a flourishing legal practice at Hamirpur in June 1948 and coming to Vindhya Pradesh, yet now he began to try to pull me back to Hamirpur and do political work with him. He tried his utmost to detach me from Meher

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Baba's field of love, and for that he wrote many loving and touching letters to me. But now his such letters did not touch my heart and I felt not the least inclined to join him again in politics or even in social life; for, my heart had become full with the definite feeling that I had found the goal of my life in Baba and that I had now nothing more to achieve for myself. The restlessness which I used to feel in my life prior to coming into Baba's contact had completely merged in Baba - quest of my soul was complete. Politics and all other things than Baba and his work appeared to me quite useless. So with this inner state of mine I used to reply to brother Pukar's calls -

"I have found out the goal of my life in Baba and with that I am quite happy, satisfied and at peace with myself. It is now impossible for me to come back to my old political life. You should give up all hopes for my coming back to you again for sharing political work with you, for actually speaking I am now doing human service in the true sense and in much wider field in Baba's love. And, I do feel that you may also join me in Baba's field sometime in future. Therefore, be cautious lest you yourself may be dragged into it. It is quite possible that instead of pulling me back again to that quagmire you yourself may be drawn in future in Baba's love." Thus Pukar with his best efforts failed to pull me back from BABA.

BABA'S EXPRESS WILL

As told above, the Vindhya Pradesh Province was still in the making, so things were rapidly changing there. For their political reasons I was not a welcome figure to the Premier of Greater Vindhya Pradesh. He wanted to put his own man as the head of the Information Department. So for that reason he started reorganising the Information Department, and on 22nd November 1948 he appointed one Sri Ram Chandra Tandan, a friend of his, as the Director and gave him the charge of the Directorate. It was Baba's Grace that the Premier did not

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discharge me from service, but instead he appointed me as the Assistant Director under his friend.

I felt extremely pained and humiliated at this change which for me was quite unjust. I felt its humiliation so much that I thought of resigning from the post, and I conveyed the information of this situation to Baba. In reply to it I received a letter from Sri Adi K. Irani dated 30th November 1948. Adi had conveyed to me, "Since it is His will that you should remain where you are, it is best to abide by His wishes and carry out your duties." This express Divine Will of Beloved Meher Baba did make me so very happy that in it I forgot all injustice and humiliation and thought myself to be extremely fortunate in receiving in quick succession God's Blessings, God's 'NAZAR' and God's Will. Having received all these from God, I did not care for anything in this world, and my only longing became to live for Meher Baba and to die for Meher Baba.

So I started working as an Assistant Director of information under Sri Tandan from 25th November 1948. Sri Tandan was called only for six months, as I was told by the Chief Secretary, and these six months proved to me to be like ages, but on the other hand at the end of them I felt that they brought to me from Meher Baba a rare boon of great spiritual treasure. That period which appeared so extremely bitter to me then appears to me now to be the sweetest and most significant period in my life with Baba. I feel that what spiritual benefit I got during this period could not have been achieved by me personally in thousands of lives.

Mr. Tandan was a very nice man, noble and good hearted and highly cultured, but he was very bitter in making critical remarks.

In the very beginning Sri Tandan formed a very bad idea against me. On 29th November 1948 he complained against me to the Premier - "He does not do any work and sits idle

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intoxicated like an opium addict." He had made one or two more of such complaints against me, though I was doing my duty honestly and sincerely in the name of my Beloved Meher Baba. These complaints were to be put up before the Premier by Sri Ganga Prasad Jain who was very good and God fearing officer and a favourite of the Premier. So before taking us both to the Premier Sri Ganga Prasad Jain called both of us to hear us both. Mr. Jain humorously asked me. "I have heard that you sit idle in the office lost in yourself and do not do office work." I replied, "It is not so. I do and complete my work honestly everyday, and of course when I have no work with me to do then, instead of gossiping I remember my Dear God silently." He seemed to feel impressed with the later portion of my reply and asked me, "Your God! Who is your God, and where is he?" At this I took out Beloved Baba's photo from my pocket and showed it to him. Mr. Jain was so impressed with it that he totally forgot the complaints against me and started asking me about Meher Baba more and more and about my experiences after coming in contact with Beloved Baba. I explained to him everything, and by this he appeared charmed and inwardly drawn to Baba. After that he heard from me the replies to other complaints against me, and, he found that all the complaints against me were baseless. Mr. Tandan's mouth was shut up. He could not utter a single word, and I was saved from appearing before the Prime Minister to answer the charges.

The result of this incident was that Mr. Ganga Prasad Jain started coming in the gatherings of our Cosmic Meher-Family and began to enjoy meeting with us in Baba's love. Some other high officers of the Secretariat also began to join our gatherings, and such meetings created a very happy atmosphere.

By the end of December 1948 Mr. Tandan also became quite pleased with my work, but still his tongue was bitter. During our official work and talk he would get irritated on

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some point and pass such piercing remarks that went direct into the deepest corner of my heart. There was hardly any day when this would not happen. I felt so much pained at his such remarks that only I know it. I used to bear this silently without uttering a single word to Mr. Tandan in reply. It will be significant to note here that before joining this service I was quite a free man at Hamirpur as a flourishing lawyer and respected political leader. I knew no subordination. So, Baba made me to experience here the negative side of freedom also for my great spiritual upliftment. I had to learn to feel even in this situation too.

Whatever may have been Baba's Will in this, but the fact is that the daily piercing remarks of my Director had made me so much afraid of him that whenever he called me to his office. I first used to go to the urinal to ease myself before confronting him. I used to take as much time in this feigned urinating as I could and then would go slowly to him with great fear, praying to Baba all the time that at least that day He might save me from the deep sting of Mr. Tandan's remarks. It is not the least exaggeration of the situation that I am narrating here, but it is a naked truth which I am disclosing to show the nature of Baba's working. At those moments, naturally Baba's Will seemed to me to be very very cruel and bitter, but later I came to know that through Mr. Tandan, He deeply punctured my ego, gave me the power of tolerance, and otherwise enriched me spiritually. Really those six months were very important days of my life with Baba and they are very very dear to me now. Baba literally filled my inner being during them. He drove away from my heart the ambition for power and pelf which I previously had and turned away my mind from them. High posts and high offices seemed to me quite trivial before Meher Baba's service. Charm for all mundane greatness had vanished from my heart.

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THE SILENT MASTER INTO MY HEART - 1949 A.D.

The year 1949 started with Baba's Circular of 1st January 1949. In this circular Baba had told His lovers that the year would prove to be of real test and hard tasks, and so He instructed His lovers and devotees to be more sacrificing and less selfish, and also told them that instead of drowning themselves in Maya they should be drowned in God. They should remain aloof from political work and debates. They should observe complete silence for the whole month of July 1949, and from 1st February 1949 to the end of the year 1949 they should not have any sort of correspondence with anybody.

This circular of Baba reached me on 3rd January 1949, so I immediately started preparing myself and others to follow the instructions of the circular. The contents of this unique circular charged the whole atmosphere for Baba-lovers and released a great force for them. I made this circular as the main base for my Baba-work, translated it into Hindi and got hundreds of its copies printed in Hindi and circulated them to all concerned at Rewa and in Hamirpur District.

Mr. Tandon had come to know that I was a lover of Meher Baba and he had also been noticing my Baba activities now and then. Things were taking strange shape with him as time rolled on, and anyhow he began to get bored with his present job. On 29th January 1949 he talked to me for the first time about my Beloved Meher Baba for about an hour. He heard my talks about Him very patiently, and then expressed his desire to read Baba's circular of 1st January 1949. He also expressed his desire to have correspondence with Baba.

By now his behaviour with me had greatly changed because he had become fed up with his office job to the extent

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that often he used to seek my advice as to how he could get rid of it. While talking to me, his tongue was so sweet and mild now as it used to be bitter in the early days of our office. I used to feel pity at his condition, and in that very short period Beloved Baba made me see that a man who called me an 'opium addict' in the beginning now found in me his sympathetic adviser and well wisher to whom he could disclose his heart freely. I used to console Mr. Tandan to my capacity and during those periods Baba was invariably referred to by me. His interest in Meher Baba seemed to grow, so that finally one day he took the book AVATAR from me to read. After going through this book thoroughly Mr. Tandan remarked about Meher Baba, "He will live in History."

Now came another important event of the year - 25th February 1949, which was Avatar Meher Baba's 55th Birthday. I decided of my own to celebrate it there publicly with due splendour. I invited the officers and officials of the Secretariat to help me in this auspicious Divine function and I got a great response to it from all quarters. Thus Baba's 55th Birthday was celebrated by me for the first time in the local Venkat Memorial Hall among a good gathering of all classes of people. I spoke to the audience about Meher Baba for one hour which seemed to have an awakening effect on all hearts. My Superior officer Mr. Tandan attended that function and he very much appreciated my speech.

As Baba had prohibited all correspondence from 1st February 1949 to the end of 1949 through His circular dated 1st January 1949, it naturally saved much of my time and enabled me to pay more attention towards Baba's work and His remembrance. The consolidation of Vindhya Pradesh was not yet complete. In April 1949 the Information Department was dissolved. Mr. R.C. Tandan handed over his charge to me very happily on 23rd April and with great sense of relief left for his home at Allahabad. I also wanted to be free from it but

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due to the earnest efforts of Sri Ganga Prasad Jain and Pandit Narsingh Prasad, who were influential officers of the secretariat, I was not relieved. Instead of it, they succeeded in getting a new post created for me, and I was appointed on 1st May 1949 as an officer on special duty in charge of Secretariat library, News Section and Central Records in Vindhya Pradesh Secretariat. This post had been created specially for me, and to me it was a clear evidence of Baba's Divine Will for me. In spite of all situations, turmoils and changes, I continued the translation of AVATAR in Hindi vigorously without the least slackness, and through Baba's grace I at last completed it at Rewa on 26th May 1949. I got much inner help from Baba in this translation, as sister Jean Adriel and Doctor C.D. Deshmukh had assured me in the beginning.

I had been a prominent and popular Political leader in Hamirpur District on the foot-steps of Mahatma Gandhi, so many of my political associates used to come from Hamirpur to visit me at Rewa, and I also used to receive a lot of correspondence from Hamirpur district and its neighbourhood. So one of the most fortunate effects of the prohibition of correspondence by Baba in 1949 for me was that all political associates became naturally out of contact with me and my political attachment with them was almost finished. Those who were intimately connected with me began to join hands with me in BABA's Divine Cause and Work. I felt that thereby Baba had clearly taken me out of the mud for using me in His pious Divine work.

I faced many tests and trials also during 1949 about which Baba had already told in His circular of 1st January. According to Baba's instructions given in the circular, myself, my wife and the Pillai family (the first of Cosmic Meher-Family at Rewa) began observing one month's silence from 1st July 1949. Pillai

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family was the first family with whom I started Baba's work at Rewa and which was the first family - D.A. Pillai, T.R. Pillai, Meher Veena, Meher Meera, Meher Kanti etc. - of Baba's Cosmic Meher-Family at Rewa. Myself and my wife both observing silence had to manage the daily affairs of the family not without difficulties and trials, but we did not break our silence for any reasons throughout the whole month. Baba's grace helped us through it all successfully. Before starting silence from the midnight of 30th June 1949, I arranged a get-together of Meher families at my home in which Sripati Sahai Rawat, Babu Ram Prasad and pandit Kunj Bihari from Hamirpur district had specially come to participate, and now they are Avatar Meher Baba's workers in Hamirpur district. Just at midnight during that gathering we all hailed loudly "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai," and commenced our one month's silence.

During this silence there was for me the great problem of managing my office work as well, but there too came Baba's help. My superior officer Pandit Narsingh Prasad offered of his own to do the work of putting up the files of my department on my behalf to the Chief Secretary, while during my office hours all other officers and my colleagues gave me their full co-operation for maintaining my silence. Thus my this silence of one month became a much talked of affair in the whole Secretariat. It was strange thing for all of them.

Baba went into a strict seclusion for 40 days from 22nd June 1949. In that seclusion no one was allowed to send to Him even a telegram. So besides the tests and trials that came before me at home and in the office during the silence, there came yet a very funny trial before me during that period. On the 6th July 1949, I had to give evidence in a murder case in the court of the sessions Judge at Datia near Jhansi. So for that purpose I left on 5th July with my orderly Brij Mohan. He was moon blind, which I did not know then, nor had he himself

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told me about it. In the evening we journeyed by train from Satana to Manikpur junction. It was twilight when we reached Manikpur. The stoppage of train was very short there. Brij Mohan, instead of getting down from the train from the main door, jumped through the side window on the platform over the pitcher of a milk seller. The pot rolled on the platform and whole of its milk flowed out. At this the enraged milk seller caught hold of Brij Mohan's neck. I was greatly perturbed to see this, because the luggage was yet to be unloaded from the train, while Brij Mohan was caught by the milk man. I was observing silence so I could not speak anything to the milk man. So I hurriedly threw all the luggage on the platform, and then with angry look gazed at the milk man and gestured with my hand to him to leave Brij Mohan. Baba's magic worked here wonderfully, as the milk man seemed to have got frightened at my frowning look and silent scolding, as a result of which he left the neck of Brij Mohan and began talking to me very meekly and humbly, "Look at this man Babuji! He has spilt over all my milk." I gave him certain silent soothing gestures. At this he went away still grumbling at Brij Mohan, "Come along, I will see you." I was feeling perturbed to think as to what further trouble this may bring to us, because for all practical purposes I was "dumb" and Brij Mohan was "blind".

Anyhow, Brij Mohan took up the luggage and we proceeded to get into the connecting train, but after going along a few steps Brij Mohan dashed against an old woman who staggered on the ground crying pitifully. This made me further perplexed, because due to silence I could say nothing to Brij Mohan or to that lady. I tried to console and pacify her with my silent gestures.

Again, we proceeded along towards the train. As we passed by the ticket checker on the platform, he asked Brij Mohan to show him the tickets, but Brij Mohan would pay no

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heed to him. The ticket checker called him out again but Brij Mohan went along with his perfect ease. Then one of my friends, who had joined me on the train in the way, intervened. He went and asked Brij Mohan to show the tickets to the T.C., which he did and I felt at ease. Now we got into the Manikpur-Jhansi passenger train for Datia.

For the journey I had given all my money to Brij Mohan to spend and keep safely with him. Now it was supper time and I wanted something to eat. Brij Mohan had money into his pocket, so I patted twice on his pocket, and simultaneously gestured with my hand to him to go and bring food for me from that money. But 'blind' Brij Mohan thought that perhaps someone was trying to take money out of his pocket, so instead of going to purchase food for me he caught hold of his pocket tightly and sat quite alert. He could not see my gestures and I could not make him hear my voice, so he would not move to do anything. How I could manage things in such circumstances was the problem before me. But here again my same friend came to my help and he brought food for me. By now I had become totally perturbed and perplexed. The idea looming before me constantly was - with such strange beginning of journey, how would the whole journey be completed?

But, during this extremely perturbed and perplexed state of mine Baba sent to me some very sweetly soothing moments also. A simple and handsome young girl came with her old father and sat just opposite to my seat where I was relaxing on my stretched hold-all. She meekly asked me to allow her father to sit by my head side, which I happily did for her. The effect of my this simple gesture was that the whole night she kept watch at me, as it were and did not allow passengers to disturb me in my sleep. Whenever any passenger tried to awake me to give him seat, I would hear her words addressing him in a very meek voice, "Brother, do not trouble and awake him. He is

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coming after 3 days long journey. He is Mauni Baba." Those very loving words of her still ring into my ears. Surely it was the great relief that Beloved Baba had sent to me in her form.

At last we reached Jhansi in the morning at 8 a.m. where we had to change the train for Datia. I gave into writing to Brij Mohan to go and purchase the tickets for Datia if there was sufficient time for it, otherwise he should not take risk. After sunrise he could see things normally. With that chit of mine Brij Mohan went out. I waited for him eagerly all the time. The time for the departure of the train for Datia reached near and I eagerly began to see Brij Mohan again and again out of the window, but in vain. At last the train whistled and started, and Brij Mohan was left behind leaving his luggage also with me. I was under a vow of silence. I had not a single penny with me, and besides my luggage I had Brij Mohan's luggage also to carry with me. The worry about the whereabouts of Brij Mohan also strongly caught my mind. I had become helpless in all respects.

But at the exact moment there came again Baba's needed help for me. One sub-Inspector of Police who had been posted at Hamirpur and was an intimate friend of mine came into the same compartment. He was also going to Datia to give evidence in the same case. I became very happy to meet him. I told him in writing all the story of my journey up to Jhansi. He assured me that he will see to my comforts. Thus I reached Datia with him and stayed with him comfortably. I went to the then Superintendent of Police of Datia Rai Sahib Raghunandan Singh who belonged to Hamirpur and contacted about Baba. His wife was so impressed that she asked for Baba's photo and the circular from me, and I gave to her both of these. From that time they started loving Baba and later on they also attended Baba's Sahavas at Meherabad.

The greater magic of Baba's silence that I experienced at that time was that whomsoever I used to contact about Baba he was inevitably drawn towards Him.

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In the court of the Sessions Judge at Datia also my silence created a very arousing atmosphere. I gave in writing to the Sessions Judge, "As I am observing one month's silence so I will speak in reply to those questions only that are relevant to the case; and for all other questions my reply would be in writing." This was my own decision, because Baba was in strict seclusion and I could not seek His advice about it even by a telegram. This way of my giving evidence made the Sessions Judge and the people attending the court very inquisitive about me and Baba, and throughout the court and outside of it people began to talk about Baba. Thus I, the silent special officer of the Vindhya Pradesh Government Secretariat became the object of wonder to all present there, and I enjoyed its fun fully.

On the return journey I came to Jhansi with the same Sub-inspector of police, because Brij Mohan had not yet come to Datia. From Jhansi I found another friend up to the next station who gave me money for my journey expenses up to Rewa. After next two stations one of my subordinate official met me who was also returning to Rewa and I reached my home at Rewa with him comfortably. During the journey I distributed the copies of Baba's circular of 1st January to the people at every station and also told them in writing about Baba with its reference.

At home I learnt that Brij Mohan had returned to Rewa from Jhansi and told his story to my silent wife who became very anxious about me, thinking as to how I would manage during the journey without 'speaking', without 'money', and without a 'Friend'. But little did they know that Beloved God Meher Baba's Mercy never never fails His dear ones. At the end of the journey I came to know that in spite of all these trials, tests and odd circumstances Baba's grace never allowed me to feel helpless, alone, and forlorn during the entire journey. On the other hand I greatly enjoyed the fun of it all in my heart in silence!

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MY FIRST DARSHAN OF GOD-INCARNATE

At 7 a.m. on the 1st of August 1949, the members of the Meher Cosmic Family broke their month-long silence with hails of Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai and hymns in His praise. I had continuously experienced during that period of silence an abundant downpour of Baba's Divine Grace upon me. It was indeed a period of great joy and invaluable experiences.

And, then circumstances began to pave the way for my first physical darshan of Baba. On 8th of August 1949, amidst the celebrations of Raksha-Bandhan, I received a wire from Sripati Rawat of village Jarakhar, district Hamirpur, inviting me to his place and discuss about Baba's oncoming Darshan programmes in Hamirpur District. On the receipt of this wire I left Rewa with my family on the 9th August, and reached Rath on the 10th. In the afternoon I set out from Rath for Jarakhar upon a pony. I had hardly covered one and a half miles when dense rainy clouds suddenly gathered in an otherwise spotless sky and a very heavy downpour of rain commenced. Taking shelter under a tree I waited and waited for the rains to cease but in vain. Flood of water began to appear all round me to the horizon, which failed my courage. So eventually I was compelled to return to Rath. Next day instead of going to Jarakhar I sent a message to Sripati Sahai to come to Rath and meet me. But he was unable to come, nor did he send any definite word to me. Under such circumstances I returned to Rewa on the 12th August 1949.

But, on reaching back Rewa on 13.8.49 I received by post the letter of Sripati dated 10.8.49 which ran thus:

"Babadasji has arrived here from Ahmednagar. Sri Baba will be here on the 1st of November. Baba has ordered me to call you and chalk out the programme of Baba's visit in consultation with you. He has further asked me to instruct you that you should take a week's leave to be at Rath, Jarakhar and

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help to finalise the programme by participating in the discussion." Accordingly I began to prepare to set out again for Rath. but for unavoidable reasons I was unable to undertake the journey. Thus I could not meet Sripati Sahai at that time.

In the morning of 20th August 1949 I received a wire from Adi K. Irani asking me to go to Rath alone on 21st and to meet Babadas there. I set out at once and on the 21st I met Babadas and Sripati at Rath. It was decided by us that in order to finalize the programme we should see Baba Himself. Accordingly Babadas, Sripati Sahai Rawat and I decided to go to Baba, but Babadas took with us on his own accord Babu Ram Prasad and Brindaban Mahton also. A wire was sent to Baba informing Him that we 5 persons were setting out to see Him on the 26th August 1949.

At first Baba permitted only Babadas to see Him, but in His next telegram He permitted all 5 of us to meet Him at Meherabad on the 30th August 1949. We all reached with Babadas at Ahmednagar station in the morning of 29th August. In the afternoon Adi K. Irani came and drove us in his car to Meherabad. Shortly afterwards he brought us Baba's message that He would see us the next day. Thus we found our abode in the Ashram of God Himself. Babadas took us round the ashram and showed us everything and also introduced us to the inmates of the ashram.

THE MATCHLESS 30 AUGUST 1949

30 August 1949 was not only the most blessed moment of my present life but it also marked the culmination of all the blessed moments of all my previous lives and of the long vista of my evolutionary sojourn, for on that day I saw God Himself on the earth in the form of Avatar Meher Baba. At 7 a.m. Baba arrived and entered the cabin adjacent to the Dhuni. At 7.30 a.m. we were called into the cabin to meet Baba. Baba had told that He would give us only five minutes but He gave us thirty-

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four minutes in His presence. Baba was seated upon a cushion on the floor and we were allowed to sit near Him. I found myself intoxicated by His Divine Glance and Divine effulgence.

Baba spelt thus on His Alphabet Board, "People call Me the Lord of the Universe, but I am the servant of the Universe. I am the Washer-man come to cleanse the dirt of humanity..... you all are very fortunate to be here at this moment when I am about to enter My New Life..... Now I give you three orders for you all to follow from the 15th October 1949 for one year. Deliberate carefully on them and then communicate your decision to me about them. I will not at all be displeased if you do not accept any one or all of these orders. But once you promise me to obey one or two or all of these orders, then you must not break them. For this reason think very well before you give your word to Me. The orders are:- (1) Do not touch money. (2) Do not touch women. (3) Observe fast for 24 hours on any fixed day every week."

I promised Baba to obey hundred percent the first and third orders, and as for the second order for not touching women I told Him that I would sincerely try my utmost to comply with it but I do not give you promise for it. Baba listened to our answers attentively.

Now, began the discussion about the Darshan programmes in the district of Hamirpur. Baba gave His consent to give Darshan on one condition. "If you make it your responsibility to see that no one coming for My Darshan folds his hands before Me or touches My Feet....." This was sheer impossibility. We gave Baba our assurance to try our best to see to it, but Baba did not want only our assurance. He wanted our full promise for it. We did not dare to give Him such a risky promise. Then Baba instructed us to go and make the people prepared for these conditions of His Darshan and also asked me to prepare then and there and show Him the draft of

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the leaflet to be distributed among the masses for this purpose there. Baba reiterated His former statement, "You are all very fortunate to have come to meet Me when I am just about to enter My New Life." And, once again, after we had left the cabin, He expressed to Adi K. Irani "These were indeed fortunate people."

Outside the cabin, I promptly drew up the draft of the leaflet and got Babu Ram Prasad and Sripati Sahai's signatures to it along with mine and sent it to Baba. (Copy of the printed leaflet is being sent). Baba heard the contents of the leaflet and fully approved them. In those days no visitor was permitted by Baba's orders to stay at Meherabad for more than twelve hours. Twelve hours of our stay there had been completed by that time. So we were taken away from the ashram to the Ahmednagar railway station by car. From thence we returned to our respective destinations. This first darshan of God-Baba initiated me into a new life and also bathed my heart in a new light. The flame of Baba's love was intensely kindled within me and before it all the world and its mundane activities appeared absolutely petty and unreal to me. Burning in that fire of love I sent a wire to Baba from Rewa praying for His darshan again. But on the 25th September it was telegraphically communicated to me that Darshan was not possible. Along with this message was conveyed to me and my family, Baba's 'Love'.

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IN HIS SERVICE

BACK TO HAMIRPUR AGAIN

Seeing how Baba linked up my fate with Hamirpur Darshan programmes, I began to perceive that I must be destined to be the Chief Baba-worker there. The symptoms began to manifest both outwardly as well as within myself. In spite of the fact that Rewa was beautiful place I was getting disenamoured of it. The "Meher-Brahma Pariwar" (Cosmic Meher-Family) was now quite a large one, and the love of these lovers it was difficult to resist. The chief family of that group of Baba-families was that of Damodar Armugham Pillai and his son Raj Bahadur Pillai engineer. It was the main pillar of "The Cosmic Meher-Family" and also its first member. Besides the Cosmic Meher-Family, so many others also took active interest in Baba-Work and helped me in it. Some of these were Ganga Prasad Jain, the then Director of Food and Civil Supplies, Vindhya Pradesh, Pandit Narsingh Prasad, the then Assistant Secretary, Secretariat Administration Department, and several other officers as well as employees of the Secretariat. Still I was feeling detached from Rewa.

Outward factors also joined to impel me to go to Hamirpur. My old and intimate friends and companions Sripati Sahai Rawat and Babu Ram Prasad, etc. were attracting me towards Hamirpur for Baba-Work. At that period the Vindhya Pradesh Secretariat also began to reorganise. I received a notice that my services were terminated at that place on the 26th September 1949. I jumped with joy to receive this communication. But my companions at the Secretariat felt very unhappy. Just then the post of the Secretary of the District Board, Hamirpur, also fell vacant. All my friends at Hamirpur with one voice

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demanding and pressed me for that post. But, my friend and lover Sri Ganga Prasad Jain, the then Director of Food and Civil Supplies, wanted yet to keep me in his office as Assistant Director of Food and Civil Supplies and would not let me leave Rewa. I drew his attention to the uncertain future of Vindhya Pradesh, and through my loving persuasions he agreed to let me accept the job in my home district. So I sent Baba a wire on 7th October 1949 about the offer of the above post to me in Hamirpur District and on 8th October I received Baba's wire: "Job sanctioned Love." - BABA

So on 10th October, I sent my application for that post. On 30th November 1949 the Board met and selected me unanimously for that post. Now came the problem of winding up again from Rewa the entire establishment. I reached my birthplace Mahewa taking with us all paraphernalia by truck and train. Then, on 31st December 1949, I joined the District Board Hamirpur as its Secretary. I had left Hamirpur in June 1948 leaving my roaring legal practice and established political leadership with the intention of never returning to it again, but after only one and a half years time God Meher Baba's DIVINE WILL sent back to me here to be permanently established in Him and His work, for it has since been revealed that Hamirpur is BABA's Heart in His Love. Thus God MEHER BABA did establish me both in His Universal Inner Heart and Outer Heart.

PREPARATION FOR HIS WORK - 1950 AND 1951

I now feel that these two years were by Baba's Will ordained for me to come here and prepare the Hamirpur District for His Love-Work. Such was Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Divine Will. I had already acquired double influence over this region by my honest selfless political work and honest legal practice. Now it was to be given a spiritual direction through

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Baba's Divine Impact. My old companions and employees of the Board were very happy to find me back in their midst as the Secretary of the District Board. My sojourn outside the District for one and a half years and the stopping of all correspondence for last eleven months of 1949 had put an end to my political activities and their 'Sanskaras'. My posting at Rewa as the Assistant of Sri Ram Chandra Tandan, Director of Information Department had already crushed my ego and all my ambitions for high posts, and my heart was free to be filled up with Baba's Love and with the urge to do Baba-Work. Politics and all other ideals had taken leave of my heart and in their place now reigned only the Divine Ideal of Baba. I was for ever more, feeling an increasing desire to participate in Baba's Divine Mission. From 16th October 1949, Baba had entered into His "New Life" and as such all external communication with Him was banned. Therefore in order to go ahead the only way at my disposal was to pursue the Path of Truth which He had in His unique manner laid out in the "Song of The New Life of Meher Baba and His Companions."

Hence I took the help of that beckoning light and began to do my work of administration in the District Board. Many of my political companions still tried to bring me back into the world of politics and also to get their political ends served through my work in the District Board, but within the limits of my understanding and control I never allowed any of their wrong tactics to gain a hand in my work. If felt a thing to be right, no arguments of anybody against it could deviate me from doing it. I waged an incessant war against corruption wherever I found it in the District Board employees at all levels throughout the district, while I encouraged the honest and straight forward employees in every way and highly respected

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them. If any employee confessed his fault truthfully I used to let him off irrespective of the magnitude of his guilt. Daily before the beginning of the office work I began to gather all the employees in my office room and made all to participate in the prayers to God. The result of it all was that the low morale of the administration remarkably rose high within one year, and corruption was almost wiped away. Baba's Grace manifested itself clearly when the income of the District Board that year established itself as the highest income in the history of the District Board. In spite of their best efforts the District Board could never attain thereafter that record of income to this day. It was sheer BABA Grace, for I held the office and did all work for BABA and in His NAME.

Along side this work I also distributed the Baba-literature to people in office, in the town, and wherever I met them during my tours, and also told them about Baba. The result was that many of these persons who worked at various places in the district, under the District Board came into the Divine Field of Meher Baba with active interest. We also printed and distributed pamphlets to prepare people for BABA's Darshan as Baba had instructed us.

THE CURRENT OF LOVE

It is the law of Love that it flows more intensely in separation than in union. From the 16th October 1949 we were separated from Baba externally and there was no certainty or indication of meeting Him again in future. So during that period love for Beloved Baba flowed out of my heart in the form of many love-songs. I thought of Him in solitude, and songs of love for Him spontaneously flowed from my heart. And, though I was not a poet and had never indulged in poetic activity, yet for the following three years songs of love for Beloved BABA

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emerged from my heart incessantly. Once Baba heard all these songs and was very pleased with them and He encouraged me to try to write more of such songs if I found time.

Of these songs "Meher Chalisa" has become very popular. Its composition began on 24th March 1950 when Baba was somewhere near Haridwar during His New Life Phase. Meher Chalisa flowed from my heart on many different days, that is, 24, 25 and 26 March, 4, 11 and 18th June 1950, and 28th August, on which day it was finally completed. Avatar Meher Baba has heard this Love-Song from me about 10 times on different occasions and He feels deeply touched by it. It has been now printed with its English translation into a big bound book and Avatar Meher Baba has been Graciously pleased to make His Signatures on one copy of it which has been given to me. It has thus become immortal and my matchless Treasure.

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MY TRAINING

THE SECOND DARSHAN

Now I was feeling a great urge to have Baba's Darshan again. From the circulars of New Life issued from Baba's office, I had come to know that Baba was near Haridwar at that time. On 13th of April 1950, fell the Purna-Kumbh-Bathing-Day at Haridwar. With the hope that Baba will surely be found in the procession of Sadhus and Saints there and that I would be able to take His Darshan in that procession even from a distance, I made a pilgrimage to Haridwar during that Kumbha. For me Kumbha-Bathing meant nothing but to take Baba's Darshan. At that time Babadas was with us. With his help I was able to reach that spot on the bank of the Ganges Canal on the just opposite side of which, i.e., on the opposite bank of the canal stood the building in whose upper storey Baba was staying along with his New Life Companions. Sometimes Baba would come out of the room, stand on the balcony and look at the millions of pilgrims through a binocular. Sometimes He would stroll all over the balcony. This gave a good opportunity for many of His lovers to see Him during the entire Kumbh-Day and take His coveted darshan to their hearts content. The Kumbh-hours began at about 3 p.m. and ended at about 7 p.m. For me Ganges was there where my Beloved Baba was. As such on that very spot of the Ganges canal I took many dips in His Name, and after every dip as I rose up I got Baba's coveted Darshan. At the end of the Kumbh-hour (7 p.m.) I again took the last dips in His Name, and with each dip I again got what I longed for, the Darshan of Baba. May it be remembered that it was dark enough at 7 p.m., and yet even in that darkness I could clearly see bright form of Baba on the balcony after every dip. My Kumbha pilgrimage was fully rewarded and my Kumbha-Bathing was hundred percent fulfilled. I felt extremely happy and blessed.

My Training

THE FIRST EMBRACE, THE FIRST SMILE, THE FIRST PRASAD

This Darshan of Baba gave me a new life impulse. With great joy I now returned to my town and got back to my administrative duties. I took it as Baba-Work and engaged myself body and soul in it. Babadas was now living in our town. He had come away from Baba. We met and exchanged our feelings of love for Baba. As the days went by, I became increasingly aware of the flow of Baba's Grace towards myself, which Joyfully sustained me in all my activities.

On 15th September 1950 I received the New Life Circular No. 17 (dated 11th September 1950) which contained the information that from 7 a.m. on the 16th October 1950 Baba was going to hold a brief programme at Mahableshwar.

Baba had invited all the companions of His old Life to participate in that meeting. I was in ecstasy to get this opportunity to be in Baba's presence once again. Many others also from this District reached Mahableshwar to participate in the meeting. I was one of them. Baba was staying in the bungalow No. 364, belonging to Aga Khan, and the programme was to take place there. All of us took an early bath and reached the bungalow at 6 a.m. of the 16th October. In that pleasant morning, our Baba stood on the verandah dressed in His pink coat. Baba met us, one by one at that very spot and caressed each one on both cheeks. But, when Adi K. Irani introduced me to BABA, Baba warmly embraced me and then lovingly caressed me on my cheeks also. Among the whole group gathered there I was the only fortunate one who got Baba's embrace on that occasion!

It was Baba's rare Blessing that He gave only to me! Thus I received not only the first touch of God but also His indescribable first Embrace too.

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Baba gave an opportunity to the lovers to tell Him if they had anything to clear about the orders which they had in the past received from Baba to carry out. I had accepted on 30-8-1949 three orders of Baba to follow for one year: (1) Not to touch money. (2) Not to touch women. (3) 24 hours fast every week. I told Baba that according to my words, I tried my best to follow the order for not touching the women and followed it 100% for only 6 months. Baba was pleased to hear that I tried successfully for 6 months. The other two orders I had followed 100% throughout the year. I told Baba that through misunderstanding about the commencement of the time of 24 hours weekly fast, I had been observing 36 hours fast every week. Baba felt very happy to hear this and gave me an orange as His Special Prasad for it. He told me then the time to commence 24 hours fast, and asked me to continue it, which I continue to this day. Baba withdrew from me His other two orders - (1) Not to touch money, and (2) not to touch women.

At the end of the meeting Baba Himself distributed to each one of us a copy of His Sermon for that occasion. While giving me that Sermon, Baba looked at me and gave me a smile. I smiled in spontaneous response to him, and thus the first secret exchange of smiles took place between the lover and the Beloved.

After the programme, which lasted for 5 hours, Baba again returned to His 'New Life'.

REUNION WITH BABA IN HYDERABAD (DECCAN) JUNE 1951

After receiving God's Touch, embrace, Smile and Prasad my longing for Him increased much more. With the help of Babadas I began to occupy myself with Baba-Work more and more in this district. Now the District Board office work also began to lose its charm for me although I still carried it out with 100% labour, honesty and zeal. I could do so purely because I

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took it as duty entrusted to me by Baba Himself. But the desire to engage myself in Baba-Work all the time took an ever increasing possession of my heart as the days went by, and this state of mine continued with unabated intensity.

On 3rd May 1951 I received an invitation from Baba (dated 1-5-51) to be near Him in Hyderabad (Southern India) for three days: 28-29 and 30 June 1951. Some others from this district were also invited for that occasion - namely, Sripati Sahai, Gaya Prasad Khare, Lakshmi Chand Paliwal, Bhawani Prasad Nigam, Parmeshwari Dayal Nigam. Gaya Prasad Khare and myself reached Hyderabad on the 26th of June, but as we were advised to be at the appointed place (the bungalow of Ali Nawaz Jung, on the Jubilee Hill) on the afternoon of 27 June therefore we went over to a Dharmashala to stay there meanwhile; when we reached the Ali Nawaz Jung Bungalow in the evening of 27 June in compliance with the instructions given in the Circular, we sadly learnt that Baba had met all those lovers who had reached there earlier before noon or afternoon, and we were deprived of that opportunity in our efforts to obey 100% Baba's circular! Baba had asked many times about us during that period. The news of our arrival was conveyed to Baba, and He mercifully declared that before beginning His programme next morning He would give five minutes to see those who could not meet Him on 27 June. I rejoiced to hear this.

It is proper that I should tell here that Babadas had for his own reasons become very much displeased with me and often used to tell people that I had gone out of Baba's fold. He was an old and intimate lover and worker of Baba. I felt not the least moved or pained to hear such words from him about me. For it was easier for me to think of leaving my life than to dream of leaving Baba. When Babadas used to talk of me in this manner, I used to muse, "Will Baba throw me out of His

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shelter even with my following Him so deeply and lovingly?" And, my innermost being always heard BABA's reply that God always helps the truthful and He never lets such an one down.

Perhaps just to confirm this, Baba gave me His order to stay in the upper storey of Ali Nawaz Jung bungalow, while Babadas and the rest of the persons from Hamirpur were given a room below. Even then Babadas went on torturing me for those three days to such an extent that he would not let me enjoy meeting with my Beloved BABA in peace. But, nothing can ever remain concealed from Baba's sight, and Baba is the Doctor who cures all ills.

On 28th of June 1951 before Baba began the morning session of the programme, He gave five minutes to meet those who had not been able to see Him the previous day due to their belated arrivals. My joy knew no bounds to get this opportunity of seeing Baba, an opportunity that I had considered to have been lost. Only one moment with God-Baba was quite enough for me! The moment I reached Baba I unburdened my heart at His feet without any ado. "Baba, I have lost relish for everything. I am utterly fed up with the mundane activities and I feel like doing only Baba-work for the whole day, for each moment." Baba heard me seriously and in reply to my words His fingers began to move rapidly on His Alphabet Board. Adi K. Irani read His reply to me. "Keep up this longing up to February 1952." My interview finished, I felt completely relieved of all the burden I had been carrying on my head so long.

For three days, the Hyderabad programme went on at a hurricane pace. And, what a programme it was! On 28th June 1951, Baba's historical declaration regarding "Manonash" was made. Besides this, another feature of the day was Baba's taking us all with Him to a sight-seeing round of Hyderabad and Usman Sagar. Baba heard amusing and witty stories from His lovers and also saw some comic acting presented by them, and

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it created an atmosphere of joy for all. In the morning of 30th June He allowed Himself to be photographed with all His lovers and gave His prasad to each for distribution to His lovers in their respective places. This was the first time that He did so. In the drama, I had acted the role of a female and through the veil I had shot a love-glance at Baba. Baba was very happy at this. Then, along with the rest I too received from Baba's hand, for my acting, a Baba-Badge as a reward. This badge is still my cherished possession in memory of that day. On 30th June I left Hyderabad, and distributing Baba's prasad to lovers of my contact at Jabalpur, Rewa and Allahabad on the way I finally reached Hamirpur to resume my duties.

THE FIRST DUTY TO ME

Returning from Hyderabad I received my first duty from Baba. Babadas had called for 500 sets of the book "Sri Meher Baba Ki Akhand Jyoti" (Baba's Hindi Discourses) for this district but very few of them were sold so far. In order to clear the bill of printing of those copies, Baba instructed us to sell them out by 16th of October 1951. After reaching here, Babadas in a letter to Baba laid the responsibility of selling the copies on me and asked my opinion about it. Since he had already made it in writing my responsibility to Baba, I meditated on Baba and felt assured that as it was a work in Baba's Name so it will definitely meet with success. Baba Himself does His work. I therefore gladly gave my consent to Babadas's writing. His letter was posted to Baba. Babadas had been instructed to help me in selling the books, but strangely enough he on the other hand began to frustrate my efforts. When I got Babu Ram Prasad, Gaya Prasad Khare and Sripati Sahai, etc. ready to purchase the books, Babadas went to them and told them on his own accord that the books were not to be sold any longer. He also told me the same thing once, but since I had taken this responsibility direct to Baba, I turned a deaf ear to his words. I

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went about asking my companions to purchase the books. Through Baba's Grace, in spite of all the opposite efforts to see me fail in Baba's work, all the copies were sold out before the 16th of October 1951. It was the miracle of Baba's Grace! Now, Babadas wanted to take the large amount accruing from the sale of those books in his own possession, but Baba's office at Ahmednagar had given me clear instructions that all the money and the account were to be sent directly to it. I obeyed that instruction. This made Babadas all the more furious with me and he now redoubled his efforts to cut my relations with Baba.

I was happy to have been able to carry out successfully the first responsibility entrusted to me by Baba! And, surely it had been possible only due to Baba's Grace!

Now, my sole desire was to do Baba-work and do it unceasingly. It seemed that this inner wish of mine was given outer support by the circumstances that now began to take shape. My companions of the District Board Hamirpur were getting dissatisfied with me for my strictly scrupulous way of working, my frank dealings, and also for my Bhajans, prayers and Baba-work. They could not like my long sessions of Non-Stop Nam-Kirtans despite the fact that I always discharged my office work completely. The office employees under me were not happy about my strict punctuality, my insisting on strict discipline, and my war against corruption. All this resulted in a meeting of the District Board members in which instead of confirming my service, the period of probation was extended to one year more up to 31st December 1951 without showing any cause for it. To find myself thus rewarded for my honest, faithful, sincere services I felt painfully disappointed at this decision of the District Board. Nevertheless. I went on as before to discharge my duties faithfully. The office employees finding that the members of the District Board were not satisfied with me, took their chance and began to disrespect me and speak

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insultingly to me in the office itself. The President himself, whom I revered greatly, turned against me and turned deaf ear to all my complaints and grievances against the behaviour of my subordinates. Thus circumstances converged in a manner that the prayer that I had made to Baba at Hyderabad was ripening for its fulfilment.

THE CRISIS - 1952 A.D.

The crisis was reached in the beginning of 1952. And, it was further made critical by brother Parmeshwari Dayal's communistic policy, who was still trying to use me in politics. He got a fine opportunity to give a showdown to the President, Diwan Shatrughna Singh and his party for extending my probationary period unjustly due to sheer prejudice. In protest to their unjust treatment to me, he now published long articles in his dead political paper 'Pukar'. The District Board people still considered myself and brother Parmeshwari Dayal (Pukar), to form an inseparable political pair although I had severed my connection with politics in toto and in that field with my friend Parmeshwari Dayal also. They felt certain that I was personally behind the publication of these defamatory articles against them, and this further incensed them against me. Thus brother Parmeshwari Dayal became, to a great extent, instrumental in ultimately getting me removed and discharged from the District Board Service, as he had become instrumental to see me shifted from Hamirpur to Vindhya Pradesh in 1948.

FROM CRISIS TO CATASTROPHE

Finally arrived the fortunate month of February 1952, up to which Baba had asked me to keep up my longing to "do only His work, and for all the time." Now, it was for Him to decide my future, and He did decide it! On the 25th February 1952 (Baba's Birthday), Diwan Shatrughna Singh and his party passed a resolution in the District Board's meeting in which they did not confirm my service and passed the proposal to

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make arrangements to fill up the vacancy created by my removal from the post. It is worth noting here that all the members of the District Board, who now removed me from service, were my intimate friends and co-workers of my past political life, and Board's President Diwan Shatrughna Singh was my Revered Ideal in the District in whose name and for whom I used to do political work. They had a deep place in my heart. This external decision of the District Board was the confirmation of Baba's own decision regarding my future, which was conveyed to me already by wire in the evening of the 12th of February 1952. It said:-

"Give positively one and all my devotees in your town my this message: God's blessings and My love to you all on this my first Real Birthday today". – BABA

My joy knew no bounds to receive this first order from Meher Baba. I promptly got copies of this message typed and immediately sent them to all the Baba-devotees of Hamirpur Town. I posted the copies of the message to those lovers of Baba also who were in my contact and who lived within or out of the Hamirpur District. I already used to send to these people on my own accord copies of Baba's circulars after I had come away from Rewa. But, I did not know at that moment what Baba was going to do for me in future.

In the execution of District Board's decision of 25 February 1952, I received from the Board's President an order on 18th March 1952 to the effect that I must hand over my charge within two days and clear out my post. The operative portion of that order was extremely humiliating for a Gazetted officer. I was given only two days to hand over my charge. I had to prepare charge-lists of all the files and papers, to pack all my things in order to vacate the quarter given by the District Board for my residence, and also search out a house in the town to take my children and all the paraphernalia. But with Baba's Grace I was

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able to get all these things done within those two days, and at 5 p.m. of the 20th March 1952, I washed my hands of the District Board Service and took shelter in the local residence of a Baba-lover, Sri Lakshmi Chand Paliwal. I feel that it marked the end of my ruin on the material plane and the beginning of my real spiritual rehabilitation on the Divine Path of Baba.

It was one of the most significant events of my life, which besides giving me a great and unprecedented shock, also gave me invaluable experiences and made me share the Real Life of Baba. After Baba had accomplished with full success "Manonash" He entered His "Complicated Free Life" phase of Real Life from 21 March 1952. So as if to participate for ever in that life I was freed from the charge of secretaryship of the District Board on the eve of that Divine Life, i.e. 20 March 1952. After that I was never again involved in any mundane job. It was a permanent freedom! Baba took me into His real Life for ever! I feel it is truly so.

In order to give me strength to bear the great shock of that event, Baba conveyed to me the following message through a letter written by Adi K. Irani:-

"Baba says if you have to suffer on account of truth do not worry, it is a benediction. Be resigned to the Will of God."

Obviously, there was nothing left for me to worry about, after receiving this message of God MEHER BABA.

THE GOOD CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS

Apparently so disastrous from the worldly point of view, that event proved an undoubted blessing to me and for my Baba-work. To view impartially, it was the same as I had asked for from BABA on 28 June 1951 at Hyderabad, and for which BABA had asked me to keep longing till February 1952. It was that event that laid a solid foundation for Baba-work in the District of Hamirpur. I had in the past impressed the people

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here with my integrity in the field of politics and during the last two years of my administration in the District Board I had made my place in the hearts of many persons due to my strictly honest and impartial administrative policy. As such the people all over the District felt greatly distressed at my unjust and humiliating removal from service. The tables turned against the all-popular leader Diwan Shatrughna Singh, who was formerly considered an ideal and worshipped leader and was now viewed as a dishonest and unjust man. From that moment his impact began to wane, many honest workers severed their connections with him, and by and by his leadership and influence were totally finished.

I myself was very much devoted to Diwan Shatrughna Singh and had been almost worshipping him. The kind of faith and regard I now have for Beloved Meher Baba, I then had for Diwan Shatrughna Singh. I considered him to be very embodiment of truth, justice and integrity. But seeing his low activities in the District Board for the last two years of my service under him and the final episode with me expelled him from my heart totally, and in his place now God-Baba filled my heart with His presence. I now feel that for my spiritual good it was necessary that that man must have lost his deep rooted place from my heart.

Further, I began to feel the truth of Baba's statement that any real love offered to any one whether animate or inanimate ultimately goes to Baba Himself. I loved Diwan Shatrughna Singh sincerely and selflessly. And, for my that deep, sincere and unselfish love I got at the ripe time the truly adorable Avatar Meher Baba without having to make any efforts in His quest. And, when He came into my heart and became enthroned there the fake-deity naturally had to disappear from there for ever.

Moreover, after this incident I had the good fortune to live like a fakir in absolute poverty for full one year. During

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that period I was keenly made to experience the falsity of worldly props and worldly relationships. I had been a leading lawyer, I had also served as the Secretary of the District Board, and also had served in other high posts, but I now found myself possessing only a saving of Rs. 35/-. I spent full one year with my children in this state of a pauper. During this state, Baba lovers like Bhawani Prasad Nigam, Lakshmi Chand Paliwal, and Sripati Sahai Rawat proved real assets to me. Even then, we had to face dire poverty in those days that, I remember that I had once to sell some pulse grains meant for our food, for two pice in order to purchase homoeopathic medicine for my ailing small daughter who died later on.

But even in that condition I was always full of joy and did Baba-work with gusto. It was my great good fortune that my wife Sudha Devi Nigam gave me her full support during those days of hard trials and took everything in the light of Baba's Divine Will. She never lost an iota of her firm faith in Baba even in the most distressing circumstances, and she always comforted me. She always fully co-operated with me in Baba-work and always helped me fulfil His orders. Had she been of a fretful nature, only Baba knows what would have been my fate at this time.

THE BEGINNING OF REAL REHABILITATION

I had considered my removal from the service of the District Board, Hamirpur, as the beginning of my real refuge in Baba, and now the circumstances clearly began to show this truth. On 21st March 1952 Baba issued His Life Circular No. 5 and He ordered two of His close disciples Eruch and Pendu to tour over India and Pakistan in order to prepare persons and the atmosphere for Baba's Fiery Free Life. Both of these persons were specially instructed by Baba to visit Hamirpur, and at the same time He instructed Babadas not to accompany them to Hamirpur District. Now I got busy in arranging the programmes for Eruch and Pendu. After their visit to Pakistan they arrived

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at Hamirpur at 11 a.m. on the 26th of May 1952. We greeted them with hails of 'Bhagwan Meher Baba Ki Jai!'. From the 27th May up to the 1st of June they held meetings in Hamirpur, Rath Jarakhar, Nauranga, Byarjo, Meherastana-Mahewa and Ingohta. They told the lovers about Beloved Meher Baba, and heard what the lovers themselves had to say about Him. Wherever they went they exchanged love with the Baba-lovers. They were preparing field for Baba to sow the seed of His Love.

During each meeting, they conveyed to the lovers Baba's order to them to congregate every week, or fortnight, or even a month at particular places and talk about Baba or any Saint or Avatar or read Divine literature. This was the foundation of our weekly meetings and also the foundation of the present-day Baba Centres. It was from that time that Baba lovers began to hold meetings according to their understanding and these meetings developed finally to take the shape of Baba Centres.

I was fortunate enough to tour district in the company of Eruch and Pendu and arrange their programmes.

In company of these two, an incident occurred which I painfully remember and which gives me cause for repentance even now. On 26th of May 1952 when they got up after taking rest at Hamirpur I asked them, "Shall I bring tea for you, or any cold drink?" In reply brother Eruch said, "A cold drink would be right in such a hot weather." I at once brought them iced lemon squash, and concluded for myself that they do not take tea in summer season! As I was looking after the arrangements for them at each place therefore whenever people offered them tea, I told that they do not drink it. Pendu began to suffer from headache as it was his habit to take tea. He used to feel dispirited for that reason. But the idea of tea had completely vanished from my mind and I used to arrange for 'Sherbat' and 'Lassi' etc. cold drink everywhere. At last when

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in Ingohta, despite my ban on 'tea', they were given tea to drink, their faces lit up with pleasure. The knowledge that both were habituated to take tea, now gave me a sharp agony to think that I had deprived them of it for full five days. At the same time I also got an idea of what a Master Baba was who had prepared them to such an extent that they not even once, directly or indirectly, hinted at the matter nor even mentioned the name of tea to me for all these days!

Both of these Baba-men left for Kanpur by bus on the 2nd of June 1952.

After they had left, Babadas arrived and I had to face a storm of rage from him. Due to Baba's restriction put on him not to accompany Eruch and Pendu to Hamirpur he was very much angry and he made me the target of all his anger. He went to the extent of planning to form a rival anti-Baba party, in league with Shatrughna Singh and his group. Shatrughna Singh had expected that I would be sobered after my removal from the District Board and would seek his shelter again and a compromise would then take place. Nothing of the sort happened, and I appealed against the decision of the District Board which Shatrughna Singh got dismissed by U.P. Government, in league with certain ministers. As Baba-work began to spread all over the district, and he was defamed because of his injustice done to me, hence he and his party became inimical to Baba. In those days I came to know that Babadas had joined hands with him to oppose Baba-work there and had decided to meet Shatrughna Singh on an appointed date for the purpose. But Baba's Divine Will frustrated all his plans.

THE BACKGROUND OF BABA'S ONCOMING VISIT AND HIS DEMAND FOR OUR SURRENDERANCE

Baba was preparing to do his work in his Fiery Free life Phase. and simultaneously we too were discussing among

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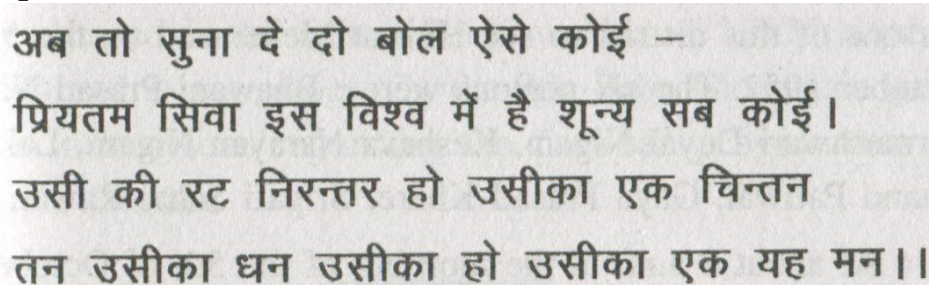
ourselves to pray to Him to give His Darshan in our district. Meanwhile came the Circular sent by Adi K. Irani dated 1st of September 1952. Along with it was sent a form which we were to fill up and return to Baba. The form was as follows:

"Dear Baba.

As per your letter of 1.9.1952, I agree on my own free will and responsibility to follow you, by unquestioningly dedicating to you any one or more or all the 'following' - entirely in the interest of spiritual life.

1. My money yes/no
2. My property yes/no
3. My service yes/no
4. My very life yes/no"

I dedicated all these four to Baba by striking 'No' off all the four and thus earned Supreme fortune for myself. This was a unique opportunity for me to surrender myself in His Holy Shelter totally, and I promptly sent back the form with my 'yes' to all the conditions. In the place for remarks I wrote :



अब तो सुना दे दो बोल ऐसे कोई -
प्रियतम सिवा इस विश्व में है शून्य सब कोई।
उसी की रट निरन्तर हो उसीका एक चिन्तन
तन उसीका धन उसीका हो उसीका एक यह मन॥

which when freely translated means -

Will someone be my hero

To whisper into my eager ears

That save my Beloved

This whole wide world is a Zero.

May the heart chant His name with no surcease

And the mind dwell on his thought in a silent song:

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"This body, this wealth, this soul - to Him alone all these belong."

On the other side of that very letter was asked whether it was possible for us to participate in Baba's "Fiery Free Life", which was going to commence from 15th of November 1952. I agreed to it and sent the following reply:-

"Dear Baba,

I am prepared on my own responsibility and free will to join you in your forthcoming "Fiery Free Life", which will be lived from November 1952, entirely in the interest of spiritual life."

In this way I got the matchless fortune to surrender myself to the God-Incarnate in writing, as well as to become His companion in the "Fiery Free Life."

At that time came Eruch B. Jessawala's letter dated 2.9.1952 telling that Baba was prepared to give His public Darshan in the District of Hamirpur between 21st November 1952 and 21st January 1953. A direct correspondence between Baba and ourselves took place regarding it. Baba asked six persons of this district to see Him at Meherazad on the 5th of October 1952. The six persons were: Bhawani Prasad Nigam, Parmeshwari Dayal Nigam, Keshava Narayan Nigam, Lakshmi Chand Paliwal, Gaya Prasad Khare, Sripati Sahai Rawat.

At about 8 a.m. in the morning of the 5th of October we saw 'Meherazad' for the first time, and then we were allowed to be in Baba's presence up to 10 a.m. Baba had sustained injuries in a car accident in America, in May 1952. His left leg was fractured and we found it in bandage even then.

We discussed about the Darshan Programme with Baba, and it was decided that Baba would give His Darshan to the public of Hamirpur District, from 18th of November up to the 27th of November 1952. Eruch read BABA's words on His Alphabet Board in English, and Baba gave me the duty for the

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first time to translate them in Hindi verbally. After discussing with BABA we returned home.

WITH BABA AT MEHERABAD

Before the Public Darshan, I was again asked along with 18 other lovers to go to Meherabad and remain near Baba on 7th, 8th and 9th of November 1952. All of us reached Meherabad at about 9.30 a.m. on the 7th of November. Baba immediately called me and told me to interpret His talk in Hindi. This duty was for the first time given to me by BABA before a large gathering. And since then, I am always given this duty in Baba-meetings and Sahavas.

Baba had got His Statement for His Fiery Free Life and the Seven Realities sent to me on the occasion of His forthcoming Darshan programmes. I was instructed to translate the text of them into Hindi and Print 10,000 (ten thousand) copies of each. This was the first occasion for me to get from Baba the work of translating His literature in Hindi, and this work has continued to this day. Reaching Meherabad I laid those printed copies of translation at Baba's feet. Baba was highly pleased. In the night of 9th November we left Meherabad and returned to our places. On the 9th, Baba once again gave us His instructions regarding the Darshan programmes in Hamirpur District.

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BABA'S FIRST FOOTPRINTS ON THE HEART OF HAMIRPUR

We reached back Hamirpur on the 11th of November and immediately got busy in making preparations for the forthcoming Darshan programmes of Avatar Meher Baba. The news of Baba's oncoming visit to the district created a great stir among the masses here. In those days of my unemployment I was able to spend all my time in the Holy work of Baba and it left me no time even to think of my unemployment. Really Baba was giving me more than I had asked of Him. Although I had not a penny for my food at that time, yet I was always feeling the joy of His Grace and was busy in His work. I was flourishing indeed in His work and on His path. I was able to feel palpably that Baba was taking me through all the phases of His "Complicated Free Life", "Full Free Life", and "Fiery Free Life" of His Real Life.

And, at last came the 18th of November 1952. At about 10 a.m. that day the footprints of the Avatar fell on the land of Hamirpur Town. Humanity at large rushed and gushed to have His Darshan. Up to the 27th of November Meher Baba gave His Darshan to the public at Hamirpur town, Ingohta, Sumerpur, Meherastana-Mahewa, Mahoba, Moudaha, Kulpahar, Panwari. Rath, Nauranga, Jarakhar, Dhagwan, Amarpura, Dhanouri andj Bandwa. Thousands and thousands of men, women and children took Baba's Darshan, received His prasad, and listened to His messages.

At village Mahewa there was no suitable place for Baba's stay, so we constructed a small Kacha (Mud) hut for Him within 10 days after returning from Meherabad. It was erected on a raised mound standing in the midst of wilderness away from

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the village. A short account of this Kuti (hut) has been published in the 'July-August' issue of the Meher Pukar, in 1960. Baba felt very pleased to see this hut. On that mound outside the hut He washed the feet of fourteen boys, each of fourteen years of age, put His head upon their feet and gave fourteen rupees to each one of them in the morning of 22 November 1952.

During the Darshan programme on 22nd of November Baba wanted to specially see my wife and children. They appeared before Him in their garb of poverty and hardship. Parvardigar Baba looked at them with deep mercy, and I felt as if He bestowed upon them something indescribably precious. He asked in a mysterious manner the age of my infant daughter Meher Sri!

In the afternoon of 22nd November 1952 Baba gave His Public Darshan in Mahewa, where I offered to Him the welcome address* on behalf of the "Cosmic Meher-Family". Baba was pleased to hear it and He drew me to His heart. He also walked into the village and gave Darshan to many families in their homes. In the morning of the 23rd November 1952 during the Mandali meeting in the courtyard of Meher-Astana I read out to BABA for the first time lines of Meher Chalisa* Baba was moved to hear them and asked me astonishingly, "Have you composed these lines?" I said, "Yes". Baba said again, "I feel touched by them; they have touched my heart deeply!" Baba's whole Mandali also felt greatly moved by it.

In the afternoon of 24th November, on the way from Mahoba to Rath I got the opportunity to sit in the car with Baba. On the way Baba said to me, "you must go to Delhi with me." I replied, "I will surely go, and if you so order I am ready to be with you always." Then Baba said, "I know that. I have that in mind. You are one of the few whom I think necessary to be near me for My work."

* See supplement

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WITH BABA IN DELHI

On the 27th November Baba completed His darshan programme in Hamirpur District and left for Delhi in the morning of 28th November. Ten of us from this district accompanied Him to Delhi. In this way I remained with Baba in Delhi from 29th November up to 3rd December 1952. On His return trip from Delhi, Baba took the Pathankot Express in the night of the 3rd December 1952, and we reached Jhansi station in the morning of the 4th. Here Baba bid us farewell and told us to return to our respective places. He lovingly caressed me moving His hand on my heart and face, gave me His warm and profound embrace, and expressing great pleasure said, "Do not worry about anything."

THE FOUNDATION OF THE OFFICE AT HAMIRPUR

During the Darshan programme in Hamirpur District at all places the people had made money-offerings totalling Rs. 1750/- at Baba's feet. Baba gave me this sum for doing Baba-work in the district and added to that sum Rs. 500/- from His own side as His prasad. Then Baba ordered me to begin His work with the help of this fund in the district. Thus He laid the foundation of His regular office here also to conduct Baba-work and gave its charge to me.

THE FINAL MANOEUVRE OF BABADAS

In this manner the year 1952 was well-spent in Baba-work. At last came a very touching letter from Babadas which was handed over to me on 12th December 1952. It was sent by him in Parmeshwari Dayal's name who was the editor of 'Pukar'. Babadas addressed to the inhabitants of Hamirpur District in that letter and wrote as follows: "During the programme in your district Baba had to ask forgiveness for five or six times. I have received the reports of work done at Mahoba, Ingohta, Hamirpur and the entire district. It clearly shows that Sri K.N.

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Nigam has acted with partiality. This is against the Divine Being and it is insult to Baba. It is not possible for me to tolerate any insult to saints and masters and such activities cannot be tolerated by any order of the Guru. For this reason, I have decided that I will undertake a non-stop Nam-Smaran (repeating the name of God) for a week from 23rd December to 30th December and afterwards in the evening of the 31st at 6 p.m. I will offer myself to the holy fire of the Altar in this "Mahayagna." I am sending this message to you all devotees and you will please communicate it to people far and near."

"The person who is carrying this letter has been sent by the 'Sarkar' and now you spread this message amongst all. Please pray for the success of this "Mahayagna" and help me according to your capacity and also by coming to attend it. To all living beings, small or big, I offer my last prostrations. I seek the forgiveness for all my errors and mistakes. All this is happening according to the divine will. Do not be anxious about what is going to happen. It is but the remedy for untruthful behaviour and injustice."

"If it is not for Sri Keshava Narayan Nigam alone, it is also for pleader Pophali of Saoner, Dr. Deshmukh of Amravati and the egoistic persons of Nagpur that all this is going to happen."

I was at my wit's end to read this letter. The resentment of Babadas was absolutely baseless. There were no untoward incidents in this District during the Darshan programmes. Baba was fully satisfied with the programmes when He left this District. And yet Babadas being an old and intimate follower of Baba and myself being just a neophyte in Baba's field, it was natural for me to feel at this nervous and upset. But, I had full and firm faith in the Truth of Meher Baba. I copied the letter of Babadas, wrote a few lines asking Baba's forgiveness for all mistakes, consciously or unconsciously committed by

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me, and sent both to Baba care of Dr. Deshmukh, who was at Amravati those days. Thus leaving the things to Baba for His decision I felt relieved and at ease.

Thereafter, on the 17th January 1953 I saw Babadas in the Mandali of Baba at the Vijaywada Staion. It was during Baba's Andhra Darshan Tour. His long beard, moustache and long hair of head were shaved by Baba's order, and he was wearing coat and pant in place of his usual kafni. He could not be easily recognised. I came to know that it was for writing that letter that he met this fate.

DURING ANDHRA DARSHAN PROGRAMME: 1953 A.D.

The year 1953 opened with the Public Darshan programmes in Andhra. I was ordered along with thirteen other lovers from this district to join Baba there. We fourteen joined the mandali at the Vijaywada station on the 17th of January 1953. Then, we all assembled before Baba in the first class waiting hall of that station.

At that time I was facing the climax of financial crisis. For the last ten months I had been jobless, and the appeal I had filed to the U.P. Government was foiled by Diwan Shatrughna Singh and his party by their personal influence. My younger brother Devendra Swaroop Nigam was then a student of Rishikul Ayurvedic College at Hardwar. He was depending upon me. Unable to help him any longer in his studies I had to call him back home and to discontinue his studies. When Baba came to know of this at Vijaywada he at once ordered me to send him back to the college to resume his studies. He also ordered me not to do any service up to April 1953, except if I got the job which I was formerly doing.

Thus I got rid of one of the most stinging problems, i.e., the education of Devendra Swaroop. I was now in a relieved

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mood and enjoyed the "Sahavas" of Baba in Andhra from the 18th of January 1953 up to 28th of January 1953, and saw the Divine effulgence of Baba during the Darshan programmes that were held at several places of Andhra. I spent my time with Baba as if I was in a Divine world.

On the 25th of January 1953 Baba gave Darshan in the garden of Katta Subba Rao in Eluru. There He ordered me to recite the Meher Chalisa amidst the mandali and other devotees who had gathered there round Baba. He heard the forty couplets from me and said, "They touch My Heart!" Then Baba abruptly ended the meeting saying, "After recitation of these couplets by Keshava there remains nothing."

In the morning of the 27th January Baba looked quite pale. He was staying then in the garden of Katta Subba Rao at Eluru. He talked to the mandali as usual. Then, Baba ordered the Mandali to wake for the whole night on the 27th January. I too got the unique fortune to participate in that first matchless vigil of the BABA Mandali, and it was an indescribably blissful experience for all of us. In the afternoon of the 28th January we took leave of Baba and left for our respective homes.

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AS 'HIS' CHIEF WORKER

THE BEGINNING OF ORGANISATIONAL WORK

I now began to give an organised form to Baba-work in Hamirpur district. I was highly inspired after receiving Baba's Sahavas in Hamirpur, Delhi and Andhra. In connection with these programmes I had got ample opportunity to do Baba-work, and the more labour and alertness I showed in that work the greater was the pleasure of Baba, and the more chances of doing His work followed. And, now I had funds given by Baba Himself for that work, while previously I had to ask for financial help from my friends and companions or spend from my own pocket for it.

I felt the need of a book of devotional songs about Baba. I sent the proposal to Baba and on the 23rd of February 1953 I received Baba's permission to publish a song-anthology entitled "Sri Meher Geetawali."

This book of songs contained selected songs in several languages, i.e. Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, Telugu and Urdu. I edited this anthology, and soon this first book containing songs revealing Baba's Glory and Divinity reached the hands of Baba-devotees.

THE LETTER OF AUTHORITY* FROM THE AVATAR

In the second half of February 1953 Baba went to Dehradun (U.P.) and stayed there. According to a letter from Him dated 28th February 1953 I was ordered to go to Dehradun on the 21st of March 1953 and stay with Baba for two days. Baba had ordered me to bring Him the news of the Baba lovers of Hamirpur about their well-being. Hence I began to meet the

* See supplement

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lovers and began to collect the needed information. Then at about 9 a.m. of 21st March 1953, I reached house No. 107 A, Rajpur Road, Dehradun where Baba stayed. Baba was then sitting amidst His mandali. He called for me at once. Reaching His presence, I began to perceive how important was that day, i.e. 21st of March 1953. A short while after, Baba had His Declaration of the 21st of March read before us, which created a great agitation in the hearts of all present. During the afternoon session Baba asked me to tell Him about the well-being of each and every lover of Baba in Hamirpur. On the 22nd of March 1953 Baba proposed to me to do God's work from the 1st of April 1953 up to the 31st of October 1953, and asked me to think well before giving my consent for it. Baba said, "Think very well before you accept to do my work. In that work you may be ridiculed, humiliated, and even may lose your life." I immediately agreed to do the work with 100% willingness, for I was longing for the same, and I had already made this intention clear to Baba at Hyderabad in the morning of 28th of June 1951. After hearing my words Baba said, "If you do it honestly God will reward you for this work as He must, and if you do not do it honestly then that mistake will undo you." I repeated my firm determination to Baba to do it. Then in order to confirm it Baba proffered His right hand and I held it at once between my both hands, kissing it twice and touching my eyes with it. Thus my Divine Contract with God was confirmed; and the engagement between the lover and his divine Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, was sealed! Baba was very pleased, and He made provision for my family for the next seven months.

For this Divine work Baba gave to me with His own hand a typed Letter of Authority* on the 23rd of March, the Ram navami day. I took it as the Supreme Symbol of my great good fortune from god's hand and touched my forehead and heart

* See supplement

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with it. In this Divine Letter of Authority are given authority for me to do BABA's Divine work and its several conditions. Thereby I was made the responsible head of BABA-Work in Hamirpur District.

In the evening Baba heard all the songs composed by me and later on published in the Sri Meher Geetavali, and gave me instructions regarding the publication of that book. That was the first book of songs on Meher BABA.

On the 23rd of March (Ramnavami day) Baba gave His Darshan to the public there and it was a rich harvest of joy for me. I received Baba's Love-Prasad twice. Thus on the Ramnavami Day I got the Darshan of Ram Himself, received His Prasad, and also His Letter of Authority. Had I not received thus all that I could aspire to receive in this world and also in all the worlds? Beloved BABA (RAM) ordered me that I should read this letter of Authority in the meetings of His lovers in Hamirpur District and make its contents known to them. After returning from Dehradun I did so throughout the district and thereby all the lovers came to know that BABA had placed me as the head of His affairs here.

THE LAY-OUT FOR BABA-WORK

On the 24th March 1953 Baba clarified to me the nature of His Divine work I had to do for the next seven months. Pendu and Eruch were present. He said: "From 1st of April up to the 15th of April, clear off the work which may be in arrears. From the 16th of April 1953 up to the 30th of April, read out the Declaration of the 21st March, at important places of Hamirpur District and explain it and make it go deep in the hearts of the people. From 1st of May up to the 31st October 1953, for six months, do the main work of finding out three kinds of Baba's lovers and prepare them to make them solid lovers (1) Those who were ready to completely renounce the

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world and do Baba's work, (2) Those who were ready to go anywhere by Baba's order to do the Divine work, (3) Those who were ready to contribute financially in the above mentioned Baba-work and thus participate in it.

Once again Baba warned me to do His work 100% as given by Him, and then He sent me back from Dehradun in the evening.

BABADAS GOES AWAY

BABA was present amidst His mandali during the morning session on 24th of March 1953. Those days Babadas was also staying with Baba and was observing silence by Baba's orders. During that meeting Babadas suddenly appeared enraged and broke his silence and in an animated tone said something in Marathi to Baba. At that Baba immediately made me note His general order for all His lovers in Hamirpur district.

"you meet all persons personally and tell them that Babadas says that from this day he has no connections with Baba, and therefore from this day Baba has made him independent. Now he may lead any kind of life that he likes, and Baba would not be responsible for it. Till this day Baba takes upon Himself the responsibility to clear all the debts he (Babadas) may have incurred. Now none of you give him money in the name of Baba, otherwise you will fall in the pit and also make Babadas fall in it."

I think Babadas could not tolerate the Letter of Authority that BABA had given to me there, so in its immediate reaction he took that desperate step.

"Babadas says that the love he had for Baba in the past will remain hereafter also. Babadas says that as he has now no connection with Baba he is therefore free, but for the sake of love, he indeed belongs to Baba. The kind of relationship he had so far with Baba will not remain now, but there will remain

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between them the relationship of love only. Therefore, none of you should ever talk about or criticise Babadas."

After returning to Hamirpur I made this order of BABA known to all concerned.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH A MAST

On my way back from Dehradun Baba ordered me to escort a Mast (God-mad person) called Shah Saheb to his place Umaria (Pukhrayan) in Kanpur District. I took the Mast with me and took the evening express. He was a very gentle and peaceful Mast. Even then, after coming out of the train at Lucknow the next morning he could with very great difficulty be made to enter the train for Kanpur. At Kanpur he got down from the train and seemed to have settled for good on the platform No. 1. I coaxed and cajoled him all day long but he did not move from the platform up to four o'clock in the evening, to entrain for Pukhrayan. I feared that if in his whim he decided to walk alongside the rail track I would have to run after him and would surely lose my luggage on the platform. On the other hand, if I took care of my luggage then I will lose Baba's dear Shah Saheb. Sometimes Shah Saheb crossed the rails and went over to the other platform so I had to run after him with all my luggage. Time went by in this wild-goose chase and eventually the last evening train for Pukhrayan was also missed. There was now only one midnight train. I thought that somehow I must manage to take Shah Saheb and my luggage to some nearby Dharmashala, secure them there, and then go to meet some acquaintances in the town and seek their help in carrying Shah Saheb further to his place. In the evening at 4 o'clock Shah Saheb agreed to go with me outside the station. I began to move as per my plan towards the central Dharmashala, but he stopped outside the 3rd class waiting-hall and settled down under a tree on the foot path. In spite of all my efforts, I could not make him move further from that place.

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I was already tired due to the exasperating experience of the whole day and there was no idea how long Shah Saheb would continue in this mood of his. I could take no bath or proper food all day. I became desperate, so at last leaving Shah Saheb and my luggage under the tree in Baba's care, I went to two or three persons in the city to seek their help. But I found none of them at home, so leaving my message at their place I returned all the more disappointed. After a long weary waiting, I found a Baba-lover Seetaram Chourasia coming to me. I felt very happy to see him and thought that now with his help my problem will be solved. But, soon my joy turned into panic when instead of hearing my problem Seetaram began to stuff my mouth with his Banarasi Barfi (a kind of sweets) which he had brought. He paid not heed to my beseeching words for helping me. Then, he turned to Shah Saheb with the same intention. A tug of war ensued in which Seetaram tried to put the sweets in the mouth of Shah Saheb 'and Shah Saheb vehemently refused to allow them to go in. I was at my wits end at this drama and I feared that this might annoy Shah Saheb and prompt him to leave us and go away at his will. I requested Seetaramji with all the force of appeal not to do so. Then Seetaram pushed me along towards the 3rd class waiting hall to show me a female Mast there. This was the proverbial straw for me that broke the camel's back. I was already having enough trouble with one Mast, and Seetaram now insisted that I should see another, for further entanglement! At last finding Sri Seetaram as another Mast for me to deal with, I somehow got rid of him by sending him back to his home.

In utter dejection now, I lay tired beside Shah Saheb upon the foot path and fell into sleep. For the whole night the birds overhead resting on the tree besmeared us with their excreta and stray cows fought and ran round us.

In the morning of the 26th March 1953 I again got anxious

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about escorting Shah Saheb to Pukhrayan, but I could see no way to do it. My efforts to obtain help from others had all failed. I was completely helpless and dejected. At 9 a.m. I made Shah Saheb take a hearty meal and then decided to go to Pukhrayan myself in order to bring with me some acquaintances of Shah Saheb from there to help me in taking Shah Saheb to his destination. But before that, as a last effort, I again requested Shah Saheb to come along with me for Pukhrayan. This time he promptly agreed. Life seemed to return to me at this. I immediately took him to the bus station by a rickshaw and then with the help of a driver I got him into the bus and finally reached Pukhrayan at 5 p.m. There I took him to a Pathan hotel where he was known. I arranged for his meals there which he took and then with the help of some people there took him to Umaria on foot, where at last I left him back at his dwelling place. The inhabitants of that place were very happy to see Shah Saheb attired in the fine new clothes given by Meher Baba and to hear my long tale in the service of Shah Saheb.

Once I got out of that unforgettable tug-of-war with Shah Saheb, I hurried to set out for my destination and reached Hamirpur on 27 March 1953.

THE DIVINE WORK BEGINS

On the 1st of April, I began the Divine work given to me by Avatar Meher Baba. As I have mentioned earlier regular get-together of Baba lovers were now a common feature in many parts of this district. I began to attend these meetings and to tell the devotees present there about Baba. and to read out to them His Letter of Authority to me as He had ordered. I also used to discuss with my companions regarding the ways to communicate Baba's Declaration of the 21st March 1953, which work was to begin from the 16th April 1953 and to continue up to the 30th April 1953.

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Meanwhile, I received a letter directly sent by Baba to me in His name. It was sent from Mussoree and written on the 12th of April 1953. It reiterated Baba's orders to me to fulfil His instructions 100% and to complete the Divine Work entrusted by Him to me. From this I understood that again some trial was on its way to me. And indeed the background of that test was already shaping itself. On the 12th April my eldest daughter Meher Prabha aged 12 years was attacked with acute dysentery and my youngest baby daughter Meher Sri was in the grip of small pox. At home there was no one except my wife in this crisis.

For the last few months I had sent my children away to my native village Mahewa, because there was nothing left here to feed them. And, I used to live at the house of Sri Lakshmi Chand Paliwal and take my meals at Sri Bhawani Prasad Nigam's house, and thus used to carry on Baba's work. On the 6th of April 1953 the children returned to me. My 15 days tour work was to start from 16 April 1953.

On the 15th April Meher Sri's condition became critical. On the 16th April I left her in that very condition to go according to already fixed programme to Bharwa-Sumerpur in the morning to begin BABA's Divine work. It was ten miles away, and I cycled to that place. I found that the friend whom I had entrusted with the arrangement of the meeting had done nothing at all nor did he give me any information about it. Then I took the help of other local friends and relatives, arranged a meeting, and read out Baba's Declaration before them, and returned to Hamirpur by noon. On the 17th April I went by cycle to Kurara which was ten miles away. Meher Sri's condition was further worsened due to an attack of double pneumonia. After addressing the meetings at Kurara in the morning and Jhalokhar in the afternoon, when I reached Hamirpur I found my daughter Meher Sri admitted to the District Hospital. She was now on

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her death-bed and doctors were giving her oxygen. The whole night was spent in nursing her and in praying to Baba to release her from the great agony. In the morning of 18th April at 7 a.m. a flash as of lightning was seen on the face of Meher Sri and her body dropped. This was the same daughter whose age Baba had mysteriously inquired about in Meher-Astana, Mahewa on 22nd November 1952, during His Darshan.

According to my fixed programme with Baba. I was to go that day (18th April) to Maudaha and Ingohta, some twenty miles away, and was to communicate to people there about Baba's Declaration of the 21st March. As such there was no time for me to lose. I immediately took the dead body of Meher Sri to the river Jamuna, placed it on the lap of the river in Beloved Meher Baba's name, and returning home got ready to go to Ingohta. This was the period of test for us.

In this test my wife Sudha Devi gave me full support. Although she herself was at that time ill and deeply shocked because of Meher Sri's death and lived all alone with the other children, yet she told me to go on BABA's work. She said, "This is the period of testing, and you must not fail in the test of BABA." What more did I need at that hour than just those words from her?

I reached Ingohta by bus and conducted the programme there. Then I reached Maudaha. The Principal of the National Inter College there was Sri Lakshmi Narayan. He had neither arranged for a meeting there, nor had he intimated to me that he was not prepared to do so. On my arrival he called all the students and his staff into the hall to hear me, and when I had spoken before the audience, he began to speak against what I had said. I was made to see even such a thing in Divine Work.

On 19th April, I went to Sisolar some twenty miles away, and arranged a meeting near the tomb of a Kabir-panthi saint. Many Kabir panthi (Those who follow the Perfect Master Kabir).

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sadhus were present there. When I reached there they came forward and touched my feet. It was so unexpected and extraordinary for me that I was unable to say or do anything. When I tried to touch their feet in return they did not let me to do that. Then I recollected that it was done by them in Avatar Meher Baba's honour and not in my honour. When after the programme, I began to return by the ekka (a kind of one horse carriage) two persons ran for a mile in order to meet me. I silently witnessed all this Avataric Lila of Avatar Meher Baba and deeply felt His presence.

I reached back Sumerpur by ekka which was thirteen miles from Sisolar and ten miles from Hamirpur. Now for these remaining ten miles for Hamirpur I got no conveyance at Sumerpur. I waited up to 11 p.m. in the night for some conveyance but in vain. In the meantime a strong gale began to blow and then followed a storm and torrential rains. Trees fell by the storm, and covered the road, and it became terribly cold. At last at 11 p.m. I got a truck. Its driver agreed to take me to Hamirpur. The truck moved and stopped in turns as the branches and trunks of the fallen trees were to be cleared off the road for passage. Thus we laboured for 8 miles, and then stopped finally for there lay across the road a giant tree mowed by the storm. All the passengers alighted and we walked the remaining two miles of the muddy road to Hamirpur. I reached home at 1 a.m. in that dark, cold and stormy night. My wife was waking, evidently unable to sleep for the deep grief caused by our daughter's death. She asked me "What was the necessity for you to take all this trouble to come back in this odd hour of the night in such an inclement weather?" I replied, "It was only to console you that I undertook this journey. From tomorrow there would not be any question of my returning home till the end of this month, because now I have to go farther and farther into the interior of the District, for work according to the fixed programme."

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Leaving Sudha Devi weak, ill and grief-stricken, I set out for BABA's Divine Work, once again, on the 20th April 1953, and up to the 30th April I moved from place to place in the district spreading Baba's Message, and returned to Hamirpur at 11 a.m. on the 1st of May 1953. Just at that moment my wife also reached home by ekka from the District Hospital. I then learnt that on the 20th April all of a sudden she became seriously ill and almost collapsed. My friends rushed her to the hospital, and only this day was she discharged from there. During her lying in the hospital, the work at home and attendance on her at the hospital was done by my 12 years old daughter Meher Prabha. During my tour I had no information at all of all this. All these incidents, as if silently, pointed out the truth of the following couplets:-

इब्तदा-ए-इश्क़ है रोता है क्या ।
आगे-आगे देखिये होता है क्या ।

Which when freely translated means -
Its 'loves' first knock and you are in tears
Watch out for what happens in the coming years.

Thus in the first fortnight the Divine Work of Baba was carried out by me successfully in spite of troubles and tests because of the limitless grace of Baba. From 1st of May 1953 I undertook the work of finding out the three kinds of lovers in Hamirpur District. Once again I set out on a tour of villages, met lovers and talked to them about Baba-work. According to individual faith and capacity each of the lovers began to offer himself for doing Baba-Work and I started preparing their list. The dynamic current of Baba-Love began to flow with great force in Hamirpur District now, and workers for His cause began to come forward from every quarter. I prepared the Lists of the three categories of workers as Baba had desired.

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ANOTHER STEP

I was again ordered to be in Baba's presence at Dehradun on the 14th of July 1953. In obedience to that order I reached Dehradun in the morning of the 14th. In the afternoon session Baba ordered me to continue doing His Work up to December, 1953 and to submit to Him on 15th July the report of the work done by me so far, in the presence of the Mandali. As Baba was going to make an important Declaration before God on the 15th of July 1953, Adi Junior, Meherjee, Nariman and Krishnaje were also called there. Besides other things, Baba told us in the morning session that after November 1953 there would be a change in the life of all of us. This was said on the 15th of July. In the afternoon of that day Baba heard the report of the work done by me and felt very pleased and fully satisfied with it. And He ordered me to go on working like that 100%.

On the 16th of July, Baba expressed His desire to give His Darshan in Hamirpur, Poona, Bombay and Andhra during December, 1953, and discussed about it.

In the end, Baba heard the Meher Chalisa from me once again, and was deeply touched by it as usual.

SHOWERING HIS GRACE UPON MEHER VEENA

On the 18th of July, arrived at Dehradun, Damodar Armugham Pillay with his two daughters as per Baba's order. The elder daughter Sushila (Meher Veena) was in Videha State (lost body consciousness) in Baba's love. This was the first family to join the cosmic Meher-Family that I had initiated at Rewa, and one that helped me in Baba-work. Baba had called the family to make certain arrangements for it.

Seeing Meher Veena's condition Baba said, "In order to have such love (as she has) Munis and Rishis do penance for thousands of years. Out of lacs only one gets this kind of love. She is fully merged in Me..... She is Mine." Then Baba took her

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with Himself to the lady mandali and fed her there with His own hands.

I was detained for two days more in connection with this family. On the 19th of July Baba made a provisional arrangement for them and sent me back to Hamirpur in the evening by Dehradun Express. I returned to Hamirpur after being refreshed by Baba's Sahavas for six days and resumed Baba's Divine Work.

"LIVE FOR BABA"

After returning from Dehradun I redoubled my enthusiasm for Baba-Work. Now I had given a regular shape to the office-work, too. So I used to do office work and at times tours also in the district. Besides searching for the three types of lovers as per Baba's order, I also tried to give the 'get-together' of lovers in the villages a regular shape. Where such a 'get-together' had been established, I tried to arouse a greater sense of obedience and discipline in lovers for Baba. Centres in various parts of the district were rapidly developing by themselves, and I contributed my mite in their development.

In August and September 1953 I undertook the longest walking tour of the district, and then I came to know about the natural beauty of this region. Pandit Kunjbihari of village Jarakhar used to accompany me on these tours on his own free will to share in Avatar's Work. He is a real Baba-lover and he has given me invaluable help in my work in the interior of the district. His company made the walking tours joyful and pleasant for me.

In October 1953, I was again ordered by Baba to see Him at Dehradun along with Parmeshwari Dayal 'Pukar' and Gaya Prasad Khare. Parmeshwari Dayal and myself reached 101, Rajpur Road in the morning of the 20th October, where now the mandali resided. Baba talked regarding Parmeshwari Dayal

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and gave him seven orders to follow and then sent him back the same evening.

In the evening Gaya Prasad Khare arrived. In the night, Baba's Declaration "Highest of the High" was being read in the Durbar and Baba asked me to do a simple translation of it in Hindi.

I began the translation on the 21st October. In the morning session Baba talked to me and Gaya Prasad Khare regarding an open Darshan Programme of His in Hamirpur, and then sent Khare back to Hamirpur. In the night session of the meeting on the 23rd October I informed Baba that I had completed the translation. On hearing that I had finished that translation so early, the Durbar expressed wonder and Baba was very happy.

On the 24th October Baba heard the translation in the midst of the mandali, and all liked it immensely. Baba ordered me to print five thousand copies of that translation and to distribute them in the district, and also to explain its contents to the people.

In the afternoon session, Baba told me to continue His Divine Work now even after December, and added that He would send His "Prasad" (Rs. 300/- per month) for my family every month even after December. Baba said to me, "Live for God". In this manner the Avatar made me permanent in His service within six months! The man (I) who was insulted, spurned and ruined by the world in spite of his unfailing honesty and faithful services to it, was thus given everything by the Compassionate Avatar, in a trice, by confirming him in the Divine Service. And now he had no other goal to attain except "Living for God."

In the evening of the 24th October Baba gave me His profound embrace, lovingly caressed me on the head, gave me a pat on the back, and then wished me farewell. After receiving

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at Dehradun five-day Sahavas of Baba, I went to Agra in connection with the printing of the translation of "The Highest of the High" in Hindi, and after entrusting that work to my friend Baba-lover Sri Madan Mohan Lal Agrawal, returned to Hamirpur. His wife Bhagwati Devi was hostile to Baba and much annoyed with me for taking her husband's help in Baba-Work. So I had to leave Agra as soon as I could.

Now, according to the message given in the "Highest of the High" I began to inspire people to surrender fully to Baba and love Him selflessly. I toured the district for this work once again. The lovers in the district were taking rapid strides in Baba's love and a good team of workers was getting prepared. In order to spread Baba-Work further I took some workers with me at a fair in Charkhari in November 1953, and we encamped there for four days. We spread Baba's Message among thousands of persons who came to the fair from all over the district. On the 29th October came Baba's telegraphic message that He will give His Darshan to the people of Hamirpur in the month of February 1954, instead of in the month of November 1953.

BABA'S SECOND DARSHAN IN THE DISTRICT OF HAMIRPUR 1954 A.D.

The beginning of the year 1954, saw hectic preparation for Baba's public Darshan. Avatar Meher Baba was to set His Foot on the heart of Hamirpur on the 3rd February 1954. Incidentally that was going to be the Kumbh day at Prayag. The lovers of Hamirpur were full of enthusiasm to receive God in their District once again and were engaged in making preparations. Telegrams and letters flowed from Baba in quick succession, and I was acting accordingly. I had to meet all the prominent workers of the entire district in order to arrange and systematise the programmes, and by Baba's grace it was all set according to the conditions prevailing here.

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Very early in the morning of the 3rd February 1954 (between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m.) we received Baba and the twenty-five men of His mandali at Orai Station. The moment Baba got down from the train He embraced me. Until morning, we arranged for Baba and His Mandali's stay at the local dharmashala. In spite of my repeated warnings the lovers at Orai had failed to arrange for tea and conveyance in time and in a proper manner. This resulted in a lot of hurry and scurry for me. Seeing this Baba embraced me very fondly, caressed me and said, "Do not worry." He told me that during the journey on the train He was frequently remembering me. Then He called me a "sincere" and real worker.

He had to go about fifteen miles from Orai to Ichhaura which lies on the eastern side of the river Betwa. But in spite of all our efforts at Orai we could not procure a car for Baba. As such we had to take Baba along with the mandali by a lorry. We set out for Ichhaura in the morning at 7.15. This time Baba had come to this district as the "Highest of the High." As such it was His order that we were to handle Him as carefully as we would handle a flower. And, from the very beginning our arrangements went contrary to His wish.

The path from Orai was a rough rural track for a certain distance, then the lorry was to take a canal road which was further worsened by rains which made it wet and muddy. After a stretch of seven miles just when our lorry having crossed a culvert took a turn to the left side to take the canal road, the right wheel went down in a deep pit. The shriek of one of the mandali caused the driver to dead stop the lorry at once. All got down and saw that the wheel had gone right into the pit, and all felt that it was only due to Baba's Presence that a major crisis was averted.

Let it be remembered that it was the Prayag Maha Kumbh Day when innumerable pilgrims lost their lives at Allahabad

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by falling into a deep abyss under the dam there. The time of the accident at Prayag coincided with the time of our accident here.

We thanked Baba for saving us from the lorry accident. The lorry was backed out of the pit and then driven up to the village named Tikar. Baba-lovers themselves had made a motorable road for the lorry to pass, from Yar to Tikar. It was three miles long. They had also made a five-mile motorable road on the other side of the river Betwa, through Ichhaura up to Boukhar. It was done to see that Baba's vehicle could move on that track. Baba was touched to see this labour of love of His lovers and forgot His injunction about keeping Him like a flower.

From Tikar the Avatar rode a bullock-cart and crossed the Betwa on that Maha Kumbh Day. Reaching Ichhaura, He got the water of Betwa brought for Him, and He bathed Himself with it. He also drank the Betwa water during his stay there. On the 4th of February, Baba gave His Darshan to thousands of men and women at Ichhaura, and also gave to each His prasad of love.

In the morning of 7th February 1954 I had called a meeting at village Dhanauri, of those lovers whom I had placed in my list in part one and part two, i.e. (1) Those who were ready to take sanyas completely and do Baba-work, (2) and those who were ready to go anywhere to do Baba-work whenever asked by Baba to do so. This meeting was called by me at the orders of Baba and it formed a special aspect of Baba's second Darshan programme in this district. In that meeting after dwelling upon the importance of obedience, selfless service, and 'public service' those two lists prepared by me were cancelled by Baba. Then Baba told all present there three things:-

- (1) They should love Baba and become even mad in that love, but there must be no show off in their love.

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- (2) If this was not possible, then they should continue to do their worldly duties, thinking that they are doing Baba's work.
- (3) If even this was not possible, then they should do public service without the desire of leadership or reward.

Baba said, "The most important public service is that in which people begin to love me, because by loving Me one can get eternal freedom."

In this manner, this meeting of the workers for the Divine cause was historical one, and it left a deep impression upon the selected workers of Baba in this district. I now got an inspired team of workers in order to enhance and deepen Baba's work. Some workers had not complied with my instructions about making arrangements for BABA's stay. Baba came to know of it and said in the worker's meeting, "If the workers not obey My Chief Worker how will they obey Me."

BABA IN THE OFFICE OF COSMIC MEHER-FAMILY

On the 8th February BABA gave His Public Darshan in Hamirpur Town and distributed His Love-Prasad. In the afternoon Baba visited the houses of His lovers and also came to my home. It was here that the office of the Cosmic Meher Family was also lodged. Myself and my wife Sudha Devi jointly held and waved the arti before the Avatar of the age. Then BABA embraced both of us together most lovingly. Sudha Devi uttered something to someone standing nearby. Baba at once asked her, "What do you want?" My wife had lost all her four sons and she used to aspire greatly to have at least one son. I thought that, perhaps, she was going to ask BABA for a son, and, I felt from BABA's mood at that moment that if she had asked for it Baba would surely have granted her desire. But, she replied that after getting Baba she now had nothing more

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to ask for and that she had got all in Baba. Baba was very pleased to hear this from her, and then He took His leave of us. After that moment my wife no longer craved to have a son, and now she remains happily resigned to Baba's Will under all circumstances.

MEHER MANDIR AND MEHERPUKAR

Baba gave His Public Darshan at Mahoba on 9th February 1954 afternoon. In the morning at Mahoba Babu Ram Prasad of village Nauranga sought Baba's permission to build a Meher Mandir at his village, but Baba did not agree to it and advised him to build Baba's temple in his heart where He truly resides. Baba advised him thus twice, but when Babu Ram Prasad still insisted upon his proposal, then Baba granted His lover's request for his own sake and touched a stone with His hand for its being laid in Meher Mandir's foundation.

In the same meeting BABA gave instruction for the proper functioning of Narayan Press at Hamirpur. Parmeshwari Dayal (Pukar) of Hamirpur expressed his desire to put his defunct Narayan Press Hamirpur at Baba's Service and to start a spiritual magazine from it in His cause. Baba accepted the request and nominated six persons to look after this affair - Parmeshwari Dayal (Pukar), Bhawani Prasad Nigam, Laksmi Chand Paliwal, Sripati Sahai Rawat, Gaya Prasad Khare, and Keshava Narayan Nigam. By making this offer to BABA Pukar wanted to entangle me again with him and with the affairs of his defunct press. But All-Knowing BABA kept me away from the responsibility of the press.

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GRACING OF MEHER-ASTANA

THE AVATARIC DECLARATION IN MEHERASTANA-MAHEWA

Baba's stay for the night on 9th February 1954 was kept at my birth-place village Mahewa. But when Baba reached there in the evening He became pleased to give His Darshan to the people who had gathered only to see Him. While thus giving His Darshan there in the evening Baba emphatically said. "It is very fortunate for you all that my Darshan programme is ending here." From 9 p.m. up to 4.30 a.m. Baba held a general night waking in which Mandali and all the main Baba-lovers of the district participated. This programme took place in the hut called "Meher-Astana" - the same which had been erected for BABA's stay in November 1952. For the entire night Bhajans and kawali were sung before Baba, between which Baba was occasionally explaining many things.

In the night at 12.50 a.m. (that is in the first hour of the 10th of February) Baba suddenly called me to His side and said, "You do not know what a luck is being granted to you at this moment." In reply I folded my hands and said, "It is all your grace BABA". How could I imagine anything about the depth of magnitude of that destiny? I could only guess about it from the way GOD-BABA said those Divine words. At that time Baba was in an extremely happy mood. His fingers ran on the Alphabet Board and spelt the words, 'AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI' and He simultaneously raised His right hand up to confirm that JAI. Baba also declared in His extremely happy mood that it was for the first time in this Incarnation of His that He had here openly and clearly declared Himself to be the Avatar. He also declared there that after dropping this body of His, He would come after 700 years again. By declaring His Avatarhood at that particular spot of His Creation, who knows what fortune Baba granted to that place (MEHER-ASTANA) and to me and to the people present there at that time.

Gracing of Meher-Astana

Secondly, according to the Parsee Calender 10th February 1954 was the 60th Birthday of Baba. As such in commemoration of that all lovers sang the birth songs to Baba and danced with joy before Him. Baba embraced each and all of them and thus the programme came to its happy end at 4.30 a.m. with the famous musician Vaman Rao singing touchingly: Yogi mat ja mat ja mat ja.....

BABA GRANTS NEW LIFE

In the morning of the 10th February, my wife ran to me and brought the news that her younger sister Lalit Kishori Devi was breathing her last.

She was suffering from typhoid and double pneumonia at the same time and the 'Vaidyas' had stopped giving medicines declaring that she was just about to die. The power of speech had left her and her eyes were turning into a stony stare. Lalit Kishori Devi was a real lover of Baba. On the 9th when she heard that Baba had arrived in the evening, she got up even in that critical condition and tried to rush for Baba's Darshan, but she dropped unconscious at the door-step. Hearing all this about her Baba agreed to go to her home. Just before Baba reached her place she regained her consciousness and began to stare at a framed photograph of Baba which she held upon her heart.

Going near her, Baba very lovingly caressed on her face. In a very faint voice she said, "Baba make me alright. I am in great agony!" Coming out of the room Baba declared before all about her life - "99% no hope" and then He told me to tell her that Baba wanted her to take His Name till her last breath, and when she had no power to utter His name she should mentally repeat it. I went in and told her the same. Then Baba told my younger brother Devendra Swaroop a special treatment for her, which was devised by Baba Himself, with the words, "Administer to her the medicine taking My Name and give her the treatment just as I have told you." It is Devendra's statement that even if there was some chance of Lalit Kishori Devi's survival from the point of view of medical science, it was certain

Gracing of Meher-Astana

that she should have died by the treatment Baba had prescribed for her. But, on the contrary she recovered by that treatment alone, and is alive till this day. It is everybody's belief who was there that Baba had granted her a second lease of Life on that occasion. After the end of the Darshan programmes Baba went to Lucknow via Hamirpur, and from Lucknow He took train for Bombay. At the Lucknow station He gave me an ardent and tight embrace and bid me farewell, and left immensely satisfied with the Darshan programmes in the Hamirpur district.

WITH BABA, DURING THE SECOND ANDHRA DARSHAN-PROGRAMMES

After giving His Public Darshan in Hamirpur District Baba was to give His Public Darshan in Andhra Pradesh also. I was ordered to join His mandali for Andhra along with four others of my district. Accordingly we set out on the 18th February 1954, and reached Vijaywada in the morning of the 20th. We were taken to Kanyaka Parmeshwari Dharmashala where the mandali was also to stay. Baba alighted at the Vijaywada station at about 8.30 p.m., from the Poona Passenger and was taken to Majeti Ram Mohan Rao's residence. He called all the mandali and ordered everybody to be quite ready by 7 a.m. the next day.

Commencing from the 21st of February 1954, the Darshan programmes in Andhra went on up to the afternoon of the 4th of March 1954. The glory of these Darshan Programmes was even more extraordinary than that of the previous ones. Magnificent arrangements were made everywhere for Baba's Darshan programmes, and we saw the most lovely spectacles on that occasion.

On the 25th of February 1954 the 60th Birthday of Avatar Meher Baba was celebrated in Tadepalligudem with great jubilation and magnificence. It was a uniquely joyous day. Baba was taken in a procession on a motor car and driven through the town. In the night Bharat Natyam dance was arranged, and it presented an indescribable spectacle befitting the Durbar of God. I had seen such a beautiful performance only in the

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presence of Avatar Meher Baba, and I can never forget it. In the end of February 1954 while going from Kovvur to Rajahmundry Baba Crossed the Godavari river by motor car and stopping the car in the middle way alighted from it and washed His face and hands in its waters, thus giving a fresh and new holiness to Godavari.

THE REAL WORK

The most important aspect of the Andhra Darshan programme was that meeting which was attended by all the Baba-workers of Andhra and Baba's mandali in the Dining hall of Nava Bharti Gurukul. The meeting took place in the night between 1st and 2nd March, as well as in the morning of the 2nd March. It was the unique meeting of this Avataric Age as BABA Himself declared, and in it the Avatar told His lovers for the first time about His work and the way of doing it. It has been printed in Hindi and English. In actuality, it was a very impressive meeting. It, as though, made me even more firmly established in the Divine work.

And, the river Godavari also received another indescribable fortune when in the night before Baba's arrival at Rajahmundry, He was made to stay in a steam launch on the Godavari waters, and mandali of Baba stayed in another launch a little distance away. Thus the Avatar spent a whole night on the bosom of Godavari with His mandali.

From Rajahmundry, Baba went through the green delta region of the Godavari giving His darshan on the way. Finally on the 4th March 1954 (Maha Shivaratri Day) in the morning, ended BABA's Darshan programme in Kakinada.

WAKE FOR THE AWAKENER

In the Andhra Darshan programmes was participating Baba's Australian lover Francis Brabazon, and he was in Baba's mandali. His obedience to Baba, his disciplined bearing, his simplicity, his behaviour, and his attempts to fit into our ways of living made me feel a great attraction towards him. Seeing

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his deep faith in Baba my own faith in Baba was strengthened. He was very friendly and loving to me.

Almost every day he used to hold my collar and tugging at it with force shouted into my ears, "Wake for the Awakener!" And, undoubtedly this did help in making me awakened towards Baba.

FASTING WITH BABA

Through Life Circular No. 19, dated 23-6-1954, all the lovers of Baba were informed of Baba's order that they were to observe complete fast and silence for twenty-four hours from 6 p.m. of the 10th July. Baba Himself decided to fast for seven days from 10th up to 17th of July (6 p.m.) and He took seven other persons to participate with Him in that 7 days fast, namely, Eruch, Pendu, Baidul, Sadashiv, Keshava Narayan Nigam, Nana Kher and Kanak Dandi Surya Narayan. I was asked by Baba through a letter whether I would join in this fast with Him and I lost no time in joyfully accepting the rare fortune of participating in 7 days fast with God-Baba Himself. Afterwards Baba made us end our fast earlier in the evening of the 13th, but due to the mistake of the postal department I did not get that information and so I continued my fast up to the noon of the 16th July when I got the order to break it. Thus Avatar Meher Baba made me fast with Him at least once in this life.

THE ROUNDS OF WORK

Only one year had passed from the time Baba had ordered me to undertake His work in this district, but Baba filled the entire district within the short time with the showers of His Grace. Within that one year many Hindi translations of Baba-literature were printed and distributed by me to thousands throughout this district and its neighbourhood. Baba had created a fresh wave of self-awakening in the atmosphere of this place. This was eyed suspiciously and jealously by many persons who were hostile to Baba. Within this year I had the good fortune to publish in Hindi and distribute the following Baba Messages to the people:

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1. The 21st March 1953 "Declaration of Meher Baba."
2. The Highest of the High.
3. Existence is Substance and Life is Shadow.
4. The Real Darshan and twelve other Messages.
(Given during the 1954 Darshan Programmes)
5. The Truth of Religion.
6. The Real Work.
(Delivered at Rajahmundry in a meeting of Baba-Workers)
7. Meher Baba's Call.
8. The Fiery Free Life and Baba's Messages in that life.
9. Sri Meher Geetavali.
10. 'Meher Pukar' - a monthly Journal which started from July 1954.

THE BOUTS WITH BROTHER PARMESHWARI DAYAL

After Baba had nominated the six persons to assist in their management of the Narayan Press in Baba-work, the Hindi monthly magazine Meher Pukar began to be published from July 1954. The work of directing and editing Meher Pukar and of maintaining the press was now being shifted to my shoulders by brother Parmeshwari Dayal. At that time the press was in a totally defunct condition. And, for me it was Baba's order that I was to keep away from taking its responsibility and was only to concentrate on my office and field work.

Brother Parmeshwari Dayal had been my inseparable companion in the political field from which I was now completely cut off and detached by Baba's Grace. On the other hand brother Parmeshwari Dayal belonged to the communistic school of thought and "communist is everywhere a communist," was still his firm policy and activity. With this attitude he came in the personal contact of Baba in 1950. He actually entered the field to test Baba, to extricate me from His fold, and drag

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me back into the field of politics. He was not yet impressed in the least with the spiritual status of Baba and with the value and importance of Baba's orders. Therefore, he did not care to keep them steadfastly. He even tried to deviate me from strictly following Baba's orders, in order to keep me parallel to him. But I did not budge an inch from my principles. At first, I used to do my duty freely in my own way, but now I found myself pitched with hard 'pukar' in connection with the Press and Meher Pukar which were mainly his responsibility.

Then, the conflict that ensued with brother Parmeshwari Dayal crucified me, as it were, every moment that I was with him. Perhaps it was Baba who was giving me this rub. At Rewa when Tandan Saheb used to call for me I would get urge to urinate (out of fear), but in this conflict with my hard communist brother I felt like losing control of my bowels. BABA had put two totally opposite extremes together.

And, there was no escape from that collision, because the more brother Parmeshwari Dayal complained to Baba, the more Baba tightened him into His grip. After all, Parmeshwari was now in the grip of the Grand Communist of all communists, Meher Baba, from whose grip no one can ever escape, once he becomes entangled with Him.

When Parmeshwari Dayal did not succeed in taking me out of Baba's fold, he tried to bring the anti-Baba people like Diwan Shatrughna Singh and his followers, etc. in the Baba-field, but due to Baba's Grace all his attempts failed. Personally, I was so scared of all his manoeuvres that my all love and regard for him for so many years, now totally disappeared.

Then, for the past few years Baba kept him with Himself for different periods of time and gave him some spiritual badgering, for now he appears to have mostly come on the Path of Baba. He has his separate responsibility to work.

Perhaps the truth is that Avatar Meher Baba put us against each other in order to give both a fine 'cooler' and then got

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both beaten hollow and ready for His own Divine work better. On the 12th of November 1959, at Meherazad Baba made us embrace each other once again in His presence and thus tried to unite our hearts. Brother Pukar had entered in the Baba field in order to test Baba and take me out of it, but he himself got caught in the love-trap of Baba and could not escape.

THE MEHERABAD MEETING

Through the life circular No. 18 dated 10th June 1954, came the good tidings of unique and last of its kind Avataric Meeting to be held on the 29th and 30th of September 1954, at Meherabad. As per Baba's orders I began to send this message to each and all lovers, so that none might be deprived of the opportunity. All lovers from this District began to prepare themselves, and I was amongst a caravan of 162 lovers who went from here to participate in that unique meeting. There we got an opportunity to meet Baba's devotees from Australia, America and Europe. Their obedience to Baba and their sense of ideal discipline left a great impression on me. Compared to it, we showed very little sense of discipline and obedience. I took that lesson deeply into my heart.

Whatever Baba did during that meeting of 29th and 30th September kindled in me new fire, as it did in the hearts of all other lovers.

It was my fortune to translate into Hindi Baba's Final Declaration, and I completed that work in one night at Meherabad. Besides, I also made a verbal simple Hindi translation of whatever Baba spelt on His Alphabet Board from the dais during that meeting. I am still the recipient of this fortune of being the Hindi-Translator in Baba meetings and darshan programmes, and also at the office. It has made a deep impact upon my internal development. In order to translate Baba's messages, and specially the ones that require extempore and immediate translation, I have to leave thinking of everything else and concentrate completely on Baba's words. I have even

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not to look at Baba at that moment, for that enchants my mind with Baba's beauty and His words do not enter my ears. My complete and concentrated attention on Baba's Divine words has made these direct words deeply engraved in my heart for years and years. and they are creating that impact in me which they are meant to do. As a translator of Baba's Divine words I have always felt their redeeming power in my heart.

After witnessing that indescribable glory and Divine spectacle of the meeting of 29th and 30th of September 1954, I returned with the caravan of lovers to my place, and again got engaged in spreading for six months the Final Declaration of Baba, which He had made on the 30th of September 1954.

One incident in my life history with Baba in the beginning of the year 1954 deserves special attention and mention. Baba began His second round of Public Darshan in Hamirpur District from village Ichhaura, which is a powerful Baba-Centre of this district. Baba reached there with His mandali in the morning of 3rd February 1954, covering about 20 miles of uneven country track partly by a bus and partly by bullock carts. Journey to this village proves to be very strenuous and trying. Baba gave His Public Darshan here in the morning of 4th February 1954. In the early morning of 4th February 1954, Baba called me alone to His tent wherein His stay had been arranged by us. Eruch and Meherji A. Karkaria were by His side when I reached there. Baba looked very lovingly at me and emphatically told me in quite homely way - and Eruch interpreted Baba's gestures to me: "Look here, all this has been done because of you! You do not leave Me. In future all these people will become One, but you should not leave me. All this has been done because of you." By this Baba meant to tell me that Baba had come to give Public Darshan in the district and in the interior-most part of it because of me. He warned me that in future people of various fields of society in the district will unite against Baba's Work, but I should not leave Baba under their influence,

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persuasion or pressure. I took Baba's loving warning to my heart and folded my hands to Baba in full acceptance of His words.

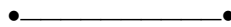
Baba's words rang powerfully into my ears - "All this has been done because of you!" By these words Baba disclosed an unique and indescribable luck for me, the depth of which could not be measured or imagined. These words of Baba were confirmed by two incidents that took place later.

Firstly, the second round of Baba's Public Darshan in Hamirpur district ended on 9th February 1954 at my native village Mahewa. There in the night between 9th and 10th February Baba held a special gathering of His mandali and selected workers of this area at Meher-Astana - a hut which was built for Baba's stay in 1952 and maintained since then by Baba's order. Baba kept there a programme of the whole night vigil with His lovers. During that momentous vigil Baba suddenly became in an extremely happy mood and at 00.50 hours openly declared Himself, for the first time in this Incarnation, to be the AVATAR of the age. At this very fortunate moment of making this Divine Declaration Baba called me to Him and told me (Eruch interpreting the gestures), "You do not know what luck you are receiving at this moment!" I reverently folded my hands before Baba in silent acceptance of this rare luck from Him, the depth or magnitude of which I could not measure, but to my human mind one thing was clear that Baba made this declaration of His Avatarhood there because of giving me some unique luck, just as He had told me at Ichhaura, "All this has been done because of you."

Secondly, in the evening of 9th February 1954 Baba had given His open Darshan also to the public at village Mahewa. One man of a neighbouring village got deeply impressed with Baba's Darshan and His Divine radiance. But he was unable to believe that Baba was The Avatar for the main reason that Baba was putting on Princely Dress. It was beyond his conception

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that a person putting on a Princely Dress could ever be The Avatar. He was sincerely eager to know the reality of Baba's spiritual status. That man was attached to a spiritually advanced soul who lived at CHITRAKOOT. When he paid his next visit to that saint, he tried to clear his doubt by asking him, "One Meher Baba came to village MAHEWA and gave His Darshan there to public. Who is he?" At this the saint rebukingly told the man that he was telling a lie. Twice did that man tell him the same thing, and again did the saint rebuke him for telling a lie. Because that man had seen Baba with his own eyes at village Mahewa and received His prasad of Love from His own hands, he emphatically told same thing again. At this the saint went hurriedly into his hut and brought out from there pictures of many saints, including a framed picture of Meher Baba. Placing those pictures before that man, he asked him, "If you say that Meher Baba had come to that village and you have seen Him there, then tell me if His picture is here among these ones." The man at once picked up Baba's picture and gave it to him. At this that saint became astonished beyond words and could not speak for a while. Thereafter he asked that man with a deep inquisitiveness, "Then who is that man because of whom He paid His visit to that small village! He is so great that He cannot go even to the biggest cities; what to say of such small and backward village!" On hearing of Meher Baba's greatness from that saint that man became convinced with Baba's spiritual status. And, when this incident was related to me and I heard the saint's words "Then who is that man because of whom He paid His visit to that small village!", I could not but remember Baba's words again - "All this has been done because of you." I could justifiably think that Baba had come to my native village because of me.



THE MAGIC BEGINS:

TRANSFORMATION, TEMPERING AND TESTING OF MY BEING. TRANSFORMATION - 1955 A.D.

I was going ahead with Avatar Meher Baba's work in the Hamirpur district. Baba had made me His chief worker of this area and established His office also here, making me In-charge of it. I was entrusted the work of finding out workers and preparing them share in Baba's work. While entrusting that work to me in the year 1953, Baba had remarked to me, "If you prepare even one for me in the district as I want, then my work in the district will have been done." From that time I have been trying to prepare one as Baba wanted including myself. In the beginning I devoted much time in touring throughout the district to contact lovers for Baba's cause, but as the office work increased gradually Baba instructed me to devote less time to tour work. So now I had to keep my office and tour work balanced. During that tour work I had had many valuable experiences which did enrich my being. I felt that with the medium of my office work and field work Baba was working fast within myself. As a result of my work many Baba Centres sprang up in the district and began to function beautifully in spreading Baba's name and His Message of Love and Truth. The seed of Love that Baba had sown in this district began to germinate.

In the beginning of the year 1955 I received from Meherabad (Ahmednagar) the hair of Hazrat Babajan's head to be preserved as Sacred Relics of Avatar Meher Baba's Perfect Master Hazrat Babajan for all Baba lovers of this area. These sacred Relics of Hazrat Babajan are preserved with me. Such Relics had also been sent to six other lovers of Baba in India and Pakistan, while eleven Relics were preserved at Meherabad

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for posterity in a sealed steel trunk. All these Relics were published on Pages 3 to 6 March-April 1955 issue of Meher Pukar (Vol. I, No. 9-10) to bear their testimony to posterity. That fortunate issue of Meher Pukar, which is published from Hamirpur, has also been preserved along with eleven Relics at Meherabad in the sealed steel trunk. To my human mind, this was another luck that Baba bestowed upon me.

Baba decided to go into strict seclusion from 1 May 1955 to 31 July 1955 at Satara. He declared that the period of that seclusion was period of crisis for Him, especially for His physical body which might become paralysed or might even drop. Before going into that seclusion Baba called an important meeting of a few lovers from Poona, Ahmednagar and Bombay on 24th April 1955. Nearly 30 such lovers were invited to that momentous meeting, And I was the only invitee to that meeting from North India. Thus total 36 men including Baba's resident Mandali attended that meeting at Satara on 24.4.1955. Baba held that meeting continuously for 8 hours and discoursed on various important spiritual subjects. During His discourse on the Path of God Realization Baba laid stress on the necessity of the mind becoming subordinate to the heart. Baba told that in order to know God, mind must become subordinate to heart. Baba held out His right hand and lowered it slowly downwards to make a gesture of pressing down something, and simultaneously remarked that mind must be pressed to become like a stone, so that it does not predominate the heart but becomes subordinate to it and helps it. While making the above gesture of pressing the mind down Baba was looking directly at me, and I felt that with the lowering down of Baba's hand something within my head was simultaneously being pressed. The meaning of this was not clear to me then, but later I found that during that moment Baba had actually pressed my mind and made it like stone to become subordinate to my heart. The

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result was that from that time I have been clearly feeling the function of the heart in my everyday life and have been guided through feelings and urges arising out of it. Now all my decisions invariably come out of my heart, not from my mind. I cannot decide anything with my mind. The moment I think of anything, my thought automatically gets switched on to my heart and its answer or decision arises from the heart in the form of a definite feeling or urge, which seldom proves to be false or incorrect. Heart gives me a correct decision, a right answer. It often brings to me reflections of the underlying meaning of Baba's words, messages and work. It is really a beautiful state that I enjoy through Baba's Grace. Its function never fails me.

After coming out of the above Seclusion Baba decided to give His Sahavas to His lovers at Meherabad. It was held in the month of November 1955 in four groups. Ours was the Hindi group. Baba had laid stress on the importance of that Sahavas programme and invited His lovers to attend it positively. Herein lay another trial of my love, faith and obedience to Baba. Few days before the date of our departure for Meherabad my wife became ill and did not recover in spite of all medical treatment. Only my three young daughters were here to attend to her in my absence, and it did not seem advisable for me to leave her alone in such state of health. The moment of our departure to Meherabad at last arrived, when my wife lay unconscious in high fever. I remembered Baba's wish that His lovers should not miss this Sahavas. So I felt impelled to fulfil Baba's will leaving my wife to His Almighty care. In her unconscious state I asked my wife to permit me to go and she unconsciously accorded to me her permission. I led caravan of Baba lovers of this district to that Sahavas and reached Meherabad. Baba asked us there to keep ourselves free from all worries, forget our home affairs and attend His Sahavas. I did so, and left my worry about my wife's illness to Baba. I returned home happily after

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attending Baba's Divine Sahavas, and found my wife well. Baba's Grace had looked after her. But I had to face a volley of wrathful remarks from my neighbours for having left my wife uncared for in such state of illness.

TEMPERING: 1956 A.D.

The year 1956 was a year of financial hardship for me. Baba had already declared in November 1955 that He will remain in seclusion from 15-2-1956 to 15-2-1957 and during that Period He will not keep contacts with the outer world. In order to make necessary arrangements and essential provisions during these 12 months of seclusion for Himself and for His dependents Baba had asked His lovers to send their individual and unconditional gifts of love to Kaka Baria for placing them at Baba's unreserved disposal. Baba had told His dependents that He would give them amounts for the monthly expenses only in proportion to what He receives by way of these gifts. Up to the last day fixed for the receipt of these gifts only about half of the amount was received by Baba, so He gave to His dependents half of the amount which each of them used to get from Baba every month. And, at this half rate Baba gave to His dependents amounts for their expenses for the whole year in advance.

I was one of the fortunate dependents of Baba, and as such I was getting at that time from Baba Rs. 250/- per month as His Prasad for my family. So according to the aforesaid half proportion I received total Rs. 1,500/- for the maintenance of my family during those 12 months. There being five members in my family - myself, my wife, and three young daughters this amount of Rs. 125/- per month was quite meagre for our family expenses in those hard days. But, we were asked by Baba to manage with this amount. Further, according to Baba's standing orders for me, I was not to take up any other job or work excepting the work given by Baba.

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I think it necessary to tell here that when Baba Graciously entrusted His work to me in 1953 and gave to me with His own hands a typed letter of appointment, He also made provisions for the maintenance of my family by giving me Rs. 300/- per month as His Prasad. Explaining the importance of this Gift of His Love to me Baba warned me, "You must not associate this monthly prasad of Mine with the work I have entrusted to you. This monthly Prasad is the Gift of my Love for your family and is quite independent of the work that I have entrusted to you. God will reward you for this work, as He must. But if you associate this Prasad with the Divine work that has been entrusted to you then you will mar the significance of both the Prasad and the work." Baba also ordered me not to take up any other job or work excepting His Divine Work. So it was my supreme fortune that Beloved Baba had accepted my entire life for His divine Service. Thus from April 1953 I used to receive in advance every month, positively in the first week of each month, Rs. 300/- as Baba's Prasad. This continued regularly for a couple of years. Then it began to vary, in amount sometimes I received Rs. 275/- sometimes Rs. 250/- and so on. Later on its periodicity also began to vary. I had to manage with whatever amount I received from Baba. Ultimately Baba stopped this monthly Prasad from the beginning of the year 1963, and ordered me to take Rs. 150/- per month as my salary from Narayan Press Hamirpur, the work of which I was already supervising under Baba's orders.

In my life I have never felt financial ease, excepting for a few years of my legal profession and thereafter few years of service on high posts. I was born of very poor parents and faced extreme poverty in my childhood and in my student career. I had not known moments of financial ease. Once I was with Baba and He was discoursing in the midst of His Mandali. During that discourse Baba said, "Some people are born with

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silver spoon in their mouth, and some are born (pointing out His finger towards me) penniless." So I being born penniless have not known financial ease in my life. And the year 1956 proved to me in my life's span to be one of the hardest years of financial stringency, but Baba's Grace helped me to face it bravely and cheerfully doing Baba's work with ever increasing zeal and devotion. At the end of the year 1956 I had a severe attack of piles also. I had been suffering from both kinds of piles for the last many years, and this time its attack was very severe. This added to my suffering and hardships which I was facing then.

TRIALS : 1957 A. D.

The suffering that I underwent during 1956 had greatly told upon my health and due to the severe attack of piles I had lost all energy and became pale and emaciated. I had become so weak that I could not move about freely and I found it difficult even to write a letter. But all this suffering and hardships of mine were amply compensated when I received Baba's special call to be with Him at Meherazad for some days in the middle of March 1957. Baba's 12 months Seclusion had ended in the middle of February 1957. This sudden call from Baba filled me with great delight and promised to me a new life. My days began to roll on with eager expectation to be in Baba's loving Presence in the near future.

I started on my journey to Meherazad on 13 March 1957. I had to be present there on the 15th March. The trials of my journey began from the very start. The bus carrying me to the Railway Station started very late and then it failed after running for a few miles. The efforts of the mechanic restored it into order after some time to cover the remaining 27 miles of its journey. The result of this delay was that I missed the first available train to give me the required connection at the next railway junction, but I learnt that this train was running late by

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two hours, so that there arose in my mind the possibility of missing the required connection of the train at the next junction. This train moved along slowly and easily, and its slow speed created great tension in my mind every moment. This tension reached its climax at the next railway junction when I found the connecting train standing at the platform ready to start and the in-charge T.T.C. refused to extend my ticket to Ahmednagar and asked me to purchase the ticket at the window of the booking office. There was no alternative, and I ran to the booking office carrying my bedding roll on my shoulders, for I had not enough money with me to pay to the coolie. I reached the window greatly panting and found the window closed. I knocked at the window and asked for the ticket, but the booking clerk refused saying that there was no train on the platform. I repeatedly entreated him to have mercy on me and assured him that the required train was standing on the platform from where I had come to purchase the ticket under the instructions of the in-charge T.T.C. I also deeply invoked Baba to help me at this moment. As a result of this the booking clerk came out of the booking office and cast a glance at me and admonished me. At this I again assured him that the train was standing on the platform and the T.T.C. had instructed me to purchase the ticket at the window. He went into his office and muttering wrathfully threw my ticket out of the window. I once again took my bedding roll on my head and ran towards the train. After running for more than half of the distance I became quite tired and my legs refused to move further. The train was standing about 50 yards away from me ready to start any moment. My mental tension was at its climax at that moment. I once again invoked Baba's help and mustering all courage ran to the train and at last got into the compartment awfully panting.

I ultimately got train which was to carry me to my Beloved Baba. All my tension subsided and it was replaced by great joy. The engine whistled and the train moved carrying me

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towards Baba's Land! And I felt the happiness of going nearer and nearer to Baba.

I enjoyed the happiness of the journey for full six hours, whereafter another trial came up to test my patience, faith and love for Baba. Our express train was passing through the Barkhera Station which is between Bhopal and Itarsi junctions. At the crossing point of the station the engine of our express train ran along the main line while the bogies behind ran on the loopline. Consequently the bogies derailed and began to run on the ground rocking forcefully right and left. Thus five bogies behind the engine derailed and their wheels got deeply studded into the ground. It was a horrible accident. All the passengers cried in woe and called aloud for God's help. The scene of the derailed train was horrible, but through Divine Grace there were no casualties, only two or three persons in the whole train had got minor injuries.

All the passengers got down from the train. So did the passengers of my compartment. All the passengers were panic-struck and were thanking God for having saved them from a great disaster. I was standing aloof from the passengers of my compartment and was thinking of Baba's Mercy. My attention was drawn to the talk of the people of my compartment. It was very significant for me. One of the passengers said to others, "There is 'someone' in this compartment because of whom the tragedy of the whole train has been averted." And immediately two persons supported him by saying, "Yes Sir, there is 'only one' such person. "At this the rest of them joined saying, "Yes there is only one such person and not more than one. "I marked their emphasis on the points that there was some one in their compartment and that there was only one such person because of whom the tragedy of the whole train had been averted. I knew well my worth as Avatar Meher Baba's slave and the above talk of the passengers made me quite certain that Baba

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had averted the tragedy of the whole train because of me; for during the derailment I had been deeply remembering Baba and calling Him inwardly at every jerk of the bogey. This made me think that Beloved Baba had to take the trouble for my sake and ran for my rescue. I felt deeply moved and tears began to flow from my eyes with a loud deep sigh. But soon I recollected myself and began to wait for what was to come next. After many hours of weary waiting a relief train arrived from Itarsi junction. It took the passengers onwards. By this train I arrived Manmad junction in the forenoon of 15th March from where I had to change for Ahmednagar. Here again I had to run to the booking office to purchase my ticket to Ahmednagar and that was my last trial during that journey.

I reached Ahmednagar at about 4 p.m. and went directly to Baba's office. His Secretary, Shri Adi K. Irani was anxiously waiting for me, because I was due to arrive at Ahmednagar in the morning. He told me that he had met Baba in the morning and Baba had asked him so many questions about my arrival. I told Adi the above train derailment. Adi sent me soon to Meherazad, where I presented myself before Baba. Baba put to me with concern a number of questions about my journey and welfare. I told him about the train derailment. On hearing it He repeatedly asked me if any person had been injured in the whole train. I told Him that only a couple of persons had received minor injuries and all the persons were saved from a horrible disaster. Baba's concern with the train derailment and his repeated enquiry whether any person had been injured in that derailment reflected to me that Baba had surely averted the tragedy of the whole train and that He had done so because of me, His dear slave! Baba looked compassionately at my pale, emaciated and broken health and discussed with Doctor (Miss) Goher Irani to give immediately medical treatment to me. He prescribed a capsule for me which was to be taken in the middle of both of the midday and the evening meals. Thus

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God Himself became my worldly physician, too. He kept me with Him at Meherazad for full 10 days. During that momentous stay with God I completely recouped my health and I was quite astonished to find the pink colour run over my face in such a short time! I had become once again a hale and hearty man full of usual zeal and energy. Only compassionate God could make me so.

During those 10 days Baba gave His public Darshan at Sakori at the Ashram of Upasani Maharaj on the 18th of March, and after some days at Poona in the Saint Meera High School. Baba took me to both of those Darshan Programmes along with His resident mandali. Baba poured Himself out uniquely in those Darshan Programmes. During that stay with Baba I also received a unique inner gift from Him. It is really a rare Gift that He bestowed upon me out of His unbounded Mercy to continue ever after. On waking up one morning during that stay at Meherazad, I found myself feeling unusually happy. That happiness was flowing from within me, and I could find no apparent cause for it. I tried to study its cause outwardly but I failed. It was quite a new experience for me. The flow of continuous happiness at last drew me inwards and made me know that the repetition of Baba's Name "BABA, BABA, BABA....." was going on automatically with my heart-beats, and from that automatic repetition of Baba's Name was flowing that happiness which I was feeling. That repetition of Baba's Name with my heart-beats has continued unbreakingly in me ever since, and consequently the feeling of bliss has naturally been continuous with it, so that since then I have been enjoying happiness incessantly even in the midst of adversities, miseries, trials and sufferings. Baba gave this Gift of His bliss to me overnight, and I felt that this was the result of Beloved Baba's direct inner working within me for which Baba had specially called me to Meherazad, and that my great

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suffering just preceding this Gift was only to prepare me for receiving this great Gift from Baba.

With the automatic and continuous flow of this repetition of Baba's Name within me, there remained no necessity for me for performing verbal 'keertans' of God's Name or His attributes. Whenever I sit in the midst of the keertan party who singingly utter 'keertan' with their mouths, I feel my utterance of that 'keertan' is just one with their voices without my actually uttering it with my mouth. My heart-beat becomes tuned with it and receives it as if it were flowing from itself. Thus I have only to tune my heart-beat with any 'keertan' or music to enjoy it quite silently as if I myself were actually doing it. It is really a blissful state that I enjoy through Baba's Grace and His Infinite Mercy.

After staying for 10 days at Meherazad in the company of God Meher Baba, I returned home fresh and energetic to resume my work. Out of His infinite Mercy Baba had given me both physical and spiritual healing at Meherazad, so that I found myself spiritually uplifted and equipped with more energy to carry on the Divine Work that Baba had entrusted to me. Baba declared to give His 'Sahavas' to His lovers at Meherabad in February 1958. This was going to be Baba's last 'Sahavas', as Baba Himself had declared that such 'Sahavas' would not be held before His next Advent after 700 years. It was the most significant 'Sahavas' not to be missed by Baba lovers. So, keeping this in mind I began to prepare the lovers of this area for that unique Divine programme, and made it my main work for the year. The time was very important. During the middle of the year Baba gave His warning to His lovers to remain alert in His love to hold fast to His 'Daaman'. That divine warning of Baba had its deep effect in me and gave to me a greater strength of His Love that sustained me through all trials and difficulties presented by 'Maya' in my way.

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MY BEING: ITS FINAL SHAPING - 1958 A.D.

Now came another fortunate year for me, the glorious year 1958. It began with Beloved God Meher Baba's last 'Sahavas' at Meherabad. It was held in February 1958. I took a large caravan of lovers from this area to Meherabad to attend that rare 'Sahavas'. Baba had told His lovers that during that 'Sahavas' programme He would tell to His lovers some very fundamental things and that after that 'Sahavas' there would be no 'Sahavas' programme of its kind. He had also told them that during this 'Sahavas' programme He would give solid shape to the purpose of His present incarnation and had asked them not to miss it, even if they were not keeping good health or had some very important work to do. I attended that 'Sahavas' wholeheartedly in the spirit of Baba's words, and I felt that in that 'Sahavas' I received another spiritual upliftment from Baba and that upliftment within me seemed to be very powerful and also to be giving quite a new shape to my life. I clearly felt that after attending that 'Sahavas' I had become definitely different from what I was just before the beginning of the 'Sahavas'. And I learnt that the same case was with all the 'Sahavasis' whom I had led to Meherabad. Baba had really released a powerful wave of His Divinity in which all the participants of the 'Sahavas' had become Saturated and had turned over a new leaf! I led the caravan back in two reserved bogies.

After this 'Sahavas' programme, Baba called to Meherabad His selected lovers from all over India to be present there on 10th July. That was also a very important meeting. During that meeting Baba gave to the world His historical "Universal Message" and His discourse "God Alone Is", which were later spread by His lovers throughout the world. I was also invited to this meeting, and I did attend it with few more lovers from this district. During that meeting Baba also laid stress on the need of loving Him more and more, and told the lovers that if

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they wanted to gain Baba's Love then they should repeat Baba's Name audibly everyday at midnight for one year from 14th July - first day for 14 times, second day for 28 times, third day 14 times again, fourth day again 28 times. Thus the lovers who desired to gain Baba's Love had to repeat His Name daily at midnight for 14 and 28 times alternately for full one year. When later I was alone with Baba, He exempted me of His own from doing this daily repetition of His Name, saying, "you need not do it." After this meeting, which proved to be Baba's last programme at Meherabad, I returned home spiritually enriched even more.

Being filled with fresh zeal and energy once again, I took up the work of spreading far and wide Baba's 'Universal Message' and His discourse 'God Alone is'. I got about one lac copies of them printed in English and Hindi separately. All the lovers of the district sent to me their voluntary and hearty contributions for this work and they also offered to go personally to different places for spreading these messages of Baba. So a number of groups of such lovers were organized by me and sent to far and near places on all directions to spread the 'Universal Message' of Avatar. They went to important places of pilgrimage on the festival days, when pilgrims gather there from all directions in thousands and thousands numbers, and delivered loudly to the multitudes of the pilgrims Beloved Baba's 'Universal Message' and also His Message of Love and Truth. I with six other Baba lovers led the group to Kashmir in October 1958 for spreading Baba's Message at the top of the Himalaya mountain. We reached Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, on 15th October and contacted Baba lovers of that place. We spread Baba's 'Universal Message' and His other messages there at different places among the local residents and among the tourists who had come to see beauty of Kashmir from various provinces of India and from many foreign

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countries. The message of Baba effectively touched the hearts of the people whom we contacted. We also went to the palace of the Head of the Kashmir State, His Highness Yuvraj Karan Singh and delivered to him Avatar Meher Baba's Message. He received the Message from us with deep attention and interest and appeared to be greatly impressed. He received us as his honourable guests and met us very humbly. We stayed at Srinagar up to 19th October and during that short period of 4 days we were able to send Avatar Meher Baba's Divine Messages to far distant provinces of India and also to foreign countries through the tourists. Kashmir proved to be a fine centre to us for this work.

From the night of 18th October I was caught with cold and high fever together with an attack of piles and dysentery. We had fixed 19th October for visiting the houses of local Baba-lovers and meeting their families, but due to the fourfold attack of disease I remained unable to move from bed. So the rest of our group carried out that programme, while I lay in the hotel remembering Baba. There was no sign of any improvement in my condition on the 19th October, and we were to start on our return journey in the morning of 20th October, for which our seats in the mail bus had already been reserved. My companions were feeling greatly anxious as to how I would be able to undertake the journey in such illness. But I was not feeling any worry at all either about my health or about my return journey, for I had full confidence in Baba's Mercy, and even in that severe attack of illness I was feeling happy within. I had firm conviction that by the time of our starting on the journey Baba's Mercy will surely make me able to start and will give me strength enough to undertake the long journey. I took that attack of the disease to be another trial of my love and faith in Baba, which I must accept bravely and cheerfully. And, lo! in the morning of 20th October I became able enough to start on

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the journey in a very cold and rainy weather. It was drizzling when we left our hotel on tongas for the bus station, On the same day the snow fall had also begun in the Kashmir valley, and had we stayed at Srinagar for a day more then we would have surely become blocked by the snow fall. But, how could it be, for Baba was with us throughout. We reached Jammu city by the evening with no trouble in the way and halted there for the night. The next morning we reached Pathankot, and from there we travelled by train and reached home safely. The journey to Kashmir and Baba's work that we did there gave to all of us many valuable experiences of Baba's Love and Grace which added to the value of our life. With these important events the year 1958 also passed away.

A PARENTHESIS : 1959 A.D.

The year 1959 had to give me an invaluable lesson of far reaching importance in its early months. One yogiraj (?) Dharma Dhruva Gaur had a deep place for him in my heart and I had great reverence for him. I had come in contact with him during the year 1950 at Hamirpur. He was a beautiful young man and possessed an attractive personality. He told about himself that he was 'The President of the World Spiritual Peace Mission' and he knew 51 languages. During my first contact with him, when he was staying at the residence of a citizen, I had become impressed with him. Next time he visited Hamirpur in 1951 and stayed with me continuously for nine days, when I was the Secretary of the District Board Hamirpur. Later, he kept his contact with me through letters in which he used to convey to me his blessings, peace and good wishes. When I was discharged from service as the Secretary of District Board Hamirpur without any ground in March 1952, he had continuously been sending to me his blessings and good wishes through letters. All this had created a deep place for him in my heart.

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After seven years, in March 1959 he suddenly knocked at my door - my present residence wherein I have Baba's office also, which Baba had directly established in the year 1952-1953. I felt so surprised to see him unexpectedly after seven long years, I greeted him warmly and arranged for his stay in a secluded room of my house as he desired. He stayed with me this time for six days. But this time I was not feeling impressed with him as he was making much show in his behaviour. This show was absent from him during our meetings seven years ago. Now at repeated intervals he used to mutter something, perhaps to impress the people around him that he was having communions into the unknown regions and was working there. As Baba had taught us to discard all show from our life, this show of Yogiraj (?) Dharma Dhruva served to create in me a doubt about his spiritual state. So I began to deal with him vigilantly.

One day he put up his proposal to me to organize a big 'Havan-Yagya' in the locality, telling me that out of the money collected for that purpose he would get Meher Baba's Messages printed in large numbers and would distribute them to the people who would gather in large numbers to attend the 'Yagya', and that Baba's messages will also be spread among the crowds through speeches that will be delivered by the lovers during the meetings held there. He told me that he wanted to perform that 'yagya' only for spreading Meher Baba's Messages. He also told me that out of the amount that will be saved from the 'Yagya' he will give a substantial amount to me for the maintenance of my family, because he knew that I had been in the grip of financial stringency for a long time. I marked vigilantly his offer of giving money to me, and I thought that thereby he might be throwing a bait to ensnare me. This offer did not attract me in the least because my finance was absolutely in the hands of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, the Lord of the

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Universe, and rather I felt repulsed at this offer. What attracted me was his offer of spreading Baba's Messages and doing Baba's work on a large scale through that 'Yagya', that is, the 'Yagya' was intended to be the means for achieving the end of spreading Baba's Divine Messages. But, I could not decide within myself whether the proposed 'Havan-Yagya' was a proper means for the intended Divine work.

Yogiraj (?) Dharma Dhruva asked me to call selected Baba lovers of Hamirpur town to him whom he would address privately on Baba's work. I called the lovers accordingly. Telling them that he wanted to do Baba's work here, Yogiraj (?) put the Proposal of the 'Havan-Yagya' before them also. At this all the lovers looked to me for final decision. As I was not yet certain about the propriety of the 'Havan-yagya' as the means for Baba's work, I told Yogiraj (?) that I could proceed further only after obtaining Baba's approval. All the lovers agreed with me. Later, some lovers told me that Yogiraj (?) did not like this idea of mine to refer this proposal to Baba for His approval. Yogiraj (?) left Hamirpur telling me - "All right, you refer the matter to Baba for approval. In the meantime I am going to visit other places. If Baba approves the proposal, then you intimate His approval to me by telegram. If He does not approve, then I will try to organize the 'Yagya' somewhere else." I wrote a long letter to Baba putting in clear details before Him everything about the proposal of Yogiraj (?) Dharm Dhruva and about my difficulty in deciding to accept his offer.

At that time Baba was staying at "Guruprasad" Poona with His Mandali. Before Baba's reply to my letter could reach me here, I received through a telegram Baba's orders asking me to present myself immediately at "Guruprasad" Poona. I did not know the purpose for which that special call had come to me from Baba. I immediately left Hamirpur and reached "Guruprasad" Poona to be with Baba. Baba met me very

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lovingly and asked the welfare of my family. During the course of talk He referred to Yogiraj (?) Dharm Dhruva Gaur and asked my opinion about him. I told Baba that up to that time I could find nothing against him excepting that this time he makes a great show of him which appeared to me very ugly. Baba deeply smiled and told me, "You have been duped." I took Baba's words quite solemnly and seriously and noted in my heart the reality about the Yogiraj (?). Baba asked me to stay with Him for two days, and thereafter twice or thrice extended my stay for about ten days. During that stay He gave to me some matter for 'Meher Pukar' journal and asked me to correct it and set it beautifully, so that apparently I could see that I had been called by Baba only for that important matter to be published in 'Meher Pukar'. Baba got a telegram sent to Hamirpur to enquire about Yogiraj, and its reply brought the news to Baba that Yogiraj had reached Hamirpur again in my absence, was staying with Baba-lover Swamidin Sharma, and was duping the Baba-lovers there. At this Baba got the following telegram sent on 6th April 1959 to Ram Sahai Singh Baghel, Hamirpur, in my name: "Telegram received. You and Bhawani Prasad read Eruch's letter to me of eighteenth March. Accordingly caution Sharma and concerned to totally stop associating with Yogis and yagyas." It was a historical letter that Eruch had sent to me. I could read it at "Guruprasad" Poona in Eruch's file, as it did not reach at Hamirpur before my leaving for Poona. It being very important, instructive and historical letter from Avatar Meher Baba to His Chief Worker at Hamirpur and also being very useful for the whole of humanity. It is reproduced below in full:

"GURUPRASAD"
24-Bund Garden Road,
Poona-1
Dated 18-3-1959

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My dear Keshavbabu,

Your letter to Bro. Adi dated 10-3-1959 was forwarded here to be read out to Beloved Baba.

Baba arrived in Poona on 15th evening from Bombay and He will be in Poona till June end.

I read out your letter to Baba regarding Yogiraj Dharma Dhruva Gaur. Baba heard the contents and remarked:

"I know all about him, he is dear to Me, he loves Me, he has a corner in My heart."

Baba then asked me to re-read letter to Him and, when I was reading the last but one Paragraph of your letter (wherein you had mentioned: The main thing that strikes me is the performance of the 'Havan Yagya' which is sought to be the means of work by Yogiraj, and if this means is not thought to be objectionable or improper from the spiritual point of view.....) Baba remarked: "What had 'Havan Yagya' and other 'yagyas' to do with spirituality?" and, "How can such 'Yagyas' help to establish Meher Baba's Avatarhood?" and, "If such 'Yagya' had any potential to establish Avatarhoods there would have been a crop of Avatars fully established and enthroned – certified as Avatar by the seal of 'Yagyas'!" But, "The Ancient One has once again repeated His advent this time to put His seal to end all 'Yagyas', rites, rituals and ceremonies; His very advent amidst mankind is the sacrifice of all sacrifices; His very being in human form surpasses all the existing rites, rituals and ceremonies: His very presence on the Earth is the Seal, sealing everything that is of the external and, at the same time, unlocking the Gate leading to the very core of one's being."

Baba then deliberated on His very dear Keshava's deep and great love for his Beloved; and this gave rise to an occasion when Baba reminded all of us here about Keshava's Love Song

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- 'Meher Chalisa': Baba also touched our hearts bringing home to us your sacrifice, your very life dedicated to the sacred Cause and your efficiency in discharging the duty of the Group-head in Hamirpur District. Baba then made us feel the love of all His Hamirpur District lovers. Within a very short time Beloved Baba surveyed the field work done in the district and neighbouring districts by His very dear Hamirpurwalas. Baba touched the spirit of sacrifice, the labour of Love, the faith and trust in Baba, all that prevailed in the district of Hamirpur. In much less a time than the time taken to pen these words, Beloved Baba brought home to us the fact that His dear ones in Hamirpur district need no tutoring to make them feel established in their love and faith for their Beloved Baba. And, even if the proposed 'Yagya' were to be permitted by Baba, which Baba would never want to do so, such an 'Yagya' would tantamount to tampering with innocent hearts of Baba lovers - the hearts wherein beloved Baba has been firmly established and enthroned. The Yogiraj's 'Yagya' might, in some cases, even cause sacrifice of Baba Himself from the precincts of the lovers' hearts. Your friend Yogiraj genuinely wants to serve the Cause of Truth and Baba is very happy about all that he has been doing in his own way to help mankind to see the Truth; but Baba does NOT want His dear ones of Hamirpur District to see this Truth at the risk and cost of their very sight: The sight which still cherishes all that was witnessed of the physical presence of Beloved Baba.

If Yogiraj wants to perform any 'Yagya' he is free to do so elsewhere; and if he is determined to perform it in the district, then it would be advisable for all Baba-lovers to refresh their memories and recall Baba's "Warning to His Lovers" and the discourses of Baba on 'Yagyas', rites, rituals, ceremonies, and even on various Yoga practices.

Baba wants me to tell here that Baba had and still has a high degree of confidence in your intellectual capabilities, and

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in your love for and faith in Baba. Nevertheless, your friend Yogiraj, who stayed as your guest for six long days, seems to have apparently fogged your ability as the Group-head of Baba-lovers and led you into temptation to utilise this means of 'Yagya' as a tool, which Baba has always taught us to discard for it is an obsolete weapon, to propagate His Message of Love and to establish His Avatarhood - except LOVE, all things and means become obsolete when the Avatar of the Age lives as God-Man amidst His own creation. In fact, when all things and means begin to become obsolete, the Advent of the Avatar brings a fresh dispensation.

Baba says that, as you had the companionship of your friend Yogiraj for six days, you could have easily brought home to him the Truth that instead of performing the sacrificial rites in shape of 'Yagya' and depriving some very hungry creatures of their rights to eat and drink things which get burnt unnecessarily in the sacrificial fire, Yogiraj should have seriously thought of sacrificing himself in the far more superior and sacred fire of Love. Such an offering would have been acceptable and would most certainly be in complete harmony with atmosphere of Hamirpur district which is surcharged with Baba-Love and which is radiating this Love to the neighbouring districts.

Baba feels much amused with this episode, which seems to have apparently tempted you. Instead of curing the diseased, Baba's stalwart Keshava is infected and enfeebled by his very friend, who is also very dear to Baba.

Baba, therefore, sends His curative dose for His very dear Keshava through these pages in shape of a letter, so that His brave and stalwart soldier not only can overcome the temporary infection but can also become potent enough to instil in others, with greater confidence, the Truth which Baba wants to be brought home to everyone who is still in the rut of things obsolete.

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Baba wants me to add that you should NOT misconstrue the theme of this letter and feel that Baba denounces outright the yogis and their yogic practices.

Baba wants that the yogis should NOT tamper the hearts filled by Baba's Love. These yogis can do what they wish and want at their respective places but NOT in the House of Baba.

Our Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati is a renowned yogi and has a great following and also conducts Yoga samaj centers in Madras, Vadalur etc. Yogiji is free to do whatever he wants at his own centres. But when he goes to lovers of Baba he never talks on Yogas or 'Yagyas', he talks on Love and Baba. When he spoke in Bombay on 25th February before Bombay public he did NOT say a word that Baba's Avatarhood be established through this means or that. On the contrary, he exhorted the public to establish Baba in their hearts and make the most of Baba's physical presence on the Earth.

Baba sends His LOVE to His very dear Keshava; and, Baba wants His Keshava to be happy in the knowledge that Keshava's Beloved will NOT let down His dearly loved Keshava in the eyes of those who profess to do Baba's work and through it want to achieve their selfish ends.

Yours lovingly
ERUCH

P.S: Baba wants you to acknowledge this letter at the aforementioned Poona address.

This letter did serve as an eye-opener to me. After about ten days refreshing stay of mine with Baba at "Guruprasad" Poona, Baba permitted me to return home to resume my work in the light of His instructions and advice. On reaching Hamirpur I learnt that Yogiraj (?) Dharma Dhruva had left Hamirpur again just a day before my arrival here, and that he had created a very filthy atmosphere among Avatar Meher

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Baba's dear and innocent lovers. In my absence he had tried to set Baba-lovers against one another for using them as his agents to help him earn money from the public by impressing the needy people with his yogic powers for obtaining their desired relief. He talked ill of Baba-lovers among them behind their back in order to prejudice them against one another. He stooped down to the extent of even making lustful gestures with some Baba-lovers. In short, he had tried his best to undermine the unity and good sense of Baba's lovers and their unflinching faith in Baba, but in vain. Baba's dear lovers were very cautious and watchful. They preserved their integrity and unity and faith, and united to drive Yogiraj (?) out of Hamirpur. After reading Eruch's letter hearing all these doings of Yogiraj (?), and remembering Baba's words to me "you have been duped", I came to know that Baba had called me to Him to save me from a serious situation and to drive away Yogiraj (?) from my heart, where his place was deeply secured. Baba had told us that He enters only those hearts that become empty of everything else. In order that Baba could reside in my heart fully Yogiraj (?) had to go out of it. And this was done by Baba Himself. The story of his doings at Hamirpur expelled him totally out of my heart. I became free from him. He was the third and the last man whom Baba had expelled from my heart. Diwan Shatrughna Singh of Hamirpur district and Baba's lover Parmeshwari Dayal (Pukar) were two others who were occupying a very deep place in my heart, and whom Baba had already expelled from it. With the expulsion of these three from my heart, my heart became empty for Baba and I felt a sense of freedom from these. The episode of Yogiraj (?) Dharma Dhruva Gaur served to bring a great boon in my life and equipped with it I proceeded on with my work.

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MY HUMBLE EFFORT FOR HIS MANIFESTATION

Time rolled on, and I realised the importance of time in Baba's work, which was passing fast away. Baba had made His final declaration at Meherabad in September 1954, had given His last 'Sahas' at Meherabad in February 1958 and had given to the world His "Universal Message" at Meherabad on 10th July 1958. I felt that Baba was proceeding with His work very fast to carry it to the point of His Final Manifestation, so that it might be taken to be the final phase of His work. Inspired with this feeling I thought that this was an opportune time for all Baba-lovers everywhere to repeat Baba's Name non-stop so long as Baba remained physically in the world. For non-stop repetition of Baba's Name His lovers everywhere should arrange the repetition in such a way that its link may continue non-stop without breaking in the middle. This could be possible if various Baba-centres, would arrange the repetition in co-ordination with other centres, in this way it would be possible to carry on the non-stop 'Japa' of Baba's Name for any number of years. So I conveyed my suggestion to Baba's Secretary Adi K. Irani through my letter of 16th July 1959. Adi informed me in reply to my letter that Baba had graciously approved my suggestion only for three months and he sent the following circular to all Baba-lovers in India and Pakistan:

**THREE MONTHS 24-HOUR NON-STOP "BABA" JAPA
DURING AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER,
1959**

NOT BABA'S ORDER but

**As suggested by Shri K.N. Nigam of Hamirpur (U.P.)
on behalf of Hamirpur District Baba Lovers,
and Approved by Baba.**

1. In every town, village and city of all the States of the Indian Union and Pakistan, an unbroken "BABA" Japa to be

My Humble Effort for His Manifestation

organised, if possible, at 12 midnight on and from 1st August 1959. If begun somewhat late would not matter.

2. No one should be forced to necessarily do the Japa at any central place or Baba Centre. Japa could be done either audibly or inaudibly or mentally at a central place, or Baba Centre or at any one home, or at different homes of Baba lovers.
3. Care should be taken that no Japa performer or his or her family members are in any way inconvenienced because of his or her or their having to do the Japa. Only persons who are willing and can conveniently devote time should undertake to do the Japa.....
4. Japa may be done individually or collectively in any convenient number together.
5. Since the Japa is to be independently held in every village, town or city the co-ordination of time between different units of individuals or groups shall be confined to every village, town or city independently.
6. These contents have been circulated only to Group-heads of different Baba Centres who are asked to distribute this information amongst those in their contact in their respective villages, towns and cities.
7. Every Baba lover is made known that this Japa to be done is not Baba's order and as such it should not be done at all costs.
8. Baba says that August, September and October are the three crucial months pertaining to His universal spiritual work, and hence Baba approves of the suggestion from Hamirpur (U.P.).

Adi K. Irani
King's Road
Ahmednagar.
23-7-1959

My Humble Effort for His Manifestation

Accordingly I became busy with organizing 'Japa' throughout the district. That 'Japa' made history in the Hamirpur district, and perhaps in all places where it was performed. It released a tidal wave of spirituality and Baba's Love, and at place of its performance miraculous manifestations were observed by the lovers. In Majhgawan Centre of Hamirpur district this 'Japa' was opposed with all force by anti elements. They took out noisy processions by the place of 'Japa', shouted at the top of their voice all filthy slogans, and even entered the place of 'Japa' to break its non-stop chain, but all their efforts failed, only to be recorded in history. On the whole that three months non-stop 'Japa' had a wonderfully awakening effect all round. Thus the glorious period of that 'Japa' passed away, Baba's dear lovers began to look forward for His Darshan.

LOVE FERVOUR CONTINUED - 1960 A.D.

During the latter half of 1959 we had deeply drunk of Baba through the non-stop 'Japa' of His Name. Every lover was feeling to be flowing in a strong wave of happiness and was aspiring for Beloved Baba's Darshan, because Baba had come out of His Seclusion at the end of 1959. He began giving His Darshan from the very beginning of 1960 - on 2nd January at Arangaon village, on 4th January at Avatar Meher Baba Centre Ahmednagar, and on 6th March at Ahmednagar. Besides these, He had declared to give Darshan to all His lovers at "Guruprasad" Poona from April to June 1960. So the lovers of Hamirpur district began to prepare to go together in group to Poona for Baba's Darshan.

In the mean time, I as chief worker of Baba here convened another historical gathering of Baba-lovers in the district. That programme was great test for the faith and love of Baba's lovers and for their courage to put Baba's Love and His Teachings into practice. One deep Baba-lover Bhagwan Das, sweeper by caste, of village Sarsai (Rath) had been requesting me for many years past to call a special gathering of Baba-lovers at his residence to perform Baba's Kirtan and to spread His Messages,

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but I had been avoiding it purposely thinking that time for such a programme in the district was not yet ripe. In India sweepers had been regarded for centuries as quite untouchable and they had been deprived of all human rights. The curse of untouchability kept absolutely segregated in all respects from the so-called upper caste people and also from the whole society. So the upper caste people could not go to the house of sweepers, nor would otherwise associate with them. It was beyond their imagination to stay with sweepers, or to take food touched by them or cooked by them. This had been coming down to us as a centuries old rigid-most tradition, and in the present state of society it needed greatest courage from Baba's lovers to break this tradition by staying at the residence of their Guru-Bandhu Bhagwan Das sweeper, by living with the sweepers in their huts standing out of the village, and by eating and drinking with them without reserve. In a way it was an open challenge to society. But seeing the high discipline, faith and love of Baba's dear lovers of Hamirpur district I at last dared to challenge this inhuman tradition, and I declared to the lovers in gathering that was held at Meher-Dham Nauranga in January 1960 that a special gathering of all Baba-lovers of this district would be held at the residence of Baba's dear lover Bhagwan Das Sweeper at his residence at Sarsai (Rath) on 3rd and 4th April 1960 on the occasion of Ram Navami. I warned all the lovers that this gathering would mean to be a great test for their faith and love for Baba. And, all the lovers who were present there cheerfully agreed to face that test bravely in Baba's Love.

Few selected workers of this district reached the residence of Bhagwan Das a day earlier to help him in the arrangements, and on the eve of the programme nearly all the workers and chief Baba-lovers from all the centres of the Hamirpur district gathered at the residence of Bhagwan Das sweeper at Sarsai, excepting a few lovers who could not dare. A very happy programme was carried out at the residence of Bhagwan Das sweeper on the scheduled dates 3rd and 4th April 1960 in the tooth of opposition and in the midst of resentful murmurs. Baba's

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Deep Love and Blessings had been received for all those who attended that historical function while Baba had sent His Love-Blessings separately to Bhagwan Das also to cheer and encourage him at this great programme which he had arranged at his cost in Baba's Love in spite of his poverty. Baba's Love and Blessings made the function exceptionally happy and successful. It made history in this district and left far-reaching effects on the society. People were astonished to see courage of Avatar Meher Baba's lovers, which they had received from their deep love and faith for Baba. The wise people gave unprecedented credit to Baba-lovers for breaking successfully this centuries old inhuman tradition of society, while others of narrow views reacted against it for many years afterwards. Baba-lovers faced all such reactions bravely, to be even more firmly established in Baba's Love. All the Baba-lovers were very happy at this historical success.

Now, the Baba-lovers of Hamirpur district turned their immediate attention to Beloved Baba' s Darshan, and I led a caravan of about 200 men, women and children in a reserved bogie to Poona. It was a 96 seater bogie which was occupied by about 200 people. So the great congestion in the bogie can well be imagined. Yet even with that congestion the lovers travelled happily for 30 hours to reach Poona on 13th May 1960, and lo! as soon as they reached their lodge - a High School building - Baba reached there with His Mandali to greet them. Baba was deeply touched with love for Him and with the labour of love which they had undertaken for His Darshan. Such greeting by Baba was very unusual, which He did not do with any other group. When on the morning of 14th May we were standing in a line in the courtyard of "Guruprasad" awaiting our entry for Baba's Darshan, Baba Himself came out to us along with His Mandali and exchanged greetings with us. This also was unusual for Baba. During His Darshan Baba told us that it was because of our love for Him that He had gone to our lodge to be with us and also had reached the gate of "Guruprasad" to walk with us. He was very happy with our

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love for Him and with the way in which we did His work in our area. He expressed His great happiness at the three months non-stop 'Japa' that was successfully carried on in our district facing bravely all oppositions and obstacles that came in the way, and expressed even greater happiness at the programme that we had carried out at the residence of Bhagwan Das sweeper at Sarsai village of our district. Baba spoke very highly of Sarsai gathering to all those who were present there. Baba assured us of His 'Nazar' and warned us to hold fast to His "Daaman". We were near Baba from 14th to 17th May 1960. In the afternoon of 17th May, our Caravan left Poona for home in the reserved bogie.

But, still many lovers were left who aspired for Baba's Darshan which was going to be closed after 10th June 1960. So, for them also I got a bogie reserved. This caravan consisted of 148 men, women and children of Hamirpur district and its neighbourhood. We got 80 seater bogie to carry these 148 people to Poona, all of us journeyed quite happily in it. We reached Poona in the afternoon of 3rd June 1960, shouting "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai." We had Baba's Darshan at "Guruprasad" from 4th to 7th June 1960. This being the end of the Darshan programme, there was a great rush of visitors. During His Darshan on 7th June 1960, Baba again asked me to recite "Meher Chalisa" to Him. Once more I offered my "Meher Chalisa" to Beloved Baba through recitation, and with that Baba closed that day's Darshan programme. On 14th May 1960 also Baba had heard "Meher Chalisa" from me during His Darshan programme and felt touched by it as usual. I led the second caravan back from Poona in the afternoon of 7th June 1960. Filled with new spirits again by Beloved Baba's Darshan, I became busy with Baba's work in the district.

From 1st July 1960 Baba entered into His six months seclusion, which had been notified to His lovers through Life Circular No. 47 dated 30th June 1960, and He again resumed His Manifestative work from behind the Curtain.

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ALL BARRIERS BROKEN: LOVE DIVINE - 1961 TO 1969

As told above, Baba had stepped into a very strict seclusion since 1 July 1960. It was one of His most strict seclusions, during which Baba had withdrawn Himself completely from the outer world, so that even His resident Mandali people felt to be physically away from Him. All the lovers expected that this seclusion of Baba would end with the end of the year 1960, but before the expiry of the year Baba declared that He would continue His seclusion for indefinite period and would come out of it only after breaking His Silence. Baba-lovers everywhere got stunned to hear this declaration of Baba and they aspired for His Darshan which Baba had been giving to His lovers at least once every year for the past many years. They waited patiently in His Will, spreading His Messages with ever increasing zeal and vigour.

To fulfil the longing of His dear lovers for His Darshan, Baba declared to give His Darshan to them at "Guruprasad" Poona from 15 to 31 May 1961. This declaration from Baba released a strong wave of happiness among His lovers. I could not miss that rare opportunity of being near Baba once again, for there cannot be anything more significant, more important and valuable than the Darshan of The Avatar on earth. Because the time at hand was very short so we were unable to secure reservation of seats for our long journey by the train. Therefore, Baba-lovers of this area began to leave for Poona in small groups for Baba's Darshan according to their convenient dates. I left with a caravan of 50 men, women and children on 28 May 1961 to have Baba's Darshan on the last dates 30 and 31 May 1961. We boarded the Pathankot-Bombay express at Jhansi in the morning of 28 May 1961. There was great rush and congestion of passengers in the whole train, but in the sweet remembrance of Beloved Baba we travelled happily the whole

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day till midnight. By midnight we were nearing the Manmad junction where we had to change our train for Poona. Our express being a bit late was running with full speed and was passing through the Pimparkhed station. At the crossing point of the Pimparkhed station the engine got a sudden jerk and instead of running straight on the main line ran along the loopline, and all the bogies followed it similarly. All the passengers felt violent jerks, heard loud crackings from below the bogies and saw clouds of dust rising below and round the train. The passengers apprehended the train derailment and pulled chains from their bogies to stop the train, and the driver applied full brakes to the engine. The train stopped at some distance; three bogies of the train had derailed. All the passengers got down from the train in great horror and panic, and thanked God for having saved them from a great disaster. The driver of the engine told the passengers that under the condition in which the train was running to the loopline and its sudden dead-stop by the chains and brake, the whole train should have been smashed and all the passengers crushed to death. He told them that though he would be rewarded for having saved the train from a great disaster, the total disaster had been averted only by God. He further told them that getting confounded by the situation he tried to save the engine and for that he applied full brakes, and having saved his engine he had got down to see if any passenger or bogie were saved. On the contrary, he was quite astonished to find that the whole train with all the passengers was safe, only three bogies had been derailed but they had not moved away from the railway line. All the passengers were talking that there were definitely some lucky souls in the train because of whom God had averted the tragedy and saved all the passengers. I heard their talk with deep attention and thought to myself that those people knew little that there were 50 dear children of the present Avatar Meher Baba who were travelling in that train and because of whom the whole train was saved by Baba from a great disaster.

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I was travelling in the sleeper coach of that train, and I found that through Baba's Grace my coach had not derailed while two bogies ahead of it and one bogie behind it had derailed. Many of us had called "BABA" aloud during the derailment, and all of us felt that Baba had come to our rescue and He had definitely averted the tragedy.

Due to this accident we could not reach Poona in time to attend Baba's Darshan Programme in the afternoon of 30 May 1961. We reached Poona in the night that day. But Baba could not forget His dear lovers. We stayed in a High School near the railway station and we were preparing to retire to bed when one of Baba's Mandali came to us to give us the happy news silently that because owing to the train derailment we had missed Baba's Darshan on 30th May, so Baba had graciously given to us separate time at "Guruprasad" at 11 a.m. on 31 May 1961. He asked us to be punctually at 11 a.m. at "Guruprasad." How happy we were to get this news from Baba. We reached "Guruprasad" on 31 May at 11 a.m. Baba at once called us within the Darshan hall and gave to all of us His happiest Divine company. He looked very lovingly at us, enquired from us our welfare, asked from us about the train derailment and talked humorously to us. At the end He gave the Prasad of His love to us in the form of sweets. Thereafter we attended the Darshan programme in the afternoon also. It being the last day of Baba's Darshan there was a great rush of lovers from all parts of India, including few lovers from the United States of America. In the beginning of the Darshan Programme Baba told the lovers who had gathered there - "you people are very lucky that you are present here on the last day of My Darshan programme." Then he gave His Love Blessings to all His lovers who were present there and also to those who were not present there. Thereafter, Baba asked me to recite "Meher Chalisa" to Him, which I did from the depth of my heart. In the end of the programme Baba gave His Prasad to all, and resumed His seclusion for indefinite period.

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While in seclusion Baba always intensified His inner work, which reflected greatly through the world events and through the intensified outer work which His dear lovers and workers did in spreading His Message of Love and Truth far and wide. Baba's Name and His Messages were being carried by His lovers to new areas and place and more and more people were being caught in Baba's love. And, when more and more people became thirsty of Baba's Love then after a certain period Baba again satisfied their thirst by giving His Darshan. In the year 1962 the lovers as usual began to expect Baba's Darshan sometime during that year. This year Baba held a very great Darshan programme in the first week of November. He called it **"1962 East-West Gathering"**. This Darshan programme turned out to be the grandest of all Darshan programmes, and it was held at "Guruprasad" Poona. Baba had told His lovers that during that East-West Gathering He would open a window of His heart to release His love for His lovers. Nearly 200 lovers from the West came to attend that Unique Gathering. I led the caravan of about 600 men, women and children from this area in a reserved special train to Poona for that Darshan programme. Baba's Grace did help me to organize the journey of such a big group and lead the caravan safely to Poona and back to Jhansi. It proved to be a very heavy task for me and I carried it out successfully through Baba's Grace and His inner help. In that East-West Gathering of Baba, which was last of its kind, I did feel that Baba had opened a window of His heart. I received much of His love and felt inwardly enriched. There was a further distinct change in me, which I could feel but could not express. All the lovers also were filled with a new life and zeal in Baba's Love. After the Gathering was over, I led the caravan back home in the reserved train.

By now I had almost become established in Baba's Spiritual Life, so that spiritual living and spiritual work had become natural with my life. Baba was going ahead with stormy speed in His Manifestative work. In the early month of 1963 I received a

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special call from Baba to be with Him for a few days at Meherazad. I reached there accordingly and lived in Baba's Divine Company for a few days, and once again became spiritually surcharged. From 1960 to 1964 I brought out a number of Hindi publications of and on Baba. In May 1965 Baba gave to His lovers another opportunity to have His Darshan at "Guruprasad" Poona, and time proved that it was the last opportunity that Baba had given. I led a caravan of about 200 men, women and children from this area to that Darshan of Baba in two reserved bogies, while about 400 lovers went to Poona by special buses. We drank deep of Baba during this Darshan also. In this Darshan Baba gave to His dear lovers of Hamirpur many valuable experiences and lessons in His work, and equipped with those I led the caravan back.

From the beginning of 1965 my right hand began to fail me in Baba's work. For about 14 years it helped me in doing Baba's office work from morning till dusk, but in 1965 it became affected with Parkinson's Disease (Paralysis Agitus). In the beginning I ignored it and carried on my work as usual, but after one year the movements of my hand and its speed and power of writing began to fail. Then I began to take medical treatment for it, but no medical treatment showed any effect on it. I brought it to the notice of Baba, and He advised me to get myself admitted to the King George Medical College Hospital Lucknow and get myself examined by the Neuro-Surgeon, for whom I received an introductory letter from Baba's personal Doctor (Miss) Goher Irani. Taking that letter with me I met the Neuro-Surgeon at Lucknow, and remained admitted to the aforesaid hospital for 4 days under the supervision of the Neuro-surgeon and remained under his treatment for 3 months, but to no effect. In the mean time I received a special call from Baba to be with Him at "Guruprasad" Poona on 16 and 17 April 1967. I reached "Guruprasad" accordingly in the afternoon of 16th April. Baba specially enquired from me about the condition of my right hand. By that time it had begun to show

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tremors due to the disease. I showed my trembling hand to Baba and told Him the history of the medical treatment that I had undergone. Baba heard it seriously and remarked to me through gestures (Eruch interpreted them): "It will not be cured by any medical treatment; it will go away of itself one day. Do not worry." Baba repeated this in every meeting when I was before Him. He further told me, "Though it will not be cured by any medical treatment, yet you must continue taking best medical treatment for it regularly - be it Allopathic treatment, or Ayurvedic, or Homoeopathic, or any other treatment." Not even this. Baba sent me to Bombay to His dear lover Doctor Ram G. Ginde, the top-most Neuro-Surgeon of India, with a message to him to examine me and give me medical treatment. I went to Bombay and got myself examined by Doctor Ginde and took his medical treatment for six months, but all in vain. The disease became even worse and I became unable to write with my right hand. But I did not worry about it as Baba had already told me that it would not be cured by any medicine but will go away by itself one day, and that I should not worry. So according to Baba's instructions I continued taking best medical treatment for it - Ayurvedic, Homoeopathic, Biochemic, Allopathic, and otherwise. In spite of all these medical treatments the condition of my hand went on getting worse and worse day by day. Due to the failure of my right hand my office work became badly dislocated and I felt worried about it. But there was no alternative for it, for Baba had advised me to work on as much as I could under this very condition of my hand and should not worry. So I was doing what I could with my ailing hand.

In October 1968 I again received a special call from Baba to be with Him for a couple of days at Meherazad, and I stayed there in the Divine Company of Baba for full three days and four nights from 11 October to 14 October 1968. Baba met me there in the morning on 12th October. This time He appeared to be totally withdrawn from the outer world. Yet He asked me to spread my hands forward, which I immediately did. My right

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hand was badly trembling due to the disease. He looked at my hands deeply and mercifully. After a few seconds He again asked me to spread my hands towards Him, and He again looked at my trembling hand with a deep merciful look. Thus He gestured to me about my disease (Eruch interpreted): "It is incurable, but I will see that it goes away one day. Do not worry." I humbly replied to Baba, "Baba I do not worry about the disease of my hand, but I feel worried only when your work suffers due to the inability of my hand." Baba heard it deeply and kept quiet. In the morning of 13th October Baba held a meeting there of some of His prominent workers. During that meeting He asked me to spread my both hands before the gathering of workers, which I did promptly. My right hand was undergoing violent tremors at that time. When all the workers had seen my trembling hand, Baba told them, "He has done much work for Me, and now his hands have become in this condition. I will make his hands healthy again (spreading His both hands towards the workers and pointing out towards them) like my hands one day. "In this way Baba made all the workers as witnesses of the assurance that He had given to me to cure my hand one day. That was the last meeting I had with Beloved Baba. In the afternoon of 14th October He asked me to kiss His left cheek by way of good-bye, and asked me to leave Meherazad in the morning of 15th October. I kissed on the left cheek of God-Baba, and that was the last kiss! Baba also gave me three books to print in Hindi - "Meher Geetika" by Bhau Kalchuri, "Meher Sarod" by Bhau Kalchuri and Hindi translation by Bhau Kalchuri of Doctor William Donkin's book "The Wayfarers." I little knew that this was my last good-bye to Beloved Baba for ever.

On 31 January 1969 I received telegraphic message from Baba's Secretary Shri Adi K. Irani that Baba had dropped His physical body in the noon of Friday, 31st January 1969. I felt no shock at this news because I did not feel that Baba had gone away from me or from His lovers. I smiled at Baba's physical

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departure and began to wait for "What next now?" It was a big event no doubt. On learning that the Darshan of Baba's physical body was indefinitely open at Meherabad Hill, I rushed to Meherabad with my family and a few other Baba lovers. We reached Meherabad in the afternoon of 6 February 1969 and had Darshan of Baba's body lying in the Tomb. To me Baba's face looked beautiful and young, but bearing the appearance of infinite Universal Suffering. I felt pained at this appearance of His suffering. The President of the "Avatar Meher Baba Trust Committee" declared that Baba's body will finally be buried on 7th February 1969, Friday.

Accordingly, we went up the Meherabad Hill in the early morning of Friday, 7th February 1969, and again had Darshan of Baba's body. I wished to recite "Meher Chalisa" to Baba for the last time in the Tomb, and I got permission to do so. During the many previous years Baba Himself used to ask me to recite to "Meher Chalisa" to Him, and He had heard it from me for about a dozen of times. But now I on my own wanted to recite it to Baba for the last time. Sitting at His feet in the Tomb and facing His beautiful face, I recited "Meher Chalisa" to Baba from the depth of my heart as my last offering to Him. In the afternoon Baba's body was buried in the Tomb for ever. I took part in that burial, and that was the end of my story with Baba.

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THE CONSTANT COMPANION: MY CONCLUSION

In conclusion I have to declare in all fairness that during this short period of my contact with Avatar Meher Baba, Beloved Baba has made Himself my constant companion. I do not find Him absent from me for even a moment. I distinctly feel in me the truth of Baba's words, "I am nearer to you than your own breath." Really He has become as natural and spontaneous with me as my breath, so that His sweet remembrance continuously remains in me without my making any efforts for it. It means that I never feel that Baba is away or separate or even different from me; rather I feel that He is just me! There have been moments during this period of my life with Him when I got a glimpse of the truth contained in Baba's Words, "I am alone." In that fleeting glimpse I happily felt myself to be all alone, while the awareness of the creation had vanished from me for that moment. There were also moments when I distinctly felt a little share of Baba's Universal burden on my shoulders, so that I could know then what Baba meant by His Universal burden and suffering. This was also a fleeting glimpse that I got only through Baba's Grace.

Secondly, since I joined Baba's 'Life' (Real Divine Life) from 21 March 1952, after being discharged on 20 March 1952 from the post of the Secretary of the District Board Hamirpur, my life has continuously been marked with suffering. During this life I have not been free from suffering even for a moment - physical suffering, or mental suffering, or suffering otherwise has always been embracing me. I now distinctly feel that because Baba had out of His Infinite Mercy made me a partner in His 'Life' from 21 March 1952, both outwardly and inwardly, so it was natural for me to get a share in Baba's Universal suffering which Baba constantly had on His shoulders. And it was

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perhaps because of this partnership with Baba that occasionally I had glimpse of Baba's Reality. But during this continuous suffering of mine I have ever been feeling happy within, so that my suffering has never become boring to me. Rather, Suffering has become a habit to me, and I happily keep myself in harmony with it. Thanks be to Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Grace.

Thirdly, with my present spiritual state I Distinctly feel where I stand in my life's journey. I feel that before getting Beloved Meher Baba's contact I was far, and still far away from the 'Manzil' of my life which should have required thousands and thousands of reincarnations of me to reach that 'Manzil'. The end of my life's journey appeared to me far beyond the horizon, requiring numberless life-spans to reach it. But after this short period of my contact with Divine Beloved Meher Baba, I distinctly and definitely feel that with Baba the journey of my life has become complete and I have definitely reached its End. Through His Divine Grace I have reached my "Manzil" in no time and I have to go nowhere now.

Fourthly, and lastly, I have a distinct continuous feeling that Beloved Avatar Meher Baba has freed me for ever from the bondage of Illusion, and my present life-span is the last in the unending chain of birth and death in my life's journey. Now, through Baba's Grace I am a Free Soul having nothing left to achieve for myself. Baba has out of His Infinite Mercy given me all, and even more than that. I have received from Him all that I prayed for in my "Meher Chalisa", and infinitely more than that. I think it will be best to say that Beloved Avatar Meher Baba has given Himself to me to my heart's content. This feeling in me is automatic, spontaneous and continuous. It flows from me incessantly of its own accord without my wishing or willing for it, or even trying to think of it. It has become as natural with me as my own breath. I feel my being

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indescribably enriched, and I feel to have been fully established in Beloved Baba's Life; and, living just as an ordinary man in this world I continuously enjoy bliss within through all circumstances and conditions of life. I feel to have unlearnt all that I had learnt during the infinite course of evolution. All this has been brought about by Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Grace. This should not be taken to mean that I have attained "BABA" or GOD consciously.

I greeted Baba's Name with extreme prejudice and humiliation in 1942, and He rewarded me with His Infinite Grace. Only the Divine Beloved Meher Baba could do so!

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI,

THE END

Signed kn Nigam
(KESHAHA NARAYAN NIGAM)
Avatar Meher Baba Hamirpur Centre,
Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh
INDIA

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EPILOGUE: POST SCRIPT

Further more, to complete this sketch finally, I have to add to my life story with Baba, that Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Grace brought to me once a sudden and momentary glimpse of "IS" also. During that moment my awareness of every-thing. was dropped excepting the only awareness of "Being" where complete peace, tranquility and stillness prevailed. My thinking, feeling, emotion and all had become completely stilled and there had remained nothing but the awareness of "stilled Being". After a few seconds this glimpse passed off as suddenly and automatically as it had come.

Both the glimpses of "I-am-alone" and "Is" had come to me automatically and suddenly and they had likewise passed away after a few seconds. Both of these had come to me at different times in the last year – 1968 – of Beloved Meher Baba's Physical Presence on earth, during the period when "Parvardigar Prayer" and "Repentance Prayer" were being recited daily under Baba's order by Lovers all over the world. That was the most significant Period of Baba's Divine Working, and during that period these glimpses came to me undoubtedly as manifestations of Baba's Grace on me.

In chronological order, the glimpse of "Baba's Universal Burden" had come to me first, then at a different time came to me the glimpse of "I-am-alone", while the glimpse of "IS" was the last to come. These came to me as ordinary events of everyday life, appearing to me absolutely trivial before the Divine Beloved Meher Baba's NAME and GLORY. To me no glimpse, howsoever great, can ever reach or match the Glory of Beloved BABA'S NAME. Yet, I have many times aspired and tried to have these glimpses at least once again, but they have not reoccurred so far.

Epilogue: Post Script

Baba had told us, "Ask for nothing and you will get everything."

Undoubtedly my Beloved Avatar Meher Baba has proved to be true to His words in my case.

(KESHA VA NARAYAN NIGAM)
Avatar Meher Baba Hamirpur Centre
Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh
INDIA

SUPPLEMENT

WELCOME ADDRESS

Letter of Prayer

of

COSMIC MEHER FAMILY

to

INFINITELY GLORIFIED

**SRI SADGURU-SAT-CHIT-ANANDA AVATAR
MEHER BABA IN HIS LIBERATING SERVICE:-**

*To the sacred text lovely as the beloved's face,
a million salutations.*

*To such a one as the King of King,
million salutations.*

*Sighting thee is sighting the Almighty
To such a loved one of the God,
a million salutations.*

*Remover of all hurdles and leader
of the flock,*

To such a Holy Guide, a million salutations.

*Morning and evening the faithful send
ever to thee alone -*

*Monarch of the noblest of teachers
a million salutations.*

O Love Personified!

The Cosmic Meher Family, the conception of which was blessed with Your concurrence for its birth and foundation in 1948 A.D. at Rewa (Vindhya Pradesh), having found Your

Welcome Address

Honor's direct Physical Presence on this auspicious day amongst us, has got its true meaning of being. The long cherished desire of this family for perceiving Your Form along with attributes has been fulfilled at this moment. Its fate which had been seeking luck since many births and rebirths, is now benefited with good luck. As personified absolute fortune of this family You are physically present here. We are stunned with joy.

You are Cosmic Meher Family's general Father and centre of Vitality; and O God! You are its sole religion, the goal and the worshipped one. This family is word by word worshipper of Your following Silent Message:-

"No sacrifice is too great to set man free from his bondage to physical and material things. He must be inspired to realize that GOD alone is REAL; all else is a vain and empty pursuit of transitory values. He must be helped to inherit the TRUTH that mankind is ONE. He must be given the capacity to love all men as his brothers, regardless of colour, creed or country."

"It is my divinely appointed task to bring this spiritual freedom to mankind; and I look to those who would be crusaders in the cause of TRUTH to help me in this GOD-ORDAINED mission."

MARYADA PURUSHOTTAM (upholder of the best ideals of all men)!

Kindly consummate all of us in the eternal cause illustrated above. There could be no better utilization of our egoistic physical bodies. O Master! Very be-getting hold of your pious Daaman, all treasures and powers have undoubtedly become naturally our own; to long for them even after getting your sacred feet is utterly useless. Therefore, from now on by deploying every moment of our life and every cell of our bodies for your cause make our lives worth, because we may get this body again, but you and the chance to perform your pious

Welcome Address

work is found by only rare ones after several ages. Your cause is absolute boon to this world and the world-beyond. Since long the world enchanted by your inescapable Maya (Illusion) is burning in agony. To extinguish the fire of such agony, this family's sacrifice at the altar of your cause is offered: Lord do accept it.

God-Man!

After a prolonged wait we have got the assurance that soon you are going to relieve the world from the present day intense Mayavic fire. On the auspicious day, the 12th February 1952, the first real birthday of yours, getting your Godly blessings and Love, we, your people, feel great-begot peace and happiness. This family has adopted the same blessed date and witnessed the beginning of the dawn of a new, the **Meher Samvat** (Era), emergence of the Divine Light and **New Era**. But, O Comrade of Weakness! You seem to adopt the same furious Virat form to annihilate the furious fury of Maya as you had adopted in Dwaper Age, the age of Mahabharata. Though you ever continue this Play, Your this Leela (play) is very fearsome. Be it so,

Rahamatullil Alamin! (Gracious to all worlds)

Granting your mercy to all, you may please calm down your Furious Fury. This family offers its following prayer to Your feet repeatedly.

(1)

O Savior the master, universe regulator and sustainer!
Ocean of Love comrade for weak,
poverty suffering destroyer O!!

(2)

Pure Infinite Inconceivable Anonymous,
O the pacifier of world's duality!

Welcome Address

O Destroyer of whole world's unrest
Hope of aggrieved Ocean of Mercy!
The shining Sun and tranquil Moon,
O Absolute Brahma Eternity!

(3)

O Father this Thou Family,
endowed with incomparable
riches of Thy Bhakti!

Let this relation, and Thy remembrance be
constantly prevailing every moment!

Thou art Comrade Brother and Sustainer, O!
The very base of our being!

(4)

Destroy Maya, Attachment, and O! Grant Freedom
from Material Bondage!

Perceived by all in the universe,
Every particle glows of thy light!

Grant thy **Meher** onto the world
O! **BABA** the invisible Eternal Might!

**Let the Universal welfare prevail! Let the Dharma (order)
be established!**

**Let The Life Divine emancipate! Let us all Hail Meher,
The Almighty.**

From Meher Moon Nightingales,
All the family members of Cosmic Meher Family
C/o Keshava Narain Nigam
Saturday, the 22nd. Day of November 1952 A.D.

Place: Meher-Astana, Mahewa
Hamirpur (U.P.)

•————•

MEHER CHALISA

*Hari! Parmatma! Allah! Ahurmazd! God! Yazdan-Hu!
Hail to Thee Meher, Avatar of the Age!
Hail to Thine unique Glory!
Salutations to Thy Lovers and God-intoxicated ones
Whose Love draws Thee to Earth.
Fain would I apply to my head and to my heart,
the dust of their feet.
Emboldened in the assurance of their Love for thee
I continue striving to attain Thee, Meher!*

- Keshav

*Hail to Thee, BABA! Hail, All-knowing, Infinite One,
Prop of the Universe,
Thou Perfect, Ancient one, Sustainer of all
Creation, hail! (1)*

*Hail to Thee, Personification of patience and
purity, bestower of peace!
Thou art the sole hope of thy Lovers, and art
eternally at play with Thine endless Divine Game. (2)*

*Guide of the age, guardian of true religion,
Thou art the treasure-house of all renunciation
and self-denial.
Just a glimpse of thy true Self would release us
from the grip of illusory bondage. (3)*

*Formless Thou art, enformed - I hail Thee
who art both Man and God!
Without, within, above and below, Thou alone
art - there is none but Thee. (4)*

* See Index

Meher Chalisa

*Thou art the BABA of Thy Lovers, the "Merwan"
of Babajan,* the treasurer of Upasani,* the sun
of the Lotus family of all saints and sages. (5)*

*Emperor of realized beings, hail!
Hail, Thou Divine Ancient Light!
Unchanging art Thou, the symbol of peace
and Existence Eternal. (6)*

*The creature that loves Thee, becomes as Thee;
as the layers of deceptive impressions fall off,
he is revealed in Thy true image of Godhood. (7)*

*To lead humanity out of its sea of confusion
Thou hast come.
To wipe out distinction of creed, colour and religion
Thou hast come. (8)*

*To reveal to the world Thy Power,
To spread the glory of Love, To uphold the life
of truth, Thou wert born to Shirinmai.* (9)*

*How can I sing Thy glory
when Shesh* and Sharda* could not fathom it!
Thou art eternal and limitless in Thy immensity,
and in the end all become absorbed in Thee. (10)*

*Though limitless, Thou hast come to us as God-
Man though Infinite, Thou hast bound Thyself
with finiteness in order to uphold and prove the
limitations of the finite. (11)*

*Thou alone wast Mira's" "Giridhar",
Thou the "Shyam" of Surdas.*
None but Thee the "Sanwaliya" of Narsi,*
Thou the "Rama" of Tulsidas.* (12)*

*To Keshav, Thou art "Beloved Baba"
enthroned in his heart.
With Thy sweet glance of grace upon him
Thine image reigns supreme in the temple of his mind. (13)*

* See Index

Meher Chalisa

*Thou alone art the touch-stone,
transmuting the life of this sinner.
Behold, I have been blessed! This day I have
caught hold of Thy Lotus feet
and the triple sorrows* have burnt to ashes. (14)*

*I do not want the renown of the world.
I long not for the occult and supernatural.
This world's treasures and possessions
I would spurn for the dust of Thy feet. (15)*

*I long ever for Thy beloved Face.
To see it is my joy.
On it I meditate, in praise of it I sing, and
I offer my obeisance to it
in the offering of my self. (16)*

*If my ears may hear, let it be but the sound of Thy-Name.
If my tongue may speak, let it be but to sing Thy praise.
Let my mind relinquish the snares of the world,
and be engrossed only in thee. (17)*

*So dwell in my eyes, Lord,
that I may see none save Thee
Sweet is the continuous uttering of Thy Name: "MEHER"!
There is naught else but Thee. (18)*

*Each time I am born,
may I find, O God-Man, Thy Form.
Then, with my devotion and service unto Thee
at last fulfilled, be re-absorbed into Thy
Formlessness. (19)*

*I am a slave at Thy feet.
Night and day I long for naught else
save Thy grace to so descend upon me, Lord,
that I may serve Thee. (20)*

*O Redeemer of sinners!
Whenever Thou shalt descend on earth,
forget not this sinful one, for I too am Thy follower. (21)*

* See Index

Meher Chalisa

*In each Avataric Advent
may I be blessed with human form,
so that I may see Thee, love Thee, serve Thee;
Having seen Thy Light, O Lord Supreme,
I will then be content to watch thy Shadow-game. (22)*

*I long for the devotion of Tulsidas,
and for the divine madness of Mira,
so that whirling in the intoxication of ecstasy
I may dance before Thee, and shed tears of love. (23)*

*Let me curl up at Thy feet
and lose all remembrance of the world and self
Be Thou the worshipped and the worshipper in
me - I cherish no other desire (24)*

*Endowed with the tongue of Surdas
may I continually sing Thy glory!
And, should Thou reject me for my failings,
Let me lock Thee all the more securely in my heart. (25)*

*Grant me that detachment which was Kabir's, Lord,
that I may keep the Unseen ever vigilant
in His care o'er me.
May my mortal sheet cover me ever so lightly
that when relinquished it shall be untainted as new. (26)*

*When my body is dropped, let it be for Thee.
that I may rank with Jatayu* and repose
peacefully in the folds of Thy embrace.
Then might I seek entrance to Thy abode. (27)*

I will feed Thee the wild berries of Shabri
and procure for Thee the vegetables Thou didst eat at
Vidur's.**

* See Index

Meher Chalisa

*I would die a thousand deaths in joy
wert Thou to relish them with that self-same love! (28)*

*By the grace of Thy touch and name,
Ahilya* and Ganika* and Sadna* were redeemed
So was blessed Ajamil.*
Valmiki* who repeated "Mara-mara"
in place of "Rama-Rama" too gained emancipation. (29)*

*May that same destiny be reserved for me, O Baba!
this boon I ask of Thee.
Becoming as Nishad* I would drink the water
that bathed Thy feet;
and achieve the aim of many lifetimes. (30)*

*Would that I were a sentinel at Thy gate,
Keeping watch day and night.
As the son of Anjani* so would I serve Thee,
and gain Thy darshan each day. (31)*

*Sages, Rishis, Rakshasas, humans, all come to Thy door;
and the Muni-Narada* sings, to the strains of his lute,
Thy Name that sanctifies. (32)*

Thou art Brahma; thou art Vishnu;*
in Thee I recognize the beginningless Shiva,*
and Indra* and Brahaspati.*
Thou alone art Lord of the three worlds.* (33)*

*Hail to Thee, O Creator and Upholder of the Universe!
Thou art the Friend and hope of the down-trodden
of the three worlds. Thou art the Ocean of mercy.
Thou art for Thy lovers and, Thy lovers are for Thee. (34)*

* See Index

Meher Chalisa

*Hail to Thee, Personification of love!
Hail to Thee, the Source of Peace!
Hail to Thee, Embodiment of Divinity!
Redeemer of the fallen, Slave to the love of Thy lovers;
Thou art all Power. (35)*

*Saviour of sinners I hail Thee!
Symbol of purity Thou dwelleth in each form.
Thou art Light eternal, dispelling the darkness of suffering.
Though limitless, Thou art perfect in
the limitations assumed by Thee. (36)*

*With folded hands I beseech Thee, so shower Thy grace
on me that Thou art never absent from the temple
of my mind and heart. To Thee I have surrendered. (37)*

*Grant that my faith and devotion for Thee abide unshaken.
Grant that the flame of my love for Thee remains unwavering -
may it be extinguished only when I have burnt
away my very self in it. (38)*

Such a flame of Thy love didst Thou give to Prahlad,
as all Saints have proclaimed. Prahlad was flung from
the mountain top. and thrust into raging fire,
but love and Truth triumphed, unshaken, unimpaired. (39)*

Bless me with that rock-like faith of Dhruva
to which stands witness the Dhruva-tara* (pole star)
Let the world lose its grip over me, and eternal union
with Thee take place O Beloved! (40)*

* See index

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- (5) **Babajan:** One of the five Perfect Masters of this Avataric age. She gave to Meher Baba the realization of his Godhood, and used to refer to Him by His name, Merwan.

Upasani Maharaj: Another of the Perfect Masters. He helped Meher Baba to regain gross consciousness.

- (9) **Shirinmai:** The mother of Meher Baba.

- (10) **Shesh:** The great Serpent of the thousand tongues, on whom the god Vishnu reclines.

Sharda: Goddess of wisdom.

- (12) **Mira, Surdas, Narsi:** Unique in their devotion to Lord Krishna.

Tulsidas: Lover of Lord Rama.

- (14) **The triple sorrows:** Pertaining to the body, the world, and fate.

- (27) **Jatayu:** The bird that got killed while trying to rescue Sita from the clutches of Ravana.

- (28) **Shabri:** A girl of low caste who loved Rama, and for years daily gathered berries for Him in the hope that He would come by her hut some day in the course of His exile. He did, and accepted with love the berries she had tasted to ensure their sweetness.

Vidur: A poor devotee whose love-imbued dish of Saltless vegetable Lord Krishna relished more than the feast at the palace.

- (29) **Ahilya:** Through a curse she had been turned to stone. She was reinstated to human form at the first touch of Lord Rama's feet, during his wanderings in exile.

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Ganika: A prostitute who had a pet parrot whom she taught to say the name of the Avatar, "Rama." In the process of teaching the parrot she continually and inadvertently repeated the Name which caused her emancipation.

Sadna: A butcher who despite of the daily slaughtering of animals as demanded by his trade, received salvation through his steadfast honesty with the scale, inspired by his devotion to God.

Ajamil: Although a non-believer and bird-hunter and considered a great sinner, he nevertheless gained liberation because he called out with his last breath his son's name "Narayan" which is also the Name of God.

Valmiki: A dacoit by profession until he met the Guru who changed his life. The Guru told him to sit in one spot in the forest indefinitely and repeat God's Name: Rama, Rama. For long years Valmiki was unable to do so; instead he found himself repeating in reverse "maramara". Finally he gained Enlightenment, and wrote the Ramayana which is known as Valmiki Ramayana.

(30) **Nishad:** A boatman who used to ferry back and forth across the Ganges. During exile Lord Rama came to this river and engaged Nishad to ferry him across. Nishad, recognizing the divinity of Rama, cried : "Only if first Thou dost allow me to wash Thy feet lest I lose my means of livelihood, for dust of Thy feet might turn wood of my vessel into a human being, as it did the stone that became Ahilya!" The boon was granted him. He washed Lord Rama's feet with water, then took that sacred water with his whole family, and happily ferried Lord Rama across the Ganges.

(31) **Son of Anjani:** Hanuman, the "monkey-god" whose devotion to Rama is considered unequalled.

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(32) **Narad:** Matchless among Deva Rishis as declared by Lord Krishna in the Bhagwat Gita, who had access to the three worlds.

(33) **Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Sustainer), and Shiva (Dissolver):** personifications of the three aspects of the Almighty - creation, preservation, dissolution.

Indra: Vedic deity, the king of Heaven.

Brahhaspati: Vedic deity, also regarded as a Teacher of the gods.

The three world: gross, subtle, mental. Referring sometimes also to heaven, earth and hell.

(39) **Prahlad:** A Youngster whose father hated him for his devotion to God, and whose every effort to destroy the boy was frustrated by divine intervention in response to the child's unwavering faith.

(40) **Dhruva:** A prince, who as a child left home and his father's kingdom, determined to pursue severe penance in the forests in order to find God.

Dhruva – tara: The North or Pole star, regarded as the "Seat" offered to Dhruva. Appearing in the same place throughout the night, it symbolizes the unchanging state which Dhruva gained through the grace of the god Vishnu.

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LETTER OF AUTHORITY

AVATAR MEHER BABA CAMP
107-A RAJPURI ROAD
DEHRADUN
23-3-53

To,

All lovers of Baba concerned of the District of Hamirpur U.P.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Shri Meher Baba desires that it should be made known to all His lovers of Hamirpur District that He has ordered Keshav Narain Nigam to do the work of God entrusted to him by Baba. Keshav will be busy with His work from the 1st of April 53 for seven months. Keshav is further authorised by Shri Baba to utilise the amount of Rs. 1677/- that was offered to Baba by his Hamirpur lovers and which was substantiated by Baba adding Rs. 500/- and totalling the amount to Rs. 2,177/-. Baba has ordered Keshav Narain Nigam to use this amount of Rs. 2177/- in the following manner:-

1. **Rs. 500-00** towards the proposed printing of "Meher Gitavali" (Priced publication).
2. **Rs. 350-00** towards translations and printing in Hindi the Messages of Shri Baba delivered at various places on different occasions during Shri Baba's Mass darshan programmes. (priced publication).
3. **Rs. 365-00** towards payment of approximate expenses incurred for printing of "Cosmic Meher Family" Booklet (Priced publication).
4. **Rs. 362-00** towards Keshav's seven months travelling expenses and postage.
5. **Rs. 600-00** as Prasad from Baba to Keshav and his family towards their monthly expenses for the months of April and May 53.

Letter of Authority

For the remaining five months of June, July, August, September and October 53, Shri Baba has authorised Vishnu Deorukhker to send to Keshav's family every month, for five months, Rs. 300/- only.

Keshav is further authorised by Shri Baba to utilise the sale proceeds of the sale of "Meher Gitavali", "Cosmic Meher Family" and "Hindi Messages" booklets for his additional travelling and postage expenses incurred for Baba's work in addition to Rs. 362/- already allotted for the purpose. Keshav is also asked by Baba to keep accounts for the same.

Shri Baba sends His love to all lovers throughout the District of Hamirpur.

BY ORDER OF BABA
yours Fraternally
Sd. Eruch
(Eruch)

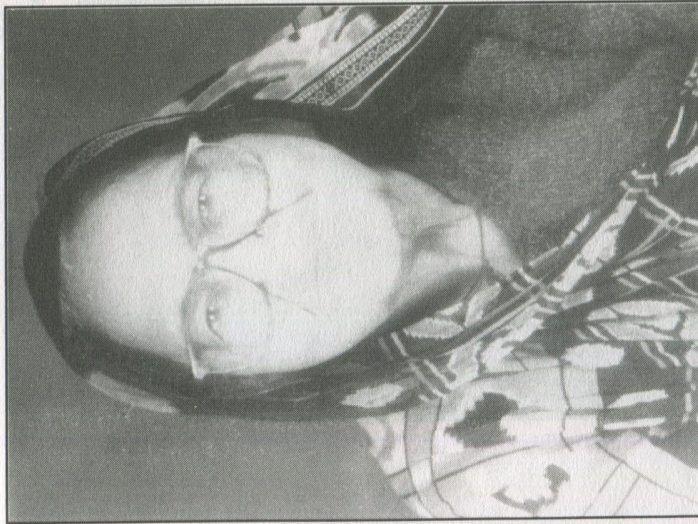
(HINDI)

First, Baba entrusted His Divine Work to Keshav for seven months and, later on before the expiry of the period of seven months, He called Keshav again to Him to hear from Keshav how he had done His work. After hearing from Keshav Baba became happy and remarked, "I told you to do the work 100% but you have done it 101%, so you continue this work permanently. You will be paid monthly Rs. 300/- as My Prasad to you for the maintenance of your family. This Prasad should not be associated by you with the Divine Work given by Me to you. God must reward you for the work done and He will surely reward you. You should not do any other work or job or business except the Divine Work given by Me."

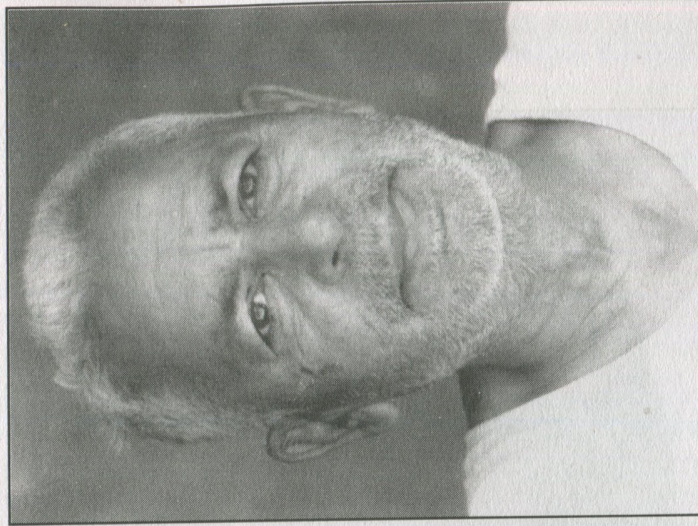
(Sd. K.N. Nigam)

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Letter of Authority



Smt. Sudha Keshava Nigam
(Keshava's Wife)



Keshava Narayan Nigam
Born - 16 June 1909, Died - 8 Feb. 1987

Letter of Authority



Meher Astana (Avatar's Abode, The Hut)

spiritual path. He visited Europe, America and other foreign countries and had been around the world several times.

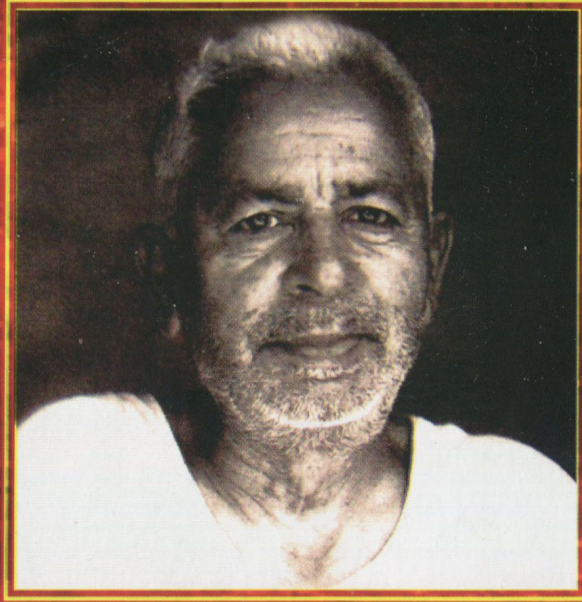
His lovers and devotees are from all religions and countries. He does not want anyone to give up His own religion but wants him to understand and live it in its essence. He does not want to found any sect or religion. His message to humanity is that of Love and Truth. He wants everyone to realise that God alone is real. His works, "God-Speaks" Theme of creation and its purpose, "Listen Humanity", "Discourses", "Life at its Best", "Beams" and Messages are immortal. They are the spiritual treasures of the emergent New Humanity. However, as he has himself said, his real gift to mankind is through his silence, which appeals to the inmost being and the divinity of everyone and awakens him to the one reality of God as eternal truth and the inviolable unity of all life.

Avatar Meher Baba had said in November 1968 that he would give darshan "on His own terms". No one knew what those terms would be. "The darshan would be strictly for my lovers". Baba also said, "This darshan would be unparalleled, it would be the last darshan given in silence" and that, "when he started giving darshan to his lovers, it would not be for a limited period, but for all time." He also said, "He would give his darshan in a reclining position". All these were hints that he would not be with us physically but spiritually. So it happened.

At 12.15 P.M. on 31 January 1969, Meher Baba dropped his body which was kept in the Tomb at Meherabad hill for seven days for the thousands of his lovers from East and West, to take His darshan. Meher Baba's body was as fresh as ever, as if He were sleeping, when He was interred on the Feb. 7, 1969 seventh day.

Meher Baba's tomb shrine at Meherabad has become a place of pilgrimage for his lovers all over the world. Every year on his Amartithi, which falls on 31st January, thousands of Baba lovers from all over India and abroad gather here in all solemnity to pay their homage to the Avatar of the Age.

* * *



KESHAV NARAYAN NIGAM

Register of Editorial Alterations

Page viii, para 4, line 3, quite changed to quiet
Page 1, para 2, line 9, counsellor changed to counselor
Page 8, para 2, line 6, restabliſhing changed to re-eſtabliſhing
Page 10, para 2, line 8, form changed to from
Page 10, para 3, line 5, "Francis is" changed to "Francis"
Page 12, para 1, line 4, trambled changed to trampled
Page 20, para 2, line 11, barbarious changed to barbarous
Page 33, para 3, line 8, Rense changed to ſenſe
Page 44, para 2, line 5, reorganised changed to reorganise
Page 53, para 4, line 6, wity changed to witty
Page 61, para 4, line 5, "be the" changed to "be"
Page 62, para 1, line 6, "did not" changed to "not"
Page 68, para 3, line 2, Come changed to came
Page 69, para 1, line 6, afterwords changed to afterwards
Page 75, para 4, line 8, it changed to in
Page 76, para 3, line 1, orderered changed to ordered
Page 80, para 1, line 4, lightening changed to lightning
Page 87, para 3, line 4, calvert changed to culvert
Page 98, para 4, line 4, dias changed to dais
Page 99, para 3, line 1, incidence changed to incident
Page 100, para 1, line 1, perſuaſion changed to perſuaſion
Page 100, para 2, line 3, undeſcribable changed to indeſcribable
Page 101, para 1, line 8, told changed to tell, rebuked to rebuke
Page 111, para 1, line 2, momentleſſ changed to momentous
Page 115, para 1, line 7, homely changed to humbly
Page 116, para 2, hdg, PARANTHESIS changed to PARENTHESIS
Page 137, para 1, line 9, quite changed to quiet
Page 146, para 1, line 5, alter changed to altar
Page 146, para 2, line 8, Weakens changed to Weakneſſ
Page 146, para 2, line 9, furry changed to fury
Page 148, para 1, line 6, feign changed to fain