

Letters
from the mandali of
Avatar Meher Baba

Compiled by
Jim Mistry

An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook
Copyright © 1981 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust
Ahmednagar, MS India

Source:

Letters from the mandali of Avatar Meher Baba

Compiled by Jim Mistry

Publisher

Sheriar Press

N. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, U.S.A.

Copyright © 1981 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual

Public Charitable Trust

Ahmednagar, MS, India

eBooks at the Avatar Meher Baba Trust Web Site

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust's eBooks aspire to be textually exact though non-facsimile reproductions of published books, journals and articles. With the consent of the copyright holders, these online editions are being made available through the Avatar Meher Baba Trust's web site, for the research needs of Meher Baba's lovers and the general public around the world.

Again, the eBooks reproduce the text, though not the exact visual likeness, of the original publications. They have been created through a process of scanning the original pages, running these scans through optical character recognition (OCR) software, reflowing the new text, and proofreading it. Except in rare cases where we specify otherwise, the texts that you will find here correspond, page for page, with those of the original publications: in other words, page citations reliably correspond to those of the source books. But in other respects-such as lineation and font-the page designs differ. Our purpose is to provide digital texts that are more readily downloadable and searchable than photo facsimile images of the originals would have been. Moreover, they are often much more readable, especially in the case of older books, whose discoloration and deteriorated condition often makes them partly illegible. Since all this work of scanning and reflowing and proofreading has been accomplished by a team of volunteers, it is always possible that errors have crept into these online editions. If you find any of these, please let us know, by emailing us at frank@ambppct.org.

The aim of the Trust's online library is to reproduce the original texts faithfully. In certain cases, however-and this applies especially to some of the older books that were never republished in updated versions-we have corrected certain small errors of a typographic order. When this has been done, all of these corrections are listed in the "Register of Editorial Alterations" that appears at the end of the digital book. If you want the original text in its exact original form, warts and all, you can reconstruct this with the aid of the "register."

The Trust's Online Library remains very much a work in progress. With your help and input, it will increase in scope and improve in elegance and accuracy as the years go by. In the meantime, we hope it will serve the needs of those seeking to deepen and broaden their own familiarity with Avatar Meher Baba's life and message and to disseminate this good news throughout the world.

Letters
FROM THE
MANDALI OF
AVATAR MEHER BABA



Compiled by
Jim Mistry

Letters

FROM THE
MANDALI OF
AVATAR MEHER BABA

Compiled by
Jim Mistry

Sheriar Press

Copyright © 1981 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust,
Ahmednagar, (M.S.), India

Front cover drawing by Rano Gayley

ISBN: 0-913078-42-5

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in
writing from Sheriar Press, Inc., 801 13th Avenue South, North Myrtle
Beach, South Carolina 29582. U.S.A.

Printed in the United States of America.

Preface

Behind the well-documented areas of Meher Baba's life and the great phases of His work is a vast treasure of correspondence between Him and His lovers. Aside from capturing the intimacy of the relationship between Meher Baba and His followers, these letters also show the role that Meher Baba's mandali, or close disciples, played in this work. Although the extensive correspondence from Meher Baba through His mandali lies in the background of the more visible aspects of His work, it is nonetheless just as important. Through the letters sampled in these pages, Meher Baba awakened hearts and forged links with those who were silently drawn to Him in all corners of the world.

It would be difficult to summarize the wide variety of letters that appear here. Not only do they address many aspects of leading a life of love devoted to Avatar Meher Baba, but they are also written by a number of hands and contain varying degrees of Meher Baba's active participation. Some contain Baba's own words or instructions; others were written by the mandali under His direction - formulated around points He had given (this was Baba's usual method of answering correspondence) - while still others, especially those dated after Baba's physical passing on January 31, 1969, were written by the mandali on their own. Even when the mandali have written without Baba's direct guidance, the words in their letters are built on lives that were passed in His physical presence. They witnessed Baba deal with countless situations and problems similar to the ones we find in these pages, learning to handle them on His behalf and under His instruction over a period of several decades.

If a high spirit of expression is found in these letters, it is

no wonder, for Meher Baba's mandali served the One who continuously expressed "in the world of forms truth, love, purity and beauty." If at times they are also of a high literary quality, that too is no wonder for Meher Baba loved literature and a story well told.

The letters included here date from the 1950's to the present, for it was during this period that correspondence between Meher Baba and His followers became increasingly important. Throughout these years, Meher Baba interspersed the great sahavas and darshan programs of the 50's and 60's with increasing periods of deep seclusion for His Universal Work. A fair number of these letters were written during these seclusions and show how Baba maintained outer communication with His lovers while nurturing them to depend upon that which is purely within.

Those whom Baba set to the task of answering the correspondence that flowed to Him include His sister Mani S. Irani, who wrote mainly to those in the West (a volume of her letters has appeared as *Eighty-two Family Letters*); Eruch Jessawala, Baba's interpreter for many years, who corresponded with those in India, and later, especially after Baba dropped His body, with those in the West; Adi K. Irani, Baba's long-time secretary who corresponded widely with individuals and groups throughout the world; Francis Brabazon, the only writer whose native tongue was English, yet who, as a poet in Baba's court, had the task of helping to transform English into a devotional language - some of his poems, written for occasions or in reply to questions, are included here - Bhau Kalchuri, Baba's Hindi poet who handled correspondence in Hindi (hopefully more of this will appear in a later volume); F.N. Driver (Padri) who reported from Meherabad, Baba's previous residence, to Baba and to the other mandali at Meherazad; and Bal Natu, who helped with Marathi correspondence and with English, mainly since Baba laid aside His physical form.

The letters included here were compiled by Jim Mistry with an eye to their instructive content and general appeal. I have edited the letters only slightly for the sake of clarity;

their flavor and style has been maintained. A brief summary phrase precedes the longer letters as an introduction and for easy reference.

Meher Baba has said that His Love increases when shared with others. These letters have been collected and published as a part of that sharing, with the wish that they will increase the reader's love for the Silent Beloved.

Peter R. Booth
Meherabad, India
20 February 1981

Introduction

At some time or another, most people who have tried to follow Avatar Meher Baba have come across a situation where they were not sure what to do. They were not sure what would please Baba; sometimes because they had heard conflicting accounts of what Baba had advised and were confused, sometimes because they had not heard that Baba had advised anything and they were uncertain, and sometimes because even though they knew what would please Baba, they were not sure how to do it.

But they say that awareness of one's ignorance is the first step towards wisdom, and never was this more apparent than when such awareness caused people to turn to India for guidance. Over the years, thousands of letters were written asking such questions as: "What does Baba say about going to saints for advice?" "How should I handle lustful thoughts?" etc. This book is a brief collection of some of the answers Meher Baba's mandali have provided.

Some of the letters herein were written under Baba's direct instructions, while others were written by the mandali on their own, but even then the answers never reflect a purely personal opinion. For the mandali have tried not to express their unique biases, but to distill the wisdom gained from a lifetime's service to and companionship with Avatar Meher Baba. The answers are thus always grounded in the framework of an intimate and first hand knowledge of what Meher Baba had said in response to similar questions in the past. What Baba would want, and the sense, which was not intellectual but after 30, 40, 50 years of being with Baba day in and day out was second nature, of what would please Baba. As such there can be little doubt that this book will prove invaluable

instructive and informative, and yet, paradoxically, also potentially misleading.

Misleading because the book which Baba wants people to read is the book of the heart. And there is always the danger that failing the courage and integrity to attempt that, we will seek refuge in the printed word. Being unable to accept the demand of continuously trying to please Baba anew with each succeeding breath, we hope to compromise by adhering to the stability of an unchanging edict. In this way we end up codifying advice whose only purpose was to draw our attention to Baba.

But just as God can never be described by any series of intellectual propositions, so too the life of those who would love God can never be outlined through a prescribed code of conduct. The closest one can come to a universal injunction is to repeat what the Avatar eternally repeats, "Love God." Yet love is not something which can be produced through any system of exercises, special diet, austerities, techniques or conscious efforts. No one code of behavior obligates God to give us love, and no action, no matter how reprehensible, can retard the gift of love's grace by even an instant, if it is His pleasure to bestow it. It is not so much that morality leads to God as it is that coming to God leads to morality. One no longer does something because one should, but because one wants to, to please one's Beloved. The former attitude is often rigid, dry and leads to intolerance, while the latter is invariably dynamic, inspiring and leads to acceptance and love.

Of course, it is nonetheless true that Meher Baba does not permit those who follow Him to remain oblivious of their failings for too long. Not necessarily all at once, but ultimately, Baba does make us face our weaknesses, not only those which we know about, but many more whose presence we had never even suspected. (And of course this is how it must be. For if we are ever to realize our true divine potential we must somewhere along the way learn to recognize the limitations which now hold us in their grip.)

Yet Meher Baba does not come into one's life as an arbitrary judge, either condemning certain behavior, or issuing

irrevocable injunctions against future indiscretions. He comes with a lover's smile and open arms. And accompanying our Baba-inspired discovery of our failings comes our simultaneous recognition of His Eternal Forgiveness and Love. For Meher Baba does not make one confront one's weaknesses until He has provided one with the assurance of His Eternal Love and Acceptance. And it is precisely this reassurance which enables us to face our faults without loss of self-esteem, and which gives us the courage to sustain us during the long difficult struggle to overcome them.

Gone is the static conception of a stern God who tallies up one's life on some sort of moral scoreboard and if the score is not positive assigns one eternally to punishment. To define how one should follow Meher Baba is to define Love itself. Thus one finds one's relationship with Baba is individualized, intimate, dynamic and played out against a background of undying love.

Therefore what Meher Baba wants from one person will not necessarily be what is wanted of another. For that matter, what Baba demands from someone one day, may not be the same for the same individual on another day. Not because Baba capriciously vacillates, but because one's relationship with Baba is always maturing, expanding, taking one to an ever deepening appreciation of both the grandeur of the impersonal divinity around us, as well as a keener realization of Meher Baba's touch - the personal aspect of divinity - manifesting in each moment of our daily lives.

Life with Meher Baba is thus an ever-renewing and strengthening baptism in the life of the spirit. An increasing literacy in the book of the heart. This life, while still flowing in its old banks of daily happenings, routines and responsibilities is in fact completely different. For the most mundane act is now surcharged with the presence of God.

When one wakes in the morning one is looking at a fresh world, and there is wonder, innocence, awe, beauty, and joy. Every incident is but a touch of the Beloved, a word in a continuous dialogue which the Creator is having with you. To try and express this merely by saying, "Well, to follow Meher

Baba means to not use drugs, to be honest, or to do this or that or anything" is not only to trivialize the experience but to miss its essence entirely. The one overwhelming fact of being a "Baba lover" is that one is living a life which centers around one's living relationship with the Eternal Beloved. A relationship which began with the dawn of creation and which will endure until we realize that in fact there is no Beloved, and no lover - there is only God.

May this book point the way to our seeking His pleasure continuously.

Steve Klein

Table of Contents

Preface	<i>iii</i>
Introduction	<i>vii</i>
Letters from Mani	1
Letters from Eruch	41
Letters from Adi	87
Letters from Padri	113
Letters from Francis	121
A Letter from Bal	133
A Letter from Bhau	137

Letters

FROM MANI

My brother is Christ ...

2 November 1956

Do I mind your asking me when I first found out who Baba is? No, of course I don't, and like 'Sarah Jones telling the story of her life' I will probably enjoy doing it - only hers was over a tankard of ale, while mine is over a typewriter and a few thousand miles.

What did I think when I first found out that Baba is who He is? Well, the thing is, looking back as far as I can I just can't remember a time when I didn't know - so I am unable to give my reaction. It seems as though the knowledge was always there with me, as natural as the fact of my existence. I certainly knew it when I was at school, and have a very vivid memory of an incident to prove it.

I was educated at an English Convent school run by nuns who spoke softly, worked hard and no doubt prayed hard, taught lessons and music, made wonderful candy and grew prize lilies and dahlias. I enjoyed attending chapel because I loved the statue of Christ and the saints, the tall white candles and the fine hand embroidered altar cloth. Seeing my interest the Mother Superior asked me once if I wouldn't like to become a Christian, and I said, 'Thank you Mother, but I already know Christ.'

But to get down to that incident: my best friend was a girl named Mary D'Souza, a devout Catholic and a truly good girl who never lied - something I could never do (I mean not tell a lie). She devotedly loved Christ and always gave me a picture of Christ on my birthdays, while I usually gave her a ball on hers. Well, once we were sitting on the steps outside the chapel and I was munching on a slab of sticky candy (I was nearly always munching something at recess time) and she was telling me about St. Theresa, when it suddenly struck me that here was my friend who dearly loved Christ and here was I who knew He was once more amongst us on earth and hadn't told

her about it! Why how thrilled she would be, and how could I have neglected to do my friend the service of giving her His present whereabouts. So I flashed round on her and blurted "Mary, do you know my brother is Christ!"

So, I probably knew it from the cradle, when Baba rocked me and told my mother how lucky I was. Well, I know Baba was right, for I am lucky - who isn't who has His Love?

Mani

*Baba's Love for us and
our love for Baba ...*

1956

I received your letters and loved reading them. Thank you for all you said about me - I can never get over being chosen as His sister and well know it does not prove any greatness in me, but proves His Divine Humility when He comes down as man for our sake - His unbounded Love when He accepts us as we are with all our imperfections and weaknesses. To me, this of all things proves His Perfection, Love and Compassion. I am infinitely grateful to be His sister, but even more to receive His Love as a disciple - for if I were the former and not the latter, then it could not have meant much for me. You and I and others who love Him are among His close relations, as it is the most lasting of all relationships - at all times and for all time.

I read your letter with interest, and feel more than ever that it is not right for anyone to conduct meetings as a teacher. This word 'teacher' I feel should not be applied to anyone who is working for Baba. Baba is the Teacher, the Master, the Avatar. We are His instruments, fortunate to know and love Him. Through this Treasure of Love He has given us, He draws others to receive it. Hence in this sense we are 'workers' in Baba's cause and message, which is and always will be LOVE.

One does not need to be defended by anyone - our love for Baba is the strength and bulwark. We should not be hurt by what others say or think - it is enough that Baba knows. Baba teaches us to be firm without being assertive, to draw from our inner reserves of patience and love, not to retaliate unkindly even if we are 'justified' in doing so; and to keep amidst it all that saving grace, a sense of humour. We must not take too seriously others' opinions of us as long as we can take ourselves honestly. Our love for Baba is the greatest message to others - it speaks for itself, simply and silently - see how His very Silence speaks! As Baba says 'I am the only One in existence - nothing else really exists.'

Yes, I can well understand your tears, my dear, when you met Baba. It is experienced by many at their first meeting. We have seen even men cry at this miracle of His Love. In '52 when we were in Myrtle Beach, many came who could not stop crying. Margaret's youngsters were weeping continuously and Ivy Duce told them it happened like that, 'The Master turns it on and off like a faucet.' When Ruano Bogislav (who died recently) first met Baba she wrote to her friend Rano (who is now with us here) that she had done nothing but cry when she met Him - Rano could not understand this, till she too experienced it on meeting Baba.

No, one should not fast unless Baba tells us to. Our love is what He wants - it is our sadhana, our prayers, our meditation and our fasts. Baba said in Andhra "Love me, love me, love me and you will know me!"

Mani

*Money, masts and
the Beloved's giving ...*

23 October 1956

Yes, I can understand too well the monetary problem concerned. We who have Baba's Love are "millionaires in love."

It's lovely to watch Baba work through money, and one fathoms a lot from it as from all things Baba does. One sees money flow into his right hand and flow out from the left, while His own needs are so extremely simple. Baba will spend a large amount on what would apparently seem 'unnecessary' projects, while the mandali will be restricted in their ration of daily necessities.

But we see and learn how nothing that He does (however little or seemingly inexplicable) is unimportant, it all has a deep connection with His work for the world.

Even at the risk of this turning out to be another longwinded letter (I hate sending things underweight, somehow feel cheated by the P.O.) I must tell you about Padri's note the other day. Baba told us about it, looking radiant as He always does when talking of masts. It was about Ali Shah, the favourite mast who is in Meherabad, who often talks to a framed picture of Baba - long rambling conversations interspersed with happy laughter. Once Padri heard him talking in quite an argumentative way, and going in saw the mast waving his hands at Baba's picture and saying, "But You have so much - OH SO MUCH! Why then don't You give me more?" So we see how 'stingy' our Beloved can also be, yet He gives us so much - I feel if He were to give us more we would all have to be masts - huh?

Mani

On remembering His lovers ... ,

October 1956

I do want you to remember one thing - never never believe that Baba fails to remember anyone. He may show He has, He may want you to believe He has, His reasons are unfathomable, but - well, just don't believe it. He is Perfection, and when He becomes man He plays the part to Perfection - for us, for His work. He knows all, and He knows that we know He knows, yet how often Baba will ask us to 'tell' Him something. He wants you to say it even though He knows it, and we have learned that at such times we must say 'all' - hide nothing. Perhaps that is what He teaches us. Only, sometimes, it is *we* who don't understand. Krishna says:

*Not comprehending Me in my true Self!
Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,
Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,
I am not seen by all; I am not known –
Unborn and changeless - to the idle world.
But, I, Arjuna! know all things which were,
and all which are, and all which are to be,
Albeit not one among them knoweth Me.*

He does love you - and you are one of His beloved ones. How can you measure that with the number of minutes you were with Him? These links are not made on the spur of the moment - they are forged through many lives.

Mani

He is universal for all, for each ...

25 October 1956

We've been having such perfect weather this last week or so - sunny yet cool, not windy or rainy or cloudy, yet so invigorating one feels like chucking all work and going for a nice long walk or a picnic under the big shady banyan.

Yes, I gave your message to Baba and He nodded and made a quick gesture that I didn't understand. But then we don't always have to understand, it is enough that He knows, and He always does.

I loved what you said about Baba - for He is both eastern and western, yet He is neither, for He is truly 'universal' in every sense of the word. I feel the most beloved trait in Baba is that He is not only for all, He is for EACH. Whether He is with children or grownups, with intellectuals or illiterates, with low or high, with poor or otherwise, with eastern or western, it's fascinating to watch Baba make the outwardly different feel "He is one with us and one of us." He does not try to westernize the East nor easternize the West, for that is no more important than the clothes one wears. It is the person within that matters and that He values. But for His work He makes use of the material at hand, and whatever we happen to be He works through us and our mode of life and expression.

Just as He "will bring all religions together like beads on one string," He will unite all nations so that we can discard outward differences and recognize that Truth is universal.

Mani

On the unity of all religions ...

19 November 1956

Baba is away contacting His beloved masts, and will be returning to Satara by the end of the month. The clouds have rolled away and it's a bright, fresh morning with the Indian robin warbling away like a prima donna and the iridescent sunbirds poking their long slender noses (I mean beaks) in the flowers.

Yesterday I received your letter of September 18th and also two magazines you sent. I found the articles by Douglas Steers terribly interesting: as you say, an expression of the spirit of Baba. Because the core of all religions is really one, all He will do is unveil the different smothering layers man has tried to dress it up in. People try to find God through churches, but He cannot be walled in by anything but the heart.

What I like is the way the question of the meaning of religion is coming to the surface these days, and people are more and more prepared to probe and seek further, though unfortunately not deep enough.

Call it coincidence or what one will, but isn't it interesting that I also just received a letter from another western disciple who writes about an article by G.S. Abdul Hammed in the magazine "Steps Unto Him" in which he speaks highly of Dr. Ferris - an informative note at the end of the article says: Dr. F.H. Ferris mentioned in this article is shortly going to India to continue his ministry. He writes: "We are now faced with the alternative either to love one another or perish. We are our brother's keeper, therefore we are beyond dogmas and creeds. We must free ourselves from prejudices of Western and Eastern traditions. We have endeavored to impose our way of life upon others and not act as God's representatives to promote a spirit of Love, Fellowship and Unity."

Mani

On sanskaras ...

1956

Your poser is certainly a poser to me - for believe me dear I'm not equal to answering it, and as I read it again today my head (already blank from this awful heat we're having just now) is spinning like a drunken top. I know that sanskaras are awfully necessary to begin with (to evolve to full consciousness) and awfully sticky and well nigh impossible to turn out when they're not wanted any more! But as to the distinction in the difference of the sanskaras that you mention it is beyond the beyond for me. However, I'll tell you what I'll do, I will keep it with me and some day some time Eruch or Ramju can tackle it, okay?

Of course, when one has hallucinations, if someone thinks she is a queen for instance, then she truly believes that she is. But if she *is* really a queen, she *knows* she is a queen. However, the fact that being a queen is *also* illusion, doesn't make matters much happier does it? There are sanskaras and sanskaras, and it's enough for us to bless ours that have brought us to Baba.

Bill Le Page (from Australia) once wrote how they went to the cinema with Baba; and typically before the film started, Baba had seats changed again and again, so that Baba and the group with Him kept shifting and playing 'musical chairs' till some stranger in a seat nearby couldn't stand it any more and remarked, "Who does he think he is, Jesus Christ?" Bill says he wishes he could've told the man right then: "That's just Who He is!"

Mani

On silence and chasing desires ...

22 May 1957

What can I say to your letter; it was more than a letter, more than a poem, an expression of the inner silence, as gentle and as deep as I have found you to be through your beautiful writings.

I have often repeated to myself the answer to man's misery, in the words, "Ye have asked enough" - for only when man stops asking and is ready to 'give' will the universal brotherhood of God's creation come into being. When will man stop asking for himself, stop the mad race for chasing transient desires, stop hating and wanting, stop the constant chattering of his mind that deafens him to the voice of God? That is to me most symbolic of Baba's Silence. Baba once said, "When I break my Silence I will speak the One Word and the whole universe will hear. But man has yet to go through much suffering before he is ready to listen."

Makes me think of the story I read about Gautama Buddha. He was once walking through the jungle, and was accosted by a dacoit who earned his living by murdering and pillaging passersby in that remote wood. The thief ran after Buddha as a possible victim, but hard as he ran he could not come up to Buddha who was walking at a slow and leisurely pace. At last in desperation he cried, "Stop, stop!" Buddha stood still and turned round smiling, saying "I stopped long ago son. It is you who must stop." The end of the story is that the dacoit fell on his knees in anguish and gratitude. He stopped his nefarious deeds, spent many years in meditation under a gnarled tree where Buddha asked him to sit, and finally became spiritually enlightened.

Mani

11 July 1957

Yesterday went off wonderfully. Silence in Meherazad is somehow so different from any other place, and our last such experience was the one month's silence before the New Life began. The fasting felt quite easy with that mid-day coffee allowed. I wish Baba hadn't fasted though - His daily meals are so small anyway, and at present He needs as much nourishment as possible; but that's just a personal wish in spite of knowing Baba would fast of course.

As for the silence, I'm sure Baba must have been amused, for as you can imagine there's nothing more amusing than seeing a group of women gesticulating about at the same time! And our gestures look so clumsy next to Baba's graceful dynamic ones, when a single gesture of His can mean a sentence and more.

Mani

23 September 1957

The Sahavas is 99% definite and the pending 1% will be disposed of by the end of the month.

Though I've come to know the love of His Western lovers, their letters to Him bowl me over every time. The shorter sahavas makes no difference, "we will come for even overnight if you allow us to," "even a moment with you is eternity" - only such a Beloved can have such lovers.

It tickles me the way some think the word 'sahavas' is plural (like samosas) and spoke of it as "the sahavas are."

Mani

*On the difference between spiritualism
and spirituality ...*

20 September 1956

Did you as a child ever play that game where you are blind-folded and have to try and catch your partner by the sound of his voice? Well it's something like that now - no sooner do I focus on you in one place than I hear your voice coming from somewhere else. This armchair travelling with you has been great, your sketches throb with life for you colour them with the heart of a people and I loved all those you mentioned.

I have just been replying to a couple of lengthy letters full of sky high questions, each one requiring an answer at least as long as one of those 'after dinner speeches' made immortal in jokes. One man asks Baba to send a representative who will perform a 'miracle' (paranormal phenomena) so it can be proved, witnessed (tabulated and catalogued) in order to help non-believers to believe. He writes in good faith and thinks himself a seeker, but got 'spiritualism' and 'spirituality' so mixed up I couldn't pry it apart for him with a lever. It's not easy to show the A B C of spirituality to intellectual giants (even if we can have a mite of the infinite patience Baba has with us). Heaven save us from these 'brainy' seekers who don't know that they don't know - I'm all for the unencumbered spontaneous ones who listen to their intuitions and read sermons in stones.

Baba-news has been going as usual in regular letters to one or another in America, and no doubt you will be getting them all on your return. The latest was full of the pre-plans for the coming November. Frankly I couldn't help feeling (perhaps as others) that the plan might be postponed or cancelled by the time November '57 comes along - but then perhaps that is just why He will see it through. For how often, when we feel smug and complacent in our estimate of certain things, feeling that by now we know Baba's ways, He shakes us

out of it by doing just the opposite! At least one learns that with Baba one should never be caught napping, and certainly at the moment He seems very serious about the November congregation. Many of the women in India have been quite justifiably grouching about their being left out of the Sahavas gatherings so far and these dames will be jumping for joy!

Baba has gone over to Jal Villa to work in seclusion with Kaikobad. Tottering fortunate little Jal Villa, but like those He has gathered around Him (whom He sometimes refers to as 'pearls' but more often as 'second-hand furniture') He seems to like it that way.

Mani

The story of the mynah bird . . .

5 May 1958

I must tell you of the talking mynah we had (a raven-black Nepali bird with a yellow beak, ear-flaps and legs) - she not only imitated speech, but also the exact tone of each one's voice, the fretful crying of a baby and the wheezing asthmatic cough of an old man (this she picked up in the little Indian shop from where a Baba lover brought her to Baba). So early every morning Mehera would go to its cage and repeat, "Baba, Baba darling." The mynah picked it up in a few days and she said it so clearly and humanly that we'd turn round with a start every time those words rang out. You can imagine how tickled Baba was, and He'd go to her cage and blow her a kiss through the bars! Then one morning there was an unexpected storm when we were not in the room. Before we could run out to cover her cage, she caught a cold and developed bronchitis and in spite of all our care she died. But the most wonderful part was as she lay in warm flannel while we stood around her, with her dying breath she croaked feebly but clearly "B..A..B..A." Beloved

Baba said we couldn't have an iota of an idea how fortunate that bird was - that it would be a human in its next form!!

Mani

6 February 1958

You know, just after that hurried letter I sent, I thought I should have said 'Mr... seems intrigued' instead of 'interested' and this about confirms it. I can understand how difficult it must be for the wife or husband whose partner has not the same love or even interest for Baba - and more so if it is resented. But of course it is a test worthy of His love; and then too the partner, even while resenting it (or perhaps because of it) thinks of Baba most often.

Mani

The 1958 Sahavas ...

1958

Each morning when the sun has risen not far above the hill next to Baba's, we stand by the gate and wave at the sparkling green car streaking across the countryside, carrying the Beloved to the hundreds of His lovers awaiting His arrival at Meherabad.

Each evening He returns, looking beautiful in the pink coat and the single plain garland of roses in deeper pink; and though physically tired out after the long full day, we can still feel the radiance of the sahavas - like the overflow of a fountain even after it's turned off.

It is 'spring' for His eastern lovers, a feast for their Baba-

hungry hearts. It is spring too for Meherabad (the place He has blessed with His name and activities of past years), which is like a tree that has blossomed in glorious profusion after a long sleep of winter, looking like a veritable town of temporary structures for housing and feeding nearly 800, buzzing with His life from early dawn to late at night.

Although we only get glimpses from the short account each evening, it is as though we are participants not in love alone but in person. Baba said, "Sahavas is the intimacy of give and take of love," and it is indeed a sahavas in its true sense. Eruch's description of the love feast raises a familiar picture in our minds when he tells us, "Baba has once again turned the faucet on full," for how often we have seen these precious tears overflow from a lover's heart in Baba's presence, when He lifts the divine curtain just the littlest bit.

Even if words were at all adequate to put down the many touching and personal 'incidents' during these days of sahavas it would take many pages; but notes are being taken by some of the mandali, and later on an account should appear in the *Awakener*. In the meantime all that our hearts can echo are the words of Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati from his letter received just before the sahavas, "Salutations to Babaji, our Beloved, Rasul, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mazda, the Avatar of the Highest Splendor of Divinity - Hail Meher Ram!"

Mani

7 November 1959

I have been reading *Stay with God*, feeling quite drunk at each revealing aspect of the beauty of our Beloved - at times it is piercingly beautiful. May it pierce many with that Love which is Baba. I sent a copy to my newly married pretty niece who is leaving with her husband for the south...

Remember God always stays with you, wherever you are, for He is in your heart which He has blessed. Remember by now being married, whatever you come across on the path of

life, you have chosen to walk hand in hand, and BABA is walking with you. Don't ask Him to always make it smooth; He ever sweeps the path for those He loves, but He helps us to climb obstacles which He turns into stepping stones to higher loving, giving and being.

There are fleeting moments when we see our Beloved sitting with stooped shoulders and His God-eyes holding an infinity of tiredness. I wonder at the burden we cannot even fathom in imagination.

Mani

Meherazad

21 January 1960

What a surprise your dear letter; and what an honour to know I haunt you (I've always fancied myself as a ghost you know, one of those nice friendly teasing ones). But happily what's haunting you is that greatest of Guys, Meher Baba - let's call Him Brother, Father, Friend - it matters little for He IS whatever you want Him to be, until you can be what He wants you to be.

I am sorry that retreat was for you not a stepping stone to Baba but an obstacle - but as you say it is all part of the great Design. What always fascinates me is seeing the pattern in retrospect, when the pattern is complete. At the time it often seems senseless to us - a dot here, a dash there - a line here, a splash there - but the artist knows - He sees the Canvas as a whole, He knows where every line and dot and colour should go. That is why Baba tells us not to worry, to just do what He says without questions, without expectations. When one loves Baba one must love Him without any strings attached - it is these invisible strings we stumble over and get entangled in, slowing up our progress, hurting ourselves. But thank God that God is inexorable in His pursuit of us, 'haunting' us with His Love and care, so that He can help us to find ourselves by losing ourselves in Him.

Mani

11 February 1960

I read this the other day and thought of you and how you will love it too:

"A true lover loves God alike in having and in not having, in sweetness and in bitterness, in joy and in sorrow; for he seeks alone the glory of God and of that which is God's, and he seeks it neither in spiritual or natural things and therefore he stands alike unshaken in all things, at all seasons. Hereby let every man judge how he stands towards God, His Creator and Lord. Amen."

Mani

16 May 1960

A thank you is what this brings to you in great appreciation for the glimpse of the Beloved you gave me in all that you expressed in your letter. For although we know and realize His compassion and His working through His lovers in countless ways, for us who are with Him constantly it is like seeing a mountain from too close. Although the majesty and grandeur is felt by us in each step of the climbing, our attention is too often concentrated on the hand-and-foothold round the difficult corners and slippery spots to always consciously realize this.

Your letter was read to Beloved Baba, and He expressed again His love for you - that love which is with you all the time, and which He accepts from you again in every action, word and thought that you offer Him on the altar of your daily service and expression of life.

Mani

12 July 1960

Ahoy, Sailor boy -

Wherever you are, on ocean or land;
Remember Baba is holding your hand.
Your ship may touch any shore;
But you are anchored at Baba's door.

These lines above
Bring our love.

Mani

30 July 1960

I have just received your letter of July 17, and noted with much interest and love all it contained. You ask what is the difference between the Oodi (ash) of Baba's dhuni and that of Sai Baba. The difference is only in the interpretations given by us. For otherwise, there is absolutely no difference between the actual Oodi in your hearth, in Sai Baba's dhuni and, as a matter of fact, in Baba's dhuni. The only difference that one can tack on is the quantity and quality of one's faith in that pinch of ash.

The *real* Oodi, as Baba has made us understand, is that ash from the burning up of our desires and cravings, and of course that pinch of ash (or real Oodi) is neither visible nor tangible. The pinch of ash any Perfect Master gives us is but a symbol or token signifying that you have to burn your desires and cravings to ashes - and He gives His blessings with it that we may do so.

Mani

1 October 1960

The 'right time' never comes - it is always floating by and you have to put out your hand and grab it in the air; or you isolate a moment from the remorseless ocean of time and make it the 'right' one. Be that as it may, this at least is a tangible moment to express the many elusive moments when I've wanted to send a Hello by post but could not, when I've wanted to tell you how your letter touched in me a chord of great understanding and sympathy - not 'pity,' for you will never need that. Even now as I re-read that letter, I again receive from it the clean fresh fragrance of self-facing, which leads soonest to self-effacing. I want you to know that your letter was read to BABA - the One true Friend. May His compassion hold your hands to His daaman, ever. I recall Baba saying to someone: "It is not really your love for me that matters, it is My love for you that counts."

I like your line, "When it is right in His Name, I will walk," for isn't that true of everyone? Though their legs carry them fast they are truly lame whose feet are not set on the main road to God.

Mani

1960

I understand your worry over the exercise order because even we staying with Him do slip up on the seemingly simple orders that are so easy to slip on. But in a way that also has its use, as we then realize some more of His Love in His ready forgiveness, and strive to be more worthy of it the next time. I've begun to really understand why Baba looks sad when we break an order - it hurts Him because it harms us.

As I read somewhere the other day, "You cannot break His Commandments - you can only break yourself against them." When I was reading out your letter to Baba He smiled and said, "Tell him not to worry in the least about this and to be happy."

Mani

7 November 1960

Your letter came when I was writing to Don, and I am sure he will share with you what poured out in my letter to him.

I loved your saying that all the things you wanted to say wanted to stay in your heart, with Him! And I know that there you have already had the answer to guide your next steps - for He who is with you speaks only in the Silence of His Love; and all that we feel in our hearts hatches only in the warmth of His Love.

Remember it is not what lies before you, nor what lies behind you - it is what lies within you that is important.

Mani

30 October 1960

The negatives are here and found me blowing me nose for with it came a tidal wave of nostalgia of those days and weeks when Harry the son was with the Hoary One and His happy hobos. But I console myself (wiping me nose across the sleeve of that blouse of my Mother's) that history has the honorable habit of repeating itself, and when you are home again and we hear that Lionel brand roar, then that illusive bridge of time and distance will be no more, for it ain't.

Your letter was beautiful Harry - it was not only a glimpse of your heart which is in a special corner in that Biggest of Hearts, it was a lover's-eye-view of the Beloved, which we who are always so close to Baba do not always obtain - we more often get the heat of the Fire than the glow.

I have been reading some light literature for relaxation, and found myself thinking that if people want who-done-its, why not seek an answer to the WHO DONE IT for the biggest of deeds ever done - Creation! Perhaps if I ever write a book on Baba I'll choose that as a title.

So me old secret is out!! But I know you won't give me away, I know it's safe in the safe of your heart where all the

wealth you inherited from your grand old Pop is locked up - may that wealth keep growing and doubling itself till it bursts the dam of illusion and joins the Ocean where there is no more separation, where nothing and everything is, or rather He alone Is.

Mani

Baba with Dr. Harry Kenmore ...

5 December 1957

I am sure you didn't need any ear trumpet for all the little messages Mehera and I sent you in response to your dear letters bringing His Love to warm our hearts and those delightful bits that bring laughter. I can quite picture the pet's bewilderment when you had to shout to poor Otto. That's how Peter (our cocker spaniel) is whenever we are on silence - he can't understand it, so he begs (to be forgiven) and all day is so extremely obedient it's pathetically funny. Dr. Kenmore is another one like you, always amusing Baba - I'm sure Baba will miss his jokes and stories, though I think by the end of the month he had exhausted them all - or nearly so. It was difficult to remember his visual handicap, and his skill is all the more amazing because of it. He really needed to attend to Baba for a few months more, but Baba said no, because that would mean losing the N.Y. practice entirely. As it is, it will be difficult to make up for the one month absence. He came of his own expense in his longing to offer to his Master his hard-earned experience of long years as a chiropractor.

I loved watching Baba's expression whenever Dr. Kenmore was near Him, full of the tender love of a mother for her child. Baba said some day he would give him true sight - a glimpse of Himself which would make him realize it was the only thing worth seeing, and that what others saw with their physical eyes was of no value. I must tell you one of his delight-

ful remarks to Baba. One day when he felt a rip in Baba's sadra he said, "I don't wonder Baba - there are so many hanging on to your daaman there's bound to be some wear and tear." Well, Baba just has to have His sadra made of stronger material, for everyone will hang on. Baba continues the exercises Dr. Kenmore has started - one of them is 'bicycling' - a sort of bicycle is fixed up in a corner of the room and Baba pedals on it. This naturally gives much pain, not because the muscles are toning up after long disuse but because Dr. Kenmore fears there's very little of the natural fluid one has in the joint, and therefore instead of moving smoothly it grates. We can only helplessly watch Him suffer, it is so difficult to judge Baba's health and pain for He is no ordinary patient and it is all connected with His work. There are times when Baba looks so utterly tired, with a deep sadness in His eyes - and we know it is not for His own suffering but for His children's.

Mani

Meherazad

11 February 1961

It is extraordinary how His love expresses itself best in our simplest and most intimate of labours - be it making a pen, baking a cake, or raking the garden. When it's from the heart, it's for Him and He is right there to accept it.

I wish God's church was only in the heart - it is for lack of it that we build high walls, ring bells, fix days when we should shut up our work and walk out to 'remember' God - none of this can make up for a single silent beat of the heart that loves and remembers most when busiest.

Mani

Guruprasad, Poona
19 June 1961

I cannot emphasize too greatly the need among us ALL for a semblance of harmony and understanding of one another's point of view by remembering the good intentions underlying one another's actions, and by striving for a balance of 'giving in' on both sides at one time or another. The part that money plays helps not only in spreading Baba's message to others, but the involvement with it also helps His dear ones in practising greater patience, tolerance and understanding for each other in Baba's Love. There is nothing like adjusting through compromise (now from one side, now from the other) to keep the ball of His work rolling. As we are all His workers on this side of the fence, it is very necessary. This may sound like preaching, but I am simply speaking from experience, knowing such disagreement crops up in nearly all the groups in East and West who work for Baba's cause. I like to think of disagreement as a 'tread' necessary for a vehicle (or a footwear) while going up a steep incline, helping to increase our 'grip' and preventing a 'slipping' into carelessness - but disagreement should never grow into dissension to such an extent that it becomes an accumulated weight which slows down the progress of the vehicle and causes unnecessary jolts.

Mani

Meherazad
11 June 1961

He who has truly known Baba to some extent, has known the eloquence of His Silence and depth of His Compassion. It is the few who recognize His bounty in the form of suffering and agony which gives birth to a deeper love and understanding and teaches us to accept His Will without any compromise. I was reading the Odes of Hafiz yesterday and these lines seem to echo many a lover's heart:

*I lay the head of desire on the threshold of the Holy Friend,
For whatever befalls me is His Will
I have seen none equal to the Friend,
Although moon and sun I have placed as mirrors
before His face, they imperfectly reflect His Glory.*

Mani

Meherazad
7 September 1961

It seems always a good excuse to find a reason for writing to you - apart from the ample reason of your just being you - and what better reason than to tell you that Baba has just heard Marvin Solly's voice singing to Him that ancient song of His, "Begin the Beguine," in that rich baritone. It is a very good rendering. Baba is very pleased and wants you to convey His love to Marvin. Whether he realizes it or not, Marvin is truly fortunate to have Baba hear him singing His song, in His Seclusion.

The fifth was also a Baba Birthday (being Lord Zoroaster's) and Pendu's birthday as well! Pendu's attachment to our little transistor radio is so literal we tease him often and so Meherazad is progressing with the march of time and we hear world-news booming from his window every morning. After tea we play to Baba on the little portable gramophone the batch of good kawali ghazals that I was allowed to go shopping for this time in Poona. In the evenings after supper it is reading hour, and at the moment we are going through the list of some books in the Ahmednagar Library that we hadn't read before. Baba likes lighter reading these days in preference to thrillers. We found a John Butler story quite entertaining.

Mani

Meherazad

30 September 1961

I have received your two long letters. The first one described your dilemma of how to love Baba more and more - when you do not even know whether you love Him! This gave me a chuckle indeed as it is a universal problem for all those who love the Beloved Master. And I had another big chuckle when our Beloved Baba had already replied to your query - the more we clean our hearts of 'otherness,' the more our love manifests for Him; but the lover can never know that he loves. I want you to remember one thing that Baba has told us - about the subtle difference between love and affection; whereas affection can be expressed and can derive satisfaction, love never seeks satisfaction and can never adequately express itself - therefore the lover never knows that he loves - the moment love derives satisfaction from its expression it is not love but affection. Love is just a burning - a silent bright burning that never stops till it has consumed all the 'otherness' of the lover. What Baba means by the 'otherness' is, of course, our age old desires that seek satisfaction. Love is the gift of God to man and cannot be had for the asking - one can only wait for it, and not measure the duration of the waiting by our own time. But it rests with man to obey the Perfect Master and offer Him the gift of one's complete surrender.

Mani

On faith and trust . . .

Meherazad

16 October 1961

About His 'promise' (which I very well remember), you first express surprise and uncertainty as to how such a thing

can be - you ask yourself (which in itself is doubting) 'can He break it' - and on the very next page you write, 'I shall have faith!' Don't you see my dear that is a contradiction? You cannot have one eye on doubt and one eye on faith - you have to close both your eyes and have full faith and trust or none at all. There is no compromise. You cannot cover even an atom of doubt with however thick a layer of trust you might spread on it. You trust and never give it another thought, or you don't. It's as simple (and as difficult) as that. There are no categories to faith, no conditions.

He tells us that He never breaks a promise - it is only a lack of our own understanding of it that makes us think so. He says, "My Glory is from here to Eternity - let Me see how far you can see My Glory." He knows His own business and He knows ours - we see nothing beyond our little noses. We focus on the little wish we want Him to fulfill, and miss the stream of blessings that flow from Him. Look at the number of promises that He did NOT make to you and yet granted - at every step while you were abroad, guiding you over every hurdle that loomed up, hearing every prayer that your heart asked but He did not promise! You say you don't understand - that is just what you should not do. He says, "I can never be understood - just love Me." And if, in gaining an iota of understanding we lose an atom of love, what a great loss is ours! So count your blessings, and lay your little 'promise' at His feet - He will keep it, exactly on which day or month or year is for Him to decide who knows best and who has seen to your best first to last. Let Him worry about His part of it, let us only worry about our own part as Baba-lovers and see that we never fail.

When we must ask for something from Him, then let that only be LOVE - nothing else is worth our receiving from Him who holds us so close to Him.

Mani

Meherazad,
16 December 1961

Your letter brought deep joy - the joy that comes when one feels His love reflected in the heart of another. Beloved Baba has said that although He has come for the many, He is for the few. We have seen that when the time comes He awakens His few through some outward medium, and the door of the heart opens at the knock of one or another of His many 'hands.'

Although Baba's love for us is as silent as His Silence is eloquent, we find a need in expressing our little love for Him in one form or another - but this is truly best done when we let His Love soak into our very being so that everything we do and say expresses that love as naturally and as simply as a flower unfolds its petals. Hence the part of your letter that touched me was your saying, "I shall try my utmost to put His message of Love and Truth in my day to day life." May Baba's Love bless you to carry it out. Remember never to despair at lapses or so-called 'failures' - just try your best and leave to Him the rest. A whole span of life, or even eons of lives spent towards achieving true obedience and surrenderance to the One cannot be too much when measured by His Love and Compassion.

Mani

21 December 1961

I was waiting to take your letter into Baba's presence before replying. Of course those whom He awakens to His Love need no such 'introduction' - their introduction is of long standing duration from past lives, and when the time comes He knocks at the doors of those few hearts whom He has chosen to know Him even in the dreaming. As He said during a Sahavas, "I have come for the many, but I am for the few."

How right you are when you say Baba is the answer to all questions - it makes everything fall into place and you know

where you are. Trying to understand Him just through books or discourses is not enough. As Baba said, do not 'learn' God, just 'yearn' God.

I know what you mean by the need for expression - just as God speaks through every grain of His creation, the lover must speak through some aspect of His beauty when the Awakener awakens him, and so starts the journey to the Beloved: the heart begins to know Him as 'there is none like Him,' and ends knowing 'there is none but HIM!'

Mani

8 January 1962

As, in your sweet understanding, you have not asked for a reply to your letter, this is just to say hello to a dear one of Baba's family. It is always a joy to 'discover' yet another relation in Baba, and no relationship is older or deeper, no bond stronger than love in Baba. I've had a glimpse of you 'over the fence' as it were when I read your name in the requests for the Beloved's photos that were sent to me, so your lovely letter was not quite a surprise. I read excerpts from your letter to Beloved Baba, and He sends His love to you and yours.

What introduction could be greater than love for Baba, and to us you are already a close one of the family. Your husband had the right description, for all true beauty - nature, music, love - can be 'achingly' so! Thus it is that Baba describes the *mast's* love for God as an agony!

I'm steeped at present in another family letter. As I mentioned in it, Christmas is a 'living' birthday for us who know Baba. To be on earth when He is among us once again as Man is our privilege. To be consciously so, and to know that He is among us is our unimagined good fortune. To be in His contact and to have His love is His unbounded Grace.

Mani

26 May 1962

About 'loving' Baba, it's a fascinating point - a difficult thing to get across as you say, yet the easiest approach to Baba for God IS Love. People are too thickly coated with intellect for this point to pierce through as a rule, unless one just meets Baba and Baba touches the heart - whether one is nearby or thousands of miles away. What I feel about Baba saying 'Love Me' is that:

Nothing that Baba says or does is ever 'barren,' i.e. it must have a reason, significance, a fruit. Because Baba says 'Love Me' it will come to pass. He is making humanity ready for it by saying it. (He said, 'Let there be Light and there was Light.') Perhaps the shell of intellect is starting to crack and the final blow of the world catastrophe will reveal the heart to its full and reinstate the value of human relationship and God's Love as the one universal religion. And so His best discourse for us will always be, 'Love Me, more and more and ever more...':

Mani

1962

I've just gotten over a perfectly lovely birthday, made perfect by the visit of you, His dear ones, to Meherazad. I couldn't have wished for a better birthday present from Baba! And it makes me bold enough to wish that it means many such 'presents' will follow throughout the year and that He will say 'yes' to more and more of His Western family coming to see Him - I can hear you say Amen to that. Apart from your enchanting birthday card bringing your love, I want to thank you dears for that utterly lovely cardigan I received at the Beloved's hands from you - it outdoes every item in my woolen wardrobe and I shall use it with much love and pleasure. The nicest part about our presents is to see Baba opening the packages, displaying them with all the pride of a shopkeeper displaying his wares and enjoying our admiration!

You should have seen Him when He showed us the golden music ball and pulled out its magic string, and that beautiful doll and shawl for Mehera. Then as usual He abruptly ends it as if to declare 'the game is finished' and tells us to put the things away.

Mani

On doing Baba's work ...

Meherazad

12 August 1965

I received your loving letter of the 4th, with all the clarifying enclosures. As I read through it all, I felt neither surprise nor distress, but a warm familiarity in the pattern it unfolded, as one who has witnessed the wondrous and manifold ways of Baba's working through the littlest things. The result of any work we do in Baba's cause is not measured by any achievement on our part, but by the amount of ourselves we have put into the doing of it. Having worked hard and having done our best at whatever we set out to do in His Love, the result will be as He wills and wants. We try to achieve the one result we have worked at; He uses every step of our endeavor for manifold results through the action and reactions that follow and are churned up. Baba is our strength, and He uses our weaknesses for our good when we have surrendered to Him. Only then can we be truly instrumental in the doing of His work. To do our wholehearted best is our real concern - how it shall turn out is not our worry. The fact is that when we set out to do anything concerned with Baba's work, the impossibly difficult things are often made easy, while the simplest things become incredibly complicated - how often we have had cause to remark on this with exasperation and delight!

You have done your best and dedicated the work to Baba - so it is no longer a 'personal' matter, and you must remain undisturbed and be a watcher to the work He is doing through it and through all who are drawn into it. I am sure all this sounds rather like 'teaching and preaching' on my part - but actually it is just that I am thinking aloud, reviving some of the grains of knowledge harvested from the experiences of many of us.

Mani

On free will . . .

Meherazad
11 June 1970

You're a fine one - saying you'll understand if I don't reply, and then filling your letter with questions! But then, your letter was also filled with love for Baba, yours and your brother's - and of course His love for you which is drawing you both closer to Him. Yes I do remember you well, you were the one whose friend mistook someone for Mehera, and you gave me the chain from round your neck to have Mehera hold it. Most of all, I remember you as the lucky ones who found it possible to keep your appointment with God - the Darshan in 1969.

I cannot answer your query "What did Meher Baba say about free will?" I cannot recall Baba saying anything direct on the point and I never thought of asking Him (we were kept busy in the depth of His Silence, and our main question has been to ourselves: whether we are loving and obeying Him' enough). But you have read everything of Baba's, and as you say Baba did not mention human beings when He said, "The waves do not roll and the leaves do not move without My Will."

Baba has made it clear that the process of evolution is the development of consciousness which becomes *full* when human form is attained. Once full consciousness is attained

there is nothing to prevent one from realizing God, except the mountainous muck of sanskaras accumulated during the innumerable lives experienced in evolutionary forms; and one can be freed from that binding by binding oneself to loving and obeying the Perfect Master, or by trying to make it through the interminably long way of self-effort. So you see, as a human being you do have a chance of a choice, particularly and immeasurably so when you have the rare good fortune to come into the Avataric orbit of the God-Man! When we are bound to Him, the Only Reality, we are freed from illusion. Doing what *we* want is enjoying liberty; doing what He wants is gaining freedom.

If you ask me, there is only God's Will - there is no such thing as our will, 'free' or otherwise; we can only have free 'want.' In the confinement of His all-pervading Will we are free to want to do better - if it were not so, Baba would have no need to give us discourses, no need to tell us repeatedly and emphatically, "Do your best, and leave to Me the rest." Travelling through the vast maze of the Divine Plan in illusion, we come to certain points where we have the choice of taking this pathway or that road. We generally select what looks like the easier way, or the one that we are deluded into believing is the 'shortcut' by following after half-baked or imperfect guides. But it is His Compassion that again and again we are given a chance, again and again He comes into illusion to show us the way.

One's present life is nothing but the screening of a sanskaric pattern one has developed in the past life; and while it runs its course we are developing another film for the next incarnation. In as much as one's present life is concerned, one does have the freedom to make a better job of it - else what use are the teachings given by the Great Ones? And then once in a long, long while comes the Producer Himself, God in Person, to direct the Passing Show in the light of Reality, to guide His creation with the Love that He alone can give as Creator. And He can change (edit) even the present lives (films) of those who are good-fortuned to come into His close connection. Therefore once we come into the Avatar's Love-Orbit, and as long as we surrender our lives into His, giving and leaving all to Him, we

are moving directly under His Will. We then have nothing to worry about, except to do our best and leave to Him the rest. And so Baba tells us "Don't worry. Be happy."

And that is another thing that is often misconstrued. Being happy need not mean being merry; happiness and pleasure are not the same thing. If we can accept every circumstance we are put in, i.e. keep our mind unaffected by the oscillations of joy and sorrow, taking it to be His Will, then we might be said to 'be happy' as Baba means it. But mind is a very obliging companion, and like the chameleon it changes its colour to blend with its object. One chap once wrote 'I am really enjoying life; after all didn't Baba tell us to be happy?' Not long after that he got into some grievous difficulty and wrote to say how miserable he was!

Baba once remarked, "Mind is like a bird cage with its many bars imprisoning the bird. The door of the cage is the heart, through which (when opened) the bird can fly to freedom so easily." But even when the Keeper comes along and opens the door, the captive bird flutters about dashing against the cage, hurting its wings and trying frantically to get out through the many narrow openings between the bars and giving up each time. I've witnessed this a number of times with caged birds. After a while the bird is exhausted with its effort and collapses, dropping to the floor of the cage looking dazed and helpless - and *then*, then it sees the open door, and in a moment is out of the cage and flying to freedom!

Now that Baba has opened the door for you, you can well afford to bypass the innumerable questions of the mind that bar you from loving Him yet more and more. But of course love for Him is also His gift, so when you come down to it, it is really His Grace which rules over all and overrules all will. The Avataric era is when His Grace is released, and the more wide-open and uncluttered we keep our hearts the more we can receive of it.

I find a number of young Baba people worried over this point of free will as raised by you which is why I am sending you this long reply.

Mani

*A short poem by Mani sent with a letter
to a Baba lover who felt hurt in
association with others.*

All salt of human-hurt
Melts in the Divine Ocean
Of Meher Baba's Love, to
Reveal His Beloved face
In the silence of one's heart.

*On the quality of Baba lovers and the
inner aspect of Divine Love ...*

27 December 1955

Yesterday Baba asked for the copies of *God Speaks* and gave some out to us - the signed ones to Mehera and myself, taking the third with Him for Eruch - a regular one for Rano and one for the others. We are so thrilled. He has asked us, however, not to actually read it before the 7th of January. I am wondering at the significance of this.

Although your letter was read to Baba, He didn't seem to want me to read the one from your friend. Every time I mentioned it He said 'Later' so there you are. Of course I can understand his disappointment - there's no worse rut than that of the mind in which one has already made deep grooves along a certain track, refusing to be guided out without derailment. It is indeed difficult from his point of view, he cannot 'feel' Baba despite reading everything about Baba. If one could understand and love Baba just through literature there would be very few followers indeed! Then when he tries to measure Baba's magnitude by the number of people who flock for His darshan, he fails to see the quality of the emotion that

draws them. To give an instance - when Baba drove away after a darshan programme, men who had arrived late ran for miles after Him, unknown to us who were in the car with Baba. Suddenly Baba had the driver stop the car for no apparent reason and waited for we knew not what. Only when we saw the panting men arrive and throw themselves at Baba's feet did we realize it was for them that Baba had stopped the car. The Beloved always responds to the love of His lovers.

It is indeed a pity the 'benefit' cannot be seen with outward eyes, but generally Hindus, even illiterate ones, are more learned in the ways of God and God-Men than a lot of others. They know, as Kabir has said:

"One second, half a second, nay half of a half second spent in the company of a Perfect One, will wipe out crores of your sanskaras."*

Many I could name want results 'on the dot' - tangible, something one can measure or label. It is not their fault - I believe that those who love and accept Baba without reservations, often without having seen Him in the flesh, have prepared the ground from previous lives. Hence they are 'ready' for Jesus when He comes again - the others are not.

Talking of people who want quick results of a certain kind makes me think of the story (from ancient Hindu literature) where a Perfect Master was taking a short cut through the forest one day when he came across a sanyasin who had renounced all and was sitting in the hot sun meditating. At the approach of the Master's footsteps the man asked, "At this rate; how long will it be before I get God-realization?" The Master replied, "See that tree over there? You'll have as many lives as there are leaves on that tree." The man thanked the Master deeply and was beside himself with joy. Going a little further the Master met another such sanyasin who asked him the same question. This time the Master answered "only fifty years more for you." "What?" said the indignant man. I have spent, thirty years of my life, indeed I might call it my whole life, in solitude, leaving everything, renouncing all, mortifying my

* millions

body, undergoing so many hardships, and if that were not enough, I have to do it fifty more years!" The end of the story is that the tree whose leaves represented the lives that the first man had yet to go were shed off, and by the Perfect Master's Grace he was given realization then and there, while the other had many more lives before he could become so small as to enter the Kingdom of God. For it is said (as you know) that the gateway to God is as small as a needle's eye and unless we have shed all the cumbersome things we carry (pride, lust, anger, greed, and all the paraphernalia called the ego) and become 'small' enough we cannot enter God's Kingdom.

Your point about cancer and illness interested me - it is of course the old point of our lack of understanding that the enlightened ones have. *We* always see it from the *material* point of view, and they (experiencing creation as illusion) must act for the *spiritual* good. It's far from the Divine Plan to have no illness of the body - after all it is one of the main mediums of experiencing pain which is the opposite of pleasure. Duality (however illusory) expresses itself in dual experiences, and misery is as much in the Divine Plan as is so-called happiness. They are both *experiences* the soul must go through some time or another.

Another way I look at it is this: even with all the misery there is, it is so difficult to 'turn away' from the world – well-nigh impossible to be disgusted sufficiently to turn to God alone. Just imagine if everything were fine and serene, no illness, no misery, we'd stick to our ignorance like leaches, and such a stagnant way would hardly serve the development of the ever-awakening soul! I remember someone remarking, "Why if there are spiritual masters in India don't they do something about the backwardness and disease of the country?" Just as though they were a crowd of missionaries, or a society for the prevention of disease and dirt! I replied that although they did a sweeping job it was not on germs, but on our Ignorance, and even if they do not completely wipe it out, at least they jolt us enough from our self-satiated complacency of accepting our illusory existence as the only and all.

Mani

*On God Speaks and the story of the
slave girl and the king ...*

Satara

31 January 1956

As your wonderful letter arrived before the 15th (when Baba retires into seclusion) I could not help but read it to Him. Your love makes Him most happy and He gives you His Love which is ever with you.

I'm basking in the profound depths of our Beloved's book *God Speaks* which He has told us to read. The explanations He gives to us are a glimmer (if only intellectually) of the immeasurably vast pattern of creation which is but a shadow of His Glory. But most of all it increases our eternal gratitude to Him for awakening our hearts with the divine breath of His Love.

How foolish then must man seem who asks Him merely for material benefit. It makes me think of the story of the king who on a spontaneous impulse announced suddenly to the subjects present in his palace to grab just one thing (anything within the palace) for himself, which he could then retain possession of. As you can imagine there was a wild rush - some made for the best of the jewels, others ran for the costliest thing they could see or had set their hearts on, while the king looked on. Amidst this mad rush of people who were trying to make the most of their sudden and short good-fortune, a slave girl walked quietly to the king and held his hand... later, the king said, "She's the only one who had sense - owning me who is the owner of all, she possesses all that is mine - she went to the source."

This afternoon Baba will return from Navsari and Bajwa where He has been giving darshan to the masses (as also in Sakori and elsewhere) fulfilling promises He had given to His lovers to visit their places and people, giving them the opportunity of His presence before retiring into seclusion for

one year from 15th February. He will break the seclusion in between (most probably July) for His visit to the West. The deep love of you wonderful people draws Him once more to your shores, for the Lord of Love has always said, "I am the slave of love."

Mani

Letters

FROM ERUCH

Meher Baba on "The Real Gift" ...
As written by Eruch

Satara
September 1965

What is meant by The Real Gift?

If a gift is real, then both the one who gives and the one who receives must forget about it completely.

To forget completely would mean that the giver should not feel that he has given, and the receiver should not know that he has received. If the giver does not forget, then he feels that he has obliged the receiver, and if the receiver does not forget, then he knows that he has been obliged by the giver.

Love alone comes as the *Real Gift* from God, because when God bestows the gift of Love and man receives it, both completely forget about it. Because of complete forgetfulness, man can ever strive to love God, and God has always remained as the Eternal Beloved for mankind.

But how can God forget when He is Omniscient?

When I say that God forgets completely I mean just that, because His Gift of Love is the Real Gift, and unless He forgets about it completely, the Gift of Love can never be the Real Gift. Man too is ever ignorant of the all pervading Love of God, and he never realizes the Gift of Love although he does realize Godhood ultimately. When the Omniscient bestows the Real Gift of Love, He has to manifest His complete forgetfulness by becoming absolutely callous of His lover. Hence, untold sufferings on the path of love are experienced by the lovers of God, as also the unimaginable pangs of separation by those who have been gifted with Divine Love for their Beloved God.

God becomes callous to His lovers because He is Omniscient and He knows the real meaning of the Real Gift. Therefore the lover who receives the Gift of Divine Love from God begins to love God so intensely that he completely forgets that he loves God and that this Love was a Gift from God.

The lover experiences the bliss of Divine Love in the midst of the fiery pangs of separation from his Beloved God, because he is completely oblivious of the Gift from God. As long as the lover does not forget the Gift of Love he is not happy, in spite of the Eternal Love of God on all alike.

On meditation ...

Meherazad

14 November 1971

Meditation has to serve but one purpose - to steady the mind of the aspirant, to make him think less of his life, and eventually to make him forget totally his false existence. If, on the contrary, meditation were to remind one of his/her self, then the purpose of meditation is not at all served. One has to beware not to become attached to any form of meditation, for meditation would then become a ritual!

Meher Baba has revealed to us who lived with Him that true meditation is to remember Him constantly in all our everyday life and acts; whether we eat or drink, feast or fast, attend to nature's call or take a bath, whether we are busy in the office or with business, or relaxing in bed, whether we are meditating at a place or making merry, resting or moving about, we should always think of Him and have Him always as our constant Companion. There is no better meditation than this! This is spontaneous meditation. There is no set time, place, posture, principle or austerity for this meditation where every breath is dedicated to His remembrance. Eventually we totally forget ourselves and live in His Grace alone. Blessed indeed is such a life!

Meher Baba wrote extensive discourses on meditation, but, as a rule, did not give meditation to His lovers. The following is His explanation which He gave to Don Stevens. Don shared this with the Southern California Baba-lovers on April 1, 1969:

"Love and direct relatedness with the Avatar is the high road of all roads of inner development and while I am in the body and for some time after I drop My body, the potential for Love and direct relationship is there and should be used. But one day as the Truth and Presence of the Avatar begins to diminish, humanity will have to use lesser, secondary techniques and I must provide for that time, and so I have given out these extensive discourses on meditation. But do not mistake Me, because meanwhile it is a distraction of your time and energies to use meditation."

Eruch

On Baba 's Silence ...

Meherazad
14 July 1969

I have with me your very loving letter and a typed copy of "a note from the publishers" - Meher Baba.

I can quite understand your personal feelings and your mental conflict over the issue of the breaking of Beloved Baba's Silence.

Please note one very simple fact - that whatever I may say verbally or in writing on the subject of Beloved Baba is my own personal viewpoint, as from a layman, and it does not carry any stamp of authoritative statement. Personally, I feel very reticent to mention anything about Beloved Baba. Understanding fails to fathom His ways and "utterances," and I frankly admit that I do *not* know nor understand His ways and "utterances" and on my own I do not even try to do so. Beloved Baba has often told me that the moment one feels that one understands anything about God, one has surely misunderstood it! So best is to keep mum.

When some close ones press me to answer their queries, I

say whatever I personally think or feel about them at the moment. Likewise, when you wrote me in your previous letter, I replied as one person to another in Baba's Love. My reply must not be misconstrued as expressing the views of the mandali in general.

So, dear brother, please do not take any of my statements in my personal letters as having any stamp of authority. I have to make it clear to you also that whatever may have been mentioned in "The Glow" or elsewhere on the issue of the breaking of Beloved Baba's Silence has nothing whatsoever do with what I say on the subject. Therefore, please do wipe off any doubts created in your mind due to what I have mentioned in my letter to you and know once and for all that I do *not* know anything for certain on this issue or on anything pertaining to Beloved Baba's "utterances"; and that each one is absolutely free to have his or her interpretation of Beloved Baba's "utterances."

When you wrote to me asking me about Beloved Baba's uttering the WORD and the breaking of His Silence and His Manifestation, I was reminded of the very first sentences in the text of the New Testament:

In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His Glory, Glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of Grace and Truth...

Accordingly, I expressed in my reply to you another angle on the issue, as I felt at the time of writing to you. I would like to express it once again more clearly in this letter as follows:

The Silence of Meher Baba in His Man-form was the personification of the Silence of God, and His being in our midst as the God-Man is the "WORD made flesh." His having dropped His Man-form is the act of releasing the WORD (i.e. the WORD that was encaged in the Man-form of Meher Baba was released when the body, which encaged it, dropped) which simultaneously is tantamount to the act of breaking the Silence.

Now, please do not take this as a statement of facts. It is

just one morsel of food for thought. That is all and nothing more! So don't become so serious about what you hear from me in reply to what you ask. I am not a master who can give an authoritative statement.

Eruch

*To a lover expressing distress while
confronting obstacles in doing
Baba-work ...*

Meherazad
28 August 1969

I have noted the outpouring of your distress in your letter. I have heard it said so often that when one dares to enter Lover's Lane determined to reach the Beloved's Abode there is no way out but to march ahead with a heart burdened with anguish. Nothing but distress and suffering is in store on this Great March! Love alone sustains the lover and eventually lands him battered and haggard on the threshold of the Divine Presence!

Whatever be the handicaps, the lover passionately marches on and on, and no matter what his shortcomings they are all eventually rectified. Love ignores obstructions. Love is the only thing that can withstand the vagaries of the shortcomings of its initiate and of the whimsical nature of its Beloved. This is what I have heard said of Love, lover and the Beloved and I share it with you.

From all that I have gathered so far and especially so from your recent letter concerning Baba-work, I somehow feel that all this is the result of your having segregated yourself from those who are doing their best to love and serve their Lord as you have been doing. Their approach may differ from yours but this is not a reason for you to belittle their approach. And because they must feel this, disunity with you obviously

persists and will alienate anyone from coming to your group meetings. Those who do not want to feel bound by unwarranted restrictions imposed on them, naturally keep away in order to preserve the dignity of the lover-Beloved relationship, despite their intense desire and inner feeling to come closer to one another and to remain undivided in Baba's Name and Love.

The best way to draw people to Baba is to keep an open heart and understand the feelings of others. Please keep in mind that no sooner do you brush aside someone whom you think does not love Baba as you think Baba should be loved, than you are brushing aside Baba. Baba does not care who loves Him and how He is loved or how that love is expressed, as long as that love is sincere and from the heart. And no one but Baba Himself can be the *Judge* of the sincerity of love.

It is extremely difficult to work for the Beloved and spread His message of Love and Truth unless one continuously remembers the lesson of give and take, which I myself have yet to master. I must have written thousands of letters to various Baba-lovers and Centres - each one a homily of Love, lover and the Beloved - but I repeat, I have yet to learn what unlearning is so that I can master the lesson of give and take.

Baba said in His message 'My Dear Workers' at the time of the East West Gathering: "The way of My Work is the way of effacement which is the way of strength, not weakness; and through it you become mature in My Love." Baba tells us that only in the Parabrahma State do Love, lover and Beloved become One, and this State is gained only by His Grace.

Eruch

On other masters ...

Meherazad
24 March 1974

I received your letter of the 16th giving me information about the situation in your area. I have also gathered from your letters how very drawn you seem to be to this individual and his talks on *God Speaks*, the *Discourses*, and his experiences and visions; and how anxious you are that he should visit us at Ahmednagar as this would "pave the way for clear understanding," etc., etc. I fail to understand what you are trying to drive at. What need is there for "paving the way" when Beloved Baba has already built a High Way to Him for us all through His repeated Warnings and Reminders! He wants us to be on our guard when we are confronted with experiences and visions. I don't know what drives you to feel as deeply involved with whatever this man did and does and would want to do, and whatever he claims to have experienced and claims to be!

He might have become a 'perfect master' or the 'chargeman' of Meher Baba overnight, just like a few others who are claiming to be; he might have already experienced what others claim they are going through, but what has all this to do with us dear brother?

I would want Beloved Baba's dear ones to remain absolutely detached from these happenings; they should not become affected by the so-called experiences, visions or claims of anyone - whether the one involved is a lover of Meher Baba, a 'perfect master' or a 'chargeman' of the God-Man.

Why create problems for yourself, dear brother, and become disturbed and thus be drawn away from your own one-pointed love and devotion to your Beloved Lord Avatar Meher Baba? Keep happy with your own simple love for Him and serve Him wholeheartedly without being influenced by anyone's love and devotion for the Lord. Let each one's love for

the Lord be his or her personal issue between the Beloved and the lover. But when this personal relationship is discussed as a commodity in the market place, then beware!

You want me to extend a special invitation to this man to visit Beloved Baba's Tomb, to see us and discuss with us his affairs. But why do you want me to treat him with a difference that I would not give to a simple and humble lover of Lord Avatar Meher Baba? You know that people from all over the world visit Ahmednagar, Meherabad and Meherazad without waiting for my special invitation. These devout and humble worshippers of the Lord do not need any invitation to visit Him and His places. They are drawn to Him; they go to Him; they pay their homage to their Eternal Beloved's Man-form at the Tomb at Meherabad; they visit places associated with His Man-Form at Meherabad and Meherazad and return home carrying His Love in their loving hearts.

Your insistence that I send a special invitation to this person to visit Ahmednagar and to make special arrangements for his stay, etc., does not appeal to me. To be very frank, dear brother, all this seems to be rather unhealthy and very distracting for simple devout lovers of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. Don't misconstrue this; I'm being very frank with you dear brother because of our very close past association and because of your deep love for Baba.

When you had spoken to me about this person and his 'experiences' I did hint that it was good to hear such *stories* but it was best to leave such 'experiences' behind in our march towards the Goal so that they are shed and the aspirant feels light and unburdened on the journey to the Beloved Lord. I had also said that we should be very careful and cautious not to become involved with and attached to such *mental postures* of the one who claims to have such experiences. I had also told you at that time to tell him to visit the Tomb-Shrine of the Man-Form of the Lord of Love so that he could pay his homage to his Beloved Avatar Meher Baba at Meherabad. I had added that such a visit would do him good. I hope you remember all this, and I do hope you have conveyed to him the gist of our talk on his having had the vision, and so on, and the futility of banking upon such visions and allied experiences. The worst

thing, however, is when one's friends and associates make an issue out of this as it results in bringing about the downfall of the poor, simple-hearted, sincere aspirant!

By the way, he should have come to Meherabad on the Amartithi Day, 31st January, to pay his homage to Beloved Baba. Such opportunities should not be missed by a true disciple or a lover of Beloved Baba, if he can afford to do so and if circumstances help him to do so.

This letter has become very lengthy and all it is meant to convey to you is that you should continue to love Beloved Baba one-pointedly, as you have been doing all these years, and to remember Him wholeheartedly until the very end.

I trust your deep love and your rock-like faith in your Beloved Baba will prompt you to dissuade other lovers of the Lord from becoming caught in the web of maya and from becoming a prey to their own mental postures! Or those of others!

Eruch

On Sadhus and Saints ...

Guruprasad
May 1960

Often times Beloved Baba has stressed that if you pay a visit to any sadhu, saint or shrine during your visit to Baba - for His Darshan or Sahavas - it is tantamount to your NOT having come solely for Baba.

When you have the rare opportunity of coming into contact with Baba, the Ocean of Love, you should not vitiate the Baba-atmosphere prevailing in your heart at the time by having a passing thought even under the guise of idle curiosity to visit any 'saint'.

In summer it is customary for sadhus, saints, yogis and such others to visit Poona for a change. Amongst such visitors only very few are genuine.

Baba says that He is the slave of the genuine lovers of God and at the same time He is the Highest of the High.

In short, during your stay in Poona, it is expected of you that you do not visit any 'saint', sadhu and the like, but remain happy and cheerful in Baba's Love.

Eruch

(The above note was read to all Baba-Lovers who specially visited Guruprasad for Beloved Baba's Darshan.)

*On actual experience and
mental delusion ...*

Guruprasad
29 March 1959

Your long letter of the 25th and your telegram were received and read out to Baba.

By now you must have received a telegram sent to you from Poona asking you not to worry for not coming to Baba with your son on March 25th. Baba knows all about your difficulties.

Baba heard all the details mentioned in your letter and in reply, Baba wants me to communicate to you that He is very happy to hear how your son and his mother were overwhelmed by love for their Beloved Baba.

Baba is the Ocean of Love and His Love radiates equally on all. Nevertheless, it is found that some are overwhelmed by love and some remain totally unaffected by it. All depends upon how one receives Baba's Love and, upon receiving it, whether one retains it as Baba's gift or reflects it *as one's own*. One often forgets that the Love is from Baba, and that Baba is the source and terminus of all Love.

Complications and distractions invariably arise when one

reflects love as one's own.

It is necessary to make a mention here that your wife and son were genuinely overwhelmed by Baba's Love, and your small son was obviously found to lose body consciousness for a short while. This is a case when your dear ones proved worthy receptacles to receive Baba's Love in good measure. They were deeply touched by Baba's Love and were affected by it.

Soon after this your son regained consciousness and his reactions were obviously in tune with Baba's Love. Thus everything he saw, animate and inanimate, reflected Baba's face. It was Baba's Love that made him see Baba in all. This is a case when your dear son reflected Baba's Love - not as his own, but as Baba's. Thus far he proved a worthy recipient and reflector of Baba's Love.

The subsequent details, as you narrated in your letter, are a sad tale of deceptive mind that played its game through your son tempting him to reflect love as his own, rather than of Baba.

Your son distributing 'prasad,' producing 'pedas' from nowhere, rebuking others, demanding obedience, feeling his sandals defiled by others touching them, taking for granted that he is stationed on the 5th plane is all humbug and childish - not that the boy is a liar, but such are the tricks of the galloping mind that gets out of control when one begins to reflect Baba's Love as one's own. At this stage the person concerned creates complications for himself and for his nearest and dearest ones; while for others he becomes a source of distraction, in the sense that a genuine devotee of Baba may be distracted in his unhampered flow of devotion for Baba, as you were and as several others might have been when coming in contact with the atmosphere prevailing in the house while witnessing the heights of a child's hallucination.

There is a world of difference between actual experience and mental delusion. The one leads towards the Goal, whereas the other leads one astray. When love is reflected as Baba's, it leads one to Baba; but when it is reflected as one's own it leads one away from Baba and drags others into dangerous pits. Baba wants me to draw your attention to the fact that Baba is

already within one and all; and as such, Baba never enters into anyone at any time. It is absolutely misleading to think that Baba entered the body of your son.

Baba is touched by your deep love and devotion for Him and sends His Love-Blessings to you all.

Devote more time to loving Baba more and more without any strings attached to love for and faith in Baba.

Eruch

On Love and Obedience ...

Guruprasad
23 May 1968

I shared your letter with all mandali concerned - some them read it and to some I gave the gist of it.

Personally, I am happy that you wrote the letter as you did, because it helped you to ventilate your pent-up feelings. It must have relieved your loving heart to some extent of the agony of separation from your Beloved Baba.

You are quite justified in writing such things, for it is the love-song of the heart that seeks to live in the Presence of the Beloved.

Neither the singer nor the listener, much less the lover and the Beloved, is blameworthy. Each one is in love with the other, and Love knows no other occupation than to torment its devotee and to make him helpless and useless in the eyes of the world!

You have no idea how helpless I and the mandali residing with Beloved Baba feel when under strict orders of Beloved Baba we have to tell visitors who come seeking Baba's Darshan to go away. From this you may gather how very tormenting it must have been for all concerned to tell you, who are dear to Baba and to us all, to return without seeing Baba! And to top it all, you brought a group of devotees with you seeking

Darshan of the Beloved who desired not to be disturbed!

To cut the story short, disappointment was in store for you, the group and the mandali. But it was washed and made clean by the waters of understanding that each one has to abide strictly by the wish of Beloved Baba. Helplessness raised its head once again and we all bowed to it and parted company. But though we parted with a heavy heart, we turned our faces from one another with proud satisfaction that all concerned did not fail to respect Beloved Baba's wish, and had thus won the battle!

We mandali do realize your feelings and pains as a lover of Baba; but I must point out to you where you failed as one of the stalwart workers and a faithful soldier of Baba. Had you come alone and on your own to tour the districts until 21st May, it would NOT have been as grossly improper as your having come with a group of devotees unripe in the art of Love. You know that the Love-Lane leading to the Beloved is very narrow and does not permit of any companionship.

Moreover, I was very pained to hear that the 'youngsters in love' in your group under your leadership started talking about provincialism, communalism, casteism, favouritism, groupism - all this is most unbecoming to a true lover of Baba. From where could they have heard such things to repeat like parrots? This made me feel that it would have been more profitable to have collected this band of budding lovers and brought home to them a better understanding about Baba and the mandali than taking them out to spread the Message of Love and Truth of the Avatar.

Why are these innocent loving hearts encouraged to lose their balance of right understanding? Do you and these others sincerely feel that I and the other mandali are steeped in the politics of states, provinces, languages and communities? If at all there is any last tinge of favouritism left in the mandali, the mandali have favoured (with the opportunity of Baba's Darshan) those who proved a headache and who pestered them with repeated requests. I alone know how I have neglected my relatives and all those dear and close ones to Beloved Baba in their love for Him. They know and have a deep understanding

of my attitude towards them.

Why can't we learn from the dear precious lovers of Baba in the West, who have not yet physically *seen* Baba but have dedicated their lives to His Cause. Don't they possess any heart? And what can I say about those Westerners like our dear Elizabeth and Kitty who lived in the 'Ashram' for years with Baba and the mandali and now crave just a glimpse of the Beloved and have not seen Him for six long years!! We bow down to their resignation with love and admiration.

A true lover knows how to uphold the discipline of the court of the Beloved, for the lover's love alone can withstand the vagaries of the whim and pleasure of the Beloved!

You confessed in your letter that you tried to love Baba and failed; you tried to obey Baba and failed. This is nothing new to me and the mandali. I and they have all tried and failed. As long as we continue to *try* to love and *try* to obey we have no hopes of success. What is needed is to just love and obey. We have to skip over our excuses of trying to do this and trying do that.

So, dear brother, we are all sailing in the same ship and our only comfort and hope is that the Captain of our ship is not one of us. We are blessed to have for our Captain, One who not only steers our ship perfectly but also steers the destiny of all men. Therefore, let us not be disheartened, but let us fill our hearts with hope and faith and set out once again on our life's adventure, determined to do as would please the Beloved. You are courageous and bold, and I am sure that you will not hesitate to tell others about our tale and woes and blessedness. It is a miracle of love of the Beloved that a lover finds himself at one and the same time lost and found; in the same breath finds himself burnt to ashes and blooming as a rose garden!

Needless to say anymore. At this point Beloved Baba directs me to read out to Him my reply to your long letter. So your song has reached Him at last; you are truly blessed!!!

Beloved Baba wants you to know that He knows how you feel and how much you long to be present near Him. He says all this confusion and feeling of pain will end soon. He wants you to love Him and obey Him in your own way and He will help

you internally to love Him and to obey Him as He should be loved and obeyed. He says that you are very dear to Him.

All the mandali send you much love and want you to know that they love you and have not forgotten you.

As for the mention in the newsletter about a group from another area, please note that this will help so many lovers who may have also thought of taking a chance to see Baba at Guruprasad. You and the other group are just an excuse to help so many lovers of Baba everywhere. So don't feel upset over it; on the contrary feel uplifted that you will have helped so many others by opening their eyes in the right direction - in the direction of seeking the Will and the Pleasure of the Beloved.

With much love to you and your dear family and my respects and love to your dear wife and all.

Eruch

*Two letters to the same person -
a follower of Godavri Mai who came
into Baba's contact - on the difference
between God and Guru ...*

Poona

25 May 1957

Your letter of the 23rd was read out to Beloved Baba. Baba felt proud of your determination to adhere to your Guru, who is also Baba's Beloved 'Yashoda'* Baba says that if by this time you are still ignorant of Baba's love for Godavri Mai, then know well now that Baba's love for Mai is too great for any expression and He loves her dearly.

Baba has never told you, or anyone for that matter, to leave Godavri Mai and come to Baba.

Baba does not have any pity for your plight but feels amused to watch the working of your mind and the consequent

* Krishna's Foster Mother

conflict of feelings in your heart. You must necessarily pass through all this until you become fully aware that Baba is no "guru" nor a "saint", but that He is the Avatar - the Ancient One - God Incarnate in human form!

Baba further wants me to add here that had you been fortunate enough to have that unwavering conviction that Baba is really the Avatar and that Godavri Mai is really your Guru, then there could never have been any chance of conflict to make you suffer so much.

It would then be obvious to you that Baba being God Incarnate, could never be just a "guru" and, as such, all who believed in Him could not be termed disciples. At the most these could be termed His "Lovers or Followers". The Messiah - Saviour of mankind - never *has* any disciple in the conventional sense, though others may call themselves disciples.

My dear, Baba has so often affirmed that He is the Father of all Creation, that He is the Source of all things in existence and that His Infinite Love sustains the very existence of all beings and things in the domain of illusion. And Baba wants me to add here: All worship Him daily and pray to Him often without any conflict in head or heart, as long as they take Him for granted as God-Nirguna* and Nirakara - but no sooner does this same God affirm in His "Sagun" and "Sakar" "Swarup"**, that He is the Ancient One, than there is a conflict and consequent suffering for those who believe in Him and also for those who are the non-believers.

Conflict and suffering of the non-believers is to be overlooked because they know not; but the conflict and suffering of a believer is ridiculous.

Baba says that this creation and its affairs are one big joke and that Baba is the Matchless Joker!

Baba wants you *not* to worry in the least if *you* cannot come to Baba on 2nd June, because He is always with you.

* God in the Beyond State. See Chart 5 of *God Speaks* by Meher Baba. Dodd Mead & Co. New York, 1973.

** God "bound by infinite qualities", Ibid.

If you happen to come to Baba on 2nd June, then Baba will clear your difficulties and you will get some relief from your conflicting thoughts and feelings for the Avatar of the Age and for your Guru, Godavri Mai.

If, however, it is impossible for you to be near Baba on 2nd June, then do not brood over it and do not get trapped more and more by the self-created conflict within your mind. Just remember this much. Baba says, "Give to God that which is God's, and give to your Guru that which is Guru's." Baba also wants you to remember well that Baba is Krishna and Godavri Mai is His Beloved "Yashoda" and that Godavri Mai is matchlessly pure of heart. Baba would feel very happy and proud of you if you can obey Godavri Mai in all respects. How could your obedience to her ever displease Baba? If you could but obey your Guru implicitly in all respects willingly and cheerfully, only then would it be possible for you to know Baba as He really is.

Baba sends His Love to you.

Eruch

P.S. Baba wants you to send a true copy of this letter to Godavri Mai.

Bindra House
29 May 1957

Yours of the 28th was received today and read out to Beloved Baba. I trust that this reaches you in time ere you leave for Matheran. When you see Mai, convey my salutation and adoration.

My dear, who am I to satisfy your difficulty and convince you what and how I feel? Nevertheless, I may mention here that there is a world of difference between God and Guru. And this difference comes into play when we human beings start to play with the differences in the personalities of Guru and God

(Sakar). Had there not been any difference, Kabir would never have given out the following couplet:

Guru Govind Dovo Khaday, Kakay Lagu Pau

Balihari Guru Apree, Gin Govind Deo Batai

In one breath, Kabir sings all praise for the Guru, who can show the 'Govind'; and in the same breath Kabir very subtly points out that all praise is due to that Guru who personally leads his disciple into the very presence of Govind. So my dear, it now rests with you to draw out any meaning you choose according to your feelings. Personally, I think there is a difference between a Guru and God-Incarnate in the domain of duality, as long as *we* are ignorant of the Truth.

On the other hand, Baba has 'said' in one of His messages: "Pay heed when I say with my Divine Authority that the oneness of Reality is so uncompromisingly unlimited and all-pervading that not only 'we are one,' but even this collective term 'we' has no place in the Infinite, Indivisible Oneness."

We have learned that Sadgurus are the personifications of God. Then what need is there for God to descend unto our level in human form and mingle with us calling Himself the Avatar of the Age? Has not the Omnipotent the power and capacity to remain 'Nirakar' while wanting to handle the affairs of His creation? Undoubtedly He has. That is what we have gathered. But who are we to question Him on this point? This is part of His Divine Game and He has the absolute right to indulge in the Game of His own creation. Even while we, ignorant human beings, refute the authority of the Avatar, God, as the Avatar, indulges in this game of 'hide and seek'.

To cut the story short, my dear, please check your mind from creating more misunderstandings. It is because of your own misunderstandings and consequent folly that you put dear Ma in this position.

So far no one has checked you from following Ma. On the contrary, Beloved Baba wants all her lovers and followers to hold fast to her through thick and thin. But who has the courage to follow the hints frequently given by Baba? Why did you stand up in Meherabad wanting to fast as desired by Baba without at first asking Ma's permission? Who forced you to go

and ask Ma, once you volunteered to undertake the fast? First of all, you ought not have volunteered to do so, and secondly when you took upon your shoulders the responsibility of following Baba's instructions, who told you to go to Ma for a confirmation or change in the definite instructions given by Baba Himself?

So, my dear, under such circumstances, we become the originator of such conflicts and our own misunderstandings. However, all of this is of the past, and let us not brood over things lightly on spur of the moment enthusiasm. Now, what Baba wants you to note is that you should stop worrying about anything. He loves you very much and He does not want you to feel miserable any longer.

Baba also wants you to know well that He loves Ma very much and that she is close to His heart of Infinite Love. Baba would feel very happy if you love Ma and obey her wholeheartedly with undivided zeal and adoration. If you could do but this much, you will spiritually come to realize who Baba is. If you do not feel like coming to Baba on 2nd June, you could have frankly written to Baba; and He says He would have appreciated that very much and have even felt proud of your devotion to Ma, who is His Beloved 'Yashoda'. There was no need for you to go to Matheran to seek her permission expressly to come to Baba. Now Baba says, even if you come to Him, it would not be for Baba but for the permission given by Ma. Had you come to Baba directly, which you could have easily done, and had you shown your inability to follow Baba's instructions, if He were to give any to you, and had you conveyed the same directly to Baba, He would have greatly appreciated all this rather than all your childish fuss about things which you yourself do not understand. When you see Ma, Baba wants you to tell her that she is most dear to Baba and that Baba wants her lovers to hold fast to her under any circumstances. Also convey to Ma Baba's LOVE.

With affectionate regards to you,

Eruch

*In reply to a Baba lover's anxiety about
not being able to follow Baba 's advice. . .*

Guruprasad
10 June 1961

I read your very long and very affectionate letter to Beloved Baba, and Beloved Baba has directed me to inform you that if you cannot do exactly as Beloved Baba has advised you, then you are free to do even now what you feel best, and Baba's love for you cannot be or become any less.

Don't worry about anything, for what matters most is one's love for God and that love should be such that it does not make the lives of others difficult or miserable, but easy and pleasant at the cost of one's own happiness! Consequently one suffers the most by loving God honestly, and each spell of suffering becomes a step leading nearer to God, the Beloved. He who begins to love God, begins to remain more silent in all his activities and eventually becomes a silent observer of life humming with activity all round.

No doubt God is Love; but Love is silence within and without! Therefore, those who have *not* loved have never sensed the eloquence of Silence and the beauty of Love and the depth of the Master of Silence and Love.

Eruch

On rituals ...

Meherazad
12 January 1965

Man is ever eager to offer his best to God, but he is limited

in his expression of love, and he invariably chooses ways and means to express his love that reflect his limitations. As long as man is not blessed with the limitless love from God, he becomes addicted to his own ways of expressing love and makes a ritual of these expressions.

Age after age, the spiritual history of man repeats itself. The man-made images of ritual and ceremonies are abolished by the Avatar with every Advent, but soon man, rejuvenated with a fresh dispensation of Love from the Avatar of the age, is bubbling anew to express his love for the Avatar (God-Man) and forms another pattern of rituals, once more becoming mixed up with the external aspect - the crust - of the fruit of Love (the gift of God to man) that he had received through the personal intervention of the God-Man during His Advent.

As for your course, Baba once again wants you to make a fresh attempt with redoubled enthusiasm. Baba says that nothing is impossible for man to attain if only he is determined. Man can even attain Godhood if he is determined, so compared with this for you to attain your goal in studies should be easy to achieve once you are determined. Baba wants you never to feel nervous in the least. His Nazar is on you. He wants you to do your level best and leave the rest to Him.

You are made to be happy and cheerful. It is the birthright of all men on earth. All undertakings of man are purely adventurous. Personally man does NOT gain nor lose anything by his attainments or his failures, but in his attempts he invariably leaves behind him (after his death) a trail of his experiences which directly or indirectly helps other men to set out for greater and greater adventures until some of them reach the Goal of no return through the realization of God - the Self. To realize the self is true attainment and all else is an adventure!

Eruch

*In reply to a Baba-lover who asked
about "carnal cravings" ...*

1978

My dear, coming to the point of your letter, Beloved Baba has given us to understand that our carnal cravings are the legacy derived from our animal ancestry; as such these cravings are inherent. If abstinence cannot be fully exercised to overcome them, at least exercise continence. To exercise continence is not repression. Repression is through fear and begets the experience of misery, while continence is through strength and results in giving confidence and joy.

Clean habits in life help keep a clean mind. Frequent remembrance of Beloved Meher Baba guards the mind and helps to "phase out" undesirable addictions. Eventually, as one ages, one gains more useful experiences and tires of the experiences of youth, and even ridicules them in one's old age.

At this stage it is best for us to leave everything in His Compassionate Hand and to always dedicate our weaknesses, and our strength to our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba and to remember Him constantly. We should strive not to let Him down through our way of life, but to uphold the trust He has reposed in His lovers. It is up to us to try. While one cannot observe total 'fast' (over lust, anger, greed, etc.) one must observe 'strict diet'!

Wishing you all the best.
Eruch

To a recently married couple ...

Meherazad
4 May 1978

What a wonderful thing it is to celebrate your marriage in the continued remembrance of your Loving Lord! Have no fear; Beloved Baba is in the hearts of you both. Baba knows fully well the responsibilities He has given to you and He knows that you will be able to discharge them. As you have told me He has seen to your husband's employment, and because your marriage is in His Love, He will see to everything as long as you keep Him as your constant Companion.

Our love and best wishes are with you and your dear husband. May Beloved Baba's Love Blessings be on you both evermore.

Eruch

*In reply to a Baba lover wanting to
found an institution in which people
would discard monetary values and
work for love while leading a new life ...*

Satara
9 September 1955

Baba wants me to convey to you that if you were to turn through the pages of what Baba has stressed, you will undoubtedly find one thing very prominent and that is love. He wants all of us to become the soldiers of love to conquer our own selfish 'selves.'

Therefore Baba is no less pleased to hear from you that

you desire to found an institution in which people will discard monetary values and work for love.

Any work that one undertakes with honest intentions and with love is Baba's work; and he who does His work for the Love of God is always His.

You cannot depend upon your colleagues in your venture for you will yourself have to continue at every step to set examples for others and for yourself in the path of love if you dare to tread upon it knowingly and consciously.

The paradox is pure and simple. Love in itself is "self" absorbing and it helps to lose one's self completely; how then can one help others actively by one's own example of self absorption?

To help others through one's example, one must first become not only drenched but drowned in love *consciously*. This is the duty of all Perfect Ones.

The prelude to all this is to attempt to create a balance between the thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart. Mind works much faster. It is like lightning. Lightning is seen first and then the report of thunder is heard much later.

To attempt an equilibrium, the mind must be made to function slower to keep pace with the feelings of the heart, and no amount of observing silence or fasting can help towards such an attempt.

If an individual desires to attempt the enforcement of equilibrium in a true direction, the most suitable means would be to attempt consistently to accelerate the feelings to such a pitch that they supersede the mind. For this the only efficient fuel is love - love unadulterated.

Unless one learns to love, purely for the sake of love and love alone, one cannot cross the hurdle of the mighty mind.

And for one to learn to love in its true sense, the only recourse is to dedicate one's "self" to the Lord of Love. Unless one is determined to hold fast to the feet of the Avatar under all circumstances, all attempts in this direction lead one astray, rather than on the path of love and righteousness.

However, Baba says that it is good to fast the belly and silence the lips for physical fitness and discipline in life. But these things are utterly insignificant when one has

determined to fast and silence the mind itself by implicitly obeying the dictates of the Avatar.

Baba wants you to go through His message given at Rajamundry "Existence is Substance and Life is Shadow" and then wait until you read and digest all what Baba has said in *God Speaks*.

In short, Baba wants you to be most natural where your "self" is concerned. If you feel like fasting on a particular day, then do it by all means. And if you feel like observing silence once a week, then do so by all means, but do not fall a prey to rigidity and forget the essence.

In a life of purity, simplicity, love and sacrifice, to be *most natural* is to reflect Godliness in abundance.

Whatever you desire to do, do it sincerely, honestly and with love. Baba says that you should rest assured that His Love for you will never fail to guide you imperceptibly in all matters.

The only thing that Baba personally wants from you is your love through your constant remembrance of Him. Make Baba your constant Companion while you speak, while you act, and even while you think.

Baba sends His love to you,
Eruch

*In reply to a Baba lover who asked if
Baba said anything about a man
who was performing miracles ...*

Meherazad
23 September 1969

Although I have stopped correspondence as before, your letter, aglow with the warmth of your love for Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, happily compels me to reply to your queries regarding this individual.

1) He is not the only one who claims to be the incarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi - the Perfect Master. There have been half a dozen, or maybe more, in India who have put forth this claim. Some of them have been convicted and are in jail for cheating the public.

2) He is not the only one who also claims to be the Avatar. There are many others who have a larger following and who claim to be the Avatar. It seems that there is a bumper crop of avatars (false prophets and messiahs) during this Avataric Cycle. With the advent of Avatar Meher Baba, such a phenomenon was expected.

3) Beloved Baba said nothing in particular about him, his claims, about his so-called miracles or about his being on the 4th plane of consciousness.

4) However, Baba issued from time to time 'warnings' to His lovers and 'reminders' to His lovers to beware of false prophets, avatars, and impersonators who, in the garb of guides, were guiding humanity away from the Goal. Baba often referred to these imposters as 'wolves' who sprang with surprise on His innocent 'lambs' and devoured them! Hence He warned His lovers from time to time to beware. One would do well to re-read the booklets, 'Avatar Meher Baba's *Warning* to His Lovers,' and, 'Avatar Meher Baba's *Reminder* to His Lovers.'

5) Sai Baba of Shirdi was God-Realized and was one of the five Perfect Masters who brought about the Advent of the Avatar in this Avataric Cycle. Once God-realization is attained, the soul is forever freed from the rounds of births and deaths, i.e. from reincarnation. To be emancipated is to be *eternally* liberated; for such a soul to reincarnate is impossible, vide *God Speaks*.

6) Only the Ancient One can and does reincarnate from time to time, as the Avatar, the Ancient One, in different Avataric Ages to give a spiritual push to all His creation in general, and to ailing humanity in particular.

7) This man is *not* an agent of Avatar Meher Baba. It is so obvious, for he claims to be the Avatar! How can the agent of the Avatar, claim to be the Avatar himself?

8) Not miracles but only constant, wholehearted remembrance of God can take one to Him; and only pure and unadulterated love for God can make one realize Him.

9) So-called miracles can never be a means to make people come to God; they are utilized as a means to gather together a crowd by the one who performs these tricks. People then become attached to the tricks and miracles they are witnessing rather than preparing themselves to come to God.

10) Anyone who masters the art of 'tantric-tricks' exhibits them to lure crowds towards him and unfortunately away from God! It is even more pitiful when such a tantric genuinely feels that he is using his tantric power to help humanity to come to God.

Even if such a tantric pours out a wagonful of 'tantric trinkets' from under his armpit with a single sweep of his hands, the lovers of Avatar Meher Baba can never be affected, for they are firmly established in the love of God by the God-Man Himself!

These lovers are no longer children who gain any satisfaction from playing with trinkets and dolls. They are now grownup and long for union with their Divine Beloved!

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!
Eruch

*In reply to a Baba-lover wanting to
know if he and all Baba-lovers in his
district should participate in a 'Yagya '*
organized by a yogi for the propagation
of Truth ...*

Guruprasad
18 March 1959

Beloved Baba has read the contents of your letter and remarked, "I know all about him (the yogi), he is dear to Me, he

loves Me, he has a corner in My heart." Baba then asked me to re-read the letter to Him and when I was reading the next to last paragraph wherein you have mentioned, "The main thing that strikes me is the performance of 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 has Havan Yagya or other yagyas to do with spirituality? How can such yagyas help to establish Meher Baba's Avatarhood? If such yagyas had any potential to establish Avatarhoods, there would have been a crop of Avatars, fully established and enthroned - certified as Avatars by the 'seal' of yagyas!

"The Ancient One has repeated His Advent this time to put His Seal on all yagyas, rites, rituals and ceremonies, thereby ending them. His very advent amongst 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 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 disciple's deep and great love for his Beloved. Baba also touched our hearts, bringing home to us your sacrifice, that your very life is dedicated to His sacred Cause, and your efficiency in discharging your duty as a group head. In much less time than the time taken to pen these words, Baba brought home to us the fact that His dear ones in the district need no tutoring for them to feel established in their love and faith for their Beloved Baba.

Even if the proposed yagya were to be permitted by Baba, which Baba would never want to do, such a yagya would be tantamount to tampering with the innocent hearts of Baba lovers, the hearts wherein Beloved Baba has been firmly established and enthroned. The Yogiraji's yagya might in some cases even cause the sacrifice of Baba Himself from the

* A Hindu religious ceremony in which offerings are made to different deities while reciting verses in their praise

precincts of His 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 to see this Truth at the risk and cost of their very sight - the sight that 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, and if he performs it in the district, then it will be an opportunity for all Baba-lovers to refresh their memories and recall Baba's "Warning to His Lovers" and His discourses on yagyas, rites, rituals, ceremonies and even on various yogic practices.

Baba wants me to tell you here that He had and still has a high degree of confidence in your intellectual capabilities and in your love and faith in Baba. Nevertheless, your friend Yogiraj, who stayed as your guest for six long days, seems to have apparently fogged your ability and led you into the temptation of utilizing this means of 'yagya' as a tool which Baba has always taught us to discard, for it is an obsolete weapon in propagating His Message of Love and in establishing His Avatarhood. Except *Love*, all things and means become obsolete when the Avatar of the Age lives as God-Man amid His own Creation. In fact, when all things and means begin to become obsolete, the Advent of the Avatar brings a fresh dispensation.

Instead of performing sacrificial rites in the form of Yagya, thereby depriving some very hungry creatures of their right to eat and drink things which are burned unnecessarily in the sacrificial fire, Yogiraj should have seriously thought of sacrificing himself in the far superior and sacred fire of LOVE. Such an offering would have been surely acceptable and would most certainly be in complete harmony with the atmosphere of your district which is surcharged with Baba's Love and which radiates this Love to the neighboring districts. Baba feels very amused at this episode which seems to have tempted you. Instead of curing the diseased, Baba's stalwart is infected and enfeebled by his very friend, who is also very dear to Baba.

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

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

Baba does *not* want yogis to tamper with the hearts that are filled with His Love. These yogis can do what they wish and want at their respective places but *not* in the house of Baba.

Baba sends His Love to you, and He wants you to be happy in the knowledge that your Beloved will *not* let down His dearly loved one in the eyes of those who profess to do Baba's work and through it want to achieve their selfish ends.

Eruch

On rites, rituals ...

Meherazad
16 January 1968

Your letter of the 13th and the paper clippings and advertisement of the Maha Rudra Yagya in Hyderabad from 15-2-68 to 21-2-68 have been received.

If hunger, droughts, destruction of crops, famine, floods, fire, accidents, earthquakes, etc. can be averted by the performance of Yagya in this Yuga, then there would never arise the need for the Advent of the Avatar or the Divine Intervention of the God-Man!

The God-Man uses illusion to arouse slumbering humanity from the 'deep sleep' that is caused or induced as a result of illusion! When Beloved Avatar Meher Baba is among

humanity in flesh and blood as the Divine Awakener, I feel all true lovers of the Avatar should never become involved in Yagya or Yagna or any form of rites and rituals.

Please circulate this among the lovers of Avatar Meher Baba.

Also, please note Baba has several times said:

- I) "Tear the curtain of set ceremonies and rituals and you will find that I am the Worshipped, the Worship and the Worshipper."
- II) "To clothe simple worship with the garments of ceremony and ritual is to expose Me to the cold winds of ignorance."

Eruch

*To Baba-lovers on the occasion
of a 'Premika Sahavas'* ...*

Meherazad
7 June 1978

Beloved Meher Baba has assured His lovers time and again that His presence is imminent whenever and wherever His lovers gather together for Him and become lost in His Love glorifying His Name.

This assembly of lovers of Avatar Meher Baba brings to my mind various Sahavas programmes Beloved Baba blessed us with at Meherabad and Meherazad in Ahmednagar, at Guruprasad in Poona, and at various other places in the world including the State of Andhra.

Blessed were those occasions and doubly blessed is this occasion of Premika Sahavas at Vijaywada as it affords His lovers yet another opportunity, in this life, to once again affirm their unwavering faith in Him, their unadulterated love for

* Lovers sahavas

Him and their total dedication to His Cause!

Avatar Meher Baba was in our midst as man amongst men. He came to us not to teach but to awaken. He was neither a teacher nor a guru, nor a yogi, nor even just a sadguru, yet He was all these and much more. ·

For the sake of mankind He was in our midst as man and remained in silence for 44 long years giving His Companionship to men and suffering for them in total silence.

He is the Avatar of the Age; veritably God the Reality descended into the realm of illusion to make His Presence, His Love and His Compassion tangible to mankind. To forsake Him is to forsake God. He has reposed His Trust in His lovers. He wants His lovers to be His apostles and not apostates.

It now rests with us, who received of His Presence, tasted the sweet nectar of His Love, bathed in the refreshing grace of His Compassion and felt the impact of the Word from His Silence to keep Him and Him alone as our Constant Companion evermore and always!

All lovers of Baba and the mandali at Meherazad and Meherabad welcome this opportunity to send all you dear brothers and sisters in Andhra much love in Beloved Avatar Meher Baba!

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!!!

Eruch

On Avataric Mistakes ...

Meherazad

28 January 1970

Next term you will be busy starting another course at the university - a seminar. What a funny thought I just had - to have a course in the *comparative* study of the life of the same Ancient One who comes among us again and again! What a

game He plays with us! We compare the matchlessness of one Advent with the matchlessness of another of the very same Ancient One! Well, can't we indulge in such a game when He as Meher Baba told us one day at Guruprasad the weakness of each of His past Advents? I don't remember if I told you about this. Well, I repeat it here. Baba said:

1) The weakness of Zoroaster was that He did not 'spare' the life of the man who killed Him while He was absorbed in telling beads.

2) The weakness of Rama was that He discarded His wife Sita just because a 'dhobi' (washerman) started spreading rumors that Lord Rama kept Sita with Him although she had been away from Him with King Ravana in Ceylon, as though this was proof that she was unpure.

3) The weakness of Krishna was that He had to give a glimpse of His Universal Body to Arjuna when Arjuna did not believe in His advice on the battlefield.

4) The weakness of Lord Gautama Buddha was that He did not disclose to His close ones the states of Perfection after Nirvana - the Goal.

5) The weakness of Lord Jesus Christ was that while He was on the cross He cried out, "O God why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

6) The weakness of Prophet Mohammed was that He did not disclose to the public nor to all His close ones that He and God are One and the same.

7) The weakness of Avatar Meher Baba will be told in the next Advent by the Ancient One when He comes back again after 700 years.

This is also a facet of comparative study. Can you guess what the weakness of the present Avatar was?

Another piece of news is that an outline of Beloved Baba's head has unfolded on the bark of a tree trunk opposite Mehera's room window. The tree is an 'oombar' held sacred among Maharashtrians as the seat of Lord Datta (the three-headed deity signifying the Creator, Preserver and Dissolver). This face was first seen by Mehera in July 1969 soon after our return to Meherabad from the darshan days at Guruprasad,

Poona. Maybe you have not seen the figure, so I enclose three prints for you.

Eruch

*From a talk by Eruch in Mandali
Hall, 10 February 1979, on the
Avatar's work ...*

"Baba once told the mandali that 'all you find and see of My Work while I am Meher Baba was planned and chalked out at the time when I was Mohammed.'

"All those whom He met as Meher Baba and all that He did as Meher Baba He had planned for when He was Mohammed. It was all so to say, 'filmed' at the time He was Mohammed, and was 'projected' while He was Meher Baba.

"All that has happened since 31st January 1969 was planned while He was Meher Baba. It was 'filmed' then and is being 'projected' now."

Someone asked about those who had met Baba for only a short time, towards the end as it were. Eruch said: "Your meeting with Him in 1962 was planned when He was Mohammed, and what you have done since He dropped the body was planned while He was Meher Baba.

"So for all who met Him as Meher Baba there is an overlapping, a continuing, of His ministry as Mohammed and His ministry as Meher Baba. Those who have come to Him since He dropped the body, He planned for as Meher Baba, and those whom He meets and all He does as the next Avatar has been planned while He was Meher Baba."

On Baba's flag ...

Meherazad
12 January 1979

We do not have any details regarding Baba's flag except that once in the early twenties one of the mandali asked Baba why they couldn't have a Baba flag? Baba said, "Who stops you from having one?"

Then there was a lot of argument about the colors to be given to Baba's flag. Baba ended the debate by saying that a Baba flag is one that includes all colors! So the seven colors of the rainbow were chosen for Baba's flag, scarlet red being at the bottom and blue at the top. This is the order of the colors.

Eruch

On what Baba meant by the term
'Mandali' ...

Meherazad
1 November 1973

Herein below are answers to your queries. Please don't take them as Gospel! My answers are according to what I remember to have gathered at the feet of the Lord from time to time:

The term 'Mandali', in the sense Beloved Baba referred to it, means those men and women who lived with Baba and obeyed and loved Him and carried out His every command, order, and wish.

Those men and women who visited Him when called by Him from time to time, and obeyed and loved Him, and car-

ried out or tried to carry out His every command, order, and wish.

Those men and women spread all over the globe who obeyed and loved Him and carried out or tried to carry out His wish, order, and command.

When Baba said Mr. X belonged to His Mandali, it was understood that X was one of the three mentioned above. 'Mandali' means "one's own; one very close; belonging to one."

Eruch

On the "Dhuni". . .

In Sanskrit *dhyan* means meditation; *dhyan*i means one who meditates. The Hindi word *dhuni* might have been derived from the Sanskrit word *dhyan*i. Again in Hindi *dhoon* means repeating the name of God aloud, in a sing-song manner. In India the saints and masters who left the towns and sometimes lived in the jungles, usually kept a *dhuni* burning for all the twenty-four hours.

Some points about Baba's *Dhuni*:

a) Baba first lit the *dhuni* at Meherabad (according to Padri) in the month of September 1925.

b) In 1926, when it was again lit on the same day, Arangaon had plentiful rains.

c) In 1941, on December 12, Baba asked Gustadjee to light the *dhuni* in His presence. Since then Baba gave specific instructions that whether He be at Meherabad or elsewhere the *dhuni* should be lit on the 12th of each month.

d) On January 12, 1942, after the passing away of Upasni Maharaj (on December 24, 1941) Pappa Jessawala lit the *dhuni* in Baba's presence.

e) On September 24, 1954, when Baba's western disciples were staying on the Hill at Meherabad, Baba had a programme of lighting the *dhuni*.

f) On November 12, 1955, during the *sahavas* when His lovers from Andhra were present, the *dhuni* was lit in Baba's presence and He asked each *sahavasi* to put a splinter of sandalwood in it with a sincere wish to burn that particular desire to which one is attached most.

g) The *dhuni* at Meherabad reminds us of the work of the Avatar which can be likened to fire. Baba once composed a poem with the title: Baba is Fire:

Baba is Fire

When you feel cold,
And sit near the fire;
It drives out your cold,
And makes you perspire.

When you feel hungry,
And cook on the fire;
It gives you your food,
For which you aspire.

But if you like a fool,
Try to play with Fire;
It may burn you so badly,
That would make hell admire!

*In reply to a Baba lover's query whether
it was one's "bounden duty" to visit
Meherabad and Meherazad and bow
down to Baba's Tomb.*

Ahmednagar
20 July 1973

I have your loving letter with me. I understand your point.
For some lovers it is their "bounden duty to visit their

Beloved at Meherabad and Meherazad" and to some their Beloved is everywhere and all pervading!

It is strictly one's own personal and intimate feeling for one's Beloved Lord. How can I interfere and suggest anything to help you decide? However, I may venture to let you know that *Beloved Baba is everywhere indeed!* But at Meherabad and Meherazad, He may be said to be "at home," and may be freely available to all yearning hearts who come sincerely for Him in their hearts.

It is to one's advantage to visit with one when one is "at home" and not busy in one's office or occupied in any other way! Baba be praised!

More than this I know not.

Eruch .

*In response to a letter about the
cancellation of the December Sahavas
of 1965 ...*

Meherazad
30 September 1965

We over here can well imagine how very busy you must have been kept during the past few months, doing your best to bring lovers to the One Beloved. We can imagine too how overwhelmingly disappointed all the lovers must have been to hear the "verdict" of cancellation of the December Sahavas. But brave indeed are the lovers of Baba the Beloved!

From hundreds of letters received one gets a very clear picture of the depths of the feelings of a true lover of God-Baba. How an individual lover dares to let his or her delicate and beautiful heart go adrift on the mighty oceanic breast of the Beloved, and how the heart is battered and tossed from crest to crest while mighty storms rage in the Sea of Life can only be experienced and felt by the true lover; and in spite of it all the

lover is never crestfallen! The heart of the lover continues to ride on the crested whims of the Beloved and, though sometimes engulfed by disappointment, it rises to the surface buoyed by the hope that the Beloved will keep His appointment sometime, somewhere, somehow!!!

Eruch

On faith in and love for the Avatar ...

Ahmednagar

19 September 1970

I have with me your letter. Please know that I have stopped replying to every letter I receive. I am replying to your letter because I feel prompted to do so.

Our Beloved Lord Jesus Christ was also accused of being one of the false prophets and was crucified along with two others of disrepute. Did this in any way affect the Christhood of Jesus? It is now almost 2,000 years since that time and Jesus is worshipped as the Christ - the God-Man - in spite of being condemned, slandered, persecuted and crucified.

Pay no heed to what the believers or the adversaries or even the so-called evangelists say about the God-Man. Most important is *your* faith in Him and *your* love for Him. If you have faith in and love for the God-Man, you are blessed indeed! And it is enough even if you were the only one in the world to believe in the God-Man at the time of His Advent.

Meher Baba is the Avatar - the God-Man of this age - not because millions believe in Him to be so but because He is the God-Man!

Jai Baba!

Eruch

*In response to a letter from Mehdi
Ghaffari asking how Eruch believed
that Meher Baba is God ...*

Meherazad
7 December 1977

Your sweet letter of November 25th touched my heart deeply and I am grateful to Beloved Baba for giving us such hearts as yours to warm our hearts with the beauty of His Love that He has poured into yours.

By now hundreds of people have asked me how do I believe Baba is God, and your asking me the same question is not surprising. My simple answer is: I believe Baba is God because He is God! But you have also asked me *how* I believe Him to be God? Well, it took my mind to accept Him as God more than 40 years, with the last 30 spent almost at His feet making my mind hold on to His daaman - sometimes with both hands! .:

Although my mind was bombarded constantly with His statements: "I am God in human form; I am the Ancient One; I am the God-Man; I am the Highest of the High; I am Infinite Consciousness; I am the Infinite and Eternal Existence; I am Infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss; I am the Lowest of the Low and the Highest of the High; I am..." in spite of it all and in spite of His overwhelming physical presence, my mind - my stubborn and stupid mind - interrogated within me, "Is He that?" Such is mind, which is also His creation to keep going His game of hide and seek. It is He who hides and it is He who seeks and is eventually sought and found!!! He as Mehdi is the seeker and the disciple and the lover; and is in search of the Beloved. He remains hidden 'behind' Mehdi, or in other words, He Himself wears the veil of Mehdi and plays the Divine Game of hide and seek. When He sheds the veil (Mehdi) He reveals Himself to Himself and proclaims Himself as "I am God!"

So, my very dear Mehdi, as long as He continues to identify Himself as Mehdi, you, as Mehdi stand *no chance* of exper-

iening Beloved Baba's Godhood. Hence Beloved Baba has exhorted us saying: "God is Infinite and Eternal Existence and He is never lost! Therefore God cannot be found. How ridiculous it is to find something or someone that is never lost. So stop trying to find God. He can never be found for He is never lost. What indeed is needed is to lose yourself and God continues to remain imminent."

Beloved Baba has comforted us so often by wanting us to be determined to be His. Once we remain determined to be His and completely depend and rely on His Grace and Compassion He takes over from us the process of unveiling Himself. So be ever determined to be His; be childlike and depend upon His Compassion and Grace *entirely* and allow Him to wind up His Game of hide and seek within you.

You ask me whether I have the experience of His Godhood and my answer is that I do not have this experience. But I believe in His Godhood and His being the Ancient One. Best for you is that you visit us here often and allow us the pleasure of your company so that by your questioning we will remain all the more in His company.

Yours,
Eruch

P.S. You had also written to Adi some weeks ago and Adi had shared your letter with me. He must have replied to you by now on your point of how best you can please Him. The best way of pleasing Him is to keep Him as your constant Companion.

*Eruch and Mani on Silence Day
transcription from a taped conversation
in Mandali Hall, Meherazad,
February 10, 1979 ...*

Eruch: The tenth of July is Silence Day. We all know that Baba observed silence for 44 years, and we talk about His Silence and about the breaking of His Silence, and many things. We have been asked by many whether we should continue to observe silence on Silence Day or not. Well, it is left to each individual whether one wants to observe silence or not. But there will come a time, I feel, when the world will observe the Silence Day, just as we observe Christmas and New Year's Day. Today is Prophet Mohammed's birthday, and in India it is known and observed as Id-e-Milad. There will come a time when the observance of Meher Baba's Silence Day will spread all over the world.

In order to commemorate the day that He began His Silence, it is but natural to observe silence on July 10th. Those who are close to Him would obviously want to commemorate this day. As to our wanting or not wanting to observe the day, there is a guideline from Baba Himself.

In the beginning we never made it a special day. There came a time after years when somebody drew Baba's attention to the fact that the 10th of July was the day when He began His Silence. Baba casually instructed that it should be remembered by observing a fast. Adi would send out circulars in advance with the reminder to Baba lovers that the 10th of July is the day of Silence, and that they should observe fast on that day. Fast meant 24 hours of fast. Only tea was permitted. Then there came an option and that was either one observed fast for 24 hours or silence for 24 hours. Baba lovers were happy; they said, "Let's try observing silence." Many people who were close to Baba began to observe silence on that day. Still there remained the option of fast or silence. Then there were a few who could neither observe fast because it was difficult for

them to do so, nor could they observe silence because they were in the military, or held a responsible post which needed the use of speech. So reports of difficulties encountered would come to Baba. They would write letters saying how it was not possible for them to observe the fast or the silence. Baba would lovingly say, "It doesn't matter, it's alright:"

Then there came a time when Baba said, "I want you all to observe fast or to observe silence." It was not an optional decision left to the discretion of His close ones; but it was His *wanting* them to do it. So they started feeling that Baba wanted them to observe fast or silence. So people in the world who followed Baba either observed fast or observed silence. But then in the late 60's He would mention how important the Day of Silence was as He had been keeping silence for so many years. He conveyed, "It's not anybody's silence, but it's my Silence; so it's best you also observe silence for a day." Thus He started giving us a gift, His sanction to participate in the day of His Silence. There was no option whatsoever. We had no option about fast or anything in between. For a number of years the mandali had been observing silence on Silence Day, but His lovers in the world were also given the option to observe silence or to observe fast. In later years Baba expressed His wish that it was better all observed silence instead of observing fast.

And in 1968 Baba gave the following *Message to His Lovers*:

"On the 10th of July, the 43rd anniversary of my Silence, I want all my lovers to observe complete silence for 24 hours, from midnight of 9th July to midnight of 10th July 1968'.

"Please note that Baba has given *no option of a fast* for those who may find it impractical to observe silence. His lovers know what their Beloved's wish is, and it is left to them how they manage to carry it out."*

This was the last circular giving instructions about this special day.

* 82 *Family Letters to the Western Family of lovers and followers of Meher Baba*, written by Mani (Manija Sheriar Irani).

Mani: I think there should be no question in the minds of anyone, should we observe silence or not. It is an opportunity that we should not let pass by. Every lover of Baba, to my mind, must observe silence on 10th of July - the Silence Day. You salute your Beloved by giving Him a rose, you would not call that a routine or a ritual. It is an expression of your love, a piece of your heart. Baba observed silence for our sake, not for His own sake. In India we even have our children from four years onwards try to observe silence on Silence Day. At first they don't know exactly what silence is and they think they can whisper; they think that whispering is not talking! But many children of the Baba families do observe silence, just like the grown-ups. When youngsters are all day long in school and are not given a holiday, they tell the principal of the school in advance that they will observe silence and not talk, but will attend the classes. Baba lovers who go to offices, who go to work and cannot get a day off still continue to observe silence. They tell their bosses who somehow always say that it's alright and co-operate. Mostly, nobody has said, "No, that can't be allowed." The answer has been, "Yes." So it is always that little striving, that effort which we must make our own, that should not be lacking.

Silence Day is a very special day for every lover of Baba. Baba has observed silence for all - for *each one* of us - and if we cannot give that little response for one day, if we cannot keep our lips closed for one day of a year, then that's too bad. I don't feel that by keeping silence we are going to help the world or anything like that. That is not why we are doing it. It's just a salute, an homage to His Love for us, an expression of our love for Him. Beloved Baba observed silence for all these years, and for one day He has said we can share it with Him too. How blessed we are! JAI BABA!

Letters

FROM ADI

On obedience ...

12 January 1978

I was happy to receive your letter. I remember you without your description of yourself. Sometimes because of the detailed explanation of the various stages of God that is given by Beloved Baba one might, as it is said, lose the forest for the trees. Know this with all of your heart and mind - Meher Baba is God in every sense of the word. Once, one of His lovers was confused over her relationship with Baba in light of all the spiritual masters, perfect and imperfect. Baba said, "There are masters and masters, but I am God!"

All the details of the spiritual path can be brought down to two things: Meher Baba is God, and the goal of life is to love and obey Him so that you lose yourself in Him. Whether He is in the body or not does not affect His connection or love for you. He uses His body as an instrument, but He is not dependent on it.

The reason the happiness you describe continues is that it is Baba's Presence you are experiencing. All other happiness fades away, but His Presence remains and grows stronger. Know that Baba is always with you. Sometimes Baba lovers say that they "see" Baba. Does it mean that when they don't see Baba, He isn't there? Of course not. He is always with you.

Yes, Baba is always protecting you, yet remember a part of His blessings is your effort. Do your best, then leave the results to Him. But you must do your best first. You can't make a half-hearted effort, then expect Baba to help.

Regarding Baba's message to you. I will repeat the message then comment on it. "I am happy with your wish to surrender to me Stop Love alone makes obedience easy so love me more and more Stop I send you my Love Blessings - Baba."

In loving Baba you forget yourself. The difficulty in obeying Baba is only one's ego; so the more you remember and

love Baba, the more you forget yourself and the easier it is for you to obey. What are the things Baba wants you to obey? They are the orders that will remove the things that keep you separate from Him. So in loving Him more and more, you are thinking not of yourself, but of Him. Thus it is easier to obey.

You can remember Him or yourself. There isn't room for both of you. Either you make Him your constant companion, or you make yourself your constant companion. One can only have one companion to make. Remember Him, forget yourself, and don't think of the things that would cause you to disobey Him.

A soldier obeys his superior. He does it for salary. There is no love, and it certainly isn't easy. When you fall in love you naturally want to do things that please your beloved, even at the cost of your own happiness.

Without obedience surrender is incomplete. Baba sent you this cable because of your wish to surrender to Him. He is reminding you that as a result of your wanting to surrender to Him, you must obey Him. This is made easy through loving Him more and more. To merely love without obeying is saying that one enjoys the feeling - the experience - of love, but doesn't care how Baba feels. To love without obeying is a form of selfishness. It is being concerned about one's feelings, but not the Beloved's.

What are the things Baba wants us to do? To avoid the things that keep us away from Him. Baba doesn't give us orders to deprive us of any happiness in the world. We may think this is so because His orders at times conflict with our desires. But He knows better than us what is best for us. The things Baba tells us to do are not only for our long-range spiritual good, but also to make us happy in this world.

Dear brother, you are so blessed to have had direct communication with Baba. The next two cables were: "Your love makes me happy. Love me more and more I send my blessings of love to you" and "Your cable made me happy You are blessed to be mine I send my Love Blessings to you."

"Love Blessings" and "Blessings of Love" are the same thing. Baba sent you these blessings so that love may awaken in your heart more and more. The very fact that Baba sent you

His Love means you have His Love. Whether you are receptive or not is not the point. You have His love because He says so. It is like Baba saying in Genesis in the Old Testament of the Bible: "Let there be light and there was light." What Baba says is an accomplished fact because He says so. You are blessed with His Love because Baba has said it.

So dear brother, try your best to love Him more and more and He will help you. Try with all your heart to obey Him, and He will help you.

Adi

On pleasing Baba ...

12 October 1976

The important thing concerning your life is that you do whatever draws you closer to Baba. The details of one's profession and career are not so nearly important as maintaining and increasing the connection one has with Him in the abode of the heart.

Baba will be with you no matter what you study. Try your best to decide in your heart what Baba wants; then make a decision, and as long as you take His name with you, you will be doing the right thing.

All the divisions you speak about exist in the mind only. The heart is only one. See from the heart, not the mind. It is the mind that wants to divide and separate. It is the heart that is one. Through your constant remembrance of Him, His grace will flow to you to help you seek and experience everything as one, as parts of the whole unity of life.

In deciding not only what to take in school, but what personal relationships to develop in friends, and what life partner to choose if you decide to get married, ask this question: Will this relationship help bring me closer to my heart's desire: Meher Baba? In deciding where to live, where

to go for your vacations - in virtually every decision in your life - the criteria for making the decision should be: Will this action of mine bring me closer to Him, and will it please Him? Or can I do something else which, although it isn't something I like, will please Him and will bring me closer to Him?

If you do this with the attitude of a child, looking to its parent to see what the parent would be happy with, then Baba will guide you and His Grace will be upon you.

Adi

*On being raised to the heights and
brought down to dust ...*

1979

I know what a trying ordeal you have experienced recently in your efforts to come closer to Him. Yet at the same time, I wanted to tell you how fortunate you both are to receive this opportunity of effacement in the midst of your recent suffering. As I have often said, fortunate are those whom Baba raises sky high, but more fortunate are those whom He brings down to become dust at His feet. You have been given the opportunity to get closer to Him in your recent experience.

By being brave and relying on Baba as the sole source of your support, and accepting the suffering you have gone through, He will draw you closer to Him.

There is a ghazal by Seemab which, upon hearing some of the lines, Baba gave the poet liberation. Seemab was out of the body at the time. I would like to share some of the lines from this ghazal with you:

"Either peel off the layers of wounds of the heart and throw them out of sight, or accept the wounds (of separation from the Beloved) as positive indications of love."

My dears, what else is there to do but accept every situation as given by Him, and allow yourself to be ground to dust cheerfully? There is another ghazal that says that this life has been forced upon me, so why not keep happy?

Welcome the gifts of effacement of the false self that He offers even though it hurts. In coming to Him, everything dear to us - our friends, our concept of the spiritual path, everything - has to be taken away leaving only Him. Believe me, nothing that anyone has done to you has been done with malice. Each thing done by those who seemed to have hurt you was done out of the sincerity of their perspective of how to serve Baba, no matter how limited that perspective might be.

This doesn't mean that your feelings of being hurt are not genuine. It is just that we have to grant the sincerity of the motive of others. The nature of the spiritual path is that two people who disagree can both be right. You see, only He is right, and everyone else at best has only partial glimpses of the Truth.

You have been blessed because, in the pain of what you have experienced, a new enthusiasm to reach Him and fall only at His feet has been born in you. This is what is important. Don't dwell on the past, don't be bitter about what has happened, but strive with all your heart to be His. Give yourself completely to Him. He is responsible for your spiritual welfare, don't be concerned about anything else. Remember Him, and automatically you forget yourself.

Adi

*On the relationship between the Avatar
and Perfect Masters ...*

6 May 1978

I read your letter of 28th March carefully and so also did the other Mandali.

I appreciate deeply your aspirations, your experiences of light and darkness, and your eagerness to be assured on the path of your advancement.

Since you have asked me for guidance, let me write to you candidly that although Baba referred many times to Perfect Masters and said many good things about them, He never once said we should go after any Perfect Master. One who loves the Avatar never has the need to go to any Perfect Master at any time. You should properly understand who the Avatar is and how He functions.

For those who are in the love-orbit of the Avatar, He is the Way and the Goal, whether He is in the body or not. The Avatar's power of Love that He releases during the work He does in His lifetime, lasts for 100 or 200 years after He gives up the body depending on if His next Advent is after 700 or 1,400 years.

For every lover, the Avatar sets up a course of life composed of one body or many bodies until His lover realizes God. The Avatar is man's eternal Friend and Benefactor. The question of defecting to any other master does not arise; and if done out of impatience, ignorance, over-eagerness or overwiseness, then one deters and disturbs one's own course of advancement.

That is why the Avatar says, "Hold on to my daaman till the very end." The end is not when the Avatar gives up the body, and the end is not when the lover dies. Connection with Avatar Meher Baba is for all times and through all lives a lover may have to pass, till manonash (destruction of the mind) is brought about and the lover is released from illusion and becomes God-realized.

All the occult or similar experiences you may have had were rightly gone through by you. They may be due to sanskaric aberrations or the timely fulfillment of an overworked desire. Occult experiences, however, are not the symptoms of true spirituality, especially if one loves Baba.

With Baba, the only thing necessary for an eventual and final Realization of the only One Highest Truth is patience, love, purity, service, and surrender to the Will of the Avatar

who always was, is, and ever will be whether in a body or out of it.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

Adi K. Irani

On miracles and the five Perfect Masters ...

21 March 1978

You are right about Meher Baba disclaiming any miracles. The only true miracle is the awakening of the heart to God. An analogy might be useful to explain this. Imagine you see a friend who is dreaming and in his dream he thinks that he is crippled or suffering some distress. If you had the ability to enter the dream, would you perform a so-called "miracle" and restore his ability to walk and relieve whatever distress he had, or would you wake him up from the dream?

The miracles performed by others only perpetuate the dream. And, if a distress is relieved in the dream, there is less of a motive to wake up from the dream; moreover it is inevitable that whatever problem is solved by the miracle will eventually trouble the person once again - if not in this birth, in the next birth.

But once one is awakened from the dream, one is permanently free from all suffering. Meher Baba doesn't bother to make one's dreams pleasant, but seeks the permanent emancipation of one from illusion.

Regarding your question about the identity of the 5 Perfect Masters, I don't know who they are. However, I will say one thing about them. Meher Baba said that during His Advent which lasts over 100 years beyond the dropping of His body, the 5 Perfect Masters would not be publicly known. Therefore, although I cannot tell you who the current 5 Perfect Masters are, I can tell you that for the next 100 years that anyone that becomes publicly known is definitely not a Perfect

Master.

The time for the next 100 years is for the Advent of Avatar Meher Baba. As such, it is His Name and Love that is meant by God to awaken humanity. Therefore, the Perfect Masters, although they do operate, will do so privately. Now is the time for Meher Baba's Advent. When the force of His Advent begins to fade after 100 years, then the Perfect Masters will come forward to continue the work that has been given them by none other than Meher Baba himself.

Adi

*On mediums, telepathy, clairvoyance
and pre-cognition ...*

Ahmednagar
23 May 1961

Your love for Baba is deep. Your reverence for Him is admirable. Your obedience to Him is sincere. These qualities have placed you as a lover of Baba close and dear to the heart of the Beloved who loves you so much.

Baba at no time encourages the slightest deviation of understanding on the part of His lovers from adhering to LOVE alone as a guide to all their actions. Hence, Baba sends no messages through any 'mediums,' nor wants us to give any countenance to our Psi-capacities such as telepathy, clairvoyance, pre-cognition, tele-kinesis, etc. These phenomena are quasi-astral and quasi-physical, and are not only illusory but often misleading and obstructive. God become Man plays His part to perfection, and Baba sends His messages through the normal means of communication. Baba wants His lovers to behave normally and naturally in their progress towards Truth, for they have the Avatar Himself to guide them in this. The chances are greater that one will move farther away from Truth and Baba, than come closer, by indulgence in occultism and supernatural phenomena such as

materialization, poltergeist, trance personality, separability of astral body from the physical body and survival of astral body after death, or giving importance to dreams or trance.

Therefore, Baba most strongly emphasizes that *all* contact with Him is solely of the heart and through love. Those who love Baba and take Him for their spiritual Master must not indulge in mediumistic tendencies as their method of contact.

Adi K. Irani

*On the value of reading the
Avatar's words ...*

26 July 1974

The history of having to own Baba literature begins from 1922, the year I joined Avatar Meher Baba. It was then (before He began His Silence) that He told me and others in Manzil-e-Meem, "In time to come I will give you such writings that will convince you without doubt the validity of My Reality."

I was ever so eager to receive and read His writings. But the process of conviction on my part began then slowly and surely. Many years after that came the full-fledged revelation of His entire writings when all the dark corners of my understanding became fully enlightened.

No wonder, on many an occasion, Baba advised old and new comers to read His works over and over again. To borrow Baba books and read them is one thing; to own His books and read them is another. When you own Baba books, you can refer to anything and everything at any time you spontaneously feel like asking yourself a question of which you don't easily get a reply. Baba books should always be on hand to read, re-read and for purposes of reference.

Owning Baba books is a Sahavas or companionship which has so much grown in need, especially after Baba dropped His

body.

May His Love enlighten the hearts of the readers of His works, and may His messages give them a perfect understanding of who Baba is - the Avatar of the Age - to enable them to give this understanding to others!

Adi

*On God Speaks, drugs, and the
Only Reality ...*

Ahmednagar
10 October 1964

Your letter of September 29th was forwarded to me for my information and reply.

Meher Baba directs me to send you His Blessings and Love and to inform you that He is happy you have been remembering Him in the course of your studies. Meher Baba wants you to study the book *God Speaks* for it will help you to understand the mystery of life ephemeral and the Truth of Existence Eternal.

The book *God Speaks* is a very important text book for all students who are keen to understand the fundamental purpose and mechanics of life and the universe. *God Speaks* reveals to us that all experiences, even of spiritual aspirants on the path to God Realization gotten in the natural course of involution of consciousness are of the domain of illusion. Therefore, how much more distracting are the experiences of a layman in a laboratory who experiments with drugs to induce experiences with the semblance of those of an aspirant on the spiritual path? Meher Baba has said that the One and True Experience is the Experience of Truth, the Reality, for once the realization of God is attained it remains a continual and never-ending experience.

The all-pervading effulgence of God the Reality can only

be experienced by an aspirant who keeps himself scrupulously above all illusory experimentations and humbly takes refuge in the Love of God.

God can only be realized by loving Him with all the love at one's command: pure, simple and unadulterated love. When one's love for God, and God alone, is at its zenith, true longing for union with God is greatest, and the aspirant's ego assertion is then at its lowest point.

The aspirant at this stage is on the sixth plane of consciousness (vide *God Speaks*) and 'sees' God face to face in all His Glory. Such an aspirant experiences God's effulgence consciously and continually without a break. He experiences this without any fears of fluctuation in his continual and never-ending experience of 'seeing' the Glory of God. Even this most sublime experience of 'seeing' God face to face falls short of the Only True Experience - union with God the Reality.

It is absolutely essential for a spiritual aspirant who genuinely longs for union with God - the Reality - to shun false practices of yogic postures and exercises, meditation on other than God the Beloved, experiments with certain drugs, and fads for types of food. These things do not uplift the aspirant nor do they draw him out of the rut of illusion. Experiences born of these practices wear off no sooner than the 'aspirant' withdraws from or is thrown out of the orbit of the effects produced by the technique employed.

All so-called 'spiritual' experiences generated by taking 'mind changing' drugs (such as LSD, mescaline and psilocybin - mentioned in your letter) are superficial and they add enormously to one's addiction to the deceptions of illusion which is but the shadow of Reality.

The experience of a semblance of freedom that these drugs may temporarily give to one is in actuality a millstone round the aspirant's neck in his efforts towards emancipation from the rounds of birth and death.

It is good to know that there are drugs that alleviate human sufferings, so it is better to have a knowledge of a specific drug for a particular ailment and it is best to put to use the specific drug for the benefit of a human body.

But there is no drug that can promote the aspirant's

progress - nor ever alleviate the suffering of separation from his Beloved God. *Love* is the only propeller and the only remedy. The aspirant should love God with all his heart until he forgets himself and recognizes his Beloved God in himself and others.

When you study the book *God Speaks* you will understand how very impossible it is for an aspirant to realize God without the grace of a Perfect Master or the Avatar who is the Eternal Perfect Master. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for a genuine spiritual aspirant to surrender himself to the Avatar or a Perfect Master who is God Himself.

Adi K. Irani

On becoming a teacher ...

Ahmednagar

10 September 1968

We are all headstrong and rebellious at times, and Beloved Baba would not be the Ocean of Love if He rejected us on that account.

We should always remember, dear brother, that although some of us may have studied the *Discourses* more than others have, or practised some of the types of meditation more successfully, that does not qualify us to set ourselves up as teachers and guides to the feet of the Master. The only one qualified to do that is he who has become dust under His feet. And that one will never try to teach, but will simply offer to share with another the amplitude and safety of that Shelter.

For the rest of us, the best thing is to treat one another as simple lovers of the One Divine Beloved and try to draw ever closer to Him. I would suggest to you that you read and re-read all the books, booklets, messages, etc., by Baba and about Him.

Avatar Meher Baba sends you His Love.

Adi

To an immigrant American who came
to Baba during a period of suffering ...

2 January 1969
Ahmednagar, India

Your letter telling of your sufferings and courage has been received and read to Avatar Meher Baba, and He was touched by your faith in Him.

He says that He has been with you in your dark hours, and will continue to be with you and help you if you hold firmly to Him.

He wants you to know that your sufferings have brought you to Him; without them you would never have heard of Him and never have come to a country where you can mingle with His lovers.

Baba wants you to read and re-read His book *God Speaks* (and any other books by and about Him as time permits) so that your faith in Him will be supported by a greater and fuller knowledge of Who He is.

Beloved Baba sends you and your wife His Love and Blessings.

Adi K. Irani

On Baba gatherings ...

6 January 1978

The first thing about Meher Baba gatherings is that they should specifically be about Avatar Meher Baba. Whether they are about His life or messages makes no difference. Sometimes some Baba lovers in all sincerity will say that Baba is in everything, so why not study other paths as Baba is there.

This is true: Baba is everywhere, but the point is where can I find Baba? It is practical to find Baba in gatherings about Him.

This question had come up during Baba's lifetime and He wanted gatherings to be about Him. Sometimes there can be discussions about the life of Perfect Masters or saints associated with Baba, but this should be kept to a minimum.

As far as decisions over practical matters: Baba has said that decisions should be made by democratic vote. The members of the group should elect the officers, and then those officers are empowered to make the decisions. No one has the right to make authoritarian decisions.

One very important thing is that anyone who is elected an officer or has any position at the Center, should do so only in an administrative capacity, and not in any spiritual capacity. There is no hierarchy in Baba's outward work. There is only Baba and His lovers. Everyone has an equal position. Baba has no chargemen on earth. He communicates equally to all of His lovers in the heart.

Baba has not appointed anyone or any organization to represent Him in a spiritual sense. Certain centers and individuals have been given specific orders and responsibilities by the Beloved, but this is between Baba and that person or organization. No one has the right to impose anything on anyone else. Each heart is free to relate directly to the Beloved in his or her own way.

The best guide is the heart. Baba has said, "Think of things that you would not hesitate to think in my presence, speak words that you would not hesitate to speak in my presence, and do things that you would not hesitate to do in my presence!"

Whenever His lovers gather together, Baba is there. Therefore, when you have Baba meetings, Baba is there. Act accordingly.

The purpose of meetings is to serve as a channel to awaken His Love. The meetings have no other purpose. The problem with traditional religions is that their gatherings start to assume a purpose of their own, rather than as mediums for awakening His Love. As long as some activity serves the

purpose of awakening love, it has a value. But the moment it starts assuming importance of its own, it should be dropped.

For example, silence at a meeting. Keeping silence for a few minutes can be useful to remember the Beloved. But there is no value in silence for silence's sake unless it is used to remember Him. Singing, plays, etc., all have a value as long as they point to Him.

There is the old story of a disciple asking his master where the moon is. The master points to the moon with his finger, and the ignorant disciple thinks the finger is the moon.

Likewise, so often His lovers tend to forget the purpose of His work. The purpose of Baba's messages is to awaken love in the hearts of His lovers. So all activities should continue only as long as there is love in them; otherwise, they should be given up. Baba wants love in the hearts of His lovers.

Baba's medium is the heart, not organizations. No organization, no group should be established to assume importance on its own. More important than all the archives, books, movies is the heart of the one true lover of the Beloved. All of these outward activities have a value and should be taken care of, but not to neglect what is most important.

It is like the comparison between the heart and the feet. The feet have a place and are very useful; yet if one loses one's feet one would still live. But if one loses one's heart, then one cannot live. Baba activities - like publishing, forming corporations, centers, etc., are like the feet. They have a value, but the feet cannot be compared to the heart.

If the world fell apart and disaster struck and all the books, movies, archives and centers disappeared - that would not affect Avatar Meher Baba's Love. Beloved Baba uses all of these things, but does not need anything or anyone. His work is independent.

During the New Life Baba said, "This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it." So it is with all of Baba's work. Do the work, participate in the activities, but don't think that the work depends on anyone.

I remember that during one of my visits to the West an old-time Baba lover in reference to the apparent lack of response to her from Baba said, "What has Baba done?" It is

like a cell of one's body saying, "What have you done for me?"

Meher Baba is the Avatar, God personified. His being permeates and sustains the entire illusion. The poet says, "One thing I could not understand: It is Meher Baba who gives me love, yet I am called the great Baba lover!"

Often, I have heard importance and appreciation for some work and activity being given to someone other than Baba. This doesn't mean you should not have Baba meetings because of concern about taking one's self or the actual meeting as more important than Baba.

A Baba lover once asked the Beloved: "Suppose one feels that meditating by oneself is service. I like to visit the group but not all the time." Baba replied, "I would like you all to belong to certain groups. Why? Because you can cooperate and tell others about me and share your thoughts. You learn much more than when you remain by yourself. When you listen, exchange thoughts, prayers, my Presence is there."

The thing to do is to always keep Baba at the meetings, remembering that the point is to be with Baba.

In your letter you asked for a general set of guidelines. Please feel free to ask me more specific questions, and I will be happy to respond to them

Adi

*On Pilgrimage to Meher Baba 's
Tomb ...*

29 November 1979

You said that you feel you will have to be "overwhelmed with this urge" before making the effort to come to His Tomb in India. You should not let your coming here depend on your moods. Moods come and go, but the benefit you get from being here doesn't come and go; it lasts forever.

Very often I hear people say that they didn't feel what they

expected when they went to His Tomb. This doesn't matter. The nature of our mind is to be changeable, and regardless of what your mind says, follow your heart and make the effort.

I suggest that you put the "wheels" in motion to come. Then at the last moment when everything is all set, if at that time you really don't want to come, you can always change your mind.

You said you are a "little short on heart quality at present." Baba said that a part of His grace is one's effort. Therefore, you should make the effort to get here, and then Baba will supply the "heart quality."

Above all, remember Baba loves you. He is always there to give His Love to you; you just have to be willing to receive it through remembrance and surrenderance.

Adi

On desirelessness ...

1978

Avatar Meher Baba's messages if taken up with due seriousness and reverence and acted upon can help man to become what he is not and what he aspires for.

Men have varied aspirations and longings in life. One desires a happy, healthy and prosperous life, while another seeks mental peace and quietude; a third hunts for power and self-aggrandizement; a fourth looks for higher experiences and ecstasy; a fifth wants God-realization but without pains and sacrifice; a sixth wants God and is prepared to give up everything but his "ego," and so a poet from Hyderabad by the name of Kamil says in Urdu,

*"Tarke dunya tarke ugaba tarke Moula tarke tark yane
yun be arazoo jine ki adat karke dekh."*

Give up this world, give up all the inner worlds, give up

the desire of God-realization and give up the sense of having given up all these. This means, cultivate the habit of living a desireless life.

Meher Baba can give and grant anything and everything but if one wants to please Meher Baba then he should try to become desireless.

If a state of perfect desirelessness is achieved, then all desires become one's servants without making one feel and demonstrate that he is the master of all desires.

So choose what you want and reject what you don't, but know that Meher Baba loves you more than you can ever love yourself.

Do rejoice in having contacted Meher Baba through His messages.

Adi

On reading past lives and the occult ...

18 November 1976

There is nothing which Baba suggested or instructed or ordered by way of meditation (except in some special cases) to be regularly practised by His lovers, much less as you say "hoaxes" about auras and reading past lives and all that nonsense. Nature does not want you to dabble into past lives which will take one more into the wilderness. Nature wants you to love God and wants man to be released from illusion. This is the only aim in life, and Baba provides a ready Presence in Himself for man to be released through love.

If someone thinks that it is unspiritual and "closed" and unloving not to become involved in this mad children's play of auras and past life findings, then in the same way, he will be called singularly unloving who does not accede to the request of a loving child who happens to get hold of a razor and wants

to cut his own throat or someone else's by not becoming "closed" in his action and preventing him from doing it.

Adi

On marriage ...

18 January 1979

As long as the basis of your marriage is seeking the Beloved's pleasure instead of your own pleasure, you are safe. To be happily married is not easy. It means being more concerned about the happiness of your partner in life than your own personal happiness. Both of you love each other and offer your united love to Baba.

Now that you are taking this step it is very important that you put the welfare of your marriage above your own individual wants and needs. By learning to sacrifice in marriage one can grow closer to Baba. Marriage is a perfect opportunity for self effacement for learning to be more concerned about someone else rather than one's self.

By both of you doing Baba's work together, that will serve as a way of directing your energies towards your higher self in the form of Baba and His work, thus not only helping your marriage but bringing you closer to Baba.

Adi

In reply to a six year old boy ...

29 October 1978

How nice to receive the drawing you sent me sometime back! Also, I was very happy to receive the photo of us

together. Yes, you and I are old friends, because we are both children of Meher Baba. He is our real Father and Mother. He is with us eternally.

Remember, my dear friend, whenever you have any problems, you always share them with Baba. I do, and He takes care of them. Remember Baba always wants you to obey your mommy and daddy, because Baba has made them responsible for taking care of you, and in their taking care of you, they are also taking care of Baba in you. Sometimes it won't be easy for them or for you as you are growing up. But remember that Baba has given you all to each other and so, in being patient and loving to one another, you are pleasing Baba. You are serving Meher Baba by taking care of each other.

The best way to love and serve Baba is to be as loving as you can to your mommy and daddy; and the best way your mommy and daddy can please Baba is to be loving and patient with each other and with you.

You see, my dear, when you serve Baba in others you will feel Baba in others. By trying as hard as you can to serve Baba in your family and those whom you meet in your life, you will begin to experience Baba more and more. Believe me, the more you strive to find Him, the more He will find you.

Please convey my love to your dear parents. Inform them that I will be going on another trip to Andhra for a few weeks this week. Also, tell your mommy and daddy that they will come to India for darshan in Baba's time, so not to worry.

Well, dear friend, do keep in touch and remember He is always with you.

Adi

On Baba's Silence ...

20 September 1960

Inspired by the skeptical remark made by someone about

Baba's constantly putting off the day of breaking His Silence, one of the mandali expressed the following in a letter. The relevant excerpt is being sent to you for your interest and for the information of other Baba-lovers near you. Please see that you share the following with them:

"We are about half way across the span of the present Seclusion and our focus is not so much on the Seclusion itself as on what lies just beyond the span. There are a number whose attention is focused on the breaking of Baba's Silence which He has said He would do this year.

"On the other hand, those who are and have been with Baba, have not felt He has been silent and are therefore not 'craning their necks' to see the breaking of His Silence - they have HIM; they hear His Silence speak in their hearts and their lives unceasingly. But those who only have His Silence, eagerly await what the breaking of it will reveal. They are the believers of His Silence and time and again they remind the believers of Baba about His Silence.

"And then there are still others who are concerned wholly and solely about His promise to break His Silence - concerned that He should be breaking His promise instead of His Silence! And finally there are those selfish fish-in-the-shell who pray that Baba will once again and yet again postpone the day, for although the breaking of His silence will herald the dawn of Universal Unity and Harmony, it will be at no little cost to His Beloved Person.

"And of course, He will break His Silence just at the right moment.

"As Pharaoh said some 1,300 years before Christ (in reference to Moses) 'One day, in his own good time, he will speak the word that cannot be misunderstood.'

"Baba said, 'The one WORD full of meaning has produced innumerable meaningless words, and when I utter that WORD all words will have meaning.'

"Some seem to feel in regard to His Silence-promises, that He has to break His word many a time before He breaks His Silence to utter the WORD. And there are some who wonder if Baba will break His Silence after all. To this Baba has said, 'Of course I will break my Silence. Otherwise why would I

have observed it?"

"The delay that we feel is made by Baba in carrying out His word is but the reflection of the *delay within us* in our preparedness to accept His WORD of words. This delay on His part therefore is nothing but the exercising of the Avatar's Infinite Compassion.

"Baba may be putting off the day of the breaking of His Silence in order to put off those people who might believe in Him for merely being true to words rather than for being the One who will give the WORD. The skeptics would believe in Baba because of it, while we believe in Baba in spite of it..."

Adi K. Irani

On suicide . . .

29 June 1978

I am sorry to hear of the suffering your family has experienced; but I am happy to see how cheerful you are in spite of it and how you remember Him, the Source of all happiness.

Concerning your aunt's suicide, Meher Baba has given a discourse in *Listen, Humanity* entitled "Death and Immortality." I suggest you and your mother read this discourse. On pages 99 and 100 Baba discusses in detail about the various types of suicides. Basically, Baba explains that suicide is classified according to the motive of the individual. The explanation given by Baba is based on the laws He has created. Above the basic law of the functioning of the universe is the law of grace which supervenes the normal course of the laws of the universe.

Don't be disheartened by what Baba says is the experience of suicide victims. His Grace can overcome the normal functioning of the laws that generally affect suicides. You ask if Baba would be merciful to your aunt. He is Mercy itself.

I will share with you a story that illustrates what happens

when His Grace takes precedence over the normal laws. The sister of a Baba-lover committed suicide because of the difficulty she was having with her marriage. Naturally, the family was very distressed. The mother of the girl, although she wasn't a Baba-lover, still had feelings and respect for Baba. She knew Baba's explanation regarding the soul that has committed suicide and the great suffering it undergoes as the result of prematurely ending its life.

About a year and a half after her daughter's death, the mother came to see Baba and expressed her concern for her deceased daughter's welfare. Baba said, "Don't you know how much I love your son (the Baba-lover)? Your daughter has already reincarnated and had my darshan as a baby!" This incident shows that His Grace supersedes all. The best thing you and your mother can do for your aunt is to get as close to Baba as possible. By doing so His Grace will flow to your aunt.

How do you win Baba's Grace not only to help your aunt but your own soul? You win His Grace by pleasing Him. How do you please Him? You please Him by leading a life of obedience to Him.

The four basic things that would please Baba I have emphasized in my talks in the U.S. when we met. No. 1: No illegal drugs. No. 2: Don't stick to any other master than Meher Baba. No. 3: No sex before marriage, and after marriage sticking to one's husband or wife. No. 4: Not taking property that belongs to someone else. If you follow these basic things you will go a long way toward pleasing Baba.

You have been given the chance of helping your aunt by the grace of your coming into contact with Baba. The basic question facing any of His lovers in a situation like this is whether they are more concerned about the satisfaction of their own desires or more concerned about the soul of the one they care about. One may not be motivated to obey Baba for oneself, but at least for the soul of someone else.

Baba said that one should leave one's family to Him. When one loves and obeys Baba, His Grace automatically flows out to those who have a connection with Him. In other words, when You remember and love Baba, His Love and Grace flows to you and automatically, without your thinking of your family

members or close friends, His Grace also flows to those persons, because you have a connection with them.

Remember, by remembering Baba more than you remember yourself, all of your problems will become His. Baba said, "The Ocean of my Love is yours to fill your hearts with. Drink deeply my Love and be happy."

Adi

The fallowing was in answer to a request to keep the stretcher that Beloved Baba was brought on to the Tomb at Meherabad. This stretcher is now in 'Baba's Room' next to the Samadhi on Meherabad Hill.

The Salvation Army
Evangelene Booth Hospital
Ahmednagar (Maharashtra)
1 March 1969

Adi K. Irani
Secretary-Trustee
Avatar Meher Baba Trust
Ahmednagar

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter regarding our stretcher from the ambulance.

Please do not be concerned at the present time about it as the ambulance itself is out of commission. The trip it made with Baba was its last and we may have to replace it if the finance is available.

Sincerely,
Sd. M.A. Briesman
Chief Medical Officer

Letters

FROM PADRI

Dhuni 1925 Meherabad ...

An account written by Padri
5 September 1968

It was the month of September - the tail-end of the monsoon here. The rains during the first three months, beginning from the first week of June, had been very feeble which foreboded a drought if the tail-end or secondary monsoon current failed to arrive.

These secondary, September rains are very essential, for during this period the major crops of jowar, wheat, gram, etc. are sown. These crops are helpful, most helpful, to the farmers because they give the farmers their staple grain plus animal fodder in plenty. And since the primary current was feeble, the primary crops had failed in many places, in fact the primary crop was almost lost. Now, if the secondary current also failed then there would be a drought.

Being this kind of situation some far-off villagers who had suffered most came in a bunch singing bhajans to Baba in Meherabad in the old bungalow where He was occupied with the Mandali during the day. This bhajan party is called "dindi" where a number of people with musical instruments and a slender two-ended drum and brass taals (a type of brass castanets, which give a sweet metallic sound) play on the instruments and the singers sing bhajans (devotional songs) in unison.

Such dindi came to Baba with their tale of sorrow, that is, the failure of rains, and invoked Baba to do something about it. Baba, being the Compassionate One, gave them a patient hearing and told them to return immediately to their village and not to worry. Then He ordered the Mandali to make preparation for a dhuni to be lit.

Due preparations were begun - wood, sandalwood, clarified butter, etc. were accumulated. A shallow pit was also dug in the ground for the fire. A dhuni fire always has a very

shallow pit to receive the glowing coals which ultimately turn to ashes. These ashes have their own value for devotees to be applied to the forehead and to be taken home to be distributed amongst others as they come from a saintly abode.

So, at about 5 p.m., the first dhuni was lit in the presence of the Master who then told the Mandali to sing Upasni Maharaj's Arti. The Mandali did so and when the Arti was almost half over, it began to drizzle which in turn developed into a very good shower, cooling the earth and drenching the Master and the Mandali. Later we received information that the dindi also got drenched on their way home as they too received good rains. Thus their prayers were answered.

After we had finished the Arti, we all ran for cover nearby in the first school opened for Arangaon village boys by Baba. There we all sat down on the ground and Baba then told us all to write a poem in praise of dhuni. The attempts by some were good, while others fell flat. Anyway, being an order, everybody attempted according to his capability.

From that time until we all again left Meherabad for some other place, the dhuni was alight 24 hours a day. But during our absence, since none remained at Meherabad, the dhuni became cold. After our return, it was revived by Baba who ordered the Meherabad residents to light the dhuni on the 12th of every month. This order has been carried out to this day.

Sequel to dhuni history ...

The dhuni was situated in front of Baba's 'Table' where He used to retire for the night. The door of the Table was facing north and the dhuni was opposite it. As usual there was a nightwatch when Baba retired for the night. During the following incident Masaji was on night duty.

It was during one of the cold months, either on December 25th or January 26th, that Masaji was on night duty. Since

there was no other protection, Masaji sat near the dhuni to keep away the cold and to be comfortably warm.

On this particular night, it being colder than usual, Masaji sat nearer the dhuni and was inhaling the hot air to help keep himself warm, and as he got more comfortable, he became sleepy and gradually his head sank down on his chest. The position of his head brought it in line with the rising hot draught from the dhuni and one spark having taken leave of its parent landed on Masaji's turban setting it aglow.

The acrid smell of burning cloth reached Masaji's nostrils and shaking off his lethargy, he looked around to see what could be burning. He couldn't find anything, yet the smell persisted and was increasing. He felt his clothes to see if they had caught fire! No, they had not. Then he passed his hand over his turban and got a shock. His turban was on fire! In double quick time *and* absolutely quietly he put out the fire, never again to go so near the dhuni as to set himself on fire.

*Two letters by Padri about
Mohammed "Mast" ...*

Meherabad
12 September 1973

To:

The Mandali at Meherazad and under the sun,

Mohammed has again gone into one of his moods of abstaining from everything that sustains the body.

It came all of a sudden - either on the 6th or 7th June. For a very few days he ate a little somehow and also had his morning tea, though reluctantly. Then on or about 28th or 29th he asked *only* for sugar for his noon meal, which Sidhu gave him. Mohammed ate about 200 grams or so and then gave it up. Then afterwards nothing at all until this date.

No tea, no food, and no sleep. He often says that he goes to

the tap to drink water, but we cannot fathom whether he drinks or not. Sometimes when he belches (like last night) after coming from the tap, it seems like he must have drunk some water.

Sidhu and I have tried all sorts of antics to make him eat or at least to have his big mug of tea but the answer is either a blunt 'nako' (no) or 'manani ghail' - 'manani piail' (will eat later - will drink later).

He also does not sleep - 2 to 3 hours at the most and then up again. He stands for hours together looking at 'deesh' which may be anything like his potty, pharsi (stone slabs) or bedspread or anything that catches his fancy.

He has become weak though his gait is still brisk - all the same he *has* become weak.

Since yesterday his voice has become feeble - like that of a very sick man.

He either sits on his bed or keeps on looking at some 'deesh.' He does not want to hear or talk to anyone and gets easily disturbed and also irritated when either a dog or a cat or any stranger comes into his presence.

He drives away strangers unless Sidhu or I are present.

He used to go off his food or drink in the past no doubt, but this time this moody wave seems to be more intense. In the past he would listen to us sometimes but now he totally refuses, and we dare not force anything on him. Since he does not eat or drink, his bowels don't move. He only piddles.

Padri

Meherabad
30 May 1978

To all concerned,

This is to inform you all that Mohammed has gone off his food and nourishment since the 3rd of May and takes *nothing* at all save water. On the 23rd he ate six bananas, which is the only time he took anything during this period.

His condition has become very feeble, voice sunk low, no

sleep night and day. He dozes in a chair during the day but to me that does not look like sleep. So also at night. He might have catnaps of which I am not aware. At night he opens the door and stands and gazes at the tap and its running water. His breath smells foul, his hands shake and he has become very weak. That this phase of his agony is very intense is quite apparent to me and everyone.

The Beloved only knows the agony of the lover.

Padri

Letters

FROM FRANCIS

*A letter to Australian Baba lovers on
the tenth anniversary of Avatar's Abode ...*

Guruprasad
4 June 1968

Dear brother and sister bubbles in the
Ocean of the Beloved,

Greetings to you on the 10th Anniversary of Beloved Baba's stay with us at His place which He called Avatar's Abode.

Ten years is a short long time or a long short time - depending on whether one takes a long view of a short time or a short view of a long time: time being what it is - both our play-fellow or our master.

If we play with time most of the time, time will remain our master. If we take time seriously, then there will come the time for our time with the Beloved. He, as you know, is timeless: the Eternal Infinite Beloved who uses time to free us from the bondage of time.

Australia is a land of lots of time - although many Aussies say that time flies. Where, I wonder? Time perhaps to clean the old 12 bore shotgun and try one's marksmanship? But if we Aussies didn't regard our country as the Land-of-Lots-of-Time, why would the Beloved God-Man, the Greatest Stirrer of Hearts, have taken so long in stirring the pot of Australian Stew?

But that is as it was: time past. Time present is our rejoicing that time near-future will hold a time for all who want a time with the Beloved - for all who are not happy in being passengers in a bus driven by a drunken driver to a place with no name and no modern conveniences who want a time sooner than 700 years hence, a time now.

We will get no notice beforehand of this time; Beloved God-Man will not ring a bell to warn us that He is about to break His Silence and manifest as the Divine Beloved.

Beloved Baba's Seclusion has ended, but there is still some time to pass before the "something great which has never happened before" happens. But the Seclusion conditions for us here with Baba continue: we do not get out of the gate, nor is anyone allowed in to see any of us.

Your cable "All joyful at Seclusion end," came today and was read to Beloved Baba, and He was happy with the spontaneous love message.

Francis

*To the Mandali at Meherazad on
Baba's Presence ...*

Avatar's Abode
3 February 1971

Your birthday greetings came as a complete surprise. Why, I don't know - it just was - and I was at once at Meherazad with you all, seeing your faces, hearing your voices.

Well, if you dear ones miss me, how much more do I miss you - for you are at the Hub and I am at the end of one spoke of a Wheel. But we know very well that the Truth is, nobody misses no one; we are all missing the daily presence of Beloved Baba and the non-doing of each day according to His Pleasure. Now we have non-doing without His presence and direction. And the fact that you all are "reminders of His presence by a thousand little things" only means that you miss Him more than I, who have not these reminders.

What is this world to me - Meher Baba –
Your dear face never to see - Meher Baba –
Time was I used to sit bathed in your smiles –
Now it's my lot to tramp road's weary miles.

What is this world as such - Meher Baba –

Without your singing touch - Meher Baba –
That song would raise me up to heaven's height –
Now on this dusty road quick falls the night.

What is this world but pain - Meher Baba –
To be borne for love's gain - Meher Baba –
So let me become a grain of dust –
And I'll wait your footfall in perfect trust.

Francis

Song to Baba

The rain of my tears cannot quench this fire which burns
in me –
For this fire was lit when your Glance first fell upon me.

Ages ago when the Earth was young;
And it will keep burning until my song is sung.

Each time I sing your Name, Beloved,
Fresh flames up-spring that may not be quenched.

This fire will keep burning until my song is sung,
For your Glance started it when the Earth was young.

Francis
6 August 1974

I Sing of You, Mehera
(On your Birthday, Meher Year 73)

I sing of you, Mehera, belov'd of the Beloved of all men.

Before He began the Creation, the Beloved created you
To mirror to Him His love so that He would know it
ever anew.

I sing of you, Mehera, belov'd of the Beloved of all men.

Then He made the earth as an arbor for your pleasure and
quiet shade,
And ordered the stars out as your escort, and the moon to
be your maid.

I sing of you, Mehera, belov'd of the Beloved of all men.

And He created the sun and rain to keep Earth always fair
and green,
Bearing to each season choicest fruits and flowers for His
chosen queen.

I sing of you, Mehera, belov'd of the Beloved of all men.

The Beloved, because of a whim, caused the whole creation
to be:

In a One-word poem He contained it - and you are its
melody.

I sing of you, Mehera, belov'd of the Beloved of all men.

Francis
Meherazad
22 December 1967

Pursuits

When a man pursues the secrets of the things contained
in space,
He is chasing the flying shadows of the Beloved's face.

When a man dares dive deep within himself sharply eager
for seeing,
He comes at last to the experiencing of Self's pure being.

We look out from the prisons we have built over a billion
years,
Not knowing that their very stones can be dissolved by
love's tears.

When men were strong they were not ashamed of tears'
meekness;
Now that we have become half-men we call them weakness.

It is good to look out, search, examine every spoor
Till one picks up some man-tracks leading to the Beloved's
door.

Our arrival there is the purpose of every road
Whether we go as freemen or as beasts under a goad.

More blessed are the stones of the road that takes us to the
sight of God's face,
Than a man who pursues the secrets of the things contained
in space.

Francis

Happy Birthday

Happy, happy Birthday to you, dear Dhun,
And a shower of Blessing from the Only One:

The One, who in the first Dawn of dim time,
Hollowed the human heart so it could chime;

The One who laid the earth out as *that* Place
Where men could serve Him and win His Grace:
The One who clothed us in the dress of Dream,
That, naked, we would know the Truth Supreme;

The One men seek, but you most clearly know,
The One who calls to all - but few follow.

May this One, the Beloved Only One,
Shower rich gifts on you today, dear Dhun.

from Francis for Dhun Satha
Meherazad
Meher Year 73

Do not sigh for the Beloved of the 'old days' –
Let your sighs fan the flame of your this-moment praise.

Let zeros cancel zeros. Even the robins have brought
You heartening news of the battles being bravely fought.

Don't let anyone tell you that we're not all in the same boat:
Those that saw Him were seeing no more than a beautiful
coat.

His physical presence was His challenge to us: Here I
am now find me.
But even when I am found, nothing but the
rope of my name can bind me.

Whether one saw Him or not, He is still knocking on each
heart-door,
And each heart is still harbouring strangers - what matter
some few, some more!

Chuck out the want-strangers and make your house a
comfortable home
And remember He is hungry, but will eat only
Name-honeycomb.

If the beautiful Beloved were not here, where, O where
could He be?
There is not a drop which does not contain Ocean's oceanity.

By Francis
For Dot Pierpont, now Carhart

To Eruch on his birthday ...

Avatar's Abode
6 October 1972

My dear Eruch,
Some that would stay
Are dragged away,
Some that would go
Are made to remain.

You, dear brother, are among the remainers that many people yet may receive from you something of your experiences of Beloved Baba, and listen, O Prince of storytellers, to the tale of the Masters, of love and discipleship.

So, on your birthday I wish you the ease and comfort of good health until the time of your own Tale's ending.

With much, much love to you and all at Meherazad and Bindra House.

Francis

On religions and living a life for God ...

3 March 1960

Mohammedans, Zoroastrians and Christians don't believe in evolution, reincarnation and Man becoming God and God becoming Man. But the very conception of Hinduism is based upon a belief of reincarnation, evolution, and that everyone and everything is God.

Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Christians and Hindus all have a *Shariat*. The *Shariat* of Mohammedans, Zoroastrians and Christians is based on non-belief of the above; the *Shariat* of the Hindus is based on belief in the above.

But the *Tarikat*, *Marafat* and *Hakikat* of all of them is *one*

and the same and is founded upon the fact of Man's spiritual progress ending in him becoming (one with) God.

Now it would seem that the reviewer of "Stay With God" in the journal to which you so kindly sent the book, could be orthodox, because although he talks about Hafiz and Sufism he does not know that the whole core and content of Hafiz is man becoming God, and the whole purpose and goal of Sufism is to become Him.

However, the *Shariat* of these religions is divided into belief and disbelief which are valueless when one enters *Tarikat*, for the actual Path is dependent not on beliefs but on experience. It is merely that the believer must leave more belief; and the disbeliever will have to disbelieve his disbelief.

Beloved Baba, being beyond all Paths, can use all beliefs and disbeliefs for His divine purpose. It might even be that when He manifests Himself as the glorious Avatar, all of us will throw away belief and disbelief and begin to live as He would have us - lovers of the One God Whom we are to become.

Francis

*In His book **God Speaks**, Meher Baba uses the figure of a walnut to illustrate these four Sufi terms "...Shariat is the outer husk, Tarikat the inner lining, Hakikat the kernel and Marefat-e-Haqiqat the oil.*

God Speaks, by Meher Baba, p. 249, 2nd Edition, Dodd Mead & Co., New York, 1973.

A Letter

FROM BAL

*In reply to a question on other masters
from a group-head in India ...*

Meherazad
29 July 1980

Dear Brother,
Jai Baba!

Received your letter of 23rd July, which contained the following note that you had made in February, 1979 and about which you expect me to freely express my thoughts:

*In the light of the Words of Truth unfolded by Avatar Meher Baba, the HIGHEST OF THE HIGH, and in the light of the warning He gave to His lovers in 1957 at Guruprasad, Poona and in view of the repeated stress the Beloved of all hearts, Meher Baba, gave that His lovers should "hold fast to His **daaman**," what would be your reaction, if in any one of the centres established with the sole object of spreading the Name of Avatar Meher Baba and the messages of Love and Truth He gave to mankind, a worker for His Cause introduces a person to the lovers gathered in His Name and Love as a **Sadguru** (Perfect Master) and worships that person by bowing down to his feet?*

Well, dear brother, I personally feel that for a lover of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba there should not be a thought, even in a dream, to worship, bow down to, or introduce a person as a saint or a Perfect Master to others in any Meher Centre, even with the best of intentions to spread Meher Baba's Name. Only the "Highest of the High" can ascertain anyone's spiritual status. In His compassion for us, He has saved us from the allurements of running after those who claim to be masters or teachers by again and again repeating His injunction:

"Hold fast to my *daaman* with both hands until the end." So, to disseminate His message is to live a life of love, obedience and surrender to Him - the only One worthy of worship.

No compromise with this conviction can be made - at any

cost. The unflinching attitude to hold fast to His *daaman* must be kept foremost in our minds and hearts. As well as this being His order to us, it is also His loving warning, born of His Love and compassion for us, so that we may not get lost in the alluring "spiritual" mazes.

Avatar Meher Baba as the Ancient One is All-powerful to do His Avataric work, in His own unfathomable ways, through anyone. Although, in His compassion, He provides opportunities to His lovers to do some "work," the fundamental fact that He needs no one, but that we need Him, should not be forgotten.

His followers, devotees and lovers are expected to love Him, yearn for Him, and pray and plead to Him with the fullness of their hearts that He may bless us to accept Him totally. He *is* the Only One, besides whom there is no other; who else should we worship or devote ourselves to? In fact, there is no one else to worship, love and obey besides Him, who took form for our sake, so that we might begin to love Him as He should be loved and recognize Him as the Eternal Divine Beloved, the Ancient One.

In loving Baba as the Ocean of Love, one automatically loves all the lakes, rivers and seas of love, as they are included in Him. If one tries to compromise in one's love for Him, one will not love Baba in the way He should be loved. In being one-pointed to Baba, that very *point* has in it all the circles of spirituality with all of their centers, for He is All in All.

I shared my feelings with you as requested. However, you are of course free to have your own.

Bal Natu

A Letter

FROM BHAU

In 1954, Meher Baba sent out a circular letter in Hindi through Bhau Kalchuri in response to His lovers' expressed concern over the dropping of His body, as He had mentioned in the Final Declaration, given at Meherabad on 30 September 1954. The letter is translated into English by C.D. Deshmukh ...

8 October 1954
Satara

Dear Lovers,

After Avatar Meher Baba returned to Satara from Meherabad, there was a heavy rush of letters and telegrams here until the 7th of October, and all of them were given replies of assurances yesterday evening.

Yesterday at 7 p.m. Baba gave up the Alphabet-board and since that moment, all the doors through which external relations were maintained with Baba, have also been closed. Your letters filled to the brim with deep love were received in the right time and were read out to Baba. In reply to them all, Baba said:

"There is no reason at all for any of you to worry. Baba was, Baba is and Baba will also be eternally existent. Severance of external relations does not mean the termination of internal connection. The external contacts had been maintained till now. The time has now come for being bound in the chain of internal connections. *Hence, external contact is no longer necessary.* It is possible to establish the internal link by obeying Baba's orders. I give you all My blessings for strengthening these internal links.

"I am always with you and I am not away from you. I was, am, and will remain eternally with you and it is for promoting this realization that I have severed external contact. This will enable all persons to realize Truth by being bound to each other with internal links.

"Oh My lovers! I love you all. It is only because of My Love

for My creation that I have descended on Earth. Let not your hearts be torn asunder by My declarations concerning the dropping of My body. On the contrary, *accept* My Divine Will cheerfully. You can never escape from Me. Even if you try to escape from Me, it is not possible to get rid of Me. Therefore, have courage and be brave.

"If you thus lose your hearts, how will it be possible for you to fulfill the great task which I have entrusted to you? Be brave and spread ***My Message of Love*** far and wide to all quarters, in order to fulfill My Divine Will. Let the words '***Baba-Baba***' come forth from every nook and corner of the world and from the mouth of every child, and let their ignorance be reduced to ashes by the burning flame of My Love.

"Come together in order to fulfill My Will by taking your stand on ***Truth, Love and Honesty***, and be worthy of participating in My Task. I give you all My Blessings for spreading ***My Message of Love.***"

Meher Baba

Letters

FROM THE
MANDALI OF
AVATAR MEHER BABA

Behind the well-documented areas of Meher Baba's life and the great phases of His work is a vast treasure of correspondence between Him and His followers. Written by seven close disciples (mandali) and containing varying degrees of Baba's active participation, the letters appearing in this collection date from the 1950's to the present, the period during which correspondence between Meher Baba and His followers became increasingly important. A fair number of these letters were written during periods of Baba's seclusion and show how He maintained outer communication with His lovers while nurturing them to depend upon that which lies within. Other letters - written by the mandali on their own after January 31, 1969 - address spiritual issues along guidelines derived from direct experience of Baba's own way of handling similar situations.

Register of Editorial Alterations

Page 79, para 6, line 2, bounded changed to bounden

Page 94, para 4, line 4, deflecting changed to defecting

Page 111, para 2, line 6, supercedes changed to supersedes

Page 131, para 5, line 3, kernal changed to kernel