

As Only God Can Love

By Darwin C. Shaw

An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook

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by Darwin C. Shaw

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AS ONLY GOD CAN LOVE

A LIFETIME OF COMPANIONSHIP WITH MEHER BABA



Meher Baba at Meher Center, 1958.

AS ONLY GOD CAN LOVE: A Lifetime of Companionship with Meher Baba, presents one of the fullest accounts of life with Meher Baba—believed by many to be the Avatar of the Age, the Christ – by a Western disciple. It encompasses the 1930s through the 1969 Great Darshan and includes an inspiring chapter assuring present-day disciples that Meher Baba is still continuously accessible.

Diary entries – including Darwin's day-by-day record of the 1954 "Three Incredible Weeks" – letters, and photographs add a sense of immediacy, and throughout the book Darwin shares many of his own precious inner spiritual experiences. The sum total is a book that fulfills Darwin's hope that what emerges from these pages is "the exquisite eternal luminosity of Love's encounter."



For seventy years, Darwin conducted meetings and gave talks based upon Meher Baba's Discourses. In a 1935 letter to Darwin, Meher Baba wrote, "I give you and your work all my blessings."

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DARWIN C. SHAW

SHERIAR
FOUNDATION

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Photograph on back cover of Meher Baba at Meher Spiritual Center, 1958
taken by Darwin Shaw.

Photograph on back cover of Darwin Shaw in Myrtle Beach, 2001
taken by Summer Turner.

Photograph on title page of Meher Baba with men who attended
“The Three Incredible Weeks” at Meherabad, 1954. For details see page 188.

Photograph on page xxvi of Meher Baba in Meherbad taken by Padri in May 1936.

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*For the
Divine Beloved*



Song of the Wind

Let the song of the wind ever remind you of my love.

Let its soul-healing balm sigh through your being,

wherever you are;

And know that I have loved you as only God can love,

And be sure that I will love you thus throughout Eternity.

Know, beloved, that you are mine forever,

That I have called you from the realm of illusion

To caress you with Love,

With Love Divine.

DARWIN SHAW

Meher Retreat Building, Meherabad

September 23, 1954

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Preface

In response to the urging of many friends, I set out to write about my personal experiences with Meher Baba, the God-Man, who is known throughout the world as the Avatar, the Christ-conscious Being who periodically dons a physical form to come to the aid of suffering humanity.

As I have tried to convey in this book, it was not so much what Meher Baba said that convinced people about his spiritual greatness – although he gave out many helpful spiritual discourses – as it was simply the impact of being in his divine presence. To gaze into his eyes was to behold the mystery of redemption, the promise of the fulfillment of many lives. Therefore, it was not my intent to include in detail every event that occurred throughout my years with Meher Baba, but to try to impart the exquisite flavor of the way Baba revealed himself to me.

Fortunately, when my family and I were with Baba at different times throughout the years, my late wife, Jeanne, kept a diary of those events. In 1954, when I spent three pivotal weeks with Baba in India along with seventeen other Western men, I kept a detailed chronicle of every precious day with the Beloved. These source materials have been included wherever possible to capture the sense of momentous

significance we experienced at the time, to record Meher Baba's words as we heard them, and to create a sense of immediacy for the reader.

Many photographs and slides of Baba were taken throughout the years by myself as well as by members of my family, and a large number of them have been incorporated in this book. When I was with Baba in India in 1954, I sometimes felt twinges of sacrilege when I would snap a photograph of the Beloved, but when Padri, one of Meher Baba's close disciples, noticed my hesitancy, he forcefully said, "Keep shooting!"

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I am grateful to Beloved Baba for bringing Summer Turner to render invaluable help in many ways to both Jeanne and me. Her spiritual preparation, writing talent, and past editing training made her highly qualified to help in shaping the story of my experiences with Meher Baba into book form. She compiled and organized the material for this manuscript, drafted some portions, and edited the whole to make it a complete and readable book.

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A Brief Introduction to Meher Baba

by Darwin C. Shaw

*M*eher Baba said, “I have come not to teach but to awaken.” He also said, “I have not come to establish any cult, society or organization, nor to establish a new religion. The religion I shall give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many. The book I shall make people read is the book of the heart, which holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart.”

Meher Baba came to give the long-sought answers to the mystery of life and death, to bring to seekers the redeeming grace of divine love and truth, and to reveal the presence of God in human form.

Merwan Sheriar Irani, later called Meher Baba (“Compassionate Father”) by his first disciples, was born on February 25, 1894, in Poona, India. Destined to become the Avatar of the Age, the God-Man, or Christ, he had a normal childhood. Then one day in 1913, Merwan was kissed on the forehead by an ancient woman, Hazrat Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters whose task it was to remove the veil concealing his Godhood at the proper time.

The kiss bestowed by Babajan made Merwan conscious only of the divine bliss of his God-state and unconscious of his body and the

whole world. What followed was an agonizing nine-month-long process of reentering creation-consciousness while retaining God-consciousness so that he could fulfill his mission to the world. The only way Merwan could find any temporary relief from the anguish and pain was to bang his head against hard objects, such as stones, which would cause his forehead to bleed.

Eventually, Merwan followed an intense inner urge to make con-

tact with the other four Perfect Masters. With one of them, Upasni Maharaj, he spent seven years integrating his God- and creation-consciousness and preparing for his avataric mission.

In 1921, Meher Baba began to gather his principal disciples, or mandali. In Bombay, the mandali went through a period of intense spiritual training with the Master. Following this phase, Baba and his disciples moved to a large piece of

property about five miles from Ahmednagar. Baba named the place Meherabad, and it became a permanent center of his activities.

Meher Baba began to observe silence on July 10, 1925. He communicated by means of an alphabet board until October 7, 1954, when he discarded the board and used hand gestures for the rest of his lifetime. Baba explained that his silence was related to his mission to the world and that when he broke his silence it would be to release the Divine Word.

From 1931 through the 1950s, Meher Baba made many trips to the West, including several around-the-world voyages. On these trips Baba contacted thousands of people, many of whom became his adherents and devotees. Many people also came to Meherabad to have Meher



Meher Baba, 1936.

Baba's darshan, the blessing of a personal contact with the God-Man.

As the Avatar, Meher Baba's mission was and is for the whole world. People of all faiths felt free to come to him. He made extensive tours and held darshan meetings in many places throughout India that were attended by sometimes more than fifty thousand people from all walks of life.

On January 31, 1969, Meher Baba dropped his physical body, after declaring that his work was completed one hundred percent to his satisfaction. Since then, tens of thousands of people from all over the world have been flocking in ever-increasing numbers to his tomb-shrine in Meherabad. There and all over Meherabad, as well as nearby Meherazad, where Meher Baba and the some of the mandali resided (and where the remaining mandali still reside), Meher Baba's presence is felt by the visitors, and many experience the feeling that their inner being is completely transformed.

Amazingly, during his physical lifetime, Meher Baba left continuously flowing fountains of divine energy, or vibrations, in a great number of places throughout the world. These attest to the timeless omnipotence of this Infinite Being. In America, the Meher Spiritual Center, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is one of those places.

Although Meher Baba kept silence and said that humankind has been given enough of words, he did give many messages and discourses. He anticipated the need for explanations spiritual seekers could easily relate to regarding the mysteries of life and the spiritual path, and he went to great pains to give those explanations in direct, non-theological terms. Those publications include the *Discourses* and *God Speaks*.

With the help of his clear explanations and his ever-flowing Divine Grace, Meher Baba makes the prospect of inner growth and spiritual maturity an adventure in faith, trust, and self-giving. In one of his dis-

courses, Meher Baba has imparted a manifesto for spiritual seekers that remains eternally true: “To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing, in the world of forms, truth, love, purity and beauty – this is the sole game that has intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents, and attainments in themselves can have no lasting importance.”

Meher Baba came to bring to the world a new dispensation of divine love and truth. As he communicated in one of his messages:

Age after age, when the wick of righteousness burns low, the Avatar comes yet again to rekindle the torch of Love and Truth. Age after age, amidst the clamor of disruptions, wars, fears, and chaos, rings the Avatar’s Call: “Come all unto Me.” The time has come and I repeat the Call and bid all come unto Me. I have emphasized in the past, I tell you now, and shall age after age for evermore repeat, that you shed your cloak of life and realize Existence which is eternally yours. I have only one message to give, and I repeat it age after age to one and all:

Love God.

Introduction

*P*erhaps the wildest dream a person could have is that God would manifest in some unmistakable way, revealing the answer to the mystery of life and of Himself. For the lover of God, this would be the earthly appearance of the Divine Beloved clothed in human flesh, living and dwelling with his lovers, searching them out to share with them the incomparable wonder, beauty and Divine Love of his Infinite Being.

This may seem like an impossible dream, yet it actually happened during the twentieth century. I know that it happened, because through God's Grace I was one of those who intermittently associated with Meher Baba, who was to me the Second Coming of Christ, over a period of some thirty-five years, between 1934 and 1969. I feel that I was born to witness this great event and to play a part in Meher Baba's Divine Cause.

I was born on July 20, 1908, in the little Adirondack Mountain town of Luzerne, later called Lake Luzerne, in New York State. My only sibling was my brother, who was one year older than I. When I was about two years old, my parents decided to move to Schenectady, New York, where my father worked as a barber.

Shortly after we moved, we began attending services at the First English Lutheran Church. I was about three years old when I was baptized there. I remember being carried to the baptismal font by my mother. As the minister patted the baptismal water on my head and spoke the words of the dedication, I became aware of being surrounded by light and a strong sense of the Spiritual Presence. I assumed that this was what everyone experienced when they were baptized.

During the years that followed, my brother and I attended Sunday school at this church. I enjoyed hearing and reading about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and they seemed very real to me. This became the foundation of a strong faith that stayed with me throughout my adolescence and mature years. When I was about ten years old, I took violin lessons for three and a half years, and one of my teachers during that time was a Rosicrucian, and he told me about reincarnation.

In the early part of the twentieth century the Industrial Revolution was just beginning to affect the country, and the slow pace of the last century was still lingering. Television was far in the future; even radio was a novelty. Modern superhighways had not yet been developed, nor had commercial airplane travel. Horses would be seen drawing wagons in the summertime and sleighs in the wintertime, delivering coal, milk, bread, and ice. People had more time for reading and family singing. Everyone walked a great deal.

There were still places that seemed remote, where an adventurous youth could explore and experience a way of life that was beginning to fade away. Having read many Zane Grey Western books, I was fascinated with the American West, and I longed to go out there to see for myself what it was like. In July of 1925, right after my seventeenth birthday, I hitchhiked out to Wyoming with my seventeen-year-old cousin.

Out West we easily found jobs on cattle ranches, where much of the

work was done using horses. However, there was no time for formal training; we had to learn as we worked. That first year, we worked on ranches in Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas; in 1926, when I went back out West, I went alone to work on ranches in Wyoming, California, Nevada, and Montana. I felt tuned in to the pioneer spirit of the Old West, and I also experienced a great expansion of consciousness due to the tremendously expansive vistas; and this seemed to be the hidden purpose of my great adventure.

I found the Western lifestyle to be conducive to my contemplative nature, and I felt the presence of God guiding and protecting me. While I was doing ranch work I would often sing Christian hymns I had learned in church, such as “I’ll go where You want me to go, I’ll do what You want me to do. . . .” I felt the Presence of God ever with me, and I could also feel my mother’s prayers for me.

In the autumn of 1926, the day after Thanksgiving, I decided to leave the bitter cold of Wyoming and head for sunny California. I stayed in Los Angeles and went out to Hollywood, where I got a part in a movie as an “extra.” The movie was an adaptation of Leo Tolstoy’s *Resurrection*, and because I could ride a horse, I played a Cossack in the Russian Army. During that winter I spent a day on the set of a Tom Mix movie, and one day I saw Gary Cooper. Years later, in 1931, they were among the movie stars who met Meher Baba. And thirty years later I would return to Hollywood as one of Meher Baba’s traveling companions during his tour of the country.

Back home in Schenectady, I worked part-time for the city in the



Darwin on borrowed horse near Schenectady, 1927

Traffic Division of the Schenectady Police Department, where I began as a sign painter. I worked outside alone, and my equipment consisted of a pail of white paint, a brush, a broom, and a chalk-line. I worked mostly downtown, painting “No Parking” in the many restricted areas. As I painted the signs on sidewalks near the curb, I found myself very much among the people who were passing by close to me. Many would stop to watch and strike up a conversation. Without even trying, I developed an inner expansive feeling of spiritual kinship with the people of the city.

At that time there was no provision to keep me on the payroll during the colder months. I was living at my parents’ home and would spend much of my time during the winter months pursuing courses of study to improve my education. I was especially interested in comparative religions. In an effort to gain some understanding of the various religions, I attended churches of most denominations. I also studied Theosophy, the Rosicrucian teachings, Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Thought metaphysics. But I always came back to the New Testament, and this led to some remarkable spiritual experiences. Through communion with God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, I experienced a sense of salvation and glimpses of the Kingdom of God. Without setting out to do so, I was living a wonderful contemplative life.

In 1928 I met Jeanne Kitler, when we were both about twenty years old, and we married a couple of years later. She was brought up Catholic and loved Jesus very much, and our courtship consisted mostly of sharing our spiritual experiences. As my wife, she was my dearest friend, my life companion and fellow disciple of Beloved Meher Baba. In her wholehearted love for Baba she obeyed his wish for us to “make him our constant companion.”

When I first began working for the City of Schenectady, I had the

strong intuitive feeling that God was leading me into this position – that He wanted me there. I would return to the sign-painting job every spring, and eventually the job became year-round and permanent. As the department grew, I took on more office work, such as writing traffic commission rulings, investigating requests and complaints, and making parking and traffic surveys. By 1975, when I retired after almost fifty years with the City of Schenectady, I was the acting head of the Bureau of Traffic and Street Lighting.

Of course, with the ever-expanding responsibilities of my job and our increasing family, I had less and less time to pursue the contemplative life, but I learned to find and live the spiritual life in the midst of a very busy life in the world.

In 1932, I found out about Meher Baba, and I met him physically in 1934. He was the one in whose Cause I was prepared to dedicate my life: the one who comes periodically to give the long-sought answers to the mystery of life and death, to bring the redeeming Grace of Divine Love and Truth to those who seek, and to reveal the presence of God in human form.

Meher Baba said, “I have come not to teach but to awaken.” He also said, “I have not come to establish any cult, society, or organization nor to establish a new religion. The religion I shall give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many. The book I shall make people read is the book of the heart, which holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart.

“I have become one with the Infinite Source of everything. This is the state of Christ Consciousness. If people call me Messiah, Savior, or Redeemer, it does not affect me. Terms and names do not matter in the state of Christ Consciousness that I eternally enjoy and toward which I shall lead all who come to me.”

Although Meher Baba came to me in the Spirit in 1932, I could not

have anticipated the indescribable wonder of meeting him face to face in 1934: the unutterable sweetness and unearthly spiritual fulfillment of his Divine Love. Very few of those who have had this experience have attempted to write about it or explain it, because doing so would almost necessitate a whole new vocabulary!

We are used to relating our experiences in terms of clearly defined beginnings and endings, and this is probably adequate for most chronicles. However, I have found that my experiences with Meher Baba have a timeless quality about them. It is my hope that, despite the limitations inherent in the words I have used to construct this story of my life with Meher Baba, what emerges is the exquisite eternal luminosity of Love's encounter.

P A R T O N E

The 1930s

First Contact with Meher Baba

In the spring of 1932, I read an item in our local newspaper, *The Schenectady Gazette*, which told about Meher Baba leaving Bombay with a small group of disciples, bound for England and America. He was described as a mystic who was regarded by many as a modern Messiah. It said that he was keeping silence and that the breaking of his silence, which he intended to do in the West, was very significant for his mission to the world.

INNER CONFIRMATION

This news item aroused my keenest interest. I had been intuitively feeling that the Second Coming of Christ would take place very soon, and I felt that wherever he appeared I would know about it and would somehow get to him. I seriously wondered if Meher Baba could be the One I was looking for. Intuitively, deep within, I felt that he might very well be, and I checked the paper every day for more information about

his arrival. Later on I saw another item in the paper which mentioned Meher Baba's arrival in Dover, England. Each time an item about Meher Baba appeared in the newspaper, I pointed it out to Jeanne, my wife. She was as adventurous as I was, and she shared my interest and enthusiasm in anticipating the possible return of the Christ.

Finally, on the twenty-first of May 1932, while I was checking the newspaper before leaving for work, I saw the much-hoped-for item. It said that Meher Baba and a group of men had arrived in America, and it mentioned that he would be staying at a retreat at Harmon-on-Hudson. No address was given, but my heart soared with the hope that I would be able to find him.

Actually, from the time the first item about Meher Baba appeared, my hopes had been high. I continued to feel intuitively that he was the One, and I found myself reaching out to him in spirit. Then, on the day I read the last item, he came to me in the spirit while I was at work. His presence was unmistakably clear. It was that same familiar presence of Christ that had been a natural part of my life from the time I was a small child.

I seemed to be "taken up in the spirit" with him. I did not actually see him, but his presence thrilled me and confirmed my hope of who he was. There was a sense of timeless closeness to him, of secure intimacy with him. I felt that he was truly the Christ and that I had been born to serve him.

This certainty I felt about Meher Baba can only be explained by the inner rapport I already had with him, for the newspaper story itself, incredibly headlined "Meher Baba May Go into Movies," would not ordinarily inspire one to believe that this was a divine being, much less the Christ himself. I saw through the media's sensationalized presentation and apprehended the true message – the message I had been longing to receive.

At that time I thought of and visualized the Christ in the traditional Christian way, as Jesus. However, I did not expect him to return in the body he used in Galilee so long ago. Thus far, I had not seen his present form nor any pictures of him, but I was extremely anxious to get to him as soon as possible. After he came to me in spirit, I felt that I should go immediately in search of him. However, I was sick with a bad case of laryngitis, and so, under the mistaken impression that Meher Baba would be at the retreat for a longer time, I reasoned that I should wait and go during the three-day Memorial Day holiday the following weekend.

A DIVINE APPOINTMENT

I was working as a sign painter in the Traffic Division of the Schenectady Police Department, and unlike my colleagues, the police officers, I was not considered a permanent employee. On the days I worked, I was paid the princely sum of \$4.50 a day; if I did not work, I was paid nothing. The police officers were expected to work their normal hours that Saturday, but, determined not to be put off any longer, I decided that the best thing for me to do was not to show up for work at all that day. I assumed I would not be missed. A police officer friend of mine, Ira Gouthy, told me later what happened.

Normally, my absence would have gone unnoticed, but on this day, our supervisor, Captain Bath, an older man who was rather forgetful and hard of hearing, began loudly calling for “Dyer,” my nickname in those days. Ira had noticed that I had not shown up, and, thinking quickly, he said, “Why, Captain, don’t you remember you told him he could go to that funeral?”

The Captain scratched his head, looking bewildered for a moment. Then he stammered, “Oh, yeah, that’s right.” Captain Bath

never did ask me about that “funeral.” I guess he forgot all about it.

I was twenty-three years old at that time, married and the father of our first child, a one-month-old baby boy. Jeanne was all for my making this trip in order to find out more about Meher Baba.

I drove the one hundred thirty miles from my home in Schenectady to Harmon-on-Hudson, the place mentioned in one of the newspaper articles. With me was my friend Donald Holloway, who had become interested enough in Meher Baba to want to go with me. About four years younger than I, Donald lived a couple of streets away from me. His father owned a bakery around the corner, and Donald worked in it, although his ambition was to become a piano virtuoso.

It did not take us long to find the retreat in Harmon-on-Hudson, which was known as Meherashram. The retreat building is situated at the end of a road off Old Albany Post Road, on the south side of the Croton River, a mile or two east of the Hudson River. The owner of the property, Margaret Mayo, a playwright who had become acquainted with Malcolm and Jean Schloss through their bookstore, The North Node, had offered it in 1931 for Meher Baba’s use.

Best viewed from across the Croton River, the secluded building is made of stone and has three floors. At the main entrance, we were greeted by Josephine Grabau, who later became Mrs. Kenneth Ross, and her mother, Mary Antin. Residents of the retreat, they assured us that this was the correct place and then related the disappointing news that Meher Baba was no longer there; he had gone on by train to California. However, they made us feel most welcome and introduced us to the weekend visitors who were there: Milo Shattuck, Anita de Caro (who later became Mme. Vieillard), Grace Mann, and Howard Inches.

We had missed Meher Baba, but the feeling of his presence was still very strong. Naturally I felt disappointment at having missed him, but

I was blissfully happy in the unblemished conviction of who he was and the knowledge that, having found some of his followers, I would eventually meet him.

We talked about Baba, as he was and is called by those who love him, and my heart was longingly reaching out to him. Josephine suggested that I might like to establish an outer connection with Baba – I already felt a secure inner connection – by writing a letter to him. This I did, spontaneously pouring my heart out to him and offering my life in his service, for his Cause. Josephine and I drove over to the nearby post office and mailed the letter.

Shortly after our return from the post office, we all sat down to the evening candlelit meal. Part way through the meal, Baba began replying to my letter, with his unmistakable love welling up through my heart center. I sensed his replies to everything I had written in my letter to him, accepting my offer to serve his Cause, while flooding my heart and my whole being with his love. As I sat there with tears silently streaming from my eyes, the others, sensing what was happening, ceased eating, as I had done, and were also enveloped in Baba's sweet love.

Donald and I stayed the weekend, and we engaged in recreational activities with the others, such as going out in a small rowboat that was there, swimming in the river, and playing an exuberant game of tag. We all were overflowing with joy and enthusiasm as we bathed in Baba's enlivening presence, and we were filled with faith and hope: Our heart's desire had been heard and answered by the Divine Beloved.

LETTER FROM HOLLYWOOD

About ten days later, back in Schenectady, I received from Josephine a copy of a letter written by Chanji, Baba's secretary. It gave

details about Baba's activities in Hollywood, including the names of stars who met Baba, and also a message from Baba in response to our letters. What follows is the letter from Chanji.

Hollywood, 4th June 1932

Dear Jo and Mary,

This is just to inform you and all at your end that Baba is leaving here tonight for China. There is no time to write all [the] details about His stay and activities here, but to say it all quite in short – it was a grand success, more than you could imagine. I will write to you further details later on and post same from Honolulu. Meanwhile, you will be delighted to know that Hollywood gave a prompt response to Baba and His mission – there were about 5 to 6 receptions given in honour of Baba by different local bodies and groups of people and amongst over a thousand that met Baba were the select society of Hollywood – people who understood inner things and were inclined towards spirituality. Hollywood's greatest attraction – the cinema world – too took this opportunity of their life in welcoming Baba to this country. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, the royalties of the screen, treated Baba and party at their Pickford House one evening when a select few of the well-known cinema stars were invited to see Baba. Douglas and Mary were so impressed as to love Baba. So did others. They simply couldn't help it. And among those that came in a closer contact with Baba and loved Him were Tallullah Bankhead, Bruce Evans, Florence Vidor, Marie Dressler, Maurice Chevalier, Tom Mix and others. Just imagine! Tallullah and Mary invited Baba to dinner at their own residence. And please

don't scream, Tallullah, Bruce Evans and Tom Mix had photos taken with Baba. Two of the greatest directors of the screen, [Josef von] Sternberg and Ernst Lubitsch also took much interest in Him and wanted so much to see Him. Sternberg invited Him at the studios, and [Baba] saw him in the midst of his work when he was busy with a picture, [and Sternberg] was so pleased with Him and didn't want to leave Him. Lubitsch invited Baba to tea, had a long talk with Baba for over half an hour and was so much interested in what he heard and was explained. They are all expecting and anxiously looking forward for a happy re-union on July 12th, when Baba is returning here again. The grand gathering at Hotel Knickerbocker will ever remain a sweet memory for about a thousand of the select society that saw Baba there that evening. Oh, He looked a darling! Wish you could have seen Him then! But you were there in spirit if not in flesh. I think this is enough for the present. Please do not mind this typewritten letter. This will explain itself of the pressure of work. You all understand.

So with nothing more but a word of Love from Baba – in all haste,

Chanji

Appended to the letter was the message from Baba, which I believe includes a hint about our relationship with him now.

And now a few words about you at Harmon. Baba received your letters, also from the new inmates of the Ashram. He is pleased to read and know how you feel, and wishes me to write to you that all there in His Ashram at Harmon are and shall ever be in His

thoughts even in the midst of all His activities. To Him whom time and space have no consideration, all those who send out their loving thoughts and heart are always close to [His] heart.

INTRODUCTION TO MEHER BABA'S WESTERN DISCIPLES

Soon after visiting the retreat, Jeanne and I began making periodic trips to New York City, which was one hundred seventy miles away, to Princess Norina Matchabelli and Elizabeth Patterson's apartment, and they once visited us in Schenectady. Mary Antin had introduced us to Norina and Elizabeth, who were fairly new to Baba, having met him the previous year at the Harmon-on-Hudson retreat. As time went on, we also met Countess Nadine Tolstoy, John Bass, Sam Cohen, Kim Tolhurst, and others. These gatherings were very informal and irregular in frequency, perhaps occurring once every two or three months. It was primarily Norina who would share stories about Baba. Sometimes John Bass or Sam Cohen would come to our house in Schenectady to visit, and we would talk about Baba.

One day, Mary Antin took us to the home of Graham and Lettice Stokes, at 88 Grove Street in Greenwich Village. Graham showed us his little meditation room, which had numerous pictures of saints and spiritual masters, including the beautiful, striking painting of Meher Baba that now hangs in the living room of Baba's house at the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach. The atmosphere in that room was very powerful. Jeanne began gazing at Baba's radiant face depicted in the painting. Suddenly it came alive for her, and Baba himself seemed to emerge from the painting and embrace her with his sweet love.

My parents, Aaron C. Shaw and Helen Drew Shaw, apparently felt the same way as Jeanne and I did when I told them about Baba after I

returned from Harmon-on-Hudson. They were keenly interested and seemed to accept everything I told them about who I felt Baba was, and they were eager to meet him. As will be shown later, they would have a role to play even before their time to meet Baba in person. A niece of mine, Dolores Shaw (my brother's daughter), as well as my parents, met Baba later, in 1952.

I introduced my parents to Elizabeth and Norina, and they remained friends throughout the years. Elizabeth was in the habit of picking up stray dogs in the city and finding homes for them in the country. She once placed a medium-sized mongrel with my parents, and she persuaded Jeanne and me to take a Boston terrier in the 1940s.

A JOB ON LONG ISLAND

In the summer of 1932, shortly after going to Harmon-on-Hudson, I received a letter from Milo Shattuck telling me about a job he was doing, distributing samples of breakfast cereal packages house to house throughout the suburbs of Long Island. He suggested that I come to New York City and join him in this work.

So, while Jeanne stayed home with our infant son, I moved down to New York City and stayed with Milo in a Mrs. Eckley's rooming house in Brooklyn – on State Street, as I recall. Every day, we would take the subway to Long Island. There we would meet the other workers, and then we would branch out, delivering the cereal packages to the houses. We were not required to knock on doors and try to speak with anyone; we could simply leave the packages on the doorstep. We would walk about thirty-five miles each day, and at the end of the day, Milo and I would meet and take the subway back to Brooklyn. I was in good physical shape, but after the first day's walking, I could hardly move my legs. This job lasted a few weeks.

The job was actually quite incidental. Of more significance was spending time with Milo and others who had met Baba, including Anita de Caro (later Vieillard).

Milo Shattuck was a colorful character. He looked like an early disciple of Jesus; he sported a full beard and was a poet. A real seeker, he had attended Harvard University but gave up worldly attainment to pursue spiritual goals. He spent time with Meredith Starr at his retreat at East Challacombe in Devon, England. Later, when Meredith left Meher Baba, Milo did, too. When that happened, he broke contact with me as well.

After the job with Milo ended, Elizabeth Patterson used a connection she had to get me a job with Western Union in New York City, and I moved in with Kenneth Ross. After a while, however, it became clear that it was too hard on Jeanne to be all alone trying to cope with our baby and the household responsibilities, so I quit to come back to Schenectady.

I was all for making a permanent move to New York City with my family in order to be closer to the group working for Baba, but Jeanne was not in favor of the idea; she felt that Schenectady was a better place in which to raise children. Later on, when Norina indicated that we should make the move, Jeanne wrote to Baba, asking him if this was correct. He wrote back, saying, "You don't have to."

MEHER BABA'S TIMING

Meher Baba's ways are unfathomable, and sometimes he would do – or not do – something that would cause people to leave him. In these early years, when I would hear of someone leaving Baba, I would wonder what it was all about. When anything would happen that raised questions in my own mind, I would just put them aside. I had a strong inner contact with Baba, so I did not judge his statements or actions. Some people left Baba after the following incident.

When Baba came to America in 1932, he said that he would break his seven-year silence on July 13 at the Hollywood Bowl in California. There was a big buildup about what a tremendously important event this would be. Elizabeth Patterson and Princess Norina Matchabelli drove out to California from New York in order to be with Baba on that occasion. I, too, felt very strongly about this momentous event, and I persuaded Jeanne that we should drive out to California to be there when he broke his silence. This would also be a chance for us to finally meet Baba.

After staying in California for a while, Baba was to go to China for one day and then return to California, so there was quite a bit of time for us to make the trip. We were very poor in those days, but we had a little money and an old light blue Chrysler of uncertain reliability. Although the trip would be three thousand miles across the United States, I was confident that, somehow, we would make it.

Accordingly, we packed our few belongings and our very young son into the car, turned in the keys to our apartment, and were just about to start out when a Western Union telegram arrived, delivered by a uniformed boy on a bicycle. It was from Elizabeth Patterson, and it said that Baba had decided not to return from China to break his silence in California. Needless to say, we were quite surprised by this news, and of course we immediately gave up our trip to California and re-engaged our apartment. This was a remarkable example of Baba's split-second timing.

We were saved from undertaking such an arduous trip, but we had crossed a psychological barrier of self-preservation and security. By being willing to undertake the long trip, we were taking a big step on faith, thus removing some of our sense of limitation by daring to trust Baba to look after us. On our spiritual journey, we cross many inner psychological barriers as we dare to trust God more and more, until we trust Him completely and surrender ourselves into His keeping.

REPUDIATING THE PATH OF POWER

Meredith Starr had accompanied Meher Baba to America from England, and when Baba decided not to break his silence, Meredith left him. Milo Shattuck arranged for me to meet Meredith in New York City at the Stokes' home as he was making his return journey to England. At that time I did not know that he had left Baba, although he did say, at one point in our conversation, "My work is different from Baba's." This puzzled me, but I did not comment on his statement.

However, while sitting with him and chatting, I began to feel that he was trying to overpower me psychically and get me under his control. I sensed that he was one of those who have chosen the "path of power." Instinctively, I knew that the only way to repudiate him was to push his power back onto him. I entered a state of heightened perception and detached alertness so that I would become invulnerable to this psychic invasion. This went on for some time, as we chatted normally, until I felt that he had finally given up, although even when he was back in England, I could feel his presence, like a kind of "oversoul." I continued to repudiate the intruding presence, and in time it disappeared.

When I learned that Meredith had left Baba, I wondered if perhaps his motives were actually good, that he was trying to warn me away from Baba, in whom he no longer believed. One benefit I received from meeting Meredith, who was a proponent of Jungian psychological principles, was that I learned about Carl Jung's "psychological types," which Meredith thought contained all the answers and which I then researched and have found helpful.

Correspondence with Meher Baba

In 1933 Meher Baba made his fifth visit to the West, arriving at Genoa, Italy, where he was met by several English and American devotees. Together they went to Portofino Mare for a most wonderful month-long stay. Correspondence from Baba, through Elizabeth Patterson, Quentin Tod, and Anita de Caro – especially those personally signed by Baba – fanned the flames of Jeanne’s and my longing to see and be with him.

“DEAREST BABA”

One day in June, soon after Baba had arrived in Portofino, Jeanne and I were giving Mary Antin a ride from New York City to Schenectady, where she would then catch a bus to go to Canada. We stopped in a town called Red Hook, about halfway to Schenectady. There Mary knew the proprietors of several cabins, and we stayed in

one long enough to eat lunch and rest. For a while we talked about Baba, and soon we got the idea that we should each write a letter to him. I had received a card from Elizabeth informing me of the Portofino address and telling about the wonderful time everyone was having with Baba there.

Accordingly, we separated to write our letters; Jeanne and Mary went outdoors – Mary volunteered to look after the baby so Jeanne could write – and I sat at a desk inside the cabin. Soon, Jeanne returned to ask me a question. When she entered, she was taken aback by the atmosphere in the cabin: The divine presence was very strong, and she noticed a wonderful heavenly fragrance. I was feeling engulfed in the spiritual atmosphere and directly tuned in to Baba. Silently, Jeanne and I looked at each other and nodded knowingly.

As we got back to the task at hand, Jeanne asked her question. “How does one address Baba in a letter? Your Majesty?” As I recall, “Dearest Baba” was the salutation I recommended, and she went back out to continue her letter. Later, when we talked about the experience, we both felt that Baba himself was actually with us and had written our letters.

LETTERS FROM BABA

When Baba received my letter, he instructed Quentin Tod to write a reply to me. Included was news of Baba’s plans and, most precious of all, Baba’s handwritten “all my love” and personal signature, “M. S. Irani.”

June 25th

Fiorenza

My Dear Darwin Shaw,

A complete stranger is writing to you, but Baba wishes me to write and tell you how happy he was to get the few lines you sent him, and also to give you some idea of his future plans.

Baba arrived in Genoa on the 23rd, and Princess Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson and Anita de Caro arrived the same day by car from Cherbourg. We were joined by two other friends from England and today we all removed ourselves here from Genoa. There we expect to stay for two weeks or so. People are coming from various parts to see Baba. He is going to make a few short trips from here, then he will return to India in about a month's time for about 3 weeks, and then come straight to London, where he will speak immediately. After having spoken in England he intends to come to America and will, of course, see you.

If you let me have an address which will always find you, I will let you know from time to time what plans he has and when he will be coming over.

With best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

Quentin Tod

All my love to You & Yours

MS Irani

(Signed by our Baba)

I replied to Quentin Tod's letter and once again poured out my feelings for Baba. And once again, Baba himself added his personal message to me and also his signature, written in his own precious hand.

Saturday, July 22nd
Villa Altachiara
Portofino Mare

My Dear Darwin,

I thought it was charming of you to write me such a nice letter in which you expressed so much love for Baba.

Anita has told me about you and your wife and the little baby, and I think it is wonderful that you love Baba so much without ever having seen him.

He appreciates all you said in your letter and I know that when you do see him you will love him even more.

We have been here at this villa ever since he arrived on the 23rd June – except for two days in Genoa and 2 at Santa Margherita. We were such a big party but we found it was less expensive to take a villa and we have been in the most beautiful one round here.

You can imagine what a joy it has been to live in such wonderful surroundings with Baba. We have been so fortunate, but I feel our share has been almost too great and that we have not appreciated it enough yet. Afterwards we shall look back upon it and remember what it was.

We have been a party of 20 here – so many different personalities and temperaments all mixed up together, but there has been wonderful harmony, as we are all so united in our love for Baba.

The gardens at the villa here are so beautiful, but we have not been out as much, except to go down to the beach to swim in the morning.

The days have gone by so quickly, but every moment has been occupied.

Baba has done a great deal of work here in preparing articles & lectures to be published after he speaks, & this has taken up the greater part of his time in the morning. Anita has blossomed out a lot and seems so much happier than when I knew her last year in New York. She has been through so much sorrow in the last two years. She deserves a change.

Baba leaves here the day after tomorrow and goes to India, where he will stay only a short time, returning to Europe on the 10th of September and arriving in London the 12th, & he says he will break his silence on the 19th, but of course he may change his plans, as he so often does, & we are accustomed to it now.

We leave here on the 28th, & I am motoring to London via Montreux, Rheims, & our address in London is 5 Ascot Avenue, Ealing, London, W5, which will find us for the next 3 months.

I hope to come to America with Baba in October or the beginning of November. If so, it will be a great pleasure to meet you.

I enclose a post card which will show you where our villa is. Anita is putting in a line . . . [letter follows]

I have taken some photos of the villa & people here, so will send them later when they are developed.

Write & let us know how you are and more about everything, & I will keep you posted about Baba's plans & movements.

Baba sends you his love & blessings –

My love, dear Darwin –

Quentin

My Dear Darwin,

All my love,

MS Irani



Villa Altachiara

Portofino Mare

Darwin dear –

Our Beloved Baba was so pleased with your letter. I have spent a month here with him. Words can't describe what it has been like and I'm wondering if it is all a dream.

After the 28th I go to London. Baba leaves the 24th for India, then returns to England on the 12th of September.

My address in London is 5 Ascot Ave., Ealing, London W5. We will be there waiting for Baba. It is a wonderful large family, Baba's friends – more than friends, I must say.

Do write to me. . . .

Love, Anita

LOCATION OF THE "REAL RETREAT"

In 1933 Kenneth Ross stayed with us for a while at our house in Schenectady. Kenneth was from the early English Meher Baba group. He had lived at the retreat in East Challacombe, England, and was the brother-in-law of Meredith Starr, the founder of the retreat. Kenneth came to America on a limited time visa and was in the process of getting a permanent immigration visa. He later settled in America and became the husband of Josephine Grabau.

We all became fast friends, and Kenneth told Jeanne and me quite a bit about the retreat in England. As a result of this, we became quite enthused about finding a suitable place in the country and establishing a similar retreat for Meher Baba in the northeastern part of the United States. We spent a lot of time searching out old farmhouses in eastern New York State and western Massachusetts,

and in 1935 (after having physically met Baba), I even wrote to him about establishing a retreat.

In Baba's reply, which follows, he pointed out that the real and lasting retreat is in the spirit of brotherhood and love within, rather than in any earthly home or structure built for that purpose. Although he did give us his approval for founding a retreat, we gradually came to feel that the time was not yet right for actually establishing one.

Meherabad

Ahmednagar, Aug. 14, 1935

My Dear Darwin,

I have your very loving letters & poems, and do so much appreciate your spirit of love, devotion and service.

I know how you and your dear wife feel, and have always been helping you spiritually, as you already experienced.

I am glad to know about the loving ones of the group that you have formed, and who wish to start a retreat if plans succeed.

Whether that retreat on earth is established or not, I do really appreciate the spirit of brotherhood and Love that has been awakened, and consider it as a spiritual retreat already established within, which is much more substantial and real than any earthly home or structure built for the purpose. The true spirit is there, already awakened, and if it is fostered and kept up with warm feelings of Love and brotherhood, it will eventually bear results that will be helpful in the development of spiritual understanding of life and things pertaining to life, and wherever such spirit of Love and brotherhood prevails, inner light and guidance always follow invariably. And rest

Meherabad
Ahmednagar, Aug. 14, 1935

My dear Darwin,
I have your very loving letters, ^{8 pages,} and do so much appreciate your spirit of love, devotion and service.

I know how you and your dear wife feel, and have always been helping you spiritually, as you already experienced.

I am glad to know about the loving ones of the group that you have formed, and wish to start a retreat if plans succeed. Whether that retreat on earth is established or not, I do really appreciate the spirit of brotherhood and Love that has been awakened, and consider it as a spiritual retreat already established within, which is much more substantial and real than any earthly home or structure built for the purpose. The true spirit is there, already awakened, and if it is fostered and kept up with warm feelings of Love and Brotherhood, it will eventually bear results that will be helpful in the development of spiritual understanding of life and things pertaining to life, and wherever such spirit of Love and brotherhood prevails, inner light and guidance always follow invariably. And rest assured, I will always be with you and the other dear ones working in unison in the spirit of Love, and my spiritual will always be forthcoming wherever I am, wherever you all are. So if a retreat is managed and established, alright. But if it is found difficult to arrange for one, do not despair, but keep the SPIRIT and carry on the useful work even without a retreat, and I will always help you. I give you and your work all my blessings.

My coming to the West is not yet definite. It depends on certain conditions and circumstances, and if I do come, I might, time and circumstances permitting, willingly call at your place en route eitherway, but remember, whether I come or not, my blessings are with you and will ever be with your work that you have so lovingly started in the spirit of brotherhood and service.

And don't worry, my dear Darwin, for being unable to come to me and meet me for want of material means. Those who are united in Love are always in spirit and know no separation.

Give my love and blessings to your dear wife Jean, and hand over the enclosed to her.

Remember I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU.

Give my Love and blessings to all the dear ones who seek and need, and who are in the group.

All my love to you

W. G. Ram

assured, I will always be with you and the other dear ones working in unison in the spirit of Love, and my spiritual help will always be forthcoming wherever I am, wherever you all are. So if a retreat is managed and established, alright. But if it is found difficult to arrange for one, do not despair, but keep up the SPIRIT and carry on the useful work even without a retreat, and I will always help you. I give you and your work all my blessings.

My coming to the West is not yet definite. It depends on certain conditions and circumstances, and if I do come, I might, time and circumstances permitting, willingly call at your place en route either way, but remember, whether I come or not, my blessings are with you and will ever be with your work that you have so lovingly started in the spirit of brotherhood and service.

And don't worry, my dear Darwin, for being unable to come to me and meet me for want of material means. Those who are united in Love are always in spirit and know no separation.

Give my love and blessings to your dear wife, Jean, and hand over the enclosed to her [a note, which follows].

Remember I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU.

Give my Love and blessings to all the dear ones who seek and need, and who are in the group.

All my love to you.

MS Irani

□ *My dear Jean,*

Your very loving “message to your beloved Master” was duly received.

Those who are united in Love and feel so deeply as you do need no words to explain.

I know, dearest Jean, how you feel, and am so happy with the Love and devotion you have for your beloved Baba. Those were “tears of joy” that you shed at the first meeting – tears of Love that brought you so close to me. You could hardly imagine how I love you and how close you are to me. And although I have been in seclusion for over two months – practically cut-off from all external contact, my love for those who love me as you do and are so dear and close to me ever pours forth in a way they alone feel and understand, and which need no words to tell.

All my love,

MS Irani

□ Appended is a note from Chanji:

□ *This letter is signed by dear Baba, in his own writing, and in his family name – M. S. Irani – which he uses in signatures, always, and this is the only thing he writes, ever since he left the pen in 1927, and only in cases of Urgent Need, or very deep & close contact.*

□ *– Chanji*

Meeting Meher Baba in Person

In 1934, Meher Baba made his second world tour, accompanied by several of his close mandali (disciples), including his brother Jal, Kaka, Adi Sr., and Chanji. Chanji was Baba's secretary at that time, who read aloud the messages that Baba spelled out by pointing to letters on a small board with the English alphabet printed on it.

In preparation for Baba's three-day stay in New York City, Princess Norina Matchabelli set up a schedule of appointments with people who wished to meet Baba. We were among those who were scheduled to meet him on the day of his arrival in New York City, Wednesday, December 13.

A TELEGRAM IGNORED

I had very little work at that time, but I managed to save up twenty dollars, which would have to take care of car expenses for the round

trip of one hundred seventy miles each way, as well as our hotel and food expenses for the three days we would be in New York City. By then we had two young children, and my parents offered to baby-sit. They also agreed to lend us their old car for the trip. At that time, Jeanne was expecting our third child and was about four months pregnant.

On December 13, we got up very early and were on our way out the door when we discovered a cablegram hanging on the doorknob. It was from Norina. The cablegram said that due to storms at sea, the ship would be late getting in and that our appointment with Baba for that day was canceled. But, it continued, we would get to see Baba the following day at a reception.

This was an unexpected setback. I looked at Jeanne and she looked at me. We had so much momentum built up in the direction of going to see Baba that we wordlessly agreed to ignore the telegram. So we went on to New York City that day just on the chance that we might catch a glimpse of Baba as he was

passing through the hotel lobby where he

would be staying. We had no intention of barging in or being a nuisance in any way.

The trip to New York City took about six hours, and we arrived at the Shelton Hotel on Lexington Avenue before Baba and his party did. Shortly after we got there, Norina walked into the hotel, and when she saw us, she came right over to us. After a warm greeting and embrace,



Photo of the Shaw family taken around the time of meeting Meher Baba in 1934. Son Lowell standing, baby Leatrice held by Jeanne, who is pregnant with Renae.

she asked, "But my dears, didn't you get my cable?" We admitted that we had but that we had decided to come along anyway, hoping to get a glimpse of Baba. "Well," she said, "Baba should be coming in any time now. He was in the cab following mine."

THE FIRST TO SEE HIM

Sure enough, just then Baba came in through the door. He was dressed in a long overcoat and wore a fedora hat pulled down almost over his ears, with his long hair tucked up inside.

Seeing him, Norina said, "Wait here; maybe Baba will see you for a moment." Then she walked quickly over to meet Baba, spoke to him, and pointed over at us. Baba nodded yes, and they came directly over to us. Norina introduced us, and we shook hands with Baba. As he and I shook hands, we looked into each other's eyes.

For me, it was an indescribably glorious moment. This was our first glimpse into the infinite pools of Divine Love that were Meher Baba's eyes. His handshake might have reached down through some two thousand years to clasp mine at that moment. I saw him as the Christ, and no words can adequately describe what poured forth from my heart as I recognized the Beloved – the living Christ. I felt instant rapport with him and experienced a great spiritual upliftment. It was like the fulfillment of an "impossible dream."

I was overjoyed. Baba's Beauty, the sweetness of his love, which could not be expressed in words – the joy, the sparkling wonder of his Being! One could not prefigure him. One could not imagine how it would be, what he would be like. He was more than one could imagine – much more, immeasurably more. Although this meeting with Meher Baba was very brief, it seemed for an instant as though time stood still, and I caught a feeling of timelessness in the presence of the

Timeless One.

Jeanne, on the other hand, was somewhat distracted by seeing Baba in those Western winter clothes and did not have the same wonderful reaction I had when meeting him. As we parted, with Baba and Norina walking toward the elevator, and Jeanne and I walking toward some chairs in the hotel lobby, Jeanne was irresistibly impelled to turn, in order to get another glimpse of him. To her surprise, just as she turned, Baba, whose back was to us, also turned and, looking directly at her, folded his hands and bowed slightly to her. Jeanne turned quickly away, feeling that she had been caught trying to sneak a look at him, but then she could not resist turning twice more to look at him. Each time, Baba also turned as she was turning, folded his hands and bowed to her. As a result of these rather furtive intimate exchanges, with Baba responding to her as he did, Jeanne realized that Baba was, indeed, an exceptional being.

A CALL FROM BABA

We both had much to think about as we sat down. We were soon joined by a little elderly lady, Bessie Allen, whose appointment with Baba for that day had also been canceled. She had baked a cake for him, and she felt confident that we would all get to see him that afternoon. We, on the other hand, were content to have seen Baba as we had, and we did not dare to hope to see him again that afternoon. Great feelings had already been awakened within us, and we were very happy as it was.

As it turned out, however, Bessie Allen was right. After a while, we noticed Elizabeth Patterson coming from the elevator toward us. When she reached us, she said, "I guess you are the 'three people sitting in the lobby' that Baba wants me to bring up to see him." We were sur-

prised, but gladly followed her to the elevator. On the way up to Baba's suite, Elizabeth explained that in the midst of a string of interviews, Baba suddenly held up his hand, indicating that there should be an interruption. Then he held up three fingers and, pointing them downward, conveyed, "Go down to the lobby and bring up the three people who are waiting there."

After waiting a few minutes in the living room of Baba's suite, we were told that we could go in to see Baba, who was receiving people in his bedroom. As we entered the room, we saw him sitting on the far side of the bed. This time he looked completely different. His long, dark hair was hanging down to his shoulders; he wore a long, white Indian sadra and had sandals on his feet. Norina stood nearby, and Chanji was there to read Baba's alphabet board. Baba looked very beautiful, and he greeted us with a smile and motioned for us to sit beside him on the bed. Bessie Allen sat on Baba's right, and Jeanne sat on the left side of Baba, with me sitting next to her. Such close proximity to Baba was too much for Bessie, and she threw her arms around him and exuberantly exclaimed, "My Master, at last I've found you!"

Meantime, Jeanne started to weep uncontrollably. She became quite distressed about this, thinking that this was spoiling our time with Baba. Baba quickly responded to her dilemma by disengaging Bessie's arms and then reaching over with his right hand and placing it on Jeanne's left wrist. Immediately, Jeanne's tears stopped, as if (as she described later) a water tap had been turned off, and she became calm and poised.

While still holding Jeanne's wrist, Baba looked past her and into my eyes. He went to work right away: I felt that he was looking over my inner consciousness and at the same time planting seeds for future work that I would be doing for him.

There was little conversation. We did not come with questions or

for an intellectual contact, but to offer ourselves in his Cause and to be accepted by him. He said, "I am very happy that you came" and "I have been helping you always."

Simply being in his presence was quite enough for us. He was already working with us at the heart level while we, like sponges, were soaking up the Divine Love that enveloped and permeated us. I could also feel Baba putting me to work right away on inner levels; it was as though he was rearranging my *sanskaras* (impressions) and programming me for work to be done for him in the future.

Baba turned to Norina, who was leaning against the heat radiator, and told her to make an appointment for us to see him again on Friday, two days hence.

"But Baba," Norina said, "there is no room!"

"Make room," Baba said.

Later on Norina arranged the time for the appointment with us.

We were actually with Meher Baba for just a few moments, but they were timeless and priceless. Baba filled our hearts with his love and beauty. We were exposed to a spiritual greatness such as we could never have anticipated. Truly, there is no such thing as a "brief contact" with the Infinite: It is a timeless moment measured in eternity, and it stays with one forever.

We left Baba's presence with overflowing hearts and blissful happiness. Jeanne went with Countess Nadine Tolstoy to her room, where the floodgates of her tears were again opened up. Nadine, who was a dear friend, held Jeanne close while she wept out of love for the Beloved.

We were able to assist Bessie by giving her a ride to an elderly man's home, where she worked as a domestic nurse, in Scarsdale (a significant location for Baba's work in 1952), and she in turn assisted us by putting us up for the night there.

RECEPTION FOR BABA

The following day, Thursday, December 14, in the afternoon, we drove down to Greenwich Village. We had been invited to attend a reception for Baba at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Phelps Stokes (Graham and Lettice), where we had visited a few times in the past. We left our outer wraps downstairs and went upstairs to their spacious library, where many chairs had been set out in rows.

Approximately four hundred people were scheduled to come at certain times for a brief contact, or darshan, with Baba that afternoon. Quite a few people were already there, and more were coming in while others were leaving after their contact with him.

Baba was seated in a big chair in a little room just off the library that one reached by walking up a short stairway. We were familiar with this room; it was the one with pictures of masters and saints on the walls that was set aside as a special meditation room. This was the room in which a year or so earlier, Jeanne felt that Baba had come to her in the spirit.

When our turn came to go up the little stairway to see Baba, one of his men mandali whispered, "One at a time, don't ask any questions, just have a brief contact with Baba and come back down the stairs to make room for the next person."

When I went into the little room, I saw Baba sitting there looking radiant and powerful. As I quickly approached him and fell into his arms, I felt not only his overwhelming love but also a sense of his Infinite Power. Later on, when we compared notes, Jeanne reported an identical experience with Baba.

Two friends, Donald Holloway and Faith Valentine, had come with us that afternoon, and after we had all had our brief contact with Baba, instead of leaving as the others were doing, I felt that I just could not

leave so soon. I noticed that there were some chairs toward the back of the library that were not being used, so I whispered to the others, "Let's go back there and sit for a while."

This we did, and no one seemed to mind, so we sat there for almost two hours. Each time the door was opened to the little room where Baba was sitting, we caught a brief glimpse of him. His love radiation was so great that, without realizing what was happening, we were gradually becoming spiritually intoxicated.

We were still sitting there after everyone else had left. Someone turned up the lights, which had been dimmed, and Baba came out of the little room. He looked tired, but as he walked down the stairs, he smiled lovingly at us. We were almost literally swimming in Meher Baba's love; we had become divinely inebriated.

We knew that Baba would be using the main stairway shortly to leave the house, so we hurried down and were standing among the small crowd of admirers at the foot of the stairs when he descended. He quickly spotted us in the crowd and flooded our hearts with his love-glances, which are like thunderbolts of love – their sweetness slaying the false, limited self. We left soon after Baba did, and we found ourselves skipping along on the sidewalk like carefree, exuberant children.

AT THE FEET OF CHRIST

The following day, Friday, December 15, in the afternoon, together with Donald Holloway and Faith Valentine, we went to keep our appointment with Meher Baba at the Shelton Hotel. As we were entering Baba's suite of rooms, we noticed Tallullah Bankhead, a well-known movie star at that time, as she was leaving. After depositing our winter coats and hats in the entrance room, we were directed to a large living room. There we saw Baba, standing to greet us, looking radiantly beautiful, wearing a white

sadra and Indian sandals. His abundant, wavy hair flowed down to his shoulders. Baba's secretary, Chanji, was the only other person in the room.

Although it was a sunny afternoon, with sunshine streaming in through the windows, there seemed to be a special light in the room that emanated from Baba. As I looked at him, this lightness became, for me at least, a luminous glory, and it was thus that I beheld the Christ, in the glorious radiance of Divine Love.

Baba sat down on a wide sofa and motioned for us to sit on either side of him. Donald and Faith sat on Baba's left side, while Jeanne and I sat on his right side. But I felt that somehow I must get closer to him. The instant that I felt this, the idea flashed into my mind that I could kneel and sit back on my heels on the carpet right in front of him. I have since come to believe that Baba flashed that idea to me in response to my longing to be nearer to him.

So, there I was at the feet of Christ. He was so beautiful, and being so close to him was truly heavenly. As on the previous occasions with him, there seemed to be no need for words, but he did speak to us – via the alphabet board, with Chanji reading – about love.

Baba said, "Through love you will come to see me as I really am." At that time we already saw him as the Christ and were almost overwhelmed by what we were beholding, so we could not imagine his unveiled spiritual splendor.

Baba sat with one foot on the carpet and the other leg crossed over his knee, and this placed his raised foot just a few inches in front of me. I could scarcely believe my eyes as, looking at his lovely foot, I realized that here was the sacred foot of Christ. Scenes of Mary of Bethany washing the feet of Jesus and wiping them with her hair came to mind, and I was consumed with a longing to kiss Baba's foot. But as I looked up, I felt a bit awkward about it with everyone looking.

Then, a moment later, to my surprise, I noticed that everyone

seemed to be preoccupied and not noticing me. Even Baba was looking away. Instantly recognizing this as my opportunity, I bent forward and most gently and lovingly kissed his foot. As I straightened up, it seemed as though no one had noticed, but then Baba reached forward and drew me close to him. Not knowing what he intended, I bowed my head, but Baba gently lifted my chin and kissed my forehead.

While we were with Baba, time seemed to vanish far, far from our consciousness, but we actually were with him on that occasion for about twenty minutes.

The experience of being there with Baba was so incredibly wonderful that I found myself thinking, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if Baba gave us something to keep as a memento of this occasion?" Instantly, Baba motioned to Chanji to bring a rose from a nearby vase. Then he gave each one of us a pink petal, saying, through Chanji and the alphabet board, "This is something for you to keep as a memento of this occasion." I was truly amazed and very grateful.

Baba filled our hearts with love and light. Being with him was a taste of Heaven itself. We left him, feeling secure in the sanctuary of his love and knowing that somehow, someplace, we would see him again in the future.

After leaving the hotel, we started our long drive back home to Schenectady. The night was extremely cold, and there was no heater in the car. We became very sleepy on the way and had to talk and sing to keep awake. Then the car broke down, out on the lonely road. Luckily we were near a town, and I was able to get the car towed in to a garage, where it was quickly repaired. Soon we were on our way again, and by Baba's grace arrived home safely – and sublimely happy.

A year after our first physical meeting with Meher Baba, December 24, 1935, we received this cable from Baba: "My Love for you Beloved Ones is as Infinite and Eternal as my Divine Existence." This was one of the most beautiful and heartwarming messages we ever received from Baba.

P A R T T W O

The 1940s

Work for Meher Baba

*A*fter meeting Meher Baba in 1934, we had no idea how long it would be until we would get to see him again. As it turned out, eighteen long years would elapse until our next meeting, which took place in May of 1952. Meanwhile, we thought of him most of the time, and we longed to be with him physically. This longing was greatly accentuated when late in 1936 some of the Westerners were called by Baba to be with him in India for a few years. These included Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson, Nadine Tolstoy, Nonny and Rano Gayley, Mary and Will Backett, Malcolm and Jean Schloss, as well as others.

Although we were unable to join them because we had family responsibilities, we did feel that Baba's presence was with us in spirit, and I was often inwardly reminded of his loving message to me in 1935 that said not to worry about being unable to come to him and meet him for want of material means. This was the message that contained

his timeless reassurance: “Those who are united in love are always in spirit and know no separation.” This was a great consolation to Jeanne and me during those years.

MEHER BABA MEETINGS

Jeanne and I hosted meetings at our home in Schenectady almost every week, beginning soon after I had first gone to the Harmon-on-Hudson retreat in 1932 hoping to meet Baba. We belonged to a local group called the Poetry and Philosophical Group, and we would also occasionally attend meetings of Rosicrucian, Theosophical, and Spiritualist groups. These were loosely formed groups where memberships overlapped, and the meetings would usually be “open,” which meant that people could speak about their own beliefs. Jeanne and I would talk about Meher Baba at these meetings, and those who subsequently became interested in him would then come to our Baba meetings.

For quite a while, the meetings at our home were held on Saturday evenings, but sometimes they would take place on a Sunday afternoon, and for a long time they were held on Monday evenings. We did not publicly advertise these meetings; we would telephone some people, to others we would send notices if we had their addresses, and some learned of the meetings by word of mouth.

We were very young – in our twenties – when we started hosting these meetings, and the people who attended were for the most part considerably older. Some of the people who learned of Meher Baba through us became staunch followers and eventually met him. They included Elsie Rogers, Jeanne Foster, Norine Shaw (no relation), and Margaret Hendrickson. I had told only a few co-workers about Baba, and some of them would attend film programs about Baba.

Jeanne and I would also sometimes attend meetings hosted by Kim Tolhurst, a British woman who had learned about Baba through Meredith Starr, at his retreat in East Challacombe. Her regularly scheduled meetings were held at her home on Riverside Drive, a posh area of New York City near the Hudson River.

When we spoke of Meher Baba, we used the terms Messiah, Christ, and Master. We had not heard the word “Avatar” associated with Baba until much later, perhaps as late as 1947, when Jean Adriel’s book of that name came out.

There were very few pictures of Baba back then. Jeanne wanted to be able to give pictures of him to people who became interested in him, so she made a project of borrowing pictures of Baba and having Frank Eaton, who had a darkroom in Schenectady, make reproductions.

Occasionally, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, we would rent the Schenectady Women’s Club for a nominal fee, around fifteen dollars, and hold more formal meetings for a special event. Sometimes the event would be a guest speaker closely associated with Baba, such as Rano Gayley, Dr. Harry Kenmore, or Charles Purdom. Other times, in the 1950s, the event would be a film of Baba or slides of my 1954 trip to India, where I was with Baba for three weeks. I would also give talks at these events, working from an informal outline I had prepared.

ONE YEAR OF RESTRICTIONS

Another opportunity to work for Baba’s Cause came in late June of 1940 in the form of a cable delivered to John Bass for himself, Sam Cohen, and me. In it, Baba asked if we would do whatever he asked us to do for a full year, beginning August 1, 1940. John and Sam were not married, so it was not as difficult for them to decide as it was for me. Of course, I wanted to do whatever Baba wished, but I was married

with a family depending on me; therefore I had to consider Baba's question very carefully before replying. Jeanne loved and trusted Baba completely, and after we talked it over, she went along with my decision, trusting that Baba would not order me to do anything too drastic. So John, Sam, and I each sent a reply that we would obey Baba's instructions.

A short time after replying to Baba, I received a two-page typed list of thirty-one numbered orders. There were check marks by the orders he had personally selected for me to follow for one year, beginning August 1. Pinned to the list with a tiny straight pin were two notes signed "M. S. Irani" in his own hand. One said:

□ *Dear Darwin,*
I enclose herewith the personal instructions which you
are to follow implicitly for a period of one year from the day on
which you receive them.
All my love,
(Signed) MS Irani
□

The other note said:

□ *You will do whatever and stay wherever circumstances*
make necessary, and obey the following order numbers from
the attached list.
Orders Number: 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 20, 30, 31
Avoid order number 20 if absolutely impracticable.
(Signed) MS Irani
□

The orders for me were as follows:

- #6: *Perform no lustful action whatever, even with your lawful wife or husband.*
- #7: *For Men – Do not touch (even without thought of lust) any female over six years of age, except under the following circumstances:*
 - a) *When absolutely necessary, when attending the sick.*
 - b) *When absolutely necessary, when nursing the sick.*
 - c) *When absolutely necessary, during medical examination of a patient.*
 - d) *When absolutely necessary, when controlling the mad.*
 - e) *When absolutely necessary, when saving a woman's life and honor.*
 - f) *When absolutely necessary, when rendering first aid in accidents.*
 - g) *When absolutely necessary, when innocently and lustlessly touching your lawful wife in performing your household duties.*
 - h) *When absolutely necessary in formally shaking hands.*
- #9: *Do not tell lies.*
- #10: *Do not steal.*
- #11: *Do not criticize, scandalize or speak ill of others.*
- #20: *You must fast in the following manner for one year: Take twice in 24 hours milk, tea or coffee, and once in 24 hours one solid meal, with as much water as needed.*
- #30: *You shall neither hit, strike nor beat anyone, save in self-defense, or in case of life and death.*
- #31: *You shall neither hit, strike nor beat anyone, save in protecting the weak.*

I received another note personally signed by Baba clarifying some of the orders. Only the clarification for item #20 applied to me. The note reads:

□ *(Unknown handwriting) Darwin Shaw*
 (Typed) Regarding Order Numbers 20 and 21. You may
 drink as much water as needed any time of day.
 Regarding Order Number 17. You may read The Meher
 Baba Journal.
 Regarding Order Number 28. [You must perform, conscientiously,
 the prayers customary to your religion.] This order may
 be obeyed or not according to individual wishes, but must be
 obeyed when ordered specifically by me on the handwritten slip
 to repeat God's names, or God's names linked with my name.
 □ *(Signed) MS Irani*

These orders were not difficult for me to carry out, and the sense of complying with them made me feel closer to Baba. I quickly established a workable routine: I ate my one solid meal at home after work, and I chose to drink milk, as it was more nourishing than the coffee I used to enjoy.

Strangely enough, no one else of our acquaintance seemed to have received the list of instructions – although much later I learned that Baba had sent them to two hundred forty of his close followers throughout the world. As far as I remember, Sam, John, and I never discussed which orders we had been asked to follow. Personally, I considered the set of instructions to be a private contract between my Beloved and me.

In June 1940, Baba had issued statements indicating that his enlistment of the two hundred forty people to abide by his orders was

connected with his work on the world situation, but I was not aware of that at the time.

THE APARTMENT MEETINGS

In 1941, Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson, and Nadine Tolstoy returned from India and settled in an apartment in New York City, on the East Side. Baba had instructed them to work hard to spread his message, and also to look for a place that would be suitable for establishing a spiritual center for him. At first they met with people on an individual basis, primarily people they knew, who would come to the apartment to hear about Baba, his Divine Love, and his mission in the world. Soon weekly meetings were being held in the apartment, usually on Saturday nights. The people who expressed a sincere interest would then be invited to attend the weekly gatherings, where Norina would do most of the speaking.

After a year or two, so many people were attending these meetings that the apartment could no longer accommodate them. So the three women found a larger apartment in the same part of the city. It contained a spacious studio that could hold approximately seventy-five people, and this was where the meetings were held from then on.

During this period I met Rabia Martin, the Murshida of the "Sufi Order in the West," which had been founded by Inayat Khan in the early 1900s. Rabia had come to see Norina and Elizabeth and to find out more about Meher Baba. She asked me about my experiences of Baba, and I told her about meeting him in the spirit in 1932 and then physically in 1934.

Jeanne and I wanted to come to New York City as often as possible to attend the gatherings and help in any way we could. However, as we had three children, Jeanne usually had to stay home to look after

them, and I would go to New York City alone. During the long period of time when our own Schenectady meetings were being held on Monday evenings, I frequently would go to New York City by train, paying \$7.35 round trip, to attend the meetings at the studio. When Jeanne and I both could get away, it was usually on a Sunday. My parents would look after the children, and I would bring Jeanne to New York City to visit the Baba people there. We would either go by car or take advantage of the train's special Sunday excursion fare, which was \$2.00 per person round trip.

During the early to mid-1940s, I was sometimes provided with an unusual mode of transportation to New York City. World War II was raging in Europe, and when the United States joined the war, in addition to the huge numbers who enlisted in the armed forces, thousands of others faced the prospect of being drafted. I was exempted because I worked in public safety. I did, however, get involved in the war effort by driving Army vehicles – jeeps, weapons carriers, ambulances, large amphibious “ducks,” and 16-ton wreckers – to ports of embarkation. This I did in the evenings and on weekends in convoys of about ten vehicles driven mostly by firemen, policemen, and teachers. Many of the vehicles had to be driven to a port in Brooklyn, and often, after delivering a vehicle, I would go to the apartment where Norina, Elizabeth, and Nadine were living. If a meeting was being held, I would participate, and sometimes stay overnight, if it was too late to catch a train back to Schenectady.

NORINA MATCHABELLI'S PUBLIC TALKS

Before long, the studio meetings evolved into well-attended public talks about Meher Baba that were held in large halls in New York City, with Norina as the speaker, and myself usually as the presenter. These

talks were held in the evenings, and generally they were attended by older people who were artists, displaced Europeans, and others who were well educated and open to new ideas. Everyone dressed in formal evening clothes for these events: I even wore a tuxedo whenever I was giving the introduction at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. Approximately two hundred people would be in attendance at these talks.

Norina had a special chair she used for these talks. It was very large and heavy, with yellow upholstery and a carved back. (As of this writing her chair is in the Barn at Meher Spiritual Center, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and Baba sat in it in 1952, 1956, and 1958.) Norina had given an identical chair to Baba, and she felt that it was important to use her chair for the talks, although she would sometimes stand, rather than sit, to give her talks.

This special chair was kept in Norina's apartment, and it had to be taken to the hall where she was scheduled to speak. Transporting the chair was usually John Bass's job, but sometimes I had to do it. I can remember standing on a street corner with the massive chair beside me, waiting for a large enough taxi to come along. After the talk, the chair was then hauled back to the apartment.

Norina's speaking style was declamatory, rather than explanatory. She would sit in her big chair on the stage, and as she spoke she would gesture dramatically. The acoustics were very good in these halls, and she did not use a microphone. She spoke inspirationally and with dynamic conviction.

Born in Florence, Italy, Norina was a famous person, not only because she and her late husband, Georges Matchabelli, had been the founders and owners of the renowned Prince Matchabelli Perfume Company, but probably even more so



Princess Norina Matchabelli
as the Madonna in the play
The Miracle in the 1920s.

because of her years as an actress on the stage and screen. She was especially famous for her portrayal of the Madonna in the play *The Miracle*, which was enacted over a thousand times in Europe and America. This role not only gave expression to her artistic talent, but it served to bring forth her great spiritual nature as the “compassionate mother.” She was tall and beautiful, and had an outstanding stage presence.

In the early 1940s, a new phase developed when Norina told us that Meher Baba had begun to speak directly through her mind and voice, and she explained that this was done through “thought transmission.” She was so closely attuned to Baba that even though he was in India and she was in New York City, he could and did use her mind and voice to convey his verbal messages. At first, she spoke in this way only to the intimate group, but soon she did so in her public talks, as well. She spoke with powerful authority and love, attracting large audiences.

Although Norina’s talks were delivered spontaneously, she would know ahead of time what the topic, or theme, would be. Notices advertising the talk and specifying the topic would be mailed out. The notices would also specify that admission was free and that there would be no collection of money. Many of the notices stated that Princess Norina Matchabelli would “deliver a discourse through the transmission of spiritual thought from The Perfect Master who is at present living in India.”

My role was to give the introduction to the talk; Norina stated that Baba had communicated to her through thought transmission that this was to be my role. Of course, at that time there was only a small pool of people to choose from, and I may have been the most suitable on hand for the task. Norina and I worked well together; we were very much in attunement with one another. I felt that Baba wanted me to

serve his Cause by helping Norina, and I was concerned to play my part well. I came to New York City to do this work as many times as I was able; one year I kept track of the number of trips I made to New York City for Norina's talks: It came to thirty-two.

Norina's thought transmission was different from mediumistic transmission, as one of the introductions I read explains. (*See Appendix A.*)

Generally, Norina would write the main body of the introduction to her talks and then would give it to me before the evening of the scheduled event. I would type it up and add details pertinent to that particular evening's talk. Rich in content, these introductions constitute a written record of the Master's tone and "voice" experienced by Norina through the thought transmission. (*See Appendix B for an introduction presented in full.*)

Norina gave talks at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, and at several hotels, such as the McAlpin, the Astor, the Barbizon Plaza, and others. Titles of talks at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall included: "The God-Man Can What No Man Can"; "Have Faith"; and "Love Is the Solution." A talk at the Alhambra Hall, at the corner of 1st Street and Second Avenue, was entitled "Faith-Hope-Love." A talk at the Barbizon Plaza was entitled "God Is Love."

Norina also gave a talk in the Bowery, a very poor section in New York City's Lower East Side. We had rented a small hall and posted notices, which promised that food would be served. In addition to the people who were there to assist – such as Adele Wolkin, Filis Frederick, John Bass, Sam Cohen, and myself – were approximately fifty down-and-out men, lured by the promise of food. Although the men looked rather puzzled during the talk, afterward they heartily enjoyed the food. (*See Appendix C for the introduction I gave at the Bowery.*)

At the Bowery talk, Norina did not have her special chair, but

usually it would have been placed on the stage – or at the front of the room, if there was no stage. After my introduction, Norina would proceed to the chair, sit down, and then speak, through thought transmission, usually for less than an hour.

Although my introductions were written afresh for each talk, they usually did not vary greatly in content. Most of my introductions began with an explanation of who Norina was. For the smaller “studio talks” given before a more intimate ongoing group, however, my introduction would start right in with Baba’s message. (*See Appendix D for the beginning of a studio talk introduction.*)

IMPACT OF THOUGHT TRANSMISSION

This work continued until Norina and Elizabeth went back to India to be with Baba in 1947. Norina’s thought transmission had served as a novel way of making people feel they had a connection with Meher Baba. Sam Cohen reported that he could see rays of golden light radiating from Norina as she spoke. And the spiritual force behind her words was very powerful. One time, as she was saying to the audience the phrase “. . . joining of the head and heart,” I experienced a powerful transformation: the integration of my head and heart.

Norina was the only one Meher Baba has ever acknowledged as having been authorized to speak as Meher Baba (although Norina once told me that Gulmai, Adi Sr.’s mother and Meher Baba’s “spiritual mother,” was also doing thought transmission). However, I preferred to relate to Baba not through Norina’s messages, but through my experience of Baba within.

In January of 1946, Meher Baba sent a rhyming acknowledgment of his workers’ efforts in the form of a cable to Norina:

I sanction and bless the message of January 31st [1945] regarding your work. Norina through thought order and Jean [Adriel] through intellectual fervour and Elizabeth through sacrificial behaviour and Malcolm [Schloss] through full faith endeavour and Nadine [Tolstoy] through life's surrender and [Alexander] Markey through arts' manoeuvre and [a] few others who with love remember are all working more or less for me.

Meherbaba Irani

Meher Spiritual Center

*D*uring this long period of speaking work in New York City, which brought many people to Meher Baba, Norina and Elizabeth were also actively involved in carrying out the task given them by Baba of establishing a center that would serve as Meher Baba's "Home in the West."

ACQUIRING THE PROPERTY

To find a location for a center that fit the criteria laid out by Meher Baba, Elizabeth and Norina made several trips to various parts of the country in search of a suitable place. The five specifications Baba had stipulated were (1) an equitable climate, (2) more than ample water, (3) virgin soil, (4) tillable land, and (5) "given from the heart."

Finally, in 1943, after a long time of searching, Elizabeth suddenly recalled that along the coast of South Carolina there were approximately sixty-five thousand acres of land which were owned by the

Myrtle Beach Farms Company, of which her father, Simeon B. Chapin, was a founder and executive. It occurred to her that some of that land might be suitable for a spiritual center. Accordingly, Norina and Elizabeth decided that the latter should make a trip from New York City to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, to talk with her father about obtaining some of this property. They asked me to accompany Elizabeth on this mission, which I did.

Elizabeth and I took a train to Wilmington, North Carolina, and, if I recall correctly, Mr. Chapin's driver met us at the station. In Myrtle Beach, we stayed at the Patricia Manor, an oceanfront hotel located south of "Youpon Dunes," as Elizabeth's parents' house was called. (This house later came to be Elizabeth's, and it played an important role in Baba's work in Myrtle Beach, as will be seen.)

The same day we arrived, Elizabeth and I went to her father's office in downtown Myrtle Beach. He knew about Elizabeth's deep interest in Meher Baba. In fact, both Mr. and Mrs. Chapin had met Baba in the early 1930s and were very favorably impressed with him and his mission. After a few minutes of chatting about family matters, Elizabeth spoke to her father about searching with Norina throughout the country for land for a spiritual center for Baba, and about how they finally realized that some of the property that was owned by the Myrtle Beach Farms Company might be suitable.

She told her father that she knew he would one day leave her a legacy and explained that if he was amenable to the idea, she would greatly appreciate it if he could give her that legacy in the form of property and bestow it upon her now, for a spiritual center. Mr. Chapin seemed very sympathetic, and he readily agreed to Elizabeth's unusual request. We did not look over any property on that trip, as many details had to be worked out before the right piece of property could be picked out and given to Elizabeth. Mr. Chapin promised that

he would go have a look and see what he could find. We returned to New York City after staying in Myrtle Beach only one night.

Subsequently, Mr. Chapin notified Elizabeth that he had selected what he felt was the most suitable area of land from which to select property for a spiritual center. Norina and Elizabeth made trips to Myrtle Beach to look over the property, which ranged along the coast, and of course eventually chose the area which later became Meher Spiritual Center. Thus, in exact accordance with Meher Baba's stipulations for his center in America, this tract of land – comprising some eight hundred acres of virgin woodland, including two freshwater lakes a short distance inland from the mile-long ocean frontage – was given out of love and from the heart to Elizabeth by her father. She in turn, out of love and from the heart, gave this property to Meher Baba for the center he wished to establish in America. (Several years later, three hundred acres west of Highway 17 were sold, by Baba's order, leaving the present five hundred acres as the Center.)

FIRST VISIT TO THE CENTER

In June 1944, some time after Elizabeth was given title to the property, a group of us made a special trip to Myrtle Beach to look over the new Center. Included in this early group were Elizabeth, Norina, John Bass, myself, Filis and Adele (as I recall), and Frank Eaton (who later gave up his job in Schenectady and moved down to become a caretaker at the Center, a post he held, serving Baba, for many years).



Frank Eaton with Elizabeth Patterson's dog Nippy, 1949.

Although we came at separate times, we all traveled on the East Coast Champion train, leaving from Penn Station in New York City and arriving in Florence, South

Carolina. A bus would then convey us to Myrtle Beach. We met at Youpon Dunes and “Whileaway,” the house next door to the south, which Elizabeth and her husband, Kenneth, owned. We were all thrilled with the prospect of seeing the Center and helping in any way we could in its development for Baba.

Piling into two cars, with Elizabeth driving one of them, we made our way to the Center from the south via “Old King’s Highway,” a narrow north-south dirt road paralleling two-lane Highway 17. Long since having ceased to function as a public road, Old King’s Highway was used only by hunters and fishermen, and it was the only road leading into and through the Center. The stretch of Old King’s Highway that goes through the Center is now known as The Beach Road.

The Center is located about nine miles north of Myrtle Beach. At that time, most of the strand (the spit of land along the Atlantic Ocean) was undeveloped woodland dotted here and there by wooden Carolina farmers’ houses. The traffic was very light on Highway 17, which cut through the dense woodland. Except in the town of Myrtle Beach itself, the beaches were virtually deserted.

As we drove onto the Center property, I was struck by the delightful quiet beauty of the wild woodlands; it gave one a sense of primordial freedom. The car in which I was riding got stuck in the sandy road, so we left it and walked easterly to the area bordering the lake that later became the main compound on the Center. From this central point we began to explore, mostly along the lake, to get an overall idea of what the area looked like.

This was a time of spiritual as well as physical adventure and delightful discovery. It has to be understood that we were fired with enthusiasm because Meher Baba was going to manifest, and we believed that when he did, everyone in the world would come to him. We were part of his “team,” helping to prepare for his glorious manifestation,

which we thought was imminent. As we walked over the grounds of Baba's chosen "Home in the West," we felt that Baba was with us.

As a way of proclaiming the Center as Meher Baba's own, we spelled out "Baba" on the ground near the beach with shells we had collected. Then we scattered far and wide shouting, "Baba!" "Baba!" "Baba!" I think this was Norina's idea. At that time there was no bridge across the lagoon, and as I called out Baba's name, I walked north, around the ravine, over onto the other side of the lagoon.

This, I knew, was the place Meher Baba had in mind for his Center all along, and I felt very privileged to be a part of its development.

DEVELOPING THE CENTER

Many trips to the Center followed. Elizabeth and Norina, of course, spent much more time at the Center than any of the rest of us. We were working people and could only get away for a few weeks at a time, on vacations. Usually, Jeanne would stay home with the children, and I would come down to help at the Center, doing physical labor.

Foremost in the minds of all of us was Meher Baba's promise to come to the new Center; all our efforts were geared to developing the Center for him and for whatever special purpose he had in mind. Although there was no master plan to work from, the Center gradually began to take shape. Elizabeth and Norina were in frequent communication with Baba, and they were guided outwardly and inwardly in the unfolding development of the Center.

Great care was taken to preserve as much as possible the natural beauty of the trees and rustic atmosphere as pathways were carved out of the woodland. It was soon realized that a road leading in from Highway 17 was urgently needed, and so one was constructed. This road came in from the north side of the Center property, south of the

adjoining property known as General Spring's property (later known as Briarcliffe Acres). Named the "Old North Road," it connected up with Old King's Highway (The Beach Road) and wound its way through the woods to the main compound. A few years later, a more direct road was put in to replace the Old North Road as far as Old King's Highway, and this road, The Center Road, is still the main route through the Center. The green gate at the original road's entrance on Highway 17 still exists, as of this writing.

The "Cabin-on-the-Hill" was the first cabin to be built. A very small kitchen building – which came to be known as the "Original Kitchen" – and bathroom facilities followed. John Bass and Frank Eaton had small, prefabricated cabins sent to the Center, where they were assembled by carpenters hired by Elizabeth. John's cabin was the Lake Cabin and Frank's was the Coop. (Although the Coop has remained its original size, the Lake Cabin has been expanded to much beyond its original size.) I stayed in a very small cabin that later became a tool room, and later on a linen closet. At that time, it was located near the Lake Cabin. As I recall, until these cabins were built, we stayed at Whileaway and Youpon Dunes.



Cabin-on-the-Hill, 1940s.

Later on, in the 1970s, Elizabeth had some buildings brought in on trailers. They included Happy House, the Cove, Cedar Nook, Pine Lodge, the Farmshed, which was originally a tobacco barn, and the Tree Room. Three of these buildings, donated by Necie Jensen, came from 74th Avenue in Myrtle Beach.

One of the tasks for which I volunteered was to make signs for the cabins. I cut rectangles of pressed wood, used a stencil to outline the cabin names in pencil, and then painted the letters with white paint. The signs had holes for screws or nails, and Center workers affixed them to the cabins.

Conditions were very primitive at first. The kitchen, about six feet square in area, was equipped with a propane stove. The “refrigerator” consisted of a wooden box tied with rope and set down into the cool lake. A well with a hand pump was installed. There was no electricity for quite a while, because new electrical lines were not permitted during wartime. We had to use kerosene lanterns and flashlights at night. There were lots of bugs and snakes, as well as poison ivy and poison oak to contend with. For years everyone was required to wear high boots. Norina and Elizabeth would often wear mosquito nets draped over their hats and covering their faces. Insect repellent and bush axes were a part of our daily defense equipment.

All of this was taking place during World War II, and it was very difficult to get wood for buildings. Elizabeth discovered that she could buy some Army surplus buildings, and she would contract with local workmen who had trucks and other equipment to bring them in. Four of these buildings became the Lagoon Cabin, the Caretaker’s Cabin, and the Near and Far Cabins. The kitchen was enlarged several different times. The Guest House and the Lantern Cabin were put up. A bridge across the lagoon was built fairly early on, as soon as the lagoon was dredged out to make a beautiful area there. There were no steps leading down the embankment to the footbridge at that time, only a graded path.

Baba wanted a structure for larger groups, so when Elizabeth heard that a barn was up for sale in Conway, the county seat, which was about thirty-five miles away, she, Norina, and I went to see it. It was made of pecky cypress, a natural gray, pitted wood that never needs painting. Although it was no longer housing animals, the well-aired barn contained stalls and even some hay. Elizabeth bought the barn (I do not recall the price) and had it taken apart, the pieces labeled and brought to the Center by truck, and reassembled at its present location.

A local mason built a fireplace and chimney, in keeping with the rustic style of the barn. New hardwood flooring was put down, and French doors were installed. Updated windows spanning the wall on each side of the fireplace replaced the original windows provided in each stall for the animals. Joe Chestnut, a nearby farmer working at the Center, donated a large wagon wheel to be used as a circular light fixture. At Norina's recommendation, the rafters were painted Mediterranean blue.

Once during these years, hired Center workers had jokingly told people in town that a "cathedral" was being built on the Center. One day a busload of people came "to see the cathedral."

In these early days, before the Center was open to the public, the lake was teeming with rather large fish. Seabirds would come and dive in the lake to catch their meals. One day, one of the caretakers and a local workman were standing in the compound area when they noticed a large seabird dive into the lake and emerge clutching a big fish in his claws. As the bird flew by overhead, the local man drawled, "Wish I could get a fish that easy." Just then, the bird lost its grip on the fish, and it landed at the workman's feet.

Large alligators also lived in the lake. They would sometimes lunge at small prey, and other times slowly emerge, glide along silently, and then suddenly submerge like submarines. When I observed alligators streaking under the open-sided wooden bridge spanning the lagoon, I told Elizabeth of the danger, and she arranged for someone to attach wire barriers along the sides of the bridge.

There was a large flock of wild turkeys that inhabited the woods south of the main road through the Center. If they were disturbed, they would scatter on foot, some flapping their wings. Through the years the flock dwindled until it died out completely. Wild pigs could be seen in the area now known as Briarcliffe.

In January 1945, Elizabeth's father passed away, and Elizabeth acquired Youpon Dunes. She was thus enabled to have full use of this house to live in and accommodate others who came to help out at the Center.

YEAR-LONG ASSIGNMENT FROM BABA

Norina and Elizabeth had been staying at Youpon Dunes in Myrtle Beach when in 1947 Meher Baba called them back to India. From India, Elizabeth wrote to my mother, in Glens Falls, New York, asking her if she would be interested in staying at Youpon Dunes in Myrtle Beach while she and Norina were in India "indefinitely." She indicated that Baba had approved the idea. My mother responded with an enthusiastic "Yes!" that included my father's agreement. This temporary pulling



Norina at Youpon Dunes, 1948.

up of stakes was not foreign to them; for many years they would drive down to Miami to spend the winters.

And so my parents, Helen and Aaron Shaw (who would first meet Baba in 1952), stayed at Youpon Dunes to look after that property and Whileaway, the house next door. My father, not yet fully retired from selling barber supplies, was paid, through arrangement with Elizabeth, for his work of looking after the Center, which he did together with Frank Eaton. Their duties included trying to figure out ways of creating better drainage of the soil and maintaining the cabins in good repair.

It was during this same year, 1947, that my family and I moved to the house in Schenectady at 2 Castine Street where we hosted Baba meetings for many, many years.

My parents enjoyed living in Youpon Dunes very much, but after

about a year, in the summer of 1948, they wished to return to New York State. Toward the end of July, Baba sent me a cable instructing me, my wife, Jeanne, and our three children, Lowell, Leatrice, and Renae, to move to Myrtle Beach to look after the two houses and for me to look after the Center. In a second cable, Baba said, referring to me: "You go alone Myrtle Beach tenth August for twelve days then go with family on second October after parents leave on first. Love, Baba."

Since the Center was being prepared for Baba, he took a keen interest in its development, and since Elizabeth was with him in India, he would confer with her about various details in connection with the Center's development. Regarding the above cable, they felt that it was advisable for me to go to Myrtle Beach for a few days without my family in order to familiarize myself with the Center work my father and Frank Eaton were involved in, and to make any necessary arrangements for moving down there. This I did do. My parents were still there; they headed back in September to stay in our house in Schenectady while I was driving my family down to Myrtle Beach.

In a letter from Elizabeth, she quoted Meher Baba, saying:

□ *Baba has just called me in to see him and dictated the following for me to transcribe to You: "Until Baba goes to Myrtle Beach, Darwin stays. After I go there I will then need many persons and I will myself decide who." To your parents Baba has asked me to transcribe the following and which I have mailed to them: "I was happy to have had them there to serve me by looking after my Myrtle Beach places and I am happy now to bestow Blessings on them for their further welfare where ever they may be."*

Baba has told Norina and myself that he had important work to be done at his Center and it is a trust that he gives to

Darwin to carry them out for him in all detail as Baba wants them. For this purpose Darwin should correspond often and let EliNorina [Elizabeth and Norina] know all that goes on regarding the work or anything else while at Myrtle Beach and they will show the letters to Baba at the first opportune moment and get Baba's replies.

The two works for Baba are to supervise on his behalf the building of a house for Baba at the lake, and the mosquito project on the property.

☐ *That Darwin should think of Baba in all he does and that it is for his eventual coming to America that we are all preparing.*

After requesting a one-year leave of absence, explaining that I wished to go to South Carolina and help found a spiritual center, I was granted leave from my job in the Department of Traffic and City Planning of the City of Schenectady. On October 2, 1948, as Meher Baba had ordered, we moved to Myrtle Beach and stayed in Youpon Dunes for a year.

CONTRACT WITH BABA

Besides the use of Elizabeth's house, Youpon Dunes, we also were given the use of her cars. Elizabeth's husband had delivered the large tan five-passenger Nash sedan to us in Schenectady for our trip down to Myrtle Beach. Once there, we also had the use of Elizabeth's dark blue Nash – the one involved in Baba's 1952 accident. We used this car only for special occasions. So this took care of our housing and transportation for the year we were there, but we also had to have an income to pay for our food and other expenses. In this connection Elizabeth had offered to pay us \$300 per month, a generous amount,

considering that a luxurious house and cars were provided. This was confirmed, together with various instructions in a letter from Baba, which follows.

Ahmednagar, India

6th September, 1948

Dear Darwin,

As you know, the Myrtle Beach Center virtually belongs to me as sometime I have to go, stay and work there for the spiritual upliftment of all mankind; and Darwin looking after the Center will indirectly in some proportion be sharing my work in the Universal Cause.

Therefore, I, for the first and last time, want to impress upon you (who loves me wholeheartedly) to work with 100% zeal and faith.

But along with this feeling of spiritual service on your part, you must have, also, a feeling of responsibility on the material level.

This means that we must have before us from the very beginning a clear understanding about your work and duties and the reward thereof.

In short, the terms and conditions we make must be binding in the literal sense.

For employment you will be paid \$300 per month as well as lodging.

If on your own accord you want to forfeit this trust of looking after the Myrtle Beach properties, you are to give \$1,000. If for my own reasons I relieve you of this employment, you will be given \$500 total upon leaving.

Jean and the children can go for an annual holiday, but fares paid by you: Darwin never to go unless in special emergency, in which case Jean stays at Youpon Dunes. In either case send cable to India before departure from Myrtle Beach.

A summary of points for conduct and work at Myrtle Beach, that is authorized by me, is herewith enclosed and should be signed by you and by Elizabeth and a triplicate copy retained by Baba in India. The other signed copies retained by each.

You are one of my intimate ones very dear to me and I trust you fully to do this duty of mine with 100% sincerity and to see that Youpon Dunes is, also, well taken care of in every respect, as I and my group here will make special use of it during my stay in America.

Furthermore, remembering that Whileaway, which partly belongs to Elizabeth's husband, has been offered by them for use during my stay so must be kept well.

-Dictated by Meher Baba

I read Baba's letter with mixed feelings. I felt very happy and privileged to know that I would be sharing Baba's work in the Universal Cause, and that he regarded me as one of his intimate ones, but I was disturbed by the business tenor of the letter. I had not thought of our move to Myrtle Beach to look after the Center and Elizabeth's and her husband's houses as paid employment, but rather as serving Meher Baba, with everything on a basis of trust. I did not feel right about signing the agreement.

I wrote all these concerns to Baba. He was very gracious and patient with me, and in his reply he freed me from his previous "order."

I had not realized that it was an order, and at that time I did not know that Baba sometimes made similar written and signed agreements with others. In any case, this exchange with him did not disturb our relationship, and I felt much happier to be serving him with full faith and trust.

It was not until years later, during the writing of this book, that I realized the significance of Baba's statement that he and his group would make "special use" of Youpon Dunes during his stay in America. Baba was revealing that he knew at that time how and why he and his group would be using Youpon Dunes. During his stay in Myrtle Beach, Baba and his group did not use Youpon Dunes at all. However, after the auto accident in 1952 – the long-foretold "personal disaster" he had said would happen in America – Baba and the other injured ones were brought to Youpon Dunes to recuperate. Special use indeed!

Baba's reply to my letter outlining my concerns about the "business arrangement" follows.

□ *Dear Darwin,*

Your letter sent October 4th makes me very happy because I know you have gone to Myrtle Beach and will work there wholeheartedly for me; as you know I am your Spiritual Master, there is no question of my not trusting you.

I wanted you to go there and you have gone to work for me. There is no question of my not trusting you, but you should have trusted in my will and taken this all as my order by having signed and tried to carry out – leaving the result to me.

When one is chosen disciple of the Spiritual Master, one never questions and never conditions but takes every point from the Master as spiritual and not material. But as you have

not yet realized the highest, you should serve the Master on the material level but with spiritual understanding.

I know you love me wholeheartedly. You want to serve me with full faith so, if you still think you ought not to sign, then I free you from my previous order.

But I want you to definitely stay there until I come and to try your best to carry out all instructions.

-Dictated by Meher Baba

Nothing more was ever said about the issue, and the “order” having been rescinded, I never did sign anything.

YOUPON DUNES

This turned out to be one of the happiest years of our lives. Youpon Dunes, located at 3202 Ocean Boulevard in Myrtle Beach, is a beautiful house a short distance back from the Atlantic Ocean. It is a massive three-story, rectangular stucco building with spacious rooms and, at that time, a tiny elevator operating between the second and third levels.



Postcard of Youpon Dunes, 1940s.

The house was built into a high dune in such a way that one could see only the second and third levels when viewing the back of the house (from the ocean), but while looking at it from the front, one could also see the first level – the basement – which was at the street level. Porthole windows and a metal deck railing running along the length of the third story overlooking the ocean indicate that the design might have been inspired by an ocean liner motif.

In front, at the basement level, was a two-stall garage with two

porthole windows, and to the right of that was the main entrance to the house. Inside, there were a few rooms at this level, and this is where my son, Lowell, and I stayed. We had two dogs – Nippy, a large dalmatian of Elizabeth's, and Happy, our own small terrier – and we kept them down there where they would not be too disruptive.

Immediately to the left after entering through the main entrance were wide stairs leading to the spacious, sunlit second level, which contained one of two kitchens, a dining room (the dining table and chairs are now in the Barn at the Center), a large, well-furnished living room, as well as some bedrooms. There were three sets of picture windows and a door in the living room that opened out onto a stone terrace and a small, grassy back-yard. Beyond that was the beach and the ocean. At that time, the youpon and myrtle bushes were small, and so our view of the ocean was unobstructed.

The third level, where most of the bedrooms were, featured a long balcony with outside stairs leading to the flat gray canvas-over-plywood roof. During our stay, I spent several hot summer evenings repainting the roof with a preparation that included linseed oil to protect it from the blistering sun.

As I recall, the house was centrally heated, but in warm weather we had to rely on fans. The open spaciousness of the interior helped keep the house fairly cool, however.

In 1952, after the accident in Oklahoma, Baba stayed in the south-east bedroom at the third level – the one with the elevator. This room remained empty while we were there, because the elevator made it too



Jeanne and Darwin Shaw
standing with Elizabeth's
dog Nippy on the terrace
outside Youpon Dunes, 1948.

public for a bedroom, although we seldom used the elevator.

Leatrice and Renae used the southwest bedroom behind what became Baba's room, and Jeanne used the northeast bedroom, to the left of Baba's room as one faces the ocean.



Youpon Dunes; Meher Baba's room was upper left, Sam Lewis (left), Darwin Shaw (right), 1948-49.

The children went by school bus to local schools, and Jeanne spent her weekdays mostly at Youpon Dunes, looking after the large house and sewing, as she did not drive and I was working at the Center.

DRAINAGE PROJECT

The Center was still in the process of development and was not yet open for guests. Joe Chestnut, the nearby farmer who worked at the Center during the daytime, also served as the night watchman on the Center. Various other workmen were employed on the Center as needed. Meher Baba had indicated that the two most important projects were the building of his house and the drainage project, but the building of his house did not get under way until after Elizabeth and Norina returned from India in August of 1949, although the location was selected and marked off with surveyor's stakes during my time at the Center.

I used to go to this location at the end of nearly every day and spend a few moments quietly looking outward toward the East while inwardly trying to tune in to Baba, who was far away in India. Those were very

rewarding moments for me, as I strongly felt Baba's love and presence. However, at times I would wonder if it was really Baba responding or just my imagination. As will be shown at the proper time, Baba cleared this up for me in 1952, when he visited the Center for the first time.

The drainage project, undertaken to get rid of the mosquitoes, proved to be complicated and time consuming. The project involved exploring the Center woodlands where large ponds of water were trapped due to poor drainage. In addition to the largest swamp area, which flowed into the Center from Highway 17, near the Old North Road, and extended across almost the entire width of the Center property, there were also scattered swamp areas and low places where water accumulated.

While my father was working at the Center, he and Frank Eaton did some work on trying to drain the low areas near Highway 17. During vacation periods, I had also spent time exploring the swamplands as well as the many low areas throughout the Center property to determine the extent of the problem. Clearly, the best solution was to drain the large swamp.

Reports were continuously sent to Elizabeth and Baba in India, including a map showing the areas to be dealt with and, over a period of time, several different drainage plans. Each plan was thoroughly investigated, and in turn superseded by a more expensive but better plan. Finally Baba accepted what proved to be the best plan.

The drainage plan that was finally accepted by Baba called for some lateral ditches whose purpose was to drain the scattered swamp and low areas. They would connect with the main half-mile-long



View from site of Meher Baba's house where Darwin used to stand and tune into Baba. View of ocean beyond, 1948-49.

ditch, which would be located a few hundred feet inside the main Center gate. (This ditch can be seen as one crosses over the little bridge on the Center Road.)

Throughout the several months of preliminary work on the project, many consultations with engineers, lumbermen, conservation people, lawyers, neighboring property owners, and many others were taking place. What appeared to be a relatively simple project turned out to be a very complicated one with endless ramifications and details, which delayed the actual work on the project for several months. Many initially unforeseen factors had to be considered and painstakingly attended to. I sent long and complex letters to Elizabeth, who consulted with Baba about every detail. She would then send long and equally complex replies to me. Besides the letters, many cables were exchanged, as well.

The actual work on the drainage project – the surveying and clearing of the right-of-way for the ditch, and the cutting and removing of the trees – was started early in 1949. But the project was not completed until the autumn of that year. Baba had wanted the project to be under the direction of professional people, and, in accordance with his wishes, a Myrtle Beach civil engineer who had submitted some drainage plan proposals together with cost estimates was chosen to oversee the project. Under his direction, the right-of-way was surveyed, trees were cut and removed, and the ditch was excavated by a huge drag-line, or heavy equipment shovel.

The water flows in a southeasterly direction, draining into the stream known as Singleton's Swash, which in turn empties into the ocean. The drainage project proved to be very helpful in reducing mosquitoes on the Center.

In retrospect, it is interesting to observe how Baba kept Elizabeth and me busy, struggling with the drainage project for such a long time.

One suspects that Baba might have been doing something more than seeing that the swamp areas on the Center were properly drained to rid the place of mosquitoes. Elizabeth expressed a thoughtful bit of insight into this aspect of the project in a letter to me from India in January 1949. She wrote:

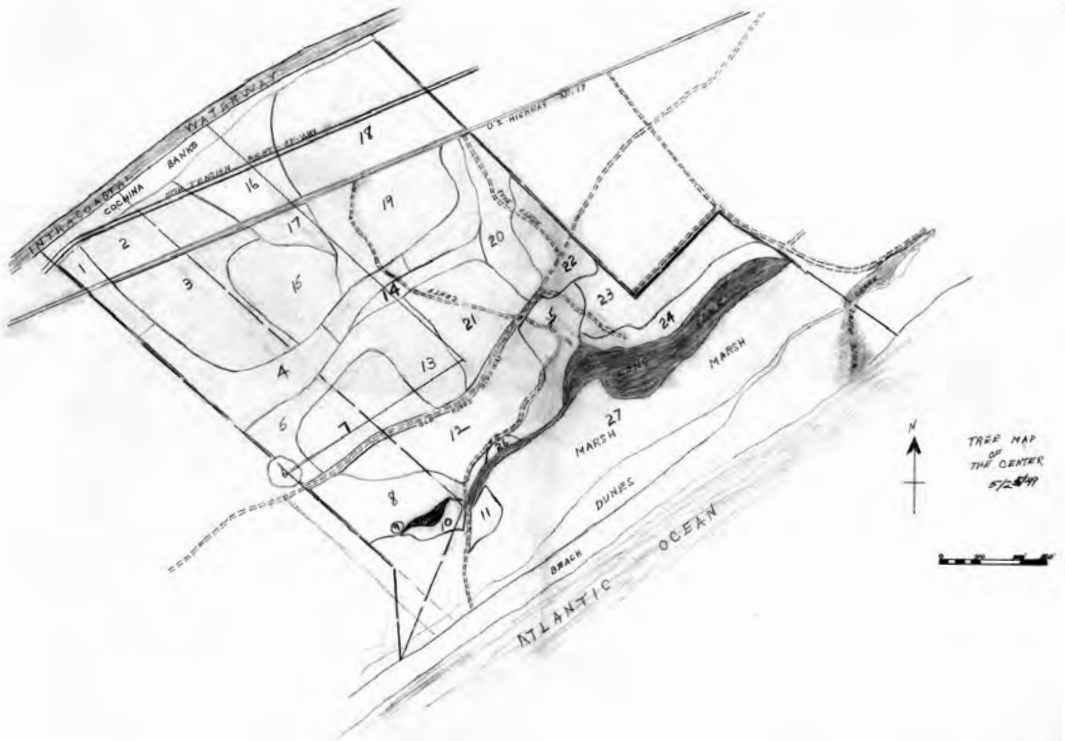
... this is another aspect of the matter, out of the realm of business. My natural caution works in the down to earth level of business. (And since I have known Baba, more than ever business of various kinds have been thrust upon me. Even over here, I am very much at my typewriter). Possibly my negative quality and your positive quality are both used by Baba as ground contacts. In any case, the unusualness of corresponding about details of a drainage project, between America and India, that Baba has directed us to "dig" together, is apparent. It might even cross your mind why he wants it that way, requiring letters and cables to fly back and forth between West and East. From the ordinary point of view, it would be easier to let the one on the spot do it all – that is, if it were only a drainage project. Nothing we do for Baba is just that which it seems.

LAND USE SURVEY


Another project that Meher Baba, through Elizabeth, directed me to undertake, was a land use survey. To accomplish this, I donned hip wading boots, armed myself with a bush ax, and walked all over the entire eight hundred acres of the Center property. As I walked, I made a sketch of the terrain and wrote notes as to which areas would be the best for various things such as farming, parks, wetlands, etc. Joe

Chestnut, the knowledgeable local farmer, helped me identify plants and soil types. From my notes and sketches, I made a land use map and sent it to Elizabeth and Baba in India.

The following is the typed report accompanying the map I sent to Baba. The report describes each segment of the Center; the numbers referred to in the report correspond to numbers on the map.



Land Use Map commissioned by Meher Baba in 1949.



Observation Report and Guide to Tree Map

5/25/49

The TREE MAP, while patterned after the Land Capability Map, is not an exact copy. If you will observe the Land Capability Map closely, you will notice that it is made up from two air-photos joined together. The difference in color – that is, one side being of a light shade whilst the other is dark – is simply the result of differing amounts of exposure allowed the two separate photos and should not be construed to indicate some difference in the area photographed. It is my impression – judging from the Jordan Map of the Center and from my own observations while traversing the boundary line southwesterly from Gator Lake – that the lighter section of the air-photo map should have been brought somewhat farther toward the darker section before joining the two together, as the present composite photo shows the southwesterly boundary line as being considerably farther away from Gator Lake than it actually is. Also, the air-photo map shows the northeasterly boundary line as being at a slightly different angle than it actually is. This, too, I believe was caused by not getting the two photos properly joined together. These discrepancies do not materially detract from the value of the Land Capability Map. I merely mention them in order to correct the erroneous impression which the Land Capability Map gives as to the locations of the two boundary lines described, and to explain that I have made an effort to locate those boundary lines more accurately on the TREE MAP. Even on the Tree Map I am not entirely satisfied that [the] southwesterly boundary line is as close as it should be to Gator Lake.

You will observe that in some places I have partially copied the sectional lines shown on the Land Capability Map, while in other locations the sectional lines of the Tree Map are entirely different. It is very interesting to observe that the variations in the types of soil also largely define the types of trees and the areas in which they grow. It was for this reason, plus the fact that the Land Capability Map is a photo which shows the thickly wooded areas, the sparse areas and the intermediate areas fairly well, that I made the Tree Map approximately the same dimensions as the Land Capability Map, as it thereby facilitates a comparative study.

- No. 1 represents a border line area of tall pines that extend from the Inland Waterway spoil bank of coquina, southeasterly past the Highway to the Gum-pond swamp area. The pines are of fairly large size and the growth is rather thick.*
- No. 2 is an area which is covered with bushes and young trees, with a few scattered pines. Among the types of bushes and young trees in this area are blueberry bushes, small holly, sweet gum, bay, oak, and a few magnolias.*
- No. 3 is similar to No. 2 except that the growth becomes much heavier as one progresses into the woods in a southeasterly direction from the Highway. Here there are quite a few good-sized trees, namely, sweet gum, oak, pine. The soil in this area is A-1 according to Joe Chestnut, and should be very good for farming. We dug down in several places but did not find enough hard-pan to interfere with growing crops. Joe Chestnut does not, of course, have the technical education of the*

Soil Service people, but he does have the practical experience with the soil as a farmer and should, therefore, have pretty good judgment on what the soil will grow.

The soil throughout the Carolina coastal area is of a “spotty” nature, and the quality noticeably changes quite a bit within even a comparatively short distance, so that it would be possible to get conflicting analysis of the same area even though the test samplings might be taken just a few hundred feet apart.

- No. 4 *This is the area of the swamp ponds extending from near the North Gate to the southwesterly boundary line and beyond. Although just now, due to a prolonged dry spell plus the tremendous amount of moisture taken from the ground by the springtime burst of growth in the woodlands, there is very little water in this ordinarily very wet area. Starting from area No. 1 and proceeding in a southeasterly direction, one leaves the predominately pine growth and begins to encounter the typical wet-area trees such as many sweet gum and quite a few water oak; some of the latter are great trees whose trunks are as much as four feet across at the base. Turning in a northeasterly direction to follow the course of the sweet gum belt, the area becomes more open as one proceeds into the lengthy lane which has been partially cleared of trees – some years back – for drainage purposes. Even along this partially cleared area, though, are many large gum trees and, as one approaches the Center Road bridge, a few cypress trees may be seen.*

- No. 5 *This is a pine belt. It starts as a ridge near where it adjoins area No. 4 at the southwesterly boundary line, but becomes a slope from No. 7 area down toward the low swampy belt just northwesterly.*
- No. 6 *This is a rather large swampy pond which Joe Chestnut calls the "Cypress Pond," because of the cypress trees that grow there.*
- No. 7 *This area is about the most arid of the entire property. The growth is sparse: scrub oak and pine.*
- No. 8 *This area is easily the most beautiful section of the entire Gator Lake strip insofar as the woods are concerned. Naturally park-like, the wide variety and spacing of the trees make of it an ideal location for scenic usefulness. Being quite removed from the more accessible northeasterly portion of the Center property, here is a place of assured solitude and seclusion. The woods in this area include fine specimens of pine, oak, dogwood, hickory, sweet gum, live oak, youpon and myrtle bushes, holly, some cedar. There are quite a few blueberry bushes in this section near the Old King's Highway. A few hundred feet toward the Ocean, from the Old King's Highway, a very fertile soil area is located.*
- No. 9 *This is the location of a very pretty grove of live oaks.*
- No. 10 *This is a very attractive area, with sand dunes, cedar and long-needle pines.*
- No. 11 *Although this area is inclined to be somewhat wet and marshy, it is the location of an exceptionally beautiful cedar grove.*
- No. 12 *The soil in this area is rather dry and the tree growth*

sparse. Most of the trees are scrubby oak, with some pine and a mixed variety of undergrowth.

- No. 13 *This section defines the pine swamp which extends almost to the Old King's Highway, and is separated from the main ditch line by a slight pine ridge.*
- No. 14 *This section is the sloping area from the big swamp pond to the scrubby oak ridge. There are some pine in this section, but most of the goodly growth of trees are of the leafy variety, among which are some fair-sized holly trees on either side of the Center Road, sweet gum, bay dogwood, water oak.*
- No. 15 *This section has very few trees, but a rather abundant growth of leaf tree bushes.*
- No. 16 *This section contains some of the thickest growth of big trees on the property. The soil is somewhat wet and rich. The tree growth includes great water oaks, maple, elm, magnolia, bay hickory, pine, holly, sweet gum, black gum.*
- No. 17 *A continuation of the same type of tree growth as that found in area No. 16, except that the thicket gradually thins out as it extends toward the easterly direction.*
- No. 18 *Mostly small pine and rather patchy with a good growth of bushes, quite a few pines bordering the northwesterly right-of-way which was recently cleared, also a very attractive grove of gum trees at the northeasterly corner bordering the Highway; scattered holly.*
- No. 19 *Very similar to the tree growth in section No. 18, except that in this section the trees are bigger and the*

growth seems thicker. Starting at the North Gate, a small area of pines gives way to swamp gum trees and other leafy trees as one proceeds toward the Center Gate. Here again, the pines predominate for a good distance. Deeper in, the woods get quite thick and jungly-like as the swamp ponds are approached.

No. 20 *This is a belt of good-sized pine trees.*

No. 21 *This is the sandy oak ridge which borders each side of the Center Road for some little distance. Sparsely covered with scrubby oak, some pine, bushes and, near the Old King's Highway, some leaf trees and a few cedars.*

No. 22 *This is one of the prettiest sections on the property. Fairly open between the trees and park-like, this area contains some ancient live oak trees, big cedars, big oak, holly, and dogwood as well as pine.*

No. 23 *This section is covered with a scrubby growth of oak and pine with some bushes. The soil is dry and sandy.*

No. 24 *The tree growth in this section is fairly thick and consists of pine, hickory, oak, cedar, holly. Bordering and overlooking beautiful Long Lake, and the Ocean a short distance beyond, this section is, scenically, one of the most beautiful to be found along the entire Atlantic coastline.*

No. 25 *Very much the same tree growth as that of area No. 24, except that along the ravine leading from the Old King's Highway down to the Lake Lagoon are some large and beautiful magnolia trees, also dogwood trees. The predominately pine growth which extends from*

the Old King's Highway to the lake contains some live oak trees and cedar. As one proceeds in a southwesterly direction, the growth changes to oak trees, mostly.

No. 26 *A very attractive grove of live oaks near the Barn.*

No. 27 *Although this expansive area is mostly marshland, it contains a great many very beautiful cedar trees. These grow in scattered locations along the entire length of this section.*

OTHER PROJECTS

At this time our neighboring property to the north, now known as Briarcliffe Acres, was just being developed, and property values were very low compared to what they became later on. Baba and Elizabeth decided that since the Center property was rather narrow toward the north end, it would be advisable to acquire some additional acreage to provide more of a buffer along that area. I was therefore directed to negotiate for the purchase of the acreage, and, as part of the transaction, to require that a new road be put in, running southward from Briarcliffe Center Gate Road to the Center property. As I recall, the amount paid for the ten-acre property was around ten thousand dollars. Later on a road was put in and named Patterson Drive; it became the "Sheriar Gate" entrance to the Center.

On another small project, we built a pathway to the beach from the east side of the lake opposite the present boat-house. In order to use this path, people had to row across the lake. Later on this path was abandoned in favor of the beach road.

These are some of the activities at the Center that kept me busy during that year. Of course, there was also the constant work of maintaining the buildings, the grounds, and the roads.

ONE MONTH OF SILENCE

In addition to the many cables Elizabeth and I exchanged, I also had some personal correspondence from her and Norina, informing me of some of Baba's activities. But in a circular dated January 1, 1949, Baba restricted all communication to business only, from the first of February until the end of 1949.

That same circular also instructed all of Meher Baba's close ones to observe silence during the whole month of July of that year. This silence corresponded to the second phase of Baba's forty-day "Great Seclusion," an important period of his Universal Work that began on June 22. Although at the time we were not informed much about this phase of Baba's Universal Work on behalf of the creation, we had no doubt but that it was very serious and portentous, and we felt closely attuned to him.

My family and I were of course still in Myrtle Beach in July, and Jeanne and I observed silence during this month. The children –

Lowell, Leatrice, and Renae – were more silent than usual, but they were not asked to observe strict silence. Actually, Jeanne would sometimes motion for them to speak, because she wanted to hear somebody talking!

During the month of silence, we tried to keep to our work routine as much as possible. On weekends, the whole family would work on the Center, which we had all to ourselves, practically. We would wash windows, rake, and do other odd jobs. We also would go out on the lake in a rowboat.

During the week, I had to deal with workmen on the Center, where the draining of the swamplands had begun.



Jeanne and Darwin Shaw
walking across the lagoon
bridge, 1940s.

The engineer, Mr. Hughes, had been told about the month-long silence and that it was for “spiritual reasons,” which he accepted. The first morning, I fished out a small notepad and wrote down some things for him. He then took my pencil and prepared to write back to me. I made a motion with my hands, and he then realized that he did not have to be silent!

I encountered other workmen now and then, and I continued to use my notepad. They took the silence in stride; developing the Center was a big job, and they were glad to have the work.

We tried to avoid public situations as much as possible. Jeanne did not drive, so I would do the grocery shopping and other errands, such as banking. Usually when I did our monthly banking business, no word would be spoken. But – wouldn’t you know it – during this month of silence, the bank teller felt like chatting with me! Thinking quickly, I pointed to my throat and shook my head regretfully.

One day I got a bad case of poison ivy on the Center. I tried to treat myself with a commercial preparation, hoping to avoid having to consult a doctor, but the outbreak covered almost my whole body and I could not clear it up. In those days you could walk into a doctor’s office without an appointment, and this is what I finally did. I used a filing card to write “I have poison ivy and I’d like a poison ivy shot,” a customary treatment in those days.

The nurse assumed right away that I was a deaf-mute. She went in to the doctor with my note, and he too assumed that I could neither hear nor speak. He came out and smiled at me. Then he mimed my symptoms by scratching himself like a gorilla and nodding questioningly. I nodded in agreement with his silent diagnosis, and he gave me the shot. As I left, I sincerely hoped I would not encounter him after the silence was ended, and we certainly never went to him again.

HIS TRUST IN US

The end of the month-long silence coincided with the end of Meher Baba's seclusion. On August 1, he sent Norina and Elizabeth back to America, with instructions to prepare his Center in Myrtle Beach for his coming in the near future.

My family and I were still living in Elizabeth's house, Youpon Dunes, and when she and Norina arrived, we all lived together there for about a month. There were plenty of rooms to accommodate everyone – even two kitchens, although we used only one of them.

Earlier in June I had received a note from Baba informing me what he wanted me to do when the year in Myrtle Beach came to an end. He knew that I could go back to my job with the City of Schenectady, and he dictated the following message to Elizabeth, who sent it to me.

June 7, 1949

I am most happy Darwin did his duty for me with all his heart, and taking into consideration his family's future I decide that he joins his old job and to rest assured that he has my love and blessings.

– Meher Baba

My family and I returned to Schenectady in mid-September and resumed our normal lives there.

1949 CIRCULAR

The January 1949 circular already referred to in connection with restricting correspondence and keeping silent is reproduced in full below. It presaged the next phase of Meher Baba's work: the New Life.

For My Disciples and Devotees
1949

- (1) *The personal disaster to me, which I have so often hinted at, will definitely occur in 1949.*
- (2) *For the first and last time, the Mandali [closest disciples] (men and women) will be faced by real tests and trials, either directly or indirectly, naturally or supernaturally, through me or through fate; and only a few real disciples might stand up to them.*
- (3) *Financial difficulties will be overwhelming and may be one of the causes of upsets for Mandali, disciples and devotees.*
- (4) *All men and women who believe in me should observe silence for one full month in July 1949 (communicating only by signs or writing when necessary for work).*
- (5) *From 1st February 1949 until the end of 1949, no one is to have any correspondence of any kind, with anyone, anywhere, except by telegram or telephone when very necessary. [The word "very" was handwritten in blue ink above the line.] Correspondence by letter may be made only for unavoidable business reasons and for urgent serious impersonal reasons. Correspondence with me may be made only telegraphically and only when very necessary. [Again, the word "very" was added in ink above the line.]*
- (6) *I shall be away from Ahmednagar with a few disciples for 4 months for my work – from 15th February to 15th June – in some place in India.*

- (7) *From 1st January 1949 (as during the year 1948, but in 1949 absolutely strictly), no women guests at all will be allowed to stay at Meherabad or Pimpalgaon only when called by me and only for twelve hours or less. I will give no interviews to women either in Meherabad or Pimpalgaon. Only men Mandali from Meherabad or elsewhere will be allowed to come to Pimpalgaon when called. I will give interviews to only those men whom I find it necessary to see and whom I especially call.*
- (8) *The year 1949 marks the artificial end to an artificial beginning and the real beginning to the real end.*
- (9) *All disciples and devotees to be more engrossed in God than in Maya by being less selfish and more sacrificing.*
- (10) *Although I am in everyone and in everything and my work is for the spiritual awakening of all mankind, I am always aloof from politics of any kind. My disciples and devotees should continue as before to abstain from taking part in political activities or discussions.*

-DICTATED BY BABA

"Meherazad"

Pimpalgaon

1st January 1949

NOTE: Return only the following "Acknowledgment Slip" by post to: Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar (India)

THE NEW LIFE

In October 1949, Meher Baba embarked on the "New Life," a new archetype of life lived in total renunciation of false values and com-

plete reliance upon God. We received the following circular in October about this New Life:

Meher Baba ends his Old Life of multifarious activities, and, with a few companions, begins his New Life of complete renunciation and absolute helplessness from October 16th, 1949. Although Baba's and his companions' New Life will be known to everyone, and their whereabouts will be no secret, no one should try to see Baba or his companions for any reason whatsoever, as Baba will not see any of them, nor allow his companions to do so. No one should try to communicate with Baba or his companions under any circumstances or for any reason whatsoever.

I stayed in New York State during the next few years, continuing to hold weekly meetings at our home in Schenectady, and once or twice a year giving talks in New York City. These were arranged by Fred and Ella Winterfeldt and were held in a rented room at Steinway Hall. Generally, thirty to thirty-five people attended. The format usually centered around the reading of one of Meher Baba's discourses. Dana Field, one of the men who went to India in 1954, first learned about Baba during one of these talks.

Elizabeth Patterson and I continued to correspond about the development of the Center and Baba's proposed plans to visit. First he intended to come in July 1951 and stay for one year, still observing the New Life conditions. Meanwhile, Elizabeth, Norina, and the workers continued working hard to get the Center ready for his stay. This included finishing the drainage project and building Baba's house. Numerous cables

were sent back and forth about the difficulties they were encountering, and Baba revised his plans accordingly. Through Elizabeth, Baba sent us the following message from Mahabaleshwar in February 1951:

Baba's plans are changed; instead of leaving India, for the West, July 1951, he will leave February 1952. Dictated personally the following: "Do not worry and rest assured that Baba wants to come and stay for one year."

Baba finally settled on April 1952 for his first trip to his Home in the West, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Thus, the 1940s had been a decade of preparation for Meher Baba's return to America. When the perfect place for his Center was found, we all felt that we were preparing it for his coming to do special work for America. We believed that he was planning to manifest his Glory soon, and that when he did, many people would instantly recognize him as the Christ and would follow him.

At the personal level during this decade, I experienced a continuous inner communication with Baba, an unbroken continuity of inner relationship with him. I was aware that Baba had placed his trust in me to do certain work – and that this work was more than just on the material plane of existence.

P A R T T H R E E

1952

Meher Baba's First Visit to the Center

Meher Baba's arrival in America in April 1952 occurred without fanfare or publicity of any kind. That was the way Baba wanted it. Nevertheless, this was an event of tremendous significance and historic importance. It is hard to believe that the Christ and a group of his close disciples could and did quietly slip into America without public recognition and acclaim.

The great importance of this visit to America may be gauged by the following message that Baba sent to his dear ones in America prior to making this trip. It was dated October 1951 and said:

The necessary arrangements have been successfully completed by Elizabeth and Norina; I shall, if God so wills it and if I am alive, come to the West next year. In order that the results of my work from Oct. 16, 1951, to Feb. 16, 1952, may be fully manifested in the Western world – either with the fullest

success or as an utter failure – I must be in seclusion for the first two weeks of my stay in America. I therefore want no publicity of any kind, either when I leave India or when I arrive in America. After these first two weeks of seclusion I shall see everyone everywhere because, eventually, I shall have to give to the world the results of my four months' work.

In the light of Baba's work with the masts (pronounced "musts": spiritually intoxicated lovers of God), the Great Seclusion, and the New Life and Manonash phases – all periods of Baba's special inner working – his visit to America in 1952 was of tremendous significance. This was greatly amplified by the predicted personal disaster in the form of an automobile accident, causing Baba to spill his blood on American soil.

Jeanne and I had waited eighteen long years to see Baba again, and this promised to be our first opportunity to be with him on an intimate basis for a considerable length of time – a full year, we thought – as well as our three children's first meeting with Baba.

At long last, on April 20, 1952, Meher Baba and approximately twelve of his men and women mandali (close disciples) arrived early in the morning at Idlewild Airport (now Kennedy Airport) near New York City. After a day's rest, they journeyed by train to Florence, South Carolina, and then in cars the remaining seventy-five miles to Meher Spiritual Center near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Baba's followers, unlike the general public, were far from indifferent to his coming – especially those who had been working since 1944 to develop Baba's Center and to prepare it for his coming. His visit was the fulfillment of all they had worked for and dreamed of. The Divine Beloved was coming at last to his Home in the West.

Along with his presence, Baba brought Divine Love, which not only spread out, enveloping the Center, but extended out into the surrounding countryside – how far, we do not know. But especially at the Center, Baba's Divine Love transformed the atmosphere in its Sweetness and Beauty. It was truly magical. One could easily imagine that Baba and his entire entourage might have come to the Center on a magical flying carpet from some celestial realm, bringing Heaven with them. This was a source of continuous joy and wonderment to me.

As Baba had stated in his message, he required a period of two weeks for rest and seclusion before seeing all of those who were eagerly looking forward to being with him. Our family in Schenectady, New York, was among those. However, I had informed my parents, Helen and Aaron Shaw, who were wintering in Miami, Florida, about Baba's arrival date at the Center, and they timed their return trip to New York so that they would be there when Baba arrived. Baba made an exception to his two-week seclusion for them, and thus they were the first to have an appointment with him. They presented him with a bag of fresh Florida oranges. Feeling that it was important to be with Baba whenever the opportunity arose, my parents would come to him whenever he came to the United States.

LOWELL'S NIGHTWATCH DUTY

One day the phone rang, and when I answered it a woman's musical voice asked with an Indian accent if I was Darwin Shaw. I replied yes, whereupon she spoke right to the point, saying that she was calling for Meher Baba, who would like to have our son, Lowell, come down to Myrtle Beach to do night duty for him. She did not identify herself, but I knew she must be Mani, Baba's sister and one of the man-

dali. I told her that we would try to get him excused from high school for a few days so that he could go.

As it worked out, Lowell obtained an excuse from school and went by train to Florence, South Carolina, and then by bus to Myrtle Beach, where someone met him and drove him out to the Center. Frank Eaton took him to the Caretaker's cabin to freshen up and shave. While Lowell was shaving, he heard the door open, and without looking up he assumed it was Frank. When he felt a tap on his shoulder, he turned around and looked straight into the smiling eyes of Beloved Baba. Baba knew that Lowell was very nervous about meeting him and chose this unexpected way to make it easy for him.

As Lowell had not rested much on his trip, he tried to get a little rest later on in the day, but he was too stimulated to actually sleep. When he went to Baba's house in the evening to do night duty, he explained to Baba that, being so tired, he probably would not wake up when Baba rang the buzzer. Baba, however, insisted that he lie down on a bed in the back left bedroom and just get up and go to him whenever he rang the buzzer. Although extremely tired, Lowell was set on keeping awake to be at Baba's call all night. However, just as Lowell thought would happen, he fell asleep and did not hear a thing all night.

Apparently Baba's purpose in having Lowell there was accomplished, because he was soon sent back home. After being with Baba, Lowell seemed like a different person. His eyes were alight with Baba's love, his voice seemed deeper, and his mannerism seemed to be that of a person in the midst of a very wonderful, deep inner experience. The most amazing thing, though, was that without realizing it, his radiation of Baba's love was so powerful that it could be felt across the city, as reported by a friend.

FAMILY MEETING WITH BABA

As Baba had scheduled our first meeting with him on May 10, our family of five – Jeanne, Lowell, Leatrice, Renae, and myself – started out by car from our home in Schenectady on May 6, and we arrived in Myrtle Beach on May 8. Jeanne and I had last seen Baba in 1934, but this was to be the first meeting with Baba for our two teenaged daughters. What follows are excerpts from Jeanne's diary, into which I have woven pertinent details and clarifications. Jeanne conveys some measure of the feelings we all had as the time approached for us to be with the Beloved once again.

May 8th, Thursday. *We arrived in South Carolina today and felt thrilled when we passed the Center. We felt as if we had come home. We stopped at Youpon Dunes and saw Elizabeth Patterson briefly. Afterwards we went to Hardy's Hillcrest Apartments in Myrtle Beach, where we rented a nice apartment of three rooms with a kitchen and bath. It was quite reasonable. In the evening we saw Frank Eaton and his family. It was lovely to see them again. All slept well that night.*

May 9th, Friday. *We went to the beach after breakfast for a swim and enjoyed it very much. We spent the morning there. We went to lunch at the Lafayette Manor [one of the few hotels in Myrtle Beach at that time]. There we met Filis, Adele, Fred and Ella Winterfeldt, and Enid*

Corfe, all of whom had just arrived from New York. Filis and Adele were allowed to stay at the Center. In the evening we met John Bass and Agnes Bourne at the hotel. We were later joined by Dr. Donkin, Sarosh, and Meherjee. It was wonderful to meet them. Dr. Donkin and Sarosh gave out appointments to the new arrivals for the next day. Before returning to our apartment we talked with Mrs. Scott and others of the group who were there.

May 10th, Saturday. Our great day! Our appointment was for ten o'clock. Darwin drove John Bass, Filis, and Adele to the Center first, then came back for our family. We had many pent-up emotions as we drove through the magic gate into the Enchanted Garden – the Center. We awaited our turn, sitting outside on benches on the terrace side of the kitchen-dining room cabin [now called the Original Kitchen]. As we waited, Delia DeLeon gave us typed papers on God and other short discourses to read before we were to go into the Lagoon Cabin to see Baba.

Delia is small-statured, a lovely person. She came from London to the Center. We saw Filis come out of Baba's cabin. Her expression of radiant happiness drew tears to my eyes. We saw others as we waited. Francis Brabazon met Baba and came over to us. He said that Baba was sending him right back to Australia. Fred and Ella were also told by Baba to return to New York City right away. Dr. Donkin and Sarosh passed by

and waved. Kitty Davy, a wonderful, dynamic person, and Malcolm Schloss – such a fine, mystic type with nice eyes – were there also. We had brought a dozen roses and a scarf for Baba. Kitty took them to the Guest House later. There were other flowers there as well, given by Mrs. Duce and Charmian.

Then we were next to go in to see Baba. I entered first. Baba was standing just inside near the door with his arms outstretched. With a happy look he embraced me, then Leatrice, Darwin, Renae, and Lowell. He gestured for us to sit down. Darwin sat near Baba on his right. The girls and I sat on a divan on the left side of the cabin and Lowell sat on the left side of the room near the door where the men mandali were sitting or standing, taking notes.

Baba was dressed in white slacks and a robe of maroon-colored silk. Adi K. Irani was on Baba's left. Across the room from us sat Meherjee, who was writing down what was said. Dr. Nilu was near him. Baba sat down. He looked young, except that his hair was thinning now. It was drawn back, no longer falling freely over his shoulders. He looked thinner, too. And we all were so happy to be in his presence.

He asked us right away how he looked to us. In spite of the changes the years had made on his body, I couldn't help but answer, "Why, the same, Baba," because he was always the same. Then Baba said, "Do you know how happy I am seeing you all? They (Leatrice and Renae) have not seen me before? They love me." Pointing to Darwin and me, he said, "They worked hard at the Center. How long was it? Every inch of the Center is full of their love – Norina, Elizabeth, and the Shaws. I like the Center – the lakes, the woods. All of it has a perfect

atmosphere.” Then he said, “Jeanne loves me.” (He repeated this twice during the interview.) “They all love me, and Baba loves all of you. It is Baba’s love that loves in you. Love is everything. Love God honestly, purely. It is better not to believe in God than to be hypocritical about loving God.”

Baba gestured toward Lowell, teasing him about his having slept through the noise of a loud buzzer that Baba rang when Lowell was on duty at night. Lowell asked, “Did you really ring? I don’t sleep so soundly at home. When Dad calls, I usually awaken easily.” Everyone laughed. Baba said, “Lowell loves me.”

Baba held Darwin’s hand and seemed to be so still, staring into space for a moment. Then he smiled at each of us, his blessed eyes full of love. The girls and I couldn’t keep our eyes dry. When the interview was over, Baba stood up, and we did also. He walked over to us, embraced each of us most lovingly again, and saw us to the door. We left the cabin. Baba was radiant all the time, except for that sober moment when he



held Darwin’s hand. We joined the others on the patio.

Sometimes I was aware of what Baba was doing within me, but on this occasion I was not. I can only speculate that he was imparting something to me for work I would be doing in the future.

THE EASTERN WOMEN DISCIPLES

Jeanne’s diary continues:



I asked for and was given permission, through Delia, to see the Eastern ladies. Kitty Davy escorted the girls and me to

the Guest House across the lagoon bridge. She introduced us to Mehera, Mani, Meheru, and Dr. Goher. Each one embraced us warmly, and we were asked to sit down. Mani talked to us, about Baba, and about Renae's and Leatrice's preferences in vocation. Others came into the room later. Among them were Mrs. Ivy Duce, Charmian with her friend Sparky, Adele, Filis, Enid Corfe, and Consuelo de Sides.

Although all of Meher Baba's disciples were leading disciplined and dedicated lives, three of the women who had come with Baba from India – Mehera, Mani, and Meheru – were leading especially sequestered lives. They remained as much as possible out of sight of men, and even when Baba's men disciples happened to be around them, they were not allowed to look at the women. Mehera was Meher Baba's closest and dearest disciple. She was a person with incomparable purity and love for the Master. Mani was Baba's younger sister, and Meheru was Mehera's niece and the daughter of Rustom, who was one of Baba's close early men disciples.

Jeanne's diary resumes:

Mani was dressed in a lovely pink sari, Mehera in a green sari, Dr. Goher in white with a green bolero, and Meheru wore a skirt and blouse. The ladies are so sweet, so angelic – the personification of Beauty, Grace, Kindliness, and Purity. It was a joy to meet them; I felt love for each one, especially Mehera. She's like a Madonna – such serenity and loveliness in her large brown eyes and in her manner. She has long hair with strands of gray, worn in a chignon in back. Mani is so very pretty, diminutive in size, with blue-black hair, large brown eyes, round face, and a sweet mouth. Meheru, daughter of Rustom, is a young girl of twenty-four, but she looks sixteen. She's very sweet.

Just as we were about to leave, Baba walked in. I gasped to see him as he passed in front of me. Everyone remained standing until Baba sat down. He then motioned us to sit down. He pointed to the alphabet board, and Mani read out loud, interpreting the message [not recorded]. Then we stood up, and the girls and I were the first to leave. I snapped a photo of some of the women in the courtyard and another of Mani in a doorway with Filis and Adele standing nearby. Baba called Mrs. Duce in again.

THE “SON OF MAN”

Continuing to quote from Jeanne’s diary:

We proceeded down the path across the bridge to join others on the patio. We lingered for a while at the Center before going back to our apartment. Elizabeth talked to us by the car before we left. Her nephew, Harry, went in to see Baba. She told us that Baba was happy to land on American soil and that he felt well. She was first to meet him at the plane when it landed. We mentioned that Baba had come as it says in the Bible: “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven . . .,” meaning by airplane.

Then we left to finish unpacking, press clothes, and write letters to Jeanne Foster, the DeLongs, the Troegels and Helen Rennish in Schenectady. Later Jeanne Foster said she felt the “charge” from our letter strongly.

In the evening, we went to the Lafayette Hotel and were on hand to meet more people just arriving. As if functioning as a

welcoming committee, we met Mr. and Mrs. Kohanow, Mr. Hettger, Miss Elinor Nichols, and Toni Roothbert. The Winterfeldts came down from their room, very happy to have seen Baba in the afternoon. The girls, Leatrice and Renae, sat in the lobby observing. They said they could tell by the happy faces which ones had already met Baba and which had not as yet.

The feeling of love overwhelmed us throughout the day, staying with us like a light deep inside, warming us and engulfing us in waves of love divine. Our minds were stilled, feeling peace and serenity not of this world. Nothing seemed to matter. All attractions of the beach, surf, and the town ceased to interest us. We felt happy, and kindly, loving, and patient toward each other and everyone. We quietly wondered at the significance of personal messages received from Baba, and reviewed the sweet, loving things said [read out by Adi as Baba pointed to the alphabet board]. We had no questions to ask – we were content to simply be with Baba; nothing else mattered. It all seemed too good to be true. We felt like pinching ourselves to see if we were dreaming. We had waited so long to be with Baba in person, and it had actually come to pass! It was a meeting we had long looked forward to.

MOTHER'S DAY INTERVIEW WITH BABA

Jeanne tells about her best Mother's Day ever:

May 11th, Sunday. Dr. Donkin, Sarosh, John, and Meherjee came again with appointments for the day. Evelyn Blackshaw went to the Center

with us in the morning. It was “Mother’s Day” – the happiest one to date. We sat on the patio and awaited our call to see Baba at nine o’clock a.m. We went in and saw Baba sitting on a settee, but he got up to embrace us. We all sat down as on the day before. What a wonderful, happy interview! Baba looked tired and heavy-laden, yet he smiled lovingly at us. On parting, he embraced each of us again.

The interview is recorded below:

Baba: “Did you sleep well, all of you?”

Jeanne: “I dreamed of Baba.” Baba smiled.

Renae: “Yes.”

Leatrice: “Yes.”

Lowell: “Yes.”

Darwin: “Yes.”

Baba to Darwin: “Your note touched me deeply.”

(Darwin had sent a note offering to do night duty for Baba.)

[Baba had sent Sarosh to our apartment with a note in reply, which said, “Baba has his love always for you and your whole family.”]

Baba to Darwin: “On the 15th morning, I want to see you from 9 to 11 a.m. so that we can discuss the future program.”

Baba: “What about Lowell?” (Baba motioned, “Tell me.”)

Darwin replied: “Lowell received notice to appear for an X-ray” (for the military draft).

Baba: "Yes, that means how long would he have to serve?"

Darwin: "This is an examination, not induction."

Baba: "If called, how long?"

Darwin: "Two years."

Baba to Lowell: "You don't like the idea?"

Lowell: "No."

Baba: "Why?"

Lowell: "I want to serve you, Baba."

Baba: "But it is all Baba, everywhere!"

Baba: "Jeanne, you don't like it?"

Jeanne: "No."

Baba gestured to Darwin: "What do you think about it?"

Darwin: "I'm neutral."

Baba turned to Jeanne: "Why?"

Jeanne: "Because of the corrupting influence."

Baba: "Well, leave it to me. Because you do not like it, Jeanne, do not worry, I will see about it."

Baba to Lowell: "Get your X-ray done, everything done, and we will see about it."

Baba called John Bass, and asked him and Darwin: "You can help me in the new program. Can you get off for fourteen days to be with Baba in New York from July 18th to the end of the month?"

John and Darwin: "Yes."

Baba: "Would it be convenient for you to do it without jeopardizing your jobs?"

Darwin: "Yes, I can do it."

Baba: "How?"

Darwin: "I have time coming."

John: "Vacation time."

Baba: "Darwin and John are to be entirely at Baba's disposal, ready for my very important work. I have some plans. I don't want to review them now. So you just be ready, prepared, free, 9 to 11 a.m. the 15th. Fourteen days with Baba in New York. Sleep, eat, and live – all the time with Baba. I have more important work for him (gestures to Darwin) these fourteen days."

Baba shook hands with Darwin and John to seal the agreement. John left.

Baba: "Lowell, he loves me very much."

Lowell: "What can I do for you, Baba?"

Baba: "Three things: (1) Love me 100 percent; (2) graduate; (3) don't worry about being called (drafted). I will see to it. Get everything done."

Baba repeated these three things Lowell must do.

Baba: "God is so happy in His purity that the whole Shaw family loves Baba with all their hearts. Unique."

Baba gestured to Adi and Meherjee and pointed to his alphabet board.

Baba: "That's most important."

While Baba was questioning Lowell, I started to answer for him, but Baba gently reached over and placed his hand on my upper arm, indicating that I should not try to speak for my family members. After the interview, I noticed red marks, almost like a burn, on my arm where Baba had so gently touched me.

Baba's invitation to spend two weeks so intimately with him was the answer to my secret desire. It was like being offered the Kingdom of Heaven on a silver platter. Baba never did broach the subject of the "important work" he said he had in mind for me during those fourteen days. This was also my first indication that Baba did not plan to stay in Myrtle Beach the entire year. I probably assumed that after Baba's work in New York was finished, he would return to Myrtle Beach. My mind never really questioned such things; I tended to "go with the flow," thinking only that "this is the way things are."

HAPPY DAYS

To resume Jeanne's diary, which continues with the entry for May 11:

□ *Then we girls were allowed to go see the ladies again. We had a short but happy visit. Mehera showed us pins made of Baba's hair and nails, which were lovely. They were shaped in the letter B, in blue, with Baba's nails and hair woven around it. Mehera gave us one of these pins. We were shown some snapshots of Baba in photo albums. While we were sitting there, Evelyn Blackshaw came in. She was crying, deeply touched by Baba's contact. Mehera comforted her. As we left, we embraced, then met Mrs. Duce and Charmian as they were entering.*

We crossed over the bridge and joined the others on the patio. Mrs. Scott was there, along with Consuelo, John, Toni, Kitty, Delia, Filis, and Adele. We then left the Center and returned to the apartment, where we met Irene Eaton and Frankie, Jr. In the afternoon we went to the Hotel Lafayette and talked to Fred and Ella, who were leaving for home the

following day. We all went for a soda at the drug-store, said our goodbyes, and left for the apartment.

May 12th, Monday. *We went for a swim, and later to the Hotel Lafayette to talk with Agnes Bourne, who was leaving that day. In the evening we talked with John, the Kohanows, and Margaret Scott. Then we all went to the Eatons' to see a movie film of Frankie and some old slides of the Center. We had a nice evening.*

One day during this period, our family was invited to have lunch with the men mandali in the Kitchen cabin. While we were eating, Baba came in and touched each of us. This was a thrilling surprise for all of us and yet another indication of intimacy with him. On this occasion, Jeanne remarked that as Baba walked away, he looked larger, instead of smaller.

Jeanne's diary continues:

May 13th, Tuesday. *In the afternoon we took the Kohanows in our car to Brookgreen Gardens. We took pictures and enjoyed the day together. We talked with Mrs. Chandler at the museum there and told her about Baba. She said she would come to the Center on the 17th.*

In the evening Frank Eaton and John Bass came over to our apartment. John scolded me for making jokes and saying funny things when we were with Baba, saying that I shouldn't waste Baba's valuable time with such things. I said nothing and didn't mind his scolding because I was feeling Baba's love and his presence.

NEXT INTERVIEW WITH BABA

Jeanne's diary continues:

May 14th, Wednesday. We went out to the Center at nine in the morning. We picked up John Bass at the Lafayette Hotel. When we went to the Lagoon Cabin to be with Baba, he said that he was relaxed today. He proved that he likes jokes and that he was indeed present the night before by telling us funny stories and incidents for about fifteen minutes. Then he turned to John, saying, "Baba likes jokes." One story Baba told us was about a boy of six who was supposed to bring him a Thermos bottle full of coffee every day when he was in seclusion for a long time, but on the way to Baba the boy secretly drank half of the coffee each day.

What follows is the transcript for the May 14 interview (recorded in Jeanne's diary):

First we talked of dreams. Then:

Baba: "We have decided about you (Darwin), about him (Lowell), about you (Jeanne) also; and both of them (Leatrice and Renae) Baba will think about."

Baba to Leatrice and Renae: "Will you both do exactly as I tell you?"

Leatrice and Renae: "Yes."

Baba: "Is that YES or just yes?"

Leatrice and Renae: "YES."

Baba: "Jump in the lake? Even with the alligators in it?"

Baba: "I am in everything. I am in the deer, in snakes, in alligators. If you knew that, you would not be afraid of anything and never be upset by anything. So I, too, know that you will do exactly as I tell you to do. I am very happy indeed. Isn't it true, Darwin? They will do exactly as I tell them to do, and that makes me very happy. So I will tell you at the right time and the right moment and you will do exactly as I tell you to do without hesitation."

Baba: "Leave on the 18th, all of you. Lowell, leave on the 17th, the rest on the 18th. (We had discussed transportation earlier.) We leave on the 20th for California." (Baba repeated these remarks.) "Baba will be in New York from July 15th to the end of the month."

Baba to Jeanne and daughters: "You three see me the 17th of July in New York when I will finally tell you about the girls – what they are to do. We will fix their future."

Baba to Leatrice: "Read what you have written for today." [She reads.] "Now draw two lines and take notes. On the 17th of July, Baba will decide the future of you both, Leatrice and Renae. So, Jeanne, Leatrice, and Renae, the three of you, see me on the 17th of July before I start my work on the 18th with Darwin and John."

Jeanne's diary for this day continues:

Later that same day, Baba came to the Original Kitchen in a station wagon which Adi was driving. He motioned for our family to get in the station wagon. Darwin and I sat directly in

back of Baba, and Lowell, Leatrice and Renae sat in back of us. As we were driving along, we could see the lake in some areas, and I had the whim to say something in a southern accent, so I said, "The lake is ca'm today, Baba." Baba quickly turned around and smiled, as he gestured that I should say something else in a southern accent. Then he motioned for Darwin to say something in a southern accent, but he couldn't do it. We all laughed. It was so wonderful riding in the station wagon with Baba. I noted that Baba's head and ears seemed so large.

INNER CONTACT WITH BABA

Jeanne, the children, and I were headed for Meher Baba's house, which had been constructed on the location selected by Baba, at the northeastern area of the Center property. As we drove along, Baba gestured for Adi to drive faster and faster, until we were speeding along the path.

As I mentioned earlier, during the year when I looked after the Center – September 1948 to September 1949 – I would find time nearly every day to check the property along the lake for trespassers who might be fishing there. I would arrive at the location where Baba's house was to be built and would



Meher Baba's house, 1952.

spend a few moments quietly looking out toward the East while inwardly trying to tune in to Baba, who was far away in India. Those were very rewarding moments for me, as I strongly felt Baba's love and presence. However, at times I would wonder if it was really Baba responding or just my imagination. Baba answered that question on this day.

When we arrived at Baba's house, the gates to the compound were open and Adi drove into the circular driveway to the front of the house. After we climbed out of the station wagon, Baba pointed meaningfully toward the lake and the ocean beyond, which at that time was clearly visible from that vantage point. We responded by saying, "Yes, Baba, it's a magnificent view."

Baba then walked quickly up the front steps, turned around, and snapped his fingers to catch my attention. As I looked at him, Baba raised his right arm with his elbow slightly bent and his index finger pointing and slowly lowered his arm, pointing toward me. As he did this, he looked into my eyes very meaningfully. I was instantly aware of what it was that he was trying to convey to me. I said, "Why, Baba, you are reminding me of how I used to come to this place and think of you!" Baba nodded and quickly turned toward the door, motioning us to follow him into the house.

I feel that this not only was a confirmation for me, but stands as a confirmation for everyone that Baba is aware of our efforts to reach out to him in spirit and that he does respond to those efforts.

Jeanne's May 14 diary entry continues:

□ *Baba showed us through all the rooms of the house. It's a lovely house with nice, neat rooms, which are well furnished. In Baba's bedroom, he showed us the buzzer he had used to call Lowell, and indicated how he had pressed it several times and still could not wake Lowell up. When we were in the kitchen, Baba pointed toward the cabinets and other modern arrangements, knowing that I would admire them, and I said, "Oh yes, Baba, it's wonderful." He also showed us the wonderful view of the ocean from the front veranda.*

As we proceeded out and down the steps, I accidentally

stepped slightly on Baba's heel. I apologized and Baba turned and tenderly took my face between his hands and indicated with a sweet smile that it was all right. Then we remarked how lovely the garden was. Baba was so gracious. We then went back in the station wagon with Baba to the central area of the Center. We went to the Kitchen, and Baba departed for the Lagoon cabin, waving affectionately to us.

The girls and I were allowed to go see Mehera, Mani, Meheru, and the other ladies at the Guest House. I felt much love for each of them; they are so sweet and loving. In the evening, we went to the hotel for a while. When we returned to the apartment, I wrapped souvenirs for the ladies.

OLD AND NEW FRIENDS

Jeanne's diary continues:

May 15th, Thursday. Darwin and John Bass went to the Center to see Baba and were in a conference with him. Lowell and I went to the beach to sun and swim. Darwin and the children worked on signs for the Center in the afternoon. In the evening, we went to the Lafayette Hotel and met some of the members of the Sufi group. We talked with them and with a priest and two women from New York. We spent some time with the Kohanows and with Mrs. DeLejeurehra from Panama and with Mrs. Orr.

The conference referred to on this day was probably in reference to the Open House Day scheduled for the 17th.

Jeanne continues:

May 16th, Friday. *Darwin, John, Sarosh, and Mrs. Orr left for the town of Florence, to meet people coming on the train that day. I baked all afternoon, making cakes and cupcakes to be sent over to Baba and the group. After being on the beach, it was seven o'clock when we came back to the apartment. We ate hurriedly and went to the hotel. We met Rhoda Diamond, Emma Larmore, the Rudds, Mr. Grives, and others. We chatted for a while, then came back to the apartment and prepared for the next day.*

OPEN DAY AT THE BARN

Although every day with Meher Baba was very wonderful, Saturday, May 17, was an outstanding day. This was the “Open Day,” when the public could come to the Barn to have a brief contact with Baba. We arose early and left for the Center at six-thirty. The weather was delightfully warm and pleasant. When we got to the Barn, Baba was already there. We all went in and he embraced each of us.

Baba’s presence was all-pervasive, giving the atmosphere an ethereal quality. It was light and sweet, giving one the feeling that the whole scene might have been mysteriously transported to some heavenly realm.

Baba directed Delia DeLeon and Margaret Craske to station themselves on the porch outside the front screen door of the Barn, where



Meher Baba posing for photographs outside the Barn on Open Day, May 17, 1952.

they were to let visitors in to see Baba. They were the only ones allowed to remain on the porch. Baba directed Jeanne, as well as Filis and Adele at separate times, to stay outside the screen door on the back porch, where they were to tell the people as they came out to eat the grape prasad Baba had given them – also, as some of them seemed bewildered after meeting Baba, to make sure they went in the right direction to get back around the Barn.

Through Eruch, Baba had indicated that I was to arrange for a potty chair to be placed for him in a tiny room under the Barn. After I did that, I was free to roam around outside the Barn. Elizabeth Patterson and John Bass were in the Barn sitting near Baba. Adi, Meherjee, and Gustadji were also there. Adi would read Baba's messages as Baba pointed to the letters on the board. Outside, there were many chairs for the group and visitors and some tables with books. Leatrice and Renae were giving out pamphlets.

From her vantage point, Jeanne could see everything that was taking place inside the Barn. She wrote in her diary: "As I saw so many people coming and leaving and how deeply touched so many of them were, I also felt the love they were feeling. I felt Baba's love, which he gave to each one, and was deeply moved by this feeling all morning, so strongly that I felt myself vibrating as if by an electric current. It was a wonderful privilege to be there and have a clear view of Baba."

Later, Jeanne told me that one time, when there were no visitors in the Barn, Baba began striding barefooted back and forth the length of the Barn. As he did this, everyone watched him, wondering if he was doing some special work. Sensing their wonderment, Baba looked up and indicated that he was just getting some exercise.

Jeanne continues her account:

Sarosh, Dr. Donkin, and Darwin drove back to the hotel in Myrtle Beach to bring people to the Center. Everyone was invited to remain at the Center throughout the day if they wished. Some brought their lunch and stayed most of the day. At nine o'clock, Baba told Leatrice, Renae, and me that we could go visit the Eastern ladies [who were secluded in the Guest House]. Then Rhoda, Anne, and the lady from Panama, along with three of the ballet dancers, were also allowed to go with us.

Sarosh drove us to the Circle [the central area of the Center]. Then Kitty escorted us across the bridge to the Guest House to see the ladies. After a short visit, we went back to the Barn. I resumed my post on the back porch. Leatrice and Renae joined me there for a while. There was a priest who was so deeply touched by Baba's love that he stood on the porch for a while and wept. Baba embraced some and shook hands warmly with others.

On all, he bestowed a loving glance and a constant loving smile. I was very interested to see the large Sufi group. They came in with their Murshida, Mrs. Duce. Baba greeted each one individually. Mrs. Duce, with her daughter, Charmian, garlanded Baba with a garland of carnations that Charmian had brought. Baba turned to us on the porch and showed how pleased he was with the garland.

Jeanne also noticed, as she observed through the screened door, that groups of African American people had come to see Baba and that Baba stood up and shook hands with each one.

While standing outside of the Barn, I was strongly wishing that I

could be inside with Baba. Just then, one of the women who was on duty at the front door of the Barn called out to me, “Darwin, Baba wants you.” Delighted, I hurried into the Barn. There were no visitors in there just then, and Baba, who was standing up, smiled at me and motioned for me to come to him. There was a humorous expression on his face as he held the alphabet board diagonally, spun it around, and then playfully handed it to me. Taking it, I responded to his playful mood, saying, “Oh, you want me to do that?” He nodded and I tried to spin the board as he had but was quite unsuccessful. Then Baba held out his hand and I gave the board back to him. Baba smiled, wagged his head a little and motioned for me to go back outside.

Jeanne witnessed a most interesting incident that revealed Baba’s omniscience. It began in our apartment the evening before the Open Day at the Barn. As she recorded in her diary:

This man who loved Baba very much had come to visit us, and he was disturbed because his wife did not want him to bring their small son out to meet Baba. I felt that Baba was aware of the situation, and I told this man not to worry about it, as I felt that Baba would work it out in some way. I was delighted the next morning when I saw this man walk into the Barn to see Baba – carrying his son on his shoulders. When Baba saw them, he quickly turned and looked at me with a knowing smile as he raised his arm and closed his thumb and forefinger to form the circle of perfection.

Later on, I asked this man what had happened. He said that he had gotten up early and was quietly preparing to slip out of the house by himself and go out to the Barn. But the little boy woke up and cried out, “Where are you going, Daddy? You’re

going out to see Baba and I'm going with you." The mother, meantime, said that he couldn't go. So the little boy screamed the house down till the mother said, "Take him, take him!"

Many people have reported that when meeting Baba they felt an unusual familiarity; it was as though they were encountering a dear, vaguely remembered friend from their past. This inner recognition would sometimes cause people to feel disoriented for a time, and on Open Day, many people became so dazed that they had to be guided out of the Barn and prevented from bumping into trees or walking into the lake. However, for many, this was the rekindling of love for their dear Beloved and a new beginning in their relationship with him.

MEHER BABA'S AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT

Following the instructions Baba had given us on the 14th, we left Myrtle Beach to return to our home in Schenectady on May 18, the day after the Open Day at the Barn. We knew that Baba would be starting out soon to go by car to Meher Mount in Ojai, California. We had been home only a few days when on May 24 we received the terrible news that Baba and those traveling with him were involved in a terrible auto accident near Prague, Oklahoma. We were told that Baba had a broken leg, a broken arm, and facial injuries. Mehera suffered a fractured skull, Elizabeth had her wrists and several ribs broken, and Meheru was also injured. Only Mani was unhurt.

Even though Baba had for some time been saying that a personal disaster would befall him, we felt deep shock and anguish when we heard about this accident. We were naturally very much concerned about the condition of Baba and the others, but were relieved to find out that they were receiving the best of care.

After spending thirteen days in the hospital at Prague, the injured ones, as well as all of the others of Baba's party, left and returned to Myrtle Beach by ambulance, arriving on or about June 7. They stayed at Elizabeth's house, Youpon Dunes, to convalesce, thus fulfilling Baba's indication to me in the 1948 letter that he and his people would make "special use" of the house.

Baba used the room with the elevator as his bedroom (top floor, on the left as one views the house from the ocean side). I believe that Mehera and Mani shared the room behind Baba's room – where Leatrice and Renae had stayed in 1948-1949 – and that Meheru and Dr. Goher stayed in the room to the left of Baba's room, which had been Jeanne's room the year we were there. I recall that Elizabeth stayed in a room on the second level. The men mandali stayed next door, at Whileaway, as they were not supposed to see Mehera. (This was Baba's order and was connected with his special archetypal working.)

On June 13, Baba released the following statement regarding the accident:

The personal disaster for some years foretold by me has at last happened, while crossing the American Continent – causing me through facial injuries, a broken leg, and a broken arm, much mental and physical suffering. It was necessary that it should happen in America. God willed it so.

It brings to fruition the first part of the Circular which said that until July 10th [in the Complicated Free Life], weakness would dominate strength and bindings would dominate freedom; but from July 10th, in my Full Free Life, strength would dominate weakness and freedom would dominate

bindings; and then, from November 15th, in my Fiery Free Life, both strength and weakness, freedom and bindings, would be consumed in the fire of Divine Love.

Dictated by Meher Baba at Myrtle Beach, S.C., June 13,

□ 1952

C H A P T E R
S E V E N

*Meher Baba's Stay in
New York:
THE FIRST THREE DAYS*

Because of Meher Baba's injuries in the May 24 accident, I thought that he might cancel his previously planned visit to New York City in July, but as it turned out, Baba decided to follow through on the plan. I had written to Baba about this, and the following is a letter with instructions from Baba, which Baba had dictated to Charmian Duce to be sent to me.

MEHER CENTER "on the Lakes"

P.O. Box 487, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

July 12, 1952

Dear Darwin:

Baba has asked me to write to you as dictated by him, the orders to date on your New York visit.

1. He agrees that it would be best for you and your wife and family to drive to New York on the 17th of July.

2. After the interviews at 33 West 67th Street on the 18th, you should bring your wife and family out to Scarsdale to have a five-minute interview with Baba. You should drive them out by car.

3. Jeanne, Leatrice, Renae and Lowell should return to Schenectady on the 20th, which is Sunday, and is, I believe, the date which you suggested.

4. Baba will let you know later if you are to stay at the Sufi Center at East 72nd Street, John Bass's Apartment, or at some location which would be closer to him in Scarsdale.

5. You will definitely be needed with the car by Baba until the 30th, when Baba leaves for Europe.

6. Baba said he was very happy over your wife's offer to bring the girls and help during Baba's visit, but that will not be necessary, and that he will see them on the 18th.

I've probably made this sound a bit stiff, but I've been trying to remember accurately the points which Baba mentioned. I can only hope that you will sympathize with me, knowing how hard it is to remember exact words after talking to Baba. He was very happy with your letter and pleased that you would all be there.

I arrived down here two days ago, and have been more than pleased to see how very well everyone looked, since I had seen them last at low ebb in Prague, Oklahoma. They just look wonderful, and Baba looks more like he did when I first met him in India in '48 than he has any time since he arrived here in the States. He sent his love to you all.

Do give my best to your family,

Devotedly,

(Signed) Charmian



In working out the details for his stay in the New York area, Baba enlisted the aid of Filis Frederick and several others. Filis managed to persuade a friend of hers, Mrs. Kate Ferris, to lend Baba and his party the use of her nice house in Scarsdale, located about thirty-five miles north of New York City, at 14 Cohaney Road. Also, an inn on School Lane was arranged for Dr. Nilu to stay in during the day, after serving Baba on nightwatch duty.

A GOOD BOY

Baba asked that a boy of around sixteen years of age be brought who could help Baba personally while he was in the New York area. Filis prevailed upon her sixteen-year-old cousin Keith MacGaffey to help Baba. Keith and his family lived in Schenectady, not far from where we lived. We were friends, so he rode with our family when we drove to Scarsdale on July 17.

After picking up Keith MacGaffey, we started on our trip to Scarsdale on Thursday, July 17. When we arrived in White Plains, just north of Scarsdale, at 3:30 p.m., I telephoned the house where Baba and his party were staying. I spoke with Rano, who gave me the message from Baba that he wanted Keith brought over as soon as we arrived so he could determine if Keith would be suitable for waiting on him during Baba's stay, which would be until the end of July.

We proceeded on to the house. Keith and I went to the door while the rest of my family remained in the car. The large two-story house, located in a beautiful section of Scarsdale, was quite charming. Rano met us at the door and led us to the right, through a doorway off the living room to the front sun porch, which had been converted into a bedroom for Baba.

Baba was sitting on the bed with his legs stretched out in front and his back leaning against the headboard. His left leg was in a full-length cast and his left arm was in a sling. It was heartrending to see him in this condition, but he did not appear to be suffering any bodily pain at the time. In fact, here was the real Baba, the embodiment of the flowing Ocean of the sweetest, purest love. To come into his presence was indescribably wonderful.

I introduced Keith and Baba to each other, and Baba asked me about Keith. I told him that Keith was a fine boy, and I assured Baba that he would be pleased with him. Baba seemed satisfied and motioned for Keith to remain. Baba then indicated that our family should meet him the following day at Mrs. Duce's apartment, where Baba was scheduled to give interviews for the next three days. Leaving Keith there with Baba, we drove from Scarsdale to the Winterfeldts' apartment in New York City, where we had arranged to stay for the next three nights.

INTERVIEWS

On the morning of July 18 we got up bright and early in order to be at Mrs. Duce's apartment by 8:00 a.m. Just before going into the building, we briefly saw the Ross family, who were there to see Baba. Mrs. Duce's apartment was at 33 West 67th Street, apartment 7FE. When we got off the elevator and arrived at the apartment, we were greeted by Mrs. Duce. Baba and some of the men mandali were already there.

Baba had our family called to go into the large room where he was going to be receiving people. There was a bed in the room, and Baba was sitting on one side of it so that his left side, which had been injured in the accident, was facing the middle of the bed. He was leaning

against a pillow that was propped up against the headboard, and his legs were stretched out in front of him.

Baba gave Jeanne a big bunch of grapes, saying through an interpreter, "Share with your two daughters and no one else." When they went back into the room where the others were, she wanted to be polite and share the grapes with them, but she knew she had to obey Baba. So she carried out Baba's order, despite what the others might have been thinking.

Baba's chest was bare because it was very hot and there was no air-conditioning. In order to make the room a little cooler, a galvanized tub with a large block of ice was placed on the floor in a corner of the room and a fan was blowing across the ice and into the room.

Baba indicated that several people should stay in the room with him during the interviews. They were Adi Sr., Meherjee, Gustadji, John Bass, myself, and Keith MacGaffey. We all sat on chairs in the background. My chair was on the left, inside the doorway where people entered. Adi and Meherjee stood, Meherjee opening the door, and Adi reading the alphabet board.

Mrs. Duce was in charge of the other arrangements; Marion Florsheim was assisting. Filis was there, and Adele was at the door, checking the names of the people as they came in. Leatrice was on duty answering the telephone. Renae and Lowell were busy passing out circulars. Charmian had a cold and so was consigned to the upstairs, but she would come down occasionally. There were also several others assisting where needed.

When Baba called our family in for a morning greeting, he told Jeanne that she should have all the visitors read a large poster as they came in. The poster read:

I am equally approachable to one and all,
 big and small.
 To saints who rise and sinners who fall,
 through all the various Paths that give
 the Divine Call.
 I am approachable alike to saints whom I
 adore
 And to sinners whom I am for,
 And equally through Sufism, Vedantism,
 Christianity
 Or Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and other
 "isms"
 Of any kind and also directly through
 no medium of "isms" at all.

Hundreds of people came to meet Meher Baba. They would enter the room one at a time or in family groups and walk around to the right side of the bed where Baba was sitting. Remaining standing, they would greet Baba and engage in a moment of loving conversation with him. The interviews were brief but filled with Baba's love and personal interest in each person. Baba wanted to touch people's hearts with his love, rather than have them be overawed by him. Each one received his Divine Love and, as prasad, a grape or other fruit. Then they would exit through another door. It was only later that we would find out how deeply Baba's presence had affected some of those who met him.

Sometimes, when there was a few minutes' break between interviews, Baba would have all the workers come into the room to spend a few moments with him. On those occasions he would tell little

stories or talk briefly with individuals here and there, giving all a few minutes of precious intimacy with the Beloved.

On other occasions when there were breaks in the interviews, Baba would toss fruit, cherries, and grapes to us, looking in one direction and tossing the fruit in another direction. We had to be very alert in order to catch the fruit. If we missed the fruit and it fell in our lap or on the chair, we had to give it to Gustadji, who put on an exaggerated expression of delight as he ate the fruit. It seemed like a little game, but the prize was not mere fruit but precious prasad from the Beloved.

I did not think about it at the time, but it was an act of intimacy for him to have me there in the room with him. And since he knew I would be working for him in later years, I suppose he wanted me to see how he worked, and to get the benefit of being there with him.

S - O - F - T

During the morning, Baba called Leatrice and Renae in to ask them to prepare a fruit salad for him. Leatrice describes this incident:

Baba called my sister, Renae, and me into his room and asked us to make a fruit salad for him. We thought that it was wonderful to be given an opportunity to serve him. Baba had Renae and me come forward so that we were standing near his right shoulder. Holding up his alphabet board with a look on his face that signified, "Are you ready for this?" Baba pointed out some letters on the board in his nimble way. Then he looked at us to see if we got his spelling. I looked down, thinking, "Oh my gosh, I didn't know what he said," for all I had grasped was that there were four letters. [Renae said later that

she could only get the letters S and T.] Baba looked up with expectation in his eyes. All I could do was to shrug my shoulders in dismay. With a look of patient understanding, Baba slowly spelled out the word again, but this time I understood only the first two letters. Once more I couldn't give the answer to Baba when he looked up at me so sweetly. I was inclined to feel embarrassed on such occasions; however, Baba seemed not to mind and didn't make me feel bad. With him it was "Let's keep on; let's do it again," as he pointed out the letters. This time I said, "S-O-F-T." When Baba squeezed his fingers together, we both called out in unison, "Soft!" Baba smiled and indicated that he wanted the salad soft.

So Renae and I went into the kitchen where the piles of fruit were – oranges, tangerines, peaches, grapes – all kinds. Washing our hands, we started to peel the fruit. Renae kept saying to me, "Mash it; make it soft." We were so happy to be doing something for Baba that our tears salted the salad and we were unmindful of the very hot day. Later, Renae told me she heard that the salad was all Baba ate and he liked it. We didn't know at that time that Baba had also lost some teeth in

□ *his accident.*

SECOND DAY OF INTERVIEWS

The next day, Saturday, July 19, we arrived at Mrs. Duce's at 9:00 a.m. Baba had not arrived yet. There were several people waiting in the large room for interviews. Jeanne wrote down the names of the people present. Enid Corfe and Ella Winterfeldt were helping for the day. Leatrice, Ella and Renae took turns answering the phone. Lowell was

downstairs passing out circulars, and Enid was assisting at the door in the afternoon.

Jeanne noted in her diary that Baba arrived at 9:10 with the men disciples. She added that he was “in a different mood entirely today, serious, powerful, magnetic.” People came from all over. There were people from out of state, out of country. Many came from California, a few from Panama, one from Israel, one from Egypt, from India and many other places. Jeanne wrote in her account: “We were happy to meet Ruano Bogislav’s daughter and another, adopted daughter.”

Several of Margaret Craske’s young ballet dancers came, and they were deeply touched at meeting Baba. Mildred Kyle was present. Jean Adriel came. Many who knew of Baba for several years and some new people came. Several Sufis came that day also. A total of one hundred twenty or more people came on this day.

Keith MacGaffey paused on his way to tea time – he looked very happy, and Jeanne asked him, “Are you happy?” He replied, “Oh, yes!” with real joy in his voice.

I was in the room with Baba intermittently. Sometimes Baba would call a few of us in for a short time when there was a lull in the flow of people coming in, and sometimes I would go in to introduce someone from the Schenectady group to Baba. When I was not in the room with Baba, I would help out in any way I could, such as speaking to people about Baba and leading people to Baba’s room.

At the close of the day we saw Baba leaving to go back to the Scarsdale house. He waved to us, smiling. My family and I then went back to the Winterfeldts’ apartment.

LAST DAY OF INTERVIEWS

The next morning, Sunday, July 20, we received a call from Mrs.

Kyle asking if she could ride out to Baba's house in Scarsdale with us for a prearranged women-only one-hour meeting with Baba. We went to get her and drove to Scarsdale, arriving at 9:00 a.m. Lowell and I waited outside while Jeanne, Leatrice, and Renae went in. Jeanne wrote of their hour-long visit:

□ *Rano greeted us at the door and took us in to see Baba. Baba was on the back patio on a settee. Mrs. Kyle greeted Baba and was introduced to the Eastern women mandali. After a few words from Baba, interpreted by Mani, Mrs. Kyle went up to see Elizabeth Patterson (who was recuperating from the accident), while I and my daughters remained. Baba had the women mandali open up one or two of the gifts we brought. Then we went upstairs to see Elizabeth for two or three minutes. She looked cheerful, happy, young, and quite well.*

After that we came down to the living room to visit with all the ladies. Besides the Eastern women, there were present Kitty, Rano, Ruano, and Margaret Craske. Mrs. Duce and Charmian came in later. Our hour was up and we went out. Ruano spoke to Darwin and Lowell. Mrs. Kyle came out, too, after visiting with Elizabeth. She was introduced to Ruano. Then Alberta, the cook, came out and talked with Mrs. Kyle. Keith was also out there talking with Darwin and Lowell. As

□ *we left, Ruano and Kitty waved gaily.*

After we took Mrs. Kyle back to her hotel, we ate lunch with the Winterfeldts and then went to Mrs. Duce's apartment at 1:30. Baba arrived at 2:00. Several of the Sufis were already waiting, and after they

all arrived, Baba addressed them as a group. Then each went in to see Baba individually.

The Schenectady group began to arrive at 2:30. Mrs. Duce had retired to her study for a rest. Baba put Jeanne in charge of arranging the order in which people would go in to see him for the rest of the afternoon. Lowell, Leatrice, Renae, and I assisted in various ways. Many of the New York City group also came. At the close of the interviews, Baba came out to the living room to address all those of the Monday night group, together with all those who remained after their interviews with Baba. One of Baba's men mandali read out the following prepared discourse, which was later circularized.

*Baba's Discourse to the New York and
Schenectady Baba Groups*

Bliss is the goal of life. That bliss is continuous, changeless, eternal and divine. That bliss has in it power, love, knowledge and infinite wisdom, and God is all this in one.

The Indian term "ANANDA" has seven stages, and "ANANDA" means happiness. The seventh "ANANDA" is called "PARAMANANDA" – the bliss of God – which when attained gives one everlasting existence in God.

Today I feel happy, but this happiness is personal. To see you who love Me makes Me feel very happy and touched at heart. Norina and Elizabeth have worked for Me all these years, and they love Me with all their hearts. It was they who made it possible for Me to come over here this time. Today their physical presence is not here, but they are in My heart very precious, very sacred.

The only thing that I want to lay stress on is that the time is very near when all will cry out for God.

From November 15th, 1952 begins My Fiery Life, which has been circularised throughout India; and if, God willing, I physically survive this Fiery Life, I shall come back definitely to America in July 1953. This is certain. If this Fiery Life makes Me give up My body, God will make Me come back on earth after about seven hundred years.

All I want to say is that the aim of all life since the beginningless beginning to the endless end is to love God and be ONE WITH HIM.

I give you all My love: that Love which, by the Grace of God, will make you love Him as He ought to be loved.

Baba left for Scarsdale soon after, and my family and I went to a cafeteria for the evening meal, along with John Bass, Filis, Adele, Frank Eaton, Helen Rennish, the Winterfeldts, Michael and Ann Kohanow, Bebe Kortcamp and Anna Ginsberg. After that, we went to the Winterfeldts' apartment, where we were joined by Frank Eaton, Helen Rennich, Leo Betz, and Leland and Hilda DeLong. The next morning the whole group left for Schenectady. Jeanne and the girls went with the DeLongs by car, and the rest went by train. I remained for the rest of the month to be at Baba's service.

C H A P T E R
—
E I G H T

*Meher Baba's Stay in
New York:*

THE NEXT TEN DAYS

*A*fter saying goodbye to my family, I went to the Winterfeldts' apartment, where I was to spend my nights for the next ten days. Meher Baba wanted me to be with him at Scarsdale through the daytime, beginning quite early each morning. So I would get up at four o'clock a.m.; shower, shave, and eat breakfast; then drive the thirty-five miles to the Scarsdale house.

IN TROUBLE WITH BABA

When I got out there the first morning, on Monday, July 21, Meher Baba was already on the backyard patio, which was shaded by the house. He was seated in his wheelchair at a large, round table, on which was the text of the message he had given out the previous day to the New York City and Schenectady Baba groups. We were immediately joined by John Bass and Keith MacGaffey. Baba wanted to go over

the message to make some improvements in the wording before circularizing it. The atmosphere was very relaxed, and Baba wanted us to freely make suggestions that might be helpful.

In the midst of this work, Rano and Adi came out of the house. Rano reported to Baba on some task he had given her to do, and evidently her report displeased Baba very much. The atmosphere changed, and Rano, who stood to my right, seemed very tense, replying to Baba's questioning in clipped tones, "Yes, Baba. No, Baba."

The situation was very awkward. But after a few minutes, thinking to ease the tension, I bent over the table and, pointing to the paper we were working on, said, "This word, Baba . . ." But that was as far as I got, because Baba looked up at me and said (Adi interpreting), "My dear Darwin!"

Baba's stern look made me realize that I had made a faux pas. I straightened up, looked sideways at Rano, and muttered to her out of the side of my mouth, "Now we're in the same boat." Then Baba quickly said, "Not quite."

Although there were strong feelings in Baba's rebuke, I was not hurt. Instead, I found myself pushed upward into a state of detached perception. Shortly after this, Baba said something more to Rano and she left. Baba's mood seemed to change rapidly, and we were soon back to work on the paper on the table.

OUTER DUTIES – INNER SAHAVAS

Generally, when I came out to Scarsdale, I would find Meher Baba on the front sun porch, which served as his bedroom. The sun porch was enclosed, with Venetian blinds on the windows. Baba would often be sitting up on the bed, leaning against the headboard. He seemed fairly comfortable, despite having his left leg in a cast stretched out before him and his left arm in a sling. A wheelchair was always nearby,

and Baba used it to move around. One of us would always help Baba get out of bed and into the wheelchair, in and out of cars, and wheel him along whenever we were out in the city. As helping Baba in this way was often my lot, I had lots of close contact with him, and this was an indescribably wonderful blessing.

Before going to be with Baba for that two-week period of time, I had thought about how wonderful it would be to be in daily close contact with him, and I had decided that I should try to restrain my feelings as a devotee as much as possible and try to be the worker, anticipating and responding to Baba's wants and needs. But being with Baba so intimately, and continuously feeling his Divine Love, made it impossible for me not to be the devotee. Baba did say to Keith MacGaffey and me (through Adi), "You are mandali." He did not explain what he meant, but the statement made us feel much closer to Baba at an inner level, the level of love. Although Baba was quite active during this period and he did see many other people, in some mysterious way the whole experience of being with Baba during this time was like a private sahavas for me.

VISIT TO THE WINTERFELDT'S' APARTMENT

Among Meher Baba's activities in the New York area was a trip from Scarsdale to pay an afternoon visit to the Winterfeldts in New York City. The visit was scheduled for a Sunday afternoon. My wife, Jeanne, at our home in Schenectady, had become very lonesome for a contact with Baba. She knew that I stayed overnight each night at the Winterfeldts' apartment. At that time the railroad company was running very inexpensive excursions round trip from Schenectady to New York City, so she wrote to me asking if it would be all right for her to come down to New York City to see

me and the Winterfeldts on the following Sunday. Her thought was that since I was with Baba every day, when she saw me some of the feelings of Baba might rub off on her. She knew nothing of Baba's plans to visit the Winterfeldts that Sunday.

I took her letter out to Scarsdale and read it to Baba, who asked, "Does that mean that she wants to come here?" I replied, "No, to the Winterfeldts." Then Baba said, "Yes, she may come." Right away I communicated the happy news to her. I wrote, "Not only may you come, with Baba's approval, but Baba and the women mandali will be there, too." Needless to say, Jeanne was overjoyed.

When Sunday arrived, Charmian Duce and I drove Baba and the others in to New York City. With Charmian driving one car, Baba sat on its back seat, with his legs stretched out, while Mehera sat on the same seat near Baba's feet. Mani and Meheru sat in the front seat with Charmian. Dr. Goher and Keith MacGaffey rode with me. Charmian drove ahead, and I followed. Baba, who was sitting sideways and could easily look back, waved to us several times.

We parked very close to the Winterfeldts' apartment. Then we helped Baba get into the wheelchair and brought him up the steps, through the lobby, and into the apartment. After we got Baba comfortably seated on the sofa, I greeted Jeanne, who was already there, as were several others, including Margaret Craske, Filis Frederick, Adele Wolkin, and of course Ella and Fred Winterfeldt.

As the visit with Baba was only for women, Fred, Keith, and I went out and sat on the apartment steps, just outside the door, in the indoor lobby. However, Baba did not forget us sitting out there. When tea was served, Baba had one of the women bring out a cup of tea for each of us – from which he had first sipped! How considerate is the Beloved, ever finding ways to communicate his love to his lovers. How precious that cup of tea – truly nectar from Heaven!

Jeanne had arrived at the apartment early and helped Ella arrange things. Ella had a bowl of fruit on the dining room table, and she asked Jeanne if she should put it away, as Baba had indicated that he and the others would just have tea. Jeanne said, "Leave it on the table and draw the curtain (which partitioned off the dining room), and Baba will know it is here if he wants it." Later on, after the tea was served, Baba motioned to Ella to "bring out the fruit."

First, though, Baba had Ella turn on the television especially so that the women mandali could see it. Jeanne was sitting near Baba in front of it, and when it was turned on, a baseball game came on. Jeanne thought to herself, "Ugh, a baseball game." Baba immediately had the dial of the television turned to what appeared to be a "soap opera." Jeanne thought, "Ah, that's better." But Baba soon had Ella turn back to the baseball game for a moment before turning off the television.

Then Baba reached for the fruit and started tossing pieces of it around to people, following his usual custom of looking one way and then quickly tossing the fruit in another direction. As usual, this brought out a lot of laughter and fun as everyone became alert to try to catch the fruit when it was tossed in their direction.

Jeanne was enjoying the fun, but then she noticed that the fruit seemed to be all gone, and she felt disappointed. Quite suddenly a piece of fruit came flying toward her. She made a lucky catch, but when she looked at the piece of fruit, she noticed that it was so shriveled and ugly that it was unidentifiable. She said to herself, "Serves me right. That's probably all I deserve." Nevertheless, she was delighted that she was not left out. Baba sometimes played a little game, leading a person to think that they were going to be left out, only to show in the end that he had not forgotten them but was just teasing them, and at the same time perhaps sharpening up their feelings for him.

That evening, while riding on the train back to Schenectady, Jeanne

ate the fruit that Baba had tossed to her. She found that in spite of its unattractive appearance, it was the most delicious piece of fruit she had ever eaten. It was like manna from Heaven, and since it was a precious gift from the Beloved, it was filled with his sweet love. Small wonder, then, that as Jeanne ate this prasada, her spirits soared and she became lost in bliss. This must have shown on her face, for it caused a man who was walking along the aisle to stop and stare at her rapturous expression. When she noticed this, she turned away and tried to conceal her feelings. Her heart was overflowing with Baba's love, and that Sunday with him always remained among her most precious memories of the Beloved.

TRIP TO THE BRONX ZOO

At the conclusion of the visit to the Winterfeldts' apartment, we helped Baba out to the car Charmian was driving, and drove out to the Bronx Zoo. Baba had invited Filis and Adele to come with us, and they rode in my car.

After parking the two cars and helping Baba get into the wheelchair, Charmian was supposed to push the wheelchair as Baba and the women went on a tour through the zoo. But a curious incident brought about a change. Keith and I were originally supposed to remain with the cars, but at the last minute Charmian realized that her shoelaces were loose and decided they should be tightened. In her haste she broke first one shoelace and then the other. Baba, observing the situation, quickly motioned for Keith and me to come along to push the wheelchair, while Charmian was left to repair her shoelaces. Ensuing events revealed that Baba had a good reason for leaving Charmian behind.

Since it was in July, the weather was pleasantly warm and we were

relaxed with Baba as we enjoyed moving along in the park-like surroundings and looking over the many animals in the zoo. When we wheeled Baba into the room where the penguins were kept, Baba had us stop in front of the big closed-in case where the arctic birds were provided with an environment simulating their native habitat. There was ice and flowing water where the birds could dive in and swim. Some of them were just standing on a ledge, but one large one was strutting along as though he were quite important. Baba smiled and, looking up at me, pointed at this big penguin. I smiled too and said, "He's the chairman of the board." Baba smiled in agreement.

Baba then had me wheel him as close as possible to a wall over which we could look down on the gorillas, who were in a big open area with a moat. There seemed to be one gorilla in particular that attracted Baba's attention, and Baba watched him for a couple of minutes before gesturing for us to move on.

Whenever Baba's men were around the women of our group, they were supposed to avoid looking at Mehera, Mani, and Meheru. This order from Baba of course included Keith and myself. An outing like this made compliance extremely difficult, because we were moving about more or less as a group. Sometimes, for example, the women would walk on ahead only to find that there was a closed area in front of them. Almost before we knew it, they would turn around, and we would almost have an unintentional confrontation. I think Keith and I managed to keep our eyes lowered, though, so that we saw only the hem of their saris and their feet.

When it came time for us to go back to the cars, we discovered that we had not noted which parking area the cars were in. Baba seemed undisturbed and pointed toward one of the paths. After going along this path for a short distance, it did not look as though we were going in the right direction. Baba, still undisturbed, stroked his chin and

pointed to another path. We tried that path for a while, but then it started to sprinkle, so we quickly went to a nearby comfort station with a wide overhanging roof, where we decided to wait. It was not long before Charmian came along, and Baba's little game of letting us think we were lost was over, but it was fun while it lasted. Charmian, of course, knew the way back to the cars.

In thinking over the way our visit to the zoo unfolded, I came to the conclusion that Baba purposely left Charmian behind with the cars, knowing that she would come to our rescue at the right time. Baba mentioned the parking lot incident at the Bronx Zoo to me in India in 1954, and we had a chuckle over it.

WASHING BABA'S HAIR

One day, when Sarosh, Meherjee, John Bass, and I were with Baba in the house in Scarsdale, Baba had all four of us participate in washing his hair. We were in a sort of hallway, in which there was a table with a large wash basin and pitcher of water. My part in the procedure was to take the basin after Baba's washed hair was rinsed, go outside through a nearby door, and throw the water out in the yard. Baba himself told me to do this. When I got outside with the basin, I noticed that there were a few of Baba's hairs floating in the water, and this put me in a dilemma.

My first thought was to pick out the hairs, but then I recalled that Baba said, "Throw this out." Now it became a matter of total obedience. Perhaps this was a test, I thought. I had no time to deliberate, so I just threw it all out.

Although one person could have easily washed Baba's hair, I felt that this was one of Baba's ways of giving us an opportunity, especially John and myself, to share in a personal and intimate activity with

him. In his own loving way, Baba drew us closer to him and made us feel that we were a part of his family.

MORE INCIDENTS

On another day, Sarosh and Meherjee had just returned from Detroit, where they had gone to see the Chevrolet manufacturing plant there. At that time, Sarosh held the franchise to sell Chevrolet cars in Ahmednagar, India. What had really impressed them was the train they rode on, and they were telling Baba all about the special features of that train. As I stood nearby listening, I thought, "Why are they wasting Baba's time telling about such things? Baba is probably really not interested in those things." But even as I had these critical thoughts, Baba shot me a sharp, withering glance that made me realize that I should not indulge in such thoughts.

On another day, I had stayed later than usual at the house in Scarsdale. Keith, Dr. Goher, and I were returning from an errand when my car broke down about a mile from the Scarsdale house. Dr. Goher walked back to the house, while Keith and I worked on the car. When we finally returned to the house, someone told me that I was to eat the evening meal with Keith, down in the nicely furnished basement apartment where he was staying. All the meals were prepared by Alberta, who had been Elizabeth's cook for the past several years. A few times before, I had eaten lunches prepared by her, so I assumed that the fare would be similar to those meals.

Therefore, I was very surprised when a plate containing a large portion of some kind of meat was placed before me. Ordinarily, I would have refused it, having been a vegetarian for many years. But as I gazed at the chunk of meat and considered that I was under Baba's roof, I smiled to myself and thought that this could be a very significant

thing. Perhaps I had become too attached to not eating meat, I thought. So without further ado, I ate the meat. I never said anything to Keith or anyone else about it.

On another day, Keith and I had come in late from doing an errand, and we were eating lunch in the main dining room. While we were eating, we heard two women's voices, which we recognized as those of Mehera and Mani. From what they were saying, we knew they had come to look us over. However, according to Baba's standing order, we were not allowed to look over at them. I did not actually see them until 1969!

One morning, I was alone with Baba in his bedroom while he was sitting up in the bed, leaning against the headboard. He gave me a red-and-white-striped peppermint candy, and I saw that he had only one more of those candies in the clear plastic bag. Then he motioned for me to go outside and call Meherjee in.

I went out, and there was Meherjee, talking to Fred Winterfeldt. I knew that Baba wanted to give Meherjee the one candy that remained, but I did not quite know how to tell him that only he should go in to Baba. I wound up just saying, "Meherjee, Baba wants you to come in." Meherjee told Fred to come along, and all three of us went in to Baba's bedroom. As we walked in, I thought, "Now what's going to happen? Have I put Baba on the spot?" Baba observed me, and of course knew my thoughts. With an expression on his face that seemed to say, "You couldn't put me on the spot," he handed Meherjee the candy – and to my astonishment casually handed one to Fred also!

ALONE WITH BABA ON A SIDEWALK IN NEW YORK

On one occasion, when a few of us took Baba in to New York City

for a dental appointment, I unexpectedly found myself alone with him. Baba had been driven by Marion Florsheim in Ivy Duce's two-door car, which was easier for Baba to get in and out of, and I had brought the wheelchair in my car. Dr. Goher accompanied Marion and Baba.

I drove up to the curb in front of the building where the dental office was as Dr. Goher helped Baba get out of the car. She and I helped Baba get into the wheelchair, and Marion drove off to a parking lot some distance away. As Dr. Goher wheeled Baba into the building, I drove off and found a parking space on a street not far away. Then I joined Dr. Goher with Baba.

When Baba was finished with his dental appointment and Dr. Goher and I had helped him back into the wheelchair, we brought him down an elevator to the surface floor. Then Baba sent Dr. Goher after Marion, who was waiting in the car in the distant parking lot, while I remained with Baba in the vestibule.

Baba and I felt completely at ease with each other. A couple of times he motioned for me to go outside and see if Marion had arrived yet with the car. After waiting a reasonable length of time, Baba motioned, indicating, "Let's go outside." I wheeled him out onto the sidewalk near the curb, but as there was still no sign of Marion and the car, Baba motioned that we should go for a walk. We seemed to have cast off all moorings, and as we slowly moved along, we found ourselves adrift in a sea of people. There were cars and buses loaded with passengers passing us nearby in the street and, of course, pedestrians walking by us each way on the sidewalk. No one seemed to pay any special attention to Baba. When they glanced at him, they merely seemed to see a man in white pajama-like clothing, with one leg in a cast and one arm in a sling, being pushed along in a wheelchair.

Baba seemed relaxed and unconcerned, but I was beside myself

with wonder and incredulity, as I observed no sign of interest or recognition in the eyes of the passersby. I thought, "If they only knew who he is!" For a few moments as we continued on, I had the strangest feeling of being completely cut off from everyone and all alone with Baba on a sidewalk in New York. Finally, Marion and Dr. Goher caught up with us in the car, and after I helped Baba into the car and stashed the wheelchair in the trunk of my car, we drove Baba back to Scarsdale.

In contrast to the foregoing incident, I recall one that occurred two years later in India in 1954, when Baba and the Western men who were his guests were walking down Meherabad Hill toward lower Meherabad. As usual at that time, Baba walked quite rapidly, and after we crossed the railroad tracks, he was some distance ahead of everyone else. As we approached the road, a small bus with many people aboard coming from the direction of Arangaon passed some distance in front of Baba. Apparently, the bus driver and his passengers saw Baba, and realizing that this was an opportunity for his darshan, stopped the bus a short way past where Baba was waiting to cross the road.

Baba, of course, observed all of this, and after crossing the road, quietly waited as the passengers came out of the bus and most reverently either stood or knelt, facing him. Baba, looking radiant and beautiful in his pink coat, his eyes sparkling and love-glancing toward the silently waiting bus passengers, graciously gave them his darshan. After a few moments, Baba wagged his head a little and motioned for them to leave.

Having been blessed with this altogether lovely contact with Baba, the driver and passengers reverently returned to their seats, and the bus resumed its journey toward Ahmednagar. As we Westerners stood nearby and watched the unfolding of this simple, beautiful tableau, we were wonderstruck by its beauty, and also blessed by the spontaneous outpouring of Baba's love.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

One day during Meher Baba's stay in Scarsdale, we took him and the women in to New York City to attend the afternoon performance at Radio City Music Hall. We drove two cars: Charmian Duce drove the first car, with Mani and Meheru sitting in the front seat beside her, while Baba and Mehera sat in the back seat. Because of the cast on Baba's left leg, he sat sideways with his legs stretched out in front of him, and Mehera sat beside his legs. I drove the second car, with Dr. Goher and Keith MacGaffey riding with me. We also carried Baba's wheelchair in the trunk.

As we drove along, Baba would occasionally look lovingly out the rear window and wave to us. Needless to say, this was a special delight for us. When we arrived at the theater, Keith and I got the wheelchair out and helped Baba out of the car and into it. We then wheeled him into the theater and onto an elevator. After that, the women took over wheeling him, while I parked the car. Baba and the women had reserved seats in the mezzanine balcony, and Keith and I sat down in the orchestra section on the first floor.

The movie was *Charlie's Aunt*, with Ray Bolger, and it was hilarious. The stage show included the "Rockettes," who are famous for their high-kicking synchronized line dancing. We stayed through the whole show, which was unusual for Baba. Apparently he wanted the women to see the entire show. It seems that Filis Frederick had heard about the theater party, and so she came and found a seat near Baba and the women. When the show was over, she got to take Baba down in the elevator to the outside door.

I enjoyed the show very much, but I realized that this was an occasion when I could let my heart go in loving Baba. I will always remember the joy of the inner rapport with Baba that I experienced

that afternoon. Baba and the women enjoyed the show very much, too, and I remember that after the show, when we got together with Baba, he looked at me with a big smile and asked, gesturing, "Did you see the show, and wasn't it funny?"

CONVERSATIONS WITH BABA

Typically, when no outing was planned, we would spend the day with Baba at the Scarsdale house. At times during the day, John Bass and I would be alone with Baba in his room while the Eastern mandali were in New York City. We felt relaxed and at ease with Baba; sometimes we would make comments and Baba would nod, but there would also be long periods of silence.

One time, Baba motioned that we should lean back in our comfortable chairs and take a nap. John fell asleep, but I could not see the point of losing the opportunity to be consciously in Baba's presence, so I was not able to drop off to sleep.

On one occasion when Fred Winterfeldt, John Bass, and I were talking with Baba, he told us about a world catastrophe that would take the lives of many people. Fred told Baba that he had a friend who had heard about this predicted world catastrophe and was seriously considering moving to some remote mountain area where it might be safer. Using his alphabet board, with one of the Eastern men interpreting, Baba replied, "If the world catastrophe occurs after November 15 – when my Fiery Free Life begins – it will be so devastating that even the tops of the Himalayas will be affected. Do not run away. It will do no good. Only those who are protected by God will survive."

Then one of us asked Baba, "Are there any masts in America?" Baba began gazing around, as though scanning America. He replied, "One or two, but don't look for them. You have me."

While I was alone with Baba on one occasion, with only an interpreter present, Baba asked me, “Do you appreciate this great gift given to you?” – meaning this precious opportunity to be with him so much during his stay in Scarsdale. I was taken aback by the question, as not only did I greatly appreciate this privilege but I also felt profoundly grateful. I hastened to express my heartfelt feelings to him.

Later on, I wondered if my feelings of blissful happiness and gratitude were not self-evident to Baba, but concluded that he must have wanted me to feel more deeply about it. Actually, the great privilege of being so intimately with Baba nearly every day was something I had dreamed of and hoped for over a period of several years, and it was like the fulfillment of an impossible dream. At that time the term “sahavas” was not mentioned, but it was truly a most blessed sahavas for me.

GABRIEL PASCAL

On two occasions I brought Gabriel Pascal, a well-known movie producer, to Scarsdale to see Baba. He first met Baba in Europe in the 1930s and loved him very much. Baba called him his “black panther,” because although he was Caucasian, he had a dark complexion.

George Bernard Shaw had given Gabriel sole permission to produce his plays as movies, and at that time he was casting for the movie *Devil’s Advocate*. He offered me a part, but I did not accept.

Gabriel’s meetings with Baba were most unusual. At this time he was working on producing a film about Gandhi. I gathered that he was going to India and that he would like to make a film about Baba while there.

During his talk with Baba, he outlined various scenes that he wanted to put in the movie. He was very dramatic – sometimes kneeling in front of Baba. I was the only other person there besides Baba and Gabriel, and as I watched and listened to this unfolding drama, I

became aware that the vibrations in the room had become very powerful and that a sort of “double play” was taking place. It seemed that under the guise of acting out various scenes from the movie, Gabriel was giving expression to his own devotion to his Beloved. At times Gabriel seemed to be pouring his heart out to Baba. It was not only very powerful but also deeply moving, especially in retrospect, since it turned out that these moments with Baba were the last times Gabriel would have with Baba in this lifetime.

TO THE HOSPITAL WITH BABA

One day Charmian Duce, John Bass, and I took Baba to Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City so that a doctor could examine his leg, arm, and other injured areas to see if they were healing as they should. Charmian, who drove the car, parked it under the marquee in front of the hospital, then went inside to find out where we were to take Baba. John and I were waiting in the car with Baba. It was quite hot, so John and I got out of the car and stood near Baba, who sat on the front seat with the door open.

Baba made a sign with his hands, showing seven fingers, and then simulated drinking from a bottle. John reached into the car and brought out a small bottle of 7-Up, which Baba always liked to have on hand during outings. We did not have a bottle opener, so John tried to open the bottle with his pocketknife. Unable to pry off the top, he handed the bottle to me.

I recalled seeing a bottle opened in a novel way and thought I would try it. I walked over to a brick windowsill of the hospital building, placed the edge of the bottle cap just over the sill, and then gave the cap a sharp whack. It worked: The cap flew off the bottle. Baba was watching with great interest, and when I turned to hand him the bottle, he raised up his hand and made a facial expression as much as to

say, "Great!" Later on, after we brought Baba back from the hospital, I retrieved the 7-Up bottle, and have kept it.

When Charmian returned, we helped Baba into the wheelchair and went into the hospital and up several floors on an elevator. We wheeled Baba down a hall to a large, spacious, light-filled waiting area, where we had to wait quite a while. As it was lunchtime, Baba sent Charmian to see if there was a cafeteria. When she came back, replying that there was one on the same floor, Baba motioned for John and Charmian to go have lunch. I stayed with Baba, and when John hurriedly returned, Baba motioned for me to go get some lunch. I got a sandwich and a cup of coffee and sat at the table where Charmian was sitting.

Anxious to get back to Baba, I sat with one foot set to propel me back to Baba as I ate and talked a bit with Charmian. I felt Baba inwardly pulling me back to him, but I tarried a bit longer than I should have. Finally I hurried back to Baba. As I approached him, he held out his hand and looked at me reproachfully and gestured, "What kept you?" thus making me feel that I had been neglecting him and missing precious moments I could have been spending with him. It seems Baba never missed an opportunity to prick the heart.

Then Baba had John and me bring our chairs so close to him that our knees were touching. He motioned for us to lean forward and bow our heads, and he did the same thing, so that our heads were almost touching. We sat huddled that way for quite a few minutes, not paying any attention to the several people who passed by us. I suppose they were wondering what we were doing, but we only knew that we were being blessed with the privilege to share a few very precious moments of spiritual closeness to the Beloved. It is impossible to describe what sensations were going through me, being so close to the center of creation!

When we finally did go into the examining room, I was surprised to see a doctor pick Baba up bodily from the wheelchair and carry him

over to an examining table. After he checked Baba's injuries and expressed satisfaction that everything was going all right, we left the hospital and returned to Scarsdale.

AN ALARMING PREDICAMENT

One day Baba was to go into New York City to the penthouse apartment of Consuelo de Sides, one of Baba's international disciples. Baba had agreed to give interviews to several people there. He had arranged for me to drive him into the city and back out to Scarsdale, and I had borrowed Fred Winterfeldt's two-door car for the purpose. The two-door car was easier for Baba to get in and out of than my four-door car, because of the wide doors. Dr. Goher and Keith MacGaffey came with us, riding in the front seat with me, and Baba sat in the back seat with his legs up on the seat. Baba's left leg was in a cast and his left arm was in a sling. His wheelchair was stashed in the trunk.

Consuelo's apartment building was on the south side of East 68th Street, at the corner of Third Avenue. I pulled up to the curb in front of the door to the apartment, and, while Dr. Goher and Keith went around to get the wheelchair out of the trunk, I climbed over the seat and into the back of the car to help Baba. As I was helping Baba to get up and put his weight on his right foot, Dr. Goher and Keith brought the wheelchair around to the side of the car, where they waited to help Baba.

Meantime, I moved around in back of Baba and put my hands under his armpits to help him scoot toward the doorway of the car. As he got to the door and was about to descend to the street, I leaned against the back of the front seat for support and balance. In my own car, the front seat was solid and would have remained stationary, but in a two-door car the front seats are hinged and bend forward. I had forgotten about this, and as I leaned against the seat, it bent forward,

partially throwing me off balance. At the same time, due to my weight on the seat, it pressed against the horn, which began blowing steadily. Meanwhile, Baba began his descent into the street.

It is easy to imagine my surprise and dismay when this happened. In this awkward position there was only one thing I could do to help ease Baba down to the street. Trusting my support, Baba had sort of hopped into the air toward the street, and somehow I managed to quickly shift my weight completely over to my right foot and stick out my left leg. In this way, I was able to support Baba as he slid down my leg to the street. Fortunately, he landed safely and easily on his right foot. Turning, Baba gave me a knowing glance, as if to say, "That worked out okay."

This all happened in just a few seconds. The horn blowing had begun to attract attention; people were stopping and staring. Baba was unperturbed, but I was nearly sweating blood out of concern that Baba might be injured. Of course, in retrospect, one can see that the incident had its funny side.

JEANNE R. FOSTER

While Dr. Goher and Keith wheeled Baba into the building and took the elevator up to Consuelo's seventeenth-floor apartment, I parked the car and hurried to join them there. Several people had already arrived for their appointments to see Baba. Among them was our dear friend from Schenectady, Jeanne R. Foster. At that time she was about seventy years old.

Jeanne Foster was a most unusual person, a published poet and literary person who throughout her life had been a serious spiritual seeker. She had met Swami Vivekananda when he was in America, and when I asked Baba if she could come to see him at Consuelo's apartment, I told him about her having met



Jeanne R. Foster,
circa 1952.

Vivekananda. Baba seemed interested to hear about her and said that yes, she could come to see him.

Her account of meeting Meher Baba, as well as some significant dreams she had, follows.

The Spiritual Experience of Meeting Baba, July 28, 1952

by Jeanne Robert Foster

I was overjoyed to have the opportunity of seeing Baba and hurried in the morning to board an early train for New York. I was in a state of excitement during the trip and remained in the New York Central Station for a time to recover my poise. Then I went up to Mrs. Sides' penthouse, 17th floor, 210 East 68th Street, and was shown into a living room where several persons were waiting, including a very beautiful East Indian woman. I was told she was the wife of a Harvard student. She wore a gorgeous sari and was lovely beyond words. I also met our hostess, Mrs. Sides, Mrs. Ivy Duce, leader of the American Sufis and others. I sat on a sofa with a young woman from Pittsburgh, Miss Swear, who confessed she was skeptical.

The door to an inner room was closed and I understood Baba was receiving there. After some of the guests had been received, Darwin came for me and I went in with my heart beating furiously, my mind empty, my inner self yielding to a vibration – a kind of intoxicating rhythm – that I had felt on entering the room.

Nothing that I had imagined, nothing for which I had prepared myself, prefigured Baba. He sat to the left on a kind

of divan. He was naked to the waist, His long dark hair fell on His shoulders, His leg – injured in the motor accident – was in a cast. There seemed to be a coolness and a spicy fragrance in the room, although it was a very hot day. His alphabet board was beside Him and His Indian interpreter stood at His left. Before I describe the interview, I must describe my impressions or visions as I saw Him. He was not static in the flesh: At first He seemed to be Siva as the god is pictured, then instantaneously He changed to another figure and His couch was the thousand-petalled lotus. These vanished and Baba was sitting there, but His face never assumed a permanent form while I remained in the room. It was infinitely finer, more beautiful, more spiritual than any photograph. The camera cannot record Him; I had great difficulty to keep from falling down on my knees, but I remembered that Baba has forbidden homage. I was motioned to a chair at His right. He extended His hand and took my hand, which I did not expect. Through His interpreter, He said – using His board – “You knew Vivekananda?” “Yes,” I replied.

“He is very dear to me,” Baba said. He did not use the past tense (Vivekananda has been dead many years), and I received the impression that He was constantly in touch with Vivekananda – indeed that Vivekananda might be there with Him unseen to all but Baba.

Using His board, the interpreter translating, He said that the only thing for His disciples to do was to become one with universal love, that He – Baba – had come to unite all creeds, all sects into one great body that – following and flowing into universal love – would cure the world of its unrest and strife.

When I rose to go, Baba gave me His hand again. I

pressed it to my face, receiving the most powerful “charge” of indefinable spiritual power. During the brief interview, I was conscious that I was beholding a great Incarnation that I was especially privileged to have seen and touched.

I had not asked Baba for anything, not even for guidance vocally, but in my mind I asked to be guided. Even that I considered wrong, for who am I to ask individual guidance of an Incarnation?

Jeanne Foster's Dreams

The night of my return home I had a dream. (I am not a dreamer of the usual kind. For years I have “dreamed true” – have been guided by dreams.) I dreamed that I was in a spacious East Indian house where a great many people were moving about. All were beautifully dressed. I realized that I wore a costume strange to me, a kind of sari. I asked about the occasion and was told it was a wedding day. I waited to see more in my dream.

Suddenly Baba entered the room. He was young, turbaned, and wore a green Persian costume embroidered in gold. His turban was paler, with a heavy jewel in the front. He moved about the large room I was in. I asked about the occasion again. The reply – from one of the attendants – was that it was a marriage feast – Baba was the Bridegroom. He came over to me and took my hand – as he had done with others who were there. I was overcome with such Spiritual Joy, with a sensation of dissolving in love, of actual death, that I awakened and found myself very weak from emotion.

The following night I dreamed that I came home and found the entire bookshelf in my hall torn out – books and oak cases leaving ugly scars. I awakened in fright. In a few moments I realized the significance. It was a message to “do,” not to “read.” I must be about Baba’s business lest I fail. Doing, not dreaming, must be my role.

Following the interview with Baba and the dreams, I was so exhausted, until Thursday, August 7th, that I could only go to work by sheer will power. Then vitality came surging back. I still experience a strange sense of loss of gravity that came over me when I saw Baba. All that has happened confirms my belief that we know very little about the planes of the spiritual universe, and to experience a little while on this plane of gross phenomena is a great privilege. My gratitude to Darwin and Jeanne Shaw for all that has happened. It came to me from one of Darwin’s friends. He found a name in a book I had loaned and set up the chain that brought me to Baba.

A REAR VIEW MIRROR KISS FROM BABA

After the interviews at Consuelo de Sides’ apartment, Keith and I helped Baba get into the wheelchair and then brought him down to the car and helped him get into the back seat. As I was driving back out to Scarsdale, Baba and I would occasionally exchange glances via the rear-view mirror. There was a sense of being completely at ease with Baba. As we were moving along, I recalled that I was scheduled to lead the “Discourse” meeting at the Winterfeldts’ that evening. I mentioned this to Baba, who responded by pursing his lips and throwing me a loving kiss via the rear-view mirror.

“BRING ME LOVERS OF GOD”

Earlier in 1952, when Baba was at the Center in Myrtle Beach, he made a practice of seeing individuals and groups in the Lagoon Cabin. One day, Malcolm Schloss and Francis Brabazon spent quite a while in the Lagoon Cabin with Baba. After they came out, I had a conversation with Malcolm about their interview with Baba. He quoted Baba as saying, “Don’t bring me lots of people; bring me lovers of God and I will bow down to them. Otherwise, I will bow down to myself.”

At the time, this comment by Baba made me wonder about “lovers of God,” not only then but also after I left Myrtle Beach and returned to my home in Schenectady. I wondered about myself: “Am I a lover of God?” I had never thought about this before. But upon some reflection, I realized that ever since I was a little child I had loved and felt the presence of Christ and God; so I wondered if I would fit into the category of those to whom Baba said he would bow down.

I had forgotten about all of this until one day while I was alone with Baba in Scarsdale. Baba was sitting up in his bed and leaning back against a pillow, and I was sitting in a chair a short distance away from the foot of the bed. Baba suddenly looked at me pointedly, as if trying to catch my attention. Slowly, painstakingly, he straightened up, placed his right hand on his right thigh and, while still looking directly at me, became very solemn and seemed to draw himself deep within. I stared at him, wondering what he was doing. Then he slowly bent over, and from that place within – the realm of Infinite Humility – he bowed to me. As he did so, I suddenly realized what he was doing. I was taken aback, surprised and shocked; I really cannot express how deeply humble I felt to be the recipient of this awful yet blessed expression of Baba’s Divine Humility.

Musing about it later, I wondered if my earlier thinking about

“lovers of God” had precipitated Baba’s action. Years later, however, I came to feel that I was merely a symbolic object on that occasion, and that Baba was really inwardly bowing down to lovers of God perhaps all over. Nevertheless, as with all such intimate, seemingly personal contacts with Beloved Baba, this was an astonishing revelation, an inestimable blessing, and a thoroughly devastating blow to my ego.

A SPIRITUAL AGENT

July 30 was the day when Meher Baba and the women were to fly to England. Several of us drove them to Idlewild Airport (later named Kennedy Airport). At that time the main airport building was relatively small; as I recall, it was only one story high. When we wheeled Baba into the building, it was near an area where there were rows of seats for the waiting passengers and their friends or relatives. John Bass and I were with Baba, and we stood near him as he sat there in the wheelchair. Beside us was a glass wall, and on the other side of this wall was a barbershop. Large windows were on the other side of the barbershop, allowing a great deal of light to come in.

After a while, Baba motioned to John and me that we could go over to where the seats were and sit down. John went over and sat down, but I was reluctant to leave Baba’s side, so I remained with him. A short time later, I noticed a middle-aged man slowly walking through the barbershop. When he passed parallel to Baba, he began to make signs with his hands as he looked toward Baba. I quickly looked back at Baba and saw that he, too, seemed to be making hand signs or signals as he looked in the direction of this man.

The man did not stop, but kept right on walking and was soon gone. As this apparent exchange was taking place, I quickly looked back and forth from Baba to this man and mused to myself, “What is

going on here?" Baba resumed his nonchalant attitude, as though nothing had happened. At that time, I had not realized that Baba had told the others that he would be "seeing someone" at the airport. Quite some time later, I found out from someone's written account that this man was an agent of Baba's.

ANOTHER ALARMING PREDICAMENT

When it came time for Baba to board the plane, we wheeled him out on the tarmac to the foot of the steps leading up to the entrance of the plane, which was near the tail. At that time, there were no walk-on ramps. Someone brought along a straight chair, and a few of us helped Baba change over from the wheelchair to the straight chair. There were five of us there to carry the chair with Baba up the steps: Sarosh, Adi, Meherjee, Nilu, and myself. We easily carried the chair with Baba in it up the steps and put it down in the vestibule of the plane. The plane was much smaller than the modern 747, and the aisle was rather narrow.

We stood around Baba for a few seconds, silently considering how best to carry him down the aisle to the three seats reserved for him in the front end of the passenger section. As we stood there, I suddenly remembered how the doctor in the hospital picked Baba up bodily and carried him to the examining table. Impulsively, I reached down and started to lift Baba up out of the chair, intending to carry him to his seat in this manner.

Baba offered no resistance and seemed amenable to the plan, but I suddenly thought to myself, "I shouldn't be doing this!" I then eased Baba back into the chair. I had suddenly realized that even though Baba did not object, I should not presume to do this while four of Baba's close men mandali were there. Any one of them could have easily carried Baba, but none did.

Instead, we decided to carry Baba down through the aisle while he was still seated in the chair. Accordingly, each of the four men mandali took hold of one of the four legs of the chair, and I found myself holding the right side of the chair. We lifted the chair up so that it would be above the high backs of the seats and started down the aisle, Baba sitting like a king. Baba reached over and held on to the back of my shirt as an aid to keeping his balance. As we headed down the aisle toward the front of the plane, the four men squeezed through all right, but there was no room for me at all. But because Baba was holding my shirt tightly for support, I could not back out!

At this point, since I had no choice, I saw that I would somehow have to get my leg up over the impossibly high back of the first seat we came to and step into the seat itself. I never knew how I did it, but I did manage to do so. A steward standing in the front of the plane watched with a horrified look on his face as I continued stepping over the back and into the lap of each seat the entire length of the plane. When we reached the front of the plane where Baba's seats were, we set the chair down and helped Baba get seated sideways on one of the plane seats, with his left leg, which was in the cast, across the two extra seats.

To an onlooker, the sight of us carrying Baba through the aisle in this most unusual way, to say the least, must have seemed both hilarious and precarious. Luckily, there were no passengers in their seats yet, so the only one who saw us was the steward. Baba was unperturbed by it all, and did not act like anything unusual was happening. The men mandali took the chair and left the plane.

I remained alone with Baba for a few brief moments of intimate sahavas. For me, this was the conclusion of being with the Beloved nearly every day for two weeks, and the few parting moments with him were as poignantly precious and sweet as every moment with him had

been during the preceding two weeks. I was never sad when Baba would leave. I felt inner rapport with him, which I and the other Westerners had to establish, since we did not have his sustained physical presence.

After Baba's plane departed, I drove back to Schenectady, where Jeanne and the family were eagerly waiting to hear all the details. We resumed our normal routines as we tried to assimilate our recent experiences with Meher Baba, our Divine Beloved.

LETTERS FROM EUROPE AND INDIA

Meher Baba and his party stayed in London for six days. While there, quite a few people had interviews with him. On August 6, Baba and his party left for Switzerland, where they stayed until August 19, when Baba flew to Bombay. Baba, ever considerate of his lovers, had Delia DeLeon write to us from Geneva, and Rano wrote to us from India, at Baba's direction, to apprise us of his activities. Their letters follow.

Geneva

Aug. 18th 1952

My dear Darwin & Jean,

Baba has asked me to write to you both & tell you our news – we have had a very lovely & peaceful time in Switzerland. It has done Baba a lot of good – He has had treatment & can walk about on crutches – His devotees here have shown such love & planned everything so well & it has made Baba so happy – We have been round a lot & had very pleasant weather.

Baba sends you & the children His love, & as you know, He is always with you, & you are not to worry about anything

– He was happy at the way you worked for Him & He knows how much you all love Him. He wants you to give His love to Keith – & to all those who love Him – All the party beg to be remembered to you.

We are spending the night here & Baba & party leave tomorrow for India & will be there Aug. 20th.

With love & Best Wishes,
Delia

Oct. 3rd 1952

Dear Darwin and Jean,

This is to give you the latest news of Baba's activities.

During Baba's short stay in Poona He went to have diathermy treatment for His arm, which really did not help very much. He went one day to B. D. Jessawala, who, with his family, is very, very devoted to Baba. There he gave darshan to many. For three hours there was a steady procession from all walks of life – all going away happy by a look or touch from the Master whose darshan they had some of them waited so long to take.

Baba is also very busy still with his Fiery Life program. Circulars had been sent to followers all over India asking who was willing to follow Baba in his forthcoming Fiery Life and what they were willing to give up accordingly. The response has been very great. Baba now is sifting the responses and deciding whom to call for a few days the first part of November when there is to be a large meeting at Meherabad.

In a few days' time Baba is to have a small meeting when only a few are to be called to arrange for Baba's visit to

various places where he will give mass darshan later on.

This is now the lull before the storm – what the Fiery Life portends we must wait and see.

Baba's love to you both,

Yours Sincerely,

Rano (by order of Baba)

Oct. 12, 1952

Dear Darwin and Jean,

Baba has asked me to let you know that from the 1st of November for fifteen days he will be busy with meetings at Meherabad prior to starting his Fiery Life program. On the 15th November Baba will start touring India, stopping at many places to give mass darshan.

From the 1st November you are not to write to Baba. Give this message about not writing to any of your group who might be wishing or intending to write to Baba. On his return Baba will inform you when you may write to him again.

Sincerely,

Rano (by order of Baba)

SIGNIFICANCE OF MEHER BABA'S VISIT

Meher Baba's visit to America in 1952 was of profound significance, not only because of the predicted "personal disaster" in the form of the auto accident in which his blood was shed on American soil, but also because of the probability that while in America he gave to the world the results of his four months' Manonash work just prior to coming to America.

The auto accident would fall under the category of the vicarious suffering the Avatar endures for the redemption of humanity, and the Manonash work was a deeply interior work to annihilate the false, limited, ignorant self with all of its desires, cravings, and longings in the fire of Divine Love.

The all-pervading presence of the Avatar blessed America with the Light, Beauty, and Truth, the Sweetness, Mercy, and Divine Love of God in the form of the Divine Beloved. “Any land that has Your Footprint becomes the land of pilgrimage for Your seekers,” said the poet and Perfect Master Hafiz.

At the personal level for me and for my family, as I realized later, Meher Baba was preparing us for closer contacts with him. One morning in Scarsdale while coming off nightwatch duty for Baba, Dr. Nilu said to me in his deep, intoning voice, “Come to India! Come to India!” It felt to me as if Baba himself were speaking. Up to this time it had not seemed possible, but this appeared to open up the possibility within my consciousness of actually going to be with Baba in India. It was as though a door long closed to me had begun to swing open.

P A R T F O U R

1954

THREE “INCREDIBLE WEEKS”

WITH MEHER BABA

The Trip to India

In the spring of 1954, during one of the weekly Meher Baba meetings we held in our home, a mysterious message was given to me in a most unusual way. Following the reading and discussion of one of Baba's discourses, we customarily had a silent period of meditation for a few minutes. On this occasion, after the period of meditation, Jeanne Foster, our elderly friend who was psychic, told me that during the meditation a male figure appeared behind me. He was dressed as they do in the East, she said, and he held a chalice in his hand. He said, "I have traveled far across the sands," and he held up his hand, showing four raised fingers.

Jeanne Foster then explained that she interpreted or understood this to be a message for me, and she felt that the message was that I would be making a trip to the East within four months. She was not able to figure out the meaning of the chalice; as events will show, that symbol proved to have great meaning.

THE INVITATION

A short time after this, I received a flyer from Adi K. Irani, one of Meher Baba's closest disciples, who served for many years as his secretary. The flyer described a big two-day meeting that was to be held at Meherabad in September 1954, exclusively for men. As I started reading it, I assumed that it was only for Baba's Eastern followers, and I felt envious; but when I came to the addendum, my eyes widened and my heart almost skipped a beat. Here was the opening I had long been looking for: Baba's men disciples and devotees in the West were also invited to attend. Moreover, the Western men were to arrive there by September 10, 1954, and stay through September 30: three whole weeks!

As I was reading all this, I became aware that the long-closed door was indeed swinging open, and that I might really be able to go to Beloved Baba in India. Although the actual journey was still four months away, I felt the inner journey had already begun.

As it turned out, a total of nineteen Western men accepted Baba's invitation to come to him in India. Eighteen of the men came from three countries. From the U.S.A. were Philippe DuPuis, John Bass, Lud Dimpfl, Malcolm Schloss, Fred Winterfeldt, Frank Hendrick, Ben Hayman, Dana Field, Fred Frey, Joseph Harb, Frank Eaton, and myself. From England were Charles Purdom, Will Backett, and Fred Marks. From Australia were Francis Brabazon, Bill LePage, and John Ballantyne. The nineteenth man, Max Haeffliger, came from Switzerland but left early.

Aside from our fare over and back, plus two nights' hotel bill for our stay in Bombay, all of our expenses were taken care of by Baba. We were his guests at the Meher Retreat Building on Meherabad Hill for the entire three weeks. During that time, all of our needs were taken care of, including excellent Western-type vegetarian food, comfortable

beds, and even two new station wagons with drivers to take us wherever Baba wanted us to go.

What follows is a copy of the flyer I received.

MEETING AT MEHERABAD

To Be Held

29th & 30th September, 1954

Exclusively for MEN

(None under 16 years of age permitted to come)

1. *Avatar Meher Baba desires to meet his disciples, devotees, and all those who love him, at Meherabad, Ahmednagar, India, on the 29th & 30th of September 1954, irrespective of whether they have previously met him or not.*
2. *Only those who are genuinely interested in Baba as BABA or his work should take this opportunity of coming to Baba, thereby also gaining a true understanding of his work.*
3. *At this Meeting of meetings to be held Baba will clarify certain very important points regarding His Present Incarnation and His Work in this Life. As the meeting held at Rajahmundry in Andhra State was the first and last of its kind, so will this Meherabad Meeting be the first and last of its kind, before Baba gives up his physical body.*
4. *With the exception of the mass Darshan programme to be held on September 12, 1954, at Ahmednagar, where Baba may give a message or messages, the Meherabad Meeting will be the last occasion on which Baba will give any messages.*
5. *All those who decide to attend the meeting should individually donate Rupees twenty-two, by money order to*

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4. With the exception of the mass Darshan programme to be held on September 12, 1954, at Ahmednagar, where Baba may give a message or messages, the Meherabad Meeting will be the last occasion on which Baba will give any messages.
6. All those who decide to attend the meeting should individually donate Rupees twenty two, by money order to Adi K. Irani, no later than August 1st, 1954.
7. Those intending to attend the meeting will be given an admittance token to Meherabad, permitting free board and lodging for the 29th and 30th, and bus service from Ahmednagar Railway station to Meherabad and back.
8. Each should bring with him his bedding roll, battery torch, and sufficient clothing to last him for the journey both ways and the two days at Meherabad. Due to the scarcity of water, it will not be possible to have any clothes washed at Meherabad.
9. All attending the meeting will bear the expense of the journey from their place of residence to Ahmednagar and back.

Note: No one should bring with him any woman disciple or devotee. Nor should he bring any child under the age of sixteen.

* * *

The above has been circulated to all Baba-lovers in India and Pakistan.

As Baba's men disciples and devotees in the West may also participate, Baba has had the following addendum specifically included:

Any one of Baba's MEN disciples or devotees in the U. S. A. who would care to come to this Meeting, who is able to do so without jeopardizing his job, and who can afford the journey to India and back, may come.

In such a case, Baba desires the disciple or devotee to be in Ahmednagar by the 10th of September 1954 so as to be present for the mass Darshan on the 12th, and stay on until the conclusion of the Meherabad Meeting on 30th September. Any one who wishes to and is able to attend, must cable Baba direct to that effect*, and must also communicate with Adi K. Irani, King's Road, Ahmednagar, Bombay State, India, by August 1st, 1954, who will answer all inquiries. For the participants twenty days' stay at Ahmednagar, full accommodation will be made at the residence of Baba's disciple Mr. Sarosh K. Irani.

It must be strictly understood No Women are permitted at this meeting. Although this Circular concerns Men solely, Baba wants it sent to women in his Groups in the U. S. A., as well, so as to inform them of Baba's activities.

Note: Others besides disciples and devotees, who are anxious to, and can afford to come may do so.

* Cable address: MEHERBABA, GRAFTON, SATARA, INDIA.

* * *

Invitation to Meherabad, 1954.

Adi K. Irani, no later than August 1st, 1954.

6. *Those intending to attend the meeting will be given an admittance token to Meherabad, permitting free board and lodging for the 29th and 30th, and bus service from Ahmednagar Railway station to Meherabad and back.*
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* Cable address: MEHERBABA, GRAFTON, SATARA,

INDIA

DOMESTIC SERVICE		WESTERN UNION		INTERNATIONAL SERVICE	
Check the class of service desired, otherwise this message will be sent as a full-rate telegram		1207 39-52		Check the class of service desired, otherwise this message will be sent as the full-rate	
FULL RATE TELEGRAM \$				FULL RATE \$	
DAY LETTER		W. P. NAME/INITIALS (PRINTED)		LETTER TELEGRAM	
NIGHT LETTER		CHARGE TO THE ACCOUNT OF		SHIP RADIOGRAM	
NO. REG. CL. OF SER.	PR. OR REG.	CASH NO.	TIME FILED		
Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to					
To: MEHERBABA		July 3 1954			
Street and No.		Place: GRAFTON, SATARA, INDIA			
Care of or Attn. No.					
AM SOBLIMELY HAPPY ABOUT YOUR MESSAGE AND INVITATION JUST RECEIVED I PLAN ON COMING TO YOU IN INDIA IN SEPTEMBER					
ALL MY LOVE					
DARWIN					
Sender's name and address (For reference)				Sender's telephone number	

Darwin's cabled reply, dated July 3, 1954.

My reply to Baba in response to his invitation to be his guest and to attend the very important two-day meeting in September when he was to give his “Final Declaration” was: “Am sublimely happy about your message and invitation just received. I plan on coming to you in India in September. All my love, Darwin.”

EN ROUTE TO INDIA

My son, Lowell, having recently returned from Korea, was able to look after the family, and so I made plane reservations – I paid \$1,172 for plane fare – and packed for the three-week-long trip.

In the afternoon of September 5, 1954, I embarked on my first trip to India, traveling with Frank Eaton and Philippe DuPuis. Fred Winterfeldt was traveling on a different plane, which took off a short time after ours. At Idlewild Airport to see us off were Virginia Rudd, Ella Winterfeldt, Michael and Ann Kohanow, Sam Cohen, Adele Wolkin, Filis Frederick, Beryl Williams, Bili Eaton, and my wife, Jeanne. As Jeanne remarked in her first letter to me after we left, “. . . [H]ow happy all you men looked to be going – like kids at their first Christmas party.”¹



Group at Idlewild Airport. From left: Bili Eaton, Sam Cohen, Virginia Rudd, Michael Kohanow, Ella Winterfeldt, Lowell Shaw, Beryl Williams, September 5, 1954.

Jeanne also commented in that letter about her concern when she saw that the plane I was on seemed to be delayed. As she gazed through Michael’s binoculars, she noticed that one of the propellers was not revolving. After a short time, we were underway, however, and she wrote, “But I said [to the group], ‘Baba’s love surrounds them and all will be well.’”² That plane gave us no trouble (the problem had

been due to a gas tank cover that was loose, or off), but her blessing certainly was needed for a plane we were on later.

DIVINE DELAY

The trip by propeller plane was supposed to take forty-eight hours from New York to Bombay, but due to various complications, it actually took seventy-two hours. When we arrived in London, we were scheduled to change planes after a few hours' layover. However, as it turned out, there was no room for us on the Air India plane out of London. So, at the airline's expense, we were taken to a pleasant hotel in the suburbs, the "Star and Garter," where we spent a twenty-four-hour layover. At that time I did not know that Baba had visited Delia DeLeon, one of Baba's first Western disciples, and her aunt, who was staying at that same hotel in 1934. When I found out about it later, it gave our stopover there a special significance.

I sent a telegram to Jeanne that said, "Had to stay over in London due Bombay Wednesday Love Darwin." I followed this up with a letter, dated September 6th, to my family about the experience, which I wrote from the Star and Garter Hotel. The letter reads:

By a curious chain of circumstances, we find ourselves staying over in London for 24 hours. We arrived London airport this morning from Gander, Newfoundland, but found out that our reservations from here to India had been canceled, through no fault of our own. The London airport official was extremely nice about it and has provided us with transportation and hotel for the night.

Thus we are getting to see London. We plan on seeing

some of the sights this afternoon. Just talked with Delia DeLeon over the phone. We are going to see her this evening. She lives close by, at Kew Gardens.

Our hotel is situated in a countryside overlooking the Thames River. Very picturesque. It's really quite a novelty to see the quaint English life over here. Many flowers and bicycles.

We go on a Super Constellation from London tomorrow morning via Dusseldorf, Rome, and Cairo to Bombay. Arriving in Bombay Wednesday.

Riding in the planes is a thrilling experience. One can see quite a lot of the countryside, too. . . .³

We did some sightseeing in London during the day and spent the evening with Delia DeLeon at her Kew Gardens apartment. The following day, we left London, and while flying to Rome, I wrote to my family again.

Well, here we are, some 19,000 feet up into the cloud-strewn heavens, over the southern part of Germany. We are gradually approaching the Swiss Alps, which we shall cross over on our way to Rome.

About an hour ago, we left Dusseldorf, where we stopped over for lunch. [In those days, meals for passengers were served in the airports, not on the planes.] We could see the city as we departed. Quite a large industrial city.

We left London at around 1:00 p.m. after a very pleasant stopover. While there, we stayed at a nice hotel overlooking a beautiful stretch of the Thames River. It was not difficult to pick up the feelings of the land of Lancelot. The countryside still retains much of its historic, simple charm.

London itself was . . . worth seeing while there. I took pictures of the English Channel as we left England and again as we approached the coast of France and Belgium. We saw the beach not far above Dunkirk, and flew the route of the R.A.F. and American fighter and bomber squadrons during the last two world wars, as they carried their bombs to Dusseldorf.

We have been near the Rhine River quite a bit of the way across Germany, and I see it winding its gleaming way far beneath our thunderbird of the skies. We have flown past Cologne, Bonn, and old Heidelberg, and are now climbing up a little to surmount the rugged alpine mountains.

Our plane is a new Super Constellation. It carries about 71 passengers, though we have only slightly more than half that number aboard at present. Among the passengers are many Indians, including the Maharaja of Jaipur, who seems to be a genial chap.

Had to stop writing for a few moments, as the riding became too bumpy. We have just passed over the Alps. The scenery is truly magnificent. We are now in Italy and can easily see the winding Po River, I think, far below.

While in London last night, Frank and I paid Delia DeLeon a visit. It was good to see her again. She said that Will Backett wrote from India that it was very hot in Bombay, so they went up to Poona. He also said that we Western men are to stay "on the hill" at Meherabad where the Western and Eastern ladies stayed.

Getting back to our flight: The high Italian Alps are just ahead. Their rugged peaks reaching far up into the sky, shrouded now and again by clouds, they seem to be lonely

fingers of Earth commingling with the contemplative heavens.

Well, dear ones, we've just landed in Rome. Saw St.

□ *Peter's and the Colosseum on the way down. . . .⁴*

Little did I know while writing that letter that our plane – this “Super Constellation” – was destined to develop engine trouble, which meant that we had to stay over in Cairo. At the London airport gift shop, Philippe had bought a gold cross necklace as a talisman, because he felt a premonition that “something was going to happen.”

ENGINE TROUBLE

We left Rome in the evening and were enjoying a moonlit flight above the Mediterranean Sea. Philippe asked the stewardess to wear the cross necklace, and she agreed to do so. Most of the passengers in the front section of the plane, where we were, seemed to be dozing, but Philippe and I stayed alert. Suddenly, a woman a few seats in front of us turned around and waved her arms to catch our attention. Then she pointed toward the window. In an alarmed voice she stage-whispered, “The motor out there seems to be turned off, and the propeller isn’t going around!”

Philippe replied reassuringly with a French gesture of nonchalance, “It’s nothing. These planes can fly on only three motors. Don’t worry.” The woman seemed relieved and settled back in her seat. Philippe then gave me a look that said, “I hope that’s true!” Fortunately, we made it safely to Cairo. As we were leaving the plane we could see that the motor was covered with oil.

These unexpected stopovers made our trip to India seem especially long, but they also gave us an opportunity to see some of the world we had never seen before.



View from Menna House Hotel,
Cairo, 1954.



Darwin Shaw on
camel at Giza, 1954.



The Cairo Museum where the
incident with the armed guard
took place, 1954.

Under a romantic moonlit sky in Cairo, we were taken to the Victoria Hotel, where we were put up in a luxurious suite of rooms at Air India's expense. The following day we were taken by bus to the Cairo Museum and then out to the Menna House Hotel at Giza for a fine lunch that catered to Western tourists' tastes. While out there, I had the thought that nobody back home would forgive me if I failed to ride a camel, so I rode one out to the pyramids.

In the Cairo Museum, I found myself in the room that contained the sarcophagus of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen. The only other person in the room was an Egyptian guard who held a rifle. Somehow our eyes met, and we looked at each other for a few seconds. Then he asked inquiringly, "Allah?" to which I replied affirmatively, "Allah." As I was on my way to the Divine Beloved, Meher Baba, my feelings for the Beloved must have shown through my eyes.

Finally, we were on our way again. On the plane, when we were approximately two hours from Bombay, I wrote another letter to my family.



Once again we are airborne, 19,000 feet above the Persian Gulf, having spent the night winging over the Arabian Desert. We are above the clouds, which stretch out in all directions below us like billowing wastelands of the Antarctic. The sky above us is pale blue. Our speed is 280 m.p.h., but we seem to

be moving very slowly in this vast wonderland of the heavens.

*We left Rome in the evening, the day before yesterday,
and flew down the boot of Italy and across the dark
Mediterranean Sea, upon whose waters the shimmering beams
of a clearly shining moon were reflected. Dimly, off to the right,
we could discern the shores of Libya. . . .*

*Soon we shall be moving by car or train up to
Ahmednagar and to Beloved Baba and the joy of reunion once
again; meantime, we settle comfortably back in the well-cush-
ioned seats on our magic carpet and dream of our loved ones,
knowing that “those who are united in love are ever in spirit
and know no separation.” [I was quoting from a letter Baba*

□ *had sent me in 1935.]*⁵

SAFE IN BOMBAY

When we arrived in India on September 9, I sent another telegram to Jeanne, which said, “Arrived safely today in Bombay Love Darwin.” We were met at the airport in Bombay by two of Meher Baba’s men mandali, Meherjee Karkaria and Nariman Dadachanji, who took us to the Grand Hotel, where we stayed for two nights while waiting for the others to arrive.

This hotel was a bit rundown, yet it had an orchestra that played during dinner. The first night, we went to see a movie about Radha and Krishna that was playing at the local theater. However, having been eager to see everything while on the plane and off, I was very tired and so did not enjoy the movie very much. In the morning, before breakfast, green bananas and hot tea were brought up to our rooms. We recovered from the long flight and also saw something of the city, with its teeming population.

The First

“Incredible Week”

On the morning of September 11, we left Bombay by chartered bus for Poona and then Ahmednagar. We were accompanied by Meherjee, Nariman and his wife Arnavaz, and Nariman’s brother Hoshang Dadachanji and Hoshang’s fiancée (later his wife), Havovi. We stopped in Poona, which is approximately one hundred forty miles from

Bombay, and had a fine dinner at the Napier Hotel, then continued on to Ahmednagar.

We had already been informed through Will Backett’s letter to Delia that we were not to stay with various Meher Baba-lover families in Ahmednagar, as we had originally been told, but at Meher Retreat, the tall stone building on Meherabad Hill. Up until

this time, only the Eastern and Western women mandali had stayed there. Needless to say, we were delighted.



Retreat Building, 1954.

Originally the building housed a water tank; in the late 1930s Baba had a second floor constructed. The large room upstairs served as our dormitory. It contained twenty beds, as well as chairs and dressers for our use. Downstairs there were three rooms. One room, which faces lower Meherabad, was used as an extra bedroom. (Since then it has become a library.) Another room we never saw, but I later found out it was where Baba kept his treasured artifacts, such as things given to him by masts. (As I mentioned earlier, masts [pronounced “musts”] are spiritually intoxicated lovers of God, with whom Baba worked extensively.) The third room, which faces Baba’s tomb-shrine, contained a small sofa, a coffee table, and enough comfortable chairs for all the Western men, and this is where we met with Meher Baba nearly every day.

When we arrived on Meherabad Hill, it was around 10:00 p.m. Charles Purdom and Will Backett were assigned to the downstairs room; the rest of us were assigned to the large room upstairs. We had a few minutes to look around the grounds before going to bed. Through the dim lighting provided by a few outdoor pole lamps, we glimpsed Baba’s tomb, the Tin Cabin, Mansari’s quarters (Mansari was a woman disciple who resided on the hill), and the outdoor privy and dining area, which was sheltered by a roof.

Baba was not there at that time; he was at Meherazad, some eighteen miles away. Nevertheless, the feeling of his presence was very intense. My spirit was quickened by this awareness of Baba’s presence, which seemed to be coming from the ground wherever I walked, but more intensely from the stone walls of the Retreat Building, like the warmth of the sun still radiating from bricks in the evening. I was reminded of the biblical passage wherein Jesus admonished passersby



Retreat Building dormitory, 1954.

for complaining about his lovers' exuberant exclamations, saying that if they stopped, the very stones would cry out.

The following accounts are taken from notes I made at the time and from letters to my family. I carried a notepad around with me and

made copious notes, including writing down things Meher Baba said. Additional details come from *The Awakener*, volume two, number three (1955). This special volume, entitled "Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba," was an account compiled by Charles Purdom and Malcolm Schloss by Meher Baba's order. Every evening, Philippe DuPuis, Malcolm Schloss, and I would gather at the nearby shelter that houses Baba's *gadi*, ("seat" or "throne," which, in this case, was a simple wooden chaise longue). There we would compare and share our notes, while Will Backett and Charles Purdom did the same in what is now the library of the Retreat Building.

From this process Charles and Malcolm were later able to create a full account. Also, Frank Eaton's informal diary of this period helped to refresh my memory about a few details.

I am presenting verbatim the discourses Meher Baba gave us, as I recorded them. It is therefore important to keep in mind that they will not always have the smooth flavor of the more polished account found in *The Awakener*. They do, however, capture the immediacy, spontaneity, and informality of Baba's words as they were read out from his alphabet board by Eruch.

Baba told us on September 17, ". . . [O]nly love, and God will be yours. Love – not intellect – but love. For the world I have to explain, so I want some of you to take notes."¹



Retreat Building and
stone wall, 1954.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: "LAST MASS DARSHAN"

The morning after we arrived on Meherabad Hill, September 12, we were all up bright and early, and at about 8:00 a.m. ate a hearty breakfast. We then were taken in two station wagons to Wadia Park, which is at the edge of Ahmednagar, some five miles from Meherabad. The roads were filled with people heading toward the darshan meeting. At Wadia Park, next to a permanent bandstand-like open structure, a huge pandal, or tent without sides, had been erected, with the supporting poles wrapped with brightly colored bunting. At the front end of the open structure, a permanent platform was ready, with a large, comfortable improvised seat for Baba to sit on and microphones in place for announcements and speeches. In keeping with Indian tradition, the men and boys were designated to sit on one side of the pandal, and the women and girls on the other side. At that time, this program was referred to as Meher Baba's "Last Mass Darshan Program."

We Westerners were told that Baba wanted us to sit on the platform near him. Baba had not arrived yet, so we had time to look around a bit. Already there were thousands of people in the pandal, and many, many more could be seen approaching from all directions. Most of them were walking, some came in cars or rode bicycles or bullock carts, and I even saw one man riding an elephant. The women's saris and the men's turbans were colorful, and a very festive atmosphere prevailed.

All were coming to receive the gift of a personal contact with the God-man. No one was being asked to join, buy, or contribute anything. It was all about God freely giving His love.

RESPONDING TO HIS CALL

Near where we sat, the broadcast of the sitars, bells, and other instruments being played by an Indian musical group situated near us added to the exotic atmosphere. I found the whole scene completely fascinating. As we sat there, one could sense an air of expectancy among the waiting crowd. I wrote to my family the next day, "We did not have long to wait, for Baba's car soon arrived, and as Baba, looking resplendently beautiful, glorious, powerful, and magnetic, mounted the steps and greeted the crowd, a great sigh seemed to sweep through everyone, a great wave of suppressed love, as it were, which now went out to acclaim the presence of the God-Man."²

Meher Baba's eyes were sparkling as he cast a quick glance at us,

and that loving glance in itself made the trip to India worthwhile! Then he walked to the front of the platform and spelled out on his alphabet board, Eruch reading his words in English to the multitude, "Not as man to man, but as God to God, I bow down to you, so as to save you the

trouble of bowing down to

Me." While the message was being broadcast in Marathi, Baba prostrated himself before the crowd. Then he dictated from his alphabet board and had Eruch read out, "To make you all share my feeling of



Meher Baba arriving in Wadia Park,
September 12, 1954.

being one with you and one of you, I sit down beside you.” Baba then descended the steps and sat, first among the men, and then among the women.³

Also, I recorded in my notepad the next day that Baba said, “May the spark of my Divine Love implant in your hearts a deep longing for the love of God.”⁴

Returning to the platform, Baba then walked over to one side of it and washed the feet of seven poor men and bowed down to touch his forehead to their feet. Baba was seated, and the seven men mounted a small raised platform in front of him for this special blessing. After bowing down to them, Baba gave each one fifty-one rupees, saying, “As each one of you is, in one way or another, an incarnation of God, I feel happy to bow down to you and to lay at your feet this Dev-Dakshana.” (Dev-Dakshana is a gift offered to a Perfect Master or a Deity.) This was followed by several speeches by local dignitaries and the performance of Baba’s arti (a worship ceremony involving the waving of a camphor lamp) by six young women in beautiful blue saris.⁵



*Meher Baba preparing to wash the feet of the poor,
September 12, 1954.*

During the performance of the arti and the speeches, Baba sat on the big seat where everyone could see him. Philippe DuPuis and I, however, were sitting on the platform to the left of Baba and back a



Meher Baba giving Darwin
a love-glance, September 12, 1954.

little way, so we could not see his face very well. We therefore left the platform and went to sit near the front among the men, where we had an excellent view of Baba's face. He quickly spotted us and smiled as he wagged his head, Indian fashion, establishing contact with us.

One of the most outstanding events of the day was the reading in Marathi of "Meher Baba's Call." We Westerners did not understand Marathi, so it was not until later, when we received copies of it in English, that we could appreciate it. We had, however, already responded to his Call.

MEHER BABA'S PRASAD

Soon after that, Baba took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and sat down on the front of the platform with his feet dangling over the edge, and the darshan program began. A huge sack of what appeared to be sugar-coated nuts was placed on the right side of him. We Westerners watched as long lines of people passed by in front of him and he gave each one a handful of the sweets. This was called giving "prasad," a gift from the Master or God. Prasad contains an energy that can be a great blessing to the recipient.

At the same time, Baba gave each one his love. He gave many a loving pat or caress while they offered him a bunch of flowers or a garland, which he allowed them to place around his neck. Many also gave him fruit, which he would touch and return to them as his gift. Many

young mothers placed their babies on his feet for his blessing.

Although I was deeply impressed with the spectacle around me, I soon became aware that much more was taking place. The atmosphere was surcharged with Meher Baba's Divine Love, which radiated from him in continuous waves of Beauty and Heavenly Sweetness, enveloping that vast multitude and, I felt, going out in unlimited measure to all of creation. As I watched all of this with great wonder, I seemed to be drawn into deeper levels of consciousness as I tried to fathom the inner significance of what I beheld. What I saw was the Christ – the Source of Divine Love – at work, selflessly pouring Divine Love and Grace into the thirsty hearts of not only all who were there but to people everywhere, dissolving the veils of ignorance and uplifting their consciousness. The very gates of heaven seemed to be wide open. One could not only feel Baba's love, but one could also see it as Beauty. Being exposed to this Divine Love, Grace, and Beauty all day long, having the heart center and other dormant centers of consciousness open, created a profound effect within me.

Baba's mandali directed alternately lines of men and boys, then lines of women – some with babes in arms – and girls, so that they came single file before Baba. For the most part it was orderly, but at times large groups, especially of men, surged forward, impatient to get to him. He was so magnetic that people sometimes could not restrain themselves. I wondered, "Aren't they aware of Baba's love where they are?" Suddenly I realized they were surging toward Baba because they *were* receiving his love! They felt impelled to get to him, to touch him and to drink from the cup of his Divine Love. Sometimes Baba himself would have to stand up and wave the people back to their seats, reassuring them that he would not leave until they had had their precious contact with him.

A FAUX PAS

One time, while Baba was working and the crowd was pressing in around him, I noticed that two from the group of Hindu nuns from Upasni Maharaj's ashram at Sakori, who had been pointed out to us previously, were sitting on the edge of the platform to one side of Baba. I was standing on the platform directly behind them. Having just arrived in India a couple of days before, I did not yet understand some of the common Indian gestures. So when one of the nuns, finishing her sentence to the other nun, raised an open hand up in the air and at the same time looked up at me, I assumed that she wanted me to take her hand and help her get up. I therefore reached down and took her hand with my right hand, only to have her snatch it back and give me a look that said, "How dare you!"

Obviously, I had made a major *faux pas*. Luckily the nun turned back to her companion and pointedly ignored me, probably thinking I had a colossal nerve. I straightened up, feeling terribly embarrassed, only later realizing how hilarious it really was. I soon found out that one of the gestures of Indian body language is to raise the arm with a twist of the wrist and the palm open to add emphasis to something just said.

MAGNETIZED BY LOVE

Baba would give out prasad first with one hand until his arm became tired, and then he would change over to the other hand. He kept this up all day, with only one break that I knew of, and that was when he went out to a nearby field where many thousands of poor people were being given a free meal. They refused to eat until Baba came out to share the beginning of the meal with them. At lunchtime,

Baba had us Western men taken back in station wagons to Meher Retreat for a fine lunch. We could hardly wait to get back to be with him until he left at 6:00 p.m.

During the course of the day, we Western men were allowed to move about freely, so of course we managed to get fairly close to Baba on the platform. Although Baba was extremely busy giving darshan and prasad, he would occasionally pause long enough to give us a smile and loving glance. Being close to him, we felt the intimacy of his love. For me, the feeling of intimacy Baba had shared with me in Myrtle Beach and Scarsdale in 1952 continued as the very core of our relationship.

At this gathering an estimated sixty thousand people were given prasad by Baba personally, and thirty thousand were fed. We Westerners did not get to have personal, physical contact with Baba at all during this day, nor did we receive any prasad.

At six o'clock, it was time for the darshan program to end, and by now the atmosphere was electric with Baba's presence. The crowd, seemingly magnetized by Baba's irresistible love, simply could not break the connection with him. To escape, Baba mounted to the top of the car that had brought him. The glorious sunset became enhanced by the magnificent luminosity of Baba's light, as the car slowly moved through the crowd of ecstatic people.



Darshan at Wadia park; Darwin Shaw (with diagonal strap) standing, September 12, 1954.



Meher Baba leaving Wadia Park atop car, September 12, 1954.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

The following day, Baba did not come to be with us at Meherabad. Quoting from my notes: "We all had a wonderful breakfast together, after which I went out back of the rear wall with Dr. Donkin [an English member of the mandali], and Bhau Kalchuri [a relatively new member of the mandali at that time]. There we discussed various ideas on cleaning up debris. Then I had a nice talk with Bhau about Baba." Also, Nariman and his wife, Arnavaz, drove out with Sarosh and spent some time with us.⁶

Then, "after lunch, we men went out back for a while, then for a walk down to Meherabad Ashram. There we met Krishnaji [a man who stayed with Baba for a time], who gave an inspiring talk about Meher Baba. Ali Shah [a mast, or God-intoxicated soul] was also there, and of course the atmosphere was surcharged with his presence, behind which one felt Baba very strongly."⁷

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

We had been told by one of the mandali that we could pay a short visit to Ali Shah, a mast on the fifth plane of consciousness who was of a *jamali*, or placid, temperament. He was staying in a tiny room to the left side of the veranda (as one faces the building from the road). By the time I had heard that we could go in to see him, several others had already gone in to visit him, so I went by myself. I thought, "A real fifth-plane mast: This should be quite a thing to see!"

The attendant opened the door for me and told me to greet Ali Shah with folded hands, a short bow, and the word "Salaam." I saw that the room was cramped because three Western men were still sitting there: Frank Eaton, Fred Winterfeldt, and Philippe DuPuis. Ali Shah

was seated on the edge of a bed, carefully holding not one but two cigarettes between his thumb and one finger. I approached the mast, did as I was instructed, and then looked Ali Shah in the face. He seemed completely oblivious of my presence. Occasionally he would slowly raise the cigarettes to his mouth and puff at them, both at the same time.

The other men soon departed, so I was left sitting alone in front of Ali Shah in that tiny room. After a while I decided that I, too, had better leave. I stood up, and when his face turned in my direction, I bowed with folded hands and repeated "Salaam." This time he seemed to notice my presence, and he mildly wagged his head back and forth. As I walked back up the hill, I pondered what, if anything, he had been trying to convey to me. It seemed as though he might have been saying, "What do you want from me? You have the Avatar!"

I recorded in my notes that we had "tea back up on the hill, followed by a visit to ancient Arangaon village and temples. Villoo and Sarosh came out in the evening and stayed through dinner with us."⁸



Group outside Retreat Building: (from left) Fred Winterfeldt, Villoo Irani, Sarosh K. Irani (behind Villoo), John Bass, Arnavaz Dadachanji, Philippe DuPuis, Nariman Dadachanji, Darwin Shaw, September 1954.

QUIET ASSIMILATION

It was a day of quiet adjustment to our surroundings and the beginning of our effort to assimilate the entire experience of the previous day with Baba and the darshan program, a task which, together with the impact of his love during the rest of our stay with him at that time, would extend through many years. Although through Baba's Love-Grace I had already ventured into his Ocean of Love a little way, he was beginning to sweep me away from my moorings, and I was blessedly bewildered by the Heavenly Beauty, Sweetness, and Wonder of his Ocean into which I was being drawn.

To my family on this day I wrote the account of the previous day and added, "Tomorrow morning Baba will come here and spend much of the day with us. The countryside hereabouts is unexpectedly attractive."⁹

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

The notes I wrote on this day chronicle what happened almost moment by moment. I am quoting them at length.

TOUR OF MEHERABAD

This is the day when we are to see Baba out here, on the hill, and all are filled with mixed emotions of love, hope, excitement, anticipation, etc. We arise early – at 6:00 a.m. or shortly after – go down and bathe and shave. Each one seems wrapped more or less in his own thoughts. Breakfast is at 7:30 a.m.

From 8 o'clock on all are watchful; one of the men even went up the tower to let us know when Baba was coming.

Suddenly we hear the cry, "He is here!" He arrived down below and [walked up the hill and] through the gate, walking very fast, taking long strides, under an umbrella lovingly held over his head by an Indian disciple.

Meantime, all of us had ranged ourselves along his path. He greeted first one, then the other. Coming up to Will Backett and Charles Purdom, he was garlanded with fragrant flowers, and also given a beautiful bouquet.

Smiling and sparkling, Baba embraced one after the other, and even joked a bit via the board. [He motioned for me to remove my sunglasses, which I did. I did not wear them when with Baba after that.]

He gathered us together where we dine, at the rear of the main building, and formal introductions were made. Some of the Western men were meeting Baba for the first time. Then we started on a tour of the ashram, with Baba leading the way, moving along rapidly. First he led us by the Tin Cabin.

Then he showed us his tomb, where he once stayed five months in seclusion [November 10, 1927 to April 24, 1928], subsisting on a thermos bottle of coffee per day, from which part of the coffee had been drunk by the small boy who delivered it to Baba.

"This is the place," he explained, "where my body will be placed." Here, Fred Winterfeldt asked Baba how long it would be till he gave up his body. Baba replied, "Maybe in months." Fred said, "Maybe years," and Baba smiled.



Meher Baba leading men on tour of Meherabad; behind the old mast ashram, September 14, 1954.



The Western men sitting with Baba, who is seated on the threshold of his tomb on Meherabad Hill. Back row, from left: Fred Marks, Lud Dimpfl, John Bass, Ben Hayman, Baba, Frank Hendrick, Bill LePage, Fred Frey, William Donkin, Charles Purdom, Frank Eaton, John Ballantyne, and Darwin Shaw. In front, from left: Joseph Harb, Dana Field, Philippe DuPuis, Francis Brabazon, Fred Winterfeldt, Malcolm Schloss, and Will Backett, 1954.

The tomb is [a simple domed structure] about 8 feet by 12 feet on the inside, with a pit in the center, all made of [stones, held together by] cement. The inner walls and ceiling are painted with delicate figures and faces.

Next Baba showed us the old mast ashram, including an inner room where he stayed for many months, seeing no one and receiving his food only through a small aperture. We then followed him toward the small cemetery. He paused by a cement cistern which contained some stagnant-looking water and, pointing down toward it, asked if there were any among us who walked in his sleep. Some later mentioned that they thought this might have a double meaning.

At the cemetery, Baba pointed out the graves of Nonny Gayley [Rano's mother], his parents, and Nadine Tolstoy, and also the graves of several faithful and well-loved dogs, including

Foundy. Here a man from Arangaon [village] bowed to Baba and shouted, "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" Baba waved to him.

After this, Baba led us out of the compound and down the hill toward the Meherabad Ashram at the lower level. He would walk very fast and occasionally he would slow down, and as he did this, the rhythm seemed to change [the vibrational energy around Baba would match his activity].

As Baba reached the roadway, we noticed that a bus, loaded with people, had stopped – the driver having seen Baba and the crowd of about eighteen Western men following him – so that the passengers could receive Baba's precious darshan. Others, too, waited along the road, or hurried to come close and respectfully and silently greet him. As Baba waited for them, he looked sparkling and radiant. After a moment or two of darshan, Baba signed for them to leave. [This is the incident I contrast to the one in 1952, where the passersby on the New York City sidewalk completely ignored Baba.]

As we approached the main ashram building, the two station wagons arrived, filled with fourteen women in saris from the Sakori ashram. Baba greeted them after we all entered the building. Each of these women and girls, in turn, bowed down and kissed Baba's feet in silent devotion. Baba then introduced a



Godavri Mai and Sakori nuns touring Meherabad with Meher Baba, September 14, 1954.

woman in a yellow sari, Godavri Mai, and explained that she was Upasni Maharaj's favorite disciple and is now at the head of the Sakori Ashram.

Here, through Eruch, Meher Baba said, "I AM THE ANCIENT ONE. I AM THE ONE REALITY." Here, too, Baba said, regarding his demise, "If not before December, then till I'm ninety years old I will be there on the top of the chest of the whole universe."

Baba then led us out to a shelter by the roadside on which is the large box-like cell in which he secluded himself while writing his [secret] book [which he said was being kept in a vault in Bombay and would be brought out sometime in the future].¹⁰ The box is about 4 1/2 feet high and 12 to 14 feet long.

While showing us the box-like cell, Baba also showed us a circular sacred fire pit [dhuni] and related the incident of how the Arangaon villagers came to him during a period of drought and asked him to light the fire in order to bring rain. When the villagers returned to Arangaon, it actually did rain, but Baba said that this was only a coincidence and no miracle. Baba emphatically stated, "The only miracle which I will perform will be when I break my silence and speak the one Divine Word."

After this, Baba took us through the small dispensary to another room where he had been while in seclusion. After we left this room and building, Baba took time out to turn to Francis Brabazon, with a twinkle in his eyes, and said [gestured], "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai." Francis repeated it in a loud voice and all laughed. Baba was, of course, ribbing

Francis about shouting this over the microphone at the public darshan.

As Baba led us back up the hill, he paused to rest for a moment under a tree, but one felt that it was not for himself that he rested, but for the others who had been straining to keep up with his rapid pace. He resumed the walk up the incline, holding one of the women by the arm to assist her along the way.

Once, he stopped to pick up a stone and toss it away after holding it a few seconds. Then, again, he paused to pick up several more stones. He seemed to be working as he held them, and as he threw them away, one felt an indefinable inner significance, but, of course, there was no outer explanation. On the way up the hill, Baba smilingly allowed Fred Winterfeldt to snap a couple of pictures of him.

Back up on the hill, Baba again made a tour of the area to show the women from Sakori the historic premises, including the dormitory upstairs where the Eastern and Western women had lived together in seclusion at one time. Baba allowed more



Meher Baba sitting partway up Meherabad Hill waiting for the others, September 14, 1954.

pictures to be taken as we moved along, all of us following after him, irresistibly drawn to remain as close to him as possible.

As the ladies from Sakori – and a few men devotees also – took their leave of Baba, they again kissed the sacred feet of the Beloved.

Baba proceeded into the lounge room, where we all sat down around him [in comfortable chairs]. He tried to make us feel at ease and to relax the tension in those who did not yet feel normally natural in his presence. Others had joined us at the ashram – at the lower level – and come along up with us. Present were Pendu, Krishnaji, Sarosh, Meherjee, Nilu, and a few other Indian disciples, in addition to the

□ *Western men.*¹¹

MASTER AND FRIEND

During this gathering, Baba gave us several pearls of wisdom, using the alphabet board. Eruch did most of the reading of Baba's board, but Adi sometimes also assisted. Baba said, "From October I will not make use of this board."¹²

He said, "Baba is not only [your] Master, but also [your] friend, one of you and one with you."¹³ He also said, "Prasad means 'Gift of God.'"¹⁴

Eruch, who was interpreting from Baba's alphabet board, would sometimes refer to Baba in the third person and other times in the first person, "I." Sometimes, at a signal from Baba, he would elaborate on something Baba had said. I simply recorded the words as Eruch or Adi spoke them.

Baba told us that in the coming days he would explain many things about the spiritual path and God-realization and that everything should be taken down. Apparently he also told Charles Purdom and

Malcolm Schloss to get the notes in shape for publication,¹⁵ but I was not aware at that time that Baba had said this.

Baba urged us all to keep our attention on him during the times he was with us so that we each would receive as much as possible of what he had to give. He said, "You all have no idea how lucky you are to be here with me." He also said, "What you have to understand is not by your mind, but by your heart."¹⁶

THREE TYPES OF LOVERS OF GOD

Baba then spoke about the three types of conviction – intellectual conviction, conviction by sight, and real conviction through God-realization.

What follows are Meher Baba's words as I recorded them:

There are three ways of conviction according to the Sufi tradition. 1st) Intellect: intellectual conviction, i.e., you feel sure there is God. But this you only understand by reason. 2nd) Sight: when you actually see God just as you see all these gross things. You see Him everywhere in everything, and see nothing but God. This is conviction by sight. 3rd) The real conviction is when you become God. Then you know only God exists and you and all are God. When you get this conviction, then you know Baba. Just by talking, it is not possible. I am on every level, but only when ego and intellect do not interfere, then Baba appears as he is.

I am what I am, even if the whole world bows down to me or turns against me. It does not matter; it is no one's fault. To know Baba is not a matter of eating ladoos [Indian sweets]; one has to die to oneself to know me. It is not just a joke: [this] Love.¹⁷

Baba then said, "I have three kinds of lovers." The first type, he explained, includes the masts and saints, who "know nothing but to love – and love to such an extent that he even loses consciousness of the body and the world. Only God exists for him. He is dead to himself and the world. As an individual, he exists as a mere [word missing]." (Here I turned the page in my notebook and missed the word.)¹⁸ My notes continue, quoting Baba, "After thus annihilating himself, he becomes one with God, the source of love."¹⁹

The second type of lover, Baba said, includes the one who "lives in the world, attends to all his worldly duties, and is one hundred percent active. Yet, all the time, in his heart he knows that all this is temporary and that only God is real. He loves God without anyone knowing about his love."²⁰

The third type of lover is very rare, Baba said. "These are the very few rare ones who surrender completely to Christ, God-Man, or Master. Surrender means they live not for themselves but for the Beloved Master. This is the highest type of lover, and unless you have this type of love, to criticize and judge will take you nowhere."²¹

COMMENTS TO THE MEN

Baba said, "Be happy, and forget everything except what you experience here. The meeting on the 29th and 30th will be unique, and it will be lasting in its effect. Until then, don't worry about anything. Be cheerful, be honest, and look after your health. Then, after the meeting is over, I want you to go back directly to your destination and to take back intact the atmosphere of the meeting."²²

My notes continue: "Baba asked each one to say something, just some little thing. Most of those present expressed their feelings in some small measure, and gradually Baba managed to loosen up their stiffness so that they could more readily feel the great love which came

from him.”²³ When it came my turn, Baba said that seeing me reminded him of the amusing experiences we had shared at the Bronx Zoo in 1952.

In response to comments from some of the others, Baba made various loving statements. To Lud Dimpfl, whom Baba was gently correcting, he said, according to my notes, “Don’t worry, I will never be displeased. Even if you slap me, I will not be displeased. Say what is in your heart. If you hide what is in your heart, you are not honest. I love you for being honest.”²⁴

When Philippe DuPuis commented on the darshan program and the toll it must have taken on Baba’s physical body, Baba explained: “Before I drop my body, I will again go through violent attacks on my body. What has to happen will happen, and I will gladly, happily, undergo this for humanity. My happiness lies in making people understand, not through the mind, but experience, that God alone is the Beloved for whom we exist.”²⁵

Baba continued, “Forget about your country – Europe, America, etc. Be completely here.” Then he referred to the upcoming meeting by saying, “At the meeting, I will make it all clear as never before. Any of you who is strong enough to carry out that message will do my work. It is only for the meeting that I have called you.”²⁶

In response to the comments of a few others, Baba gave out these pearls. “One who wants nothing gets everything. Nothing means nothing, and one who wants nothing is never disappointed.” He then quoted Hafiz by saying, “Do not ask for union with God, and do not bewail separation. Only seek the Will of the Beloved.”²⁷

Meher Baba disclosed, “Before I met my Beloved in union, I lost everything – ego, mind, and lower consciousness. But thank God I did not lose my sense of humor. That is why I appear amongst you on your level. Yogis, saints, and sadhus with long beards you will find in India

sitting in contemplation. You would not be allowed near them with your shoes or allowed to smoke in their presence. But with me you can do all these things, because I am one with you. I am also human. From tomorrow I will work in order that this visit of yours will not be merely a picnic or sightseeing tour.”²⁸

My notes continue: “At about noon Baba indicated that he was going to leave. As he walked among us toward the door, he playfully clasped several of us by the hand. We all waved farewell to him as he rode out of the compound in the car. In a few minutes’ time we were upstairs, each one reflecting on the events which had just taken place, or writing, when we learned that Baba had returned and would stay with us through the lunch period. Naturally we were anxious to get back downstairs to see Baba again. We were partway through our lunch when Baba came and sat at one end of the table. Baba insisted that we continue with our meal, which we did.”²⁹

As I was to experience numerous times when eating in Baba’s presence, I was always aware of the choice of either eating heartily or focusing on him. Actually, I would rather have forgone the meals and focused on Baba.

BE PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING

Meantime, Baba gave little discourses about loving God and how approachable God is through the Avatar. The following did not appear in *The Awakener*. Baba said, “It is so easy to see God that its being easy has made it infinitely difficult. When all doubts are removed, when mind is at infinite peace, when you continually, unbreakably enjoy divine bliss – that bliss – in that split second you see – in that moment we understand – that we always were THAT. Not through the intellec-

tual mind. It is more clear than what you see here with your gross eyes. To explain God would take eternity or one moment – a split second. How to explain? Be here, not somewhere else.”³⁰

Baba went on to say:

If you were to see me at Andhra and elsewhere where the traditions are different from yours, you would see how different it is. They respect me, as they are used to thinking of saints and yogis sitting with a sober expression on their faces. If they were to see me here with you – and you eating and smoking in front of me – they would say, “What is going on here?” When I sit with the lowly and poor, I am one with them, and when I sit with you, I am one with you. But when I am in my Divine State, only God knows who I am: you cannot.

If you see me amongst sadhus, you won’t find anyone more serious than me there. I am there as the head sadhu. When I am among boys, I play marbles, I fly kites, and here I am just one of you. When giving darshan, I am above everything. Then my power, if not checked, would burst everything. This is my Divine Ego that says [speaks] Truth. If I came into my Divine Excitement, you would not stand it five minutes. When big wrestlers would see Baba in that mood, they would run away. It is not anger. In God anger does not exist. When I get into a Divine Mood, I get Divine Excitement.

It is said, “Perfect ones are so soft like butter, hard like steel, so it all comes and it all goes.” When I am with crowds, I feel all alone in the crowd, and when I am in seclusion, I feel the whole world around me.

Now, among my mandali there are those who would give

their life for me. They would not dream of smoking, sitting beside Baba; but when I tell you all, "Chat, smoke, be relaxed, be honest and do as I tell you," don't hesitate. But be so prepared as to do anything just as you do now. If I say, "Eat plenty, play tennis, etc." – suppose if I tell you afterward, "Fast for a day, stand in the tree, etc.," you might do it – but not as children as you do all these things. The mandali will do it. If

□ *Baba tells them to go about in the town naked, they will do it.*³¹

In an undated journal note entered between the account of the 14th and 15th of September, I noted that Baba said, "Babajan made me feel what I am, Upasni Maharaj made me know what I am, and I am what I am."³²

Before Baba left, he told us that he would be giving us private interviews the next day. He promised that we would each have fifteen minutes with him.

I quote from my notes: "Shortly after this, Baba left us for the rest of the day. We did see him to wave to, however, at Sarosh's place of business [automobile dealership]. This was later in the afternoon, when we went there to give information about our passports and visas to the local police. Baba was there in a car at the time and was just leaving."³³

HOW EASY TO REACH HIM!

Generally, after Baba had spent some time with us on the hill at Meherabad, he would walk down the long winding road to where the car awaited him at lower Meherabad. There would always be one or two others with Baba, and one of them held an umbrella over Baba's head. Sometimes, as Baba walked down the hill, he would pause to

turn around and wave to us. I especially remember one day in particular. He had taken his leave of us, but we stayed outside the gate looking after him with deep feelings of love and longing.

He stopped some distance down the hill and waved to us. We returned his wave, after which most of the men went back to their quarters. A few of us, however, lingered on to continue to watch the Beloved, and we were very glad we remained, because, to our surprise and delight, every two or three hundred feet, Baba turned around to wave to us until he was way down the hill, almost out of sight. Each time, we responded with a joyful surge of the spirit as we reached out to him with the fullness of our hearts. It seemed like such a spontaneous exchange of love, but I felt that he was showing us how constant his love is for us, and how easy it is for us to reach out to him with our love and longing.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

I wrote in my notepad on this day: "This morning we expected Baba up here 'on the hill' at 9:00 a.m. As it turned out, Baba didn't arrive until around 9:30. Eruch explained to us that Baba was delayed at Sarosh's motor place, as there were several employees there who had to work on the day of the public darshan and therefore missed out on the darshan and prasad. Baba allowed them to have his darshan this morning. This was the day when we were all allowed private interviews with Baba. Day of days – a few moments of Divine Love and the rest of the day to readjust to Earth."³⁴

Baba told us that the next day we were going to Pimpalgaon (Meherazad) to see the places where he had lived in seclusion and fasted. Later, he planned to take us to Poona and Sakori to see the historic places of his life. He restated that the meeting at the end of the month

was very important and that it was the main reason he called us to India. Baba indicated that in two days he would start giving us explanations and that we should not have our minds on affairs at home but keep our focus fully on him.³⁵

A TOUCHING INTERVIEW

The interviews took place in Will Backett and Charles Purdom's room and lasted from around 9:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. I was the fifth one to be called by Baba. Immediately after the interview I wrote in my notepad:

11:30 a.m. – I've just been in to see Baba, The Ancient One, the Highest of the High, the Divine Beloved. He is more beautiful than ever before, more lovely. Much more energetic and vigorous, yet infinitely tender, compassionate, and overwhelmingly kind and considerate.

He greets me with a warm embrace and tells Eruch – who is reading the board – "This is Darwin. He is very dear to me – one of my dearest ones."

He asked me how Jeanne, Lowell, Leatrice, and Renae are, and said that they are all very dear to him.

[He said,] "I love you very much because you love me. It is good that you came. I would have felt it very deeply if you had not come." When Baba told me that I was one of his dearest ones, I asked him, through my tears, "How can you say that?" He replied, "I do not humor you."

Baba recalled again the episode at the zoo and we laughed about it. He said that when he rode with me in the car, he felt the same as though one of his close mandali members was driving.

Baba said to tell Lowell that he would like him to take

advantage of the GI educational rights he has [in order] to further his education. Baba was pleased about Leatrice’s occupation and Renae’s educational program.

Baba asked about Jeanne, and indicated to Eruch that she loves Baba very much and that Baba loves her as well as the children very much. All are dear to him.

Baba said of Jeanne that “she is an angel.”

When I gave Baba the scarf, he was very pleased. I commented that it was just a little thing, and he replied, “The best gift you could bring is yourself – Gift of God” to him.

Baba told me about the public darshan at Andhra, etc. He smilingly demonstrated how he handed out prasad for many hours at a time, working very fast.³⁶

I gave him gifts and messages from my family for the women mandali and the messages of love from all the group in Schenectady.³⁷ When Baba told me (using his alphabet board) about his recent activities, such as the public darshans at Andhra, he spoke the way a close friend would discuss current doings.

LETTER TO MY FAMILY

To my family I wrote:

Today we all saw Baba privately for the first time. He said, yesterday, that he would give us all 15 minutes each – even if it drove him crazy.

He started the interviews this morning and didn’t finish till around 4:30 p.m. I was lucky to be the fifth one called by Baba. Doubly lucky! I saw Baba from a short

distance earlier, and we were en rapport in love.

When I went in to see Baba it was with great love for him, but when I saw him I was quite overwhelmed. Here was our Beloved Baba of yesteryear, suddenly much younger, vigorous, sublimely radiant, and divinely loving. What a blessing to have him reveal himself thus, and to unite with him in the immeasurable release of love. He embraced me tenderly and, of course, I returned that embrace.

Eruch was reading Baba's board; otherwise we were alone. Baba was so beautiful: his smile and his eyes were more beautiful than ever I had seen them before, and he was altogether lovely.³⁸

Then I related everything that had transpired during the interview, adding that "He asked about each one of you dear ones and was happy to receive your messages of love. He told Eruch that you all are very dear to him. He expressed such love for you all that I know he always loves and blesses you." And of course I wrote, "At one time he said of you, Jeanne, 'She is an angel.'"³⁹

After Baba had left, we all went for tea at Sarosh's place at 5:00 p.m. and listened to Indian music.⁴⁰

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16: TOUR OF MEHERAZAD

My notes for this day are only a summary sketch, which I believe I wrote at the end of the day. More detail is given in a letter to my family written on the 17th, in the morning. To them I wrote, "We all went over to Pimpalgaon [Meherazad], in the two station wagons, arriving at a little after 9:00 a.m. Pimpalgaon is about twelve miles [I

think eighteen is more accurate] from Meherabad. It is like an oasis. The place is developed in what appears to be a square pattern. It has nice shade trees and beautiful flower gardens in which the ladies work.

“The men’s quarters are separated from the women’s. Baba greeted us on our arrival and immediately started on a tour of the place, first showing us the men’s quarters, the old Blue Bus, and a room he uses for ‘special work.’ The men sleep on stone floors with very little underneath to form a mattress. Their rooms are almost completely unfurnished. Very rugged.”⁴¹

Baba and some of the mandali, mostly the women, had used the Blue Bus during a special phase of Baba’s work, when they traveled all over India from December 1938 through February 1939. The Blue Bus was set on a concrete base, and Baba sat in it during his Manonash phase. He also used it during his forty days’ fast in 1949. The room for “special work” was a stone building about ten feet square. He used it for work with the masts, God-intoxicated souls. Baba said that this type of work was known only to him.⁴²

My notes include our encounter with Kaikobad. “Baba introduced us to Kaikobad, an older man disciple, who has great inner experiences. Kaikobad spends most of his time alone in his room; he repeats Baba’s name 100,000 times each day. He meditates through the wee hours of the night, sees Baba inwardly, and also experiences seeing the sun or moon inwardly.”⁴³



Meher Baba at Meherabad with Kaka Baria.

We also met Kaka Baria, who was the manager of Pimpalgaon. Baba said that it was Kaka who had named the place “Meherabad,”

azad meaning “free.” (In “Meherabad,” abad means “flourishing,” Baba explained).⁴⁴

We then met Gustadji, whom Upasni Maharaj had sent to Baba, telling him that Meher Baba is the Avatar. (I had first met Gustadji in 1952, at the Center in Myrtle Beach.) By Baba’s order, Gustadji was put on permanent silence.

Baba showed us his own room and told us that during the Manonash period he worked very hard for the whole world and that when he was finished with that work, it was as if something had been sucked out of him.

Also in connection with the Manonash period was an asbestos cabin that had actually been two cabins on the top of the hill at Pimpalgaon. Baba used this cabin during the daytime in the Manonash period. He said that he still sometimes used it for sleeping; his bed consisted of a thin mat and hard pillow on the stone floor.

Baba then had Eruch and a few of the others tell stories illustrating how difficult it was to carry out Baba’s orders during the Manonash period. Baba remarked, “I always say, when there are conflicting orders, always obey the first order.”⁴⁵

After a tour of the beautiful, well-tended gardens, we accompanied Baba to the women’s quarters. I quote from my letter: “There is a fairly large house which we were shown after seeing the men’s quarters. This large house is where the ladies live. Rano and Dr. Goher greeted us. We had little time to talk, but Rano said the girls all send their love to you all. I guess they liked the gifts.”⁴⁶

We did not see any of the other women besides Rano and Dr. Goher, but we were shown their rooms. Upstairs, Baba led us to his own room, which contained a wooden bed where he sometimes would sleep. The room opened out onto a veranda.

Downstairs, Baba handed Lud Dimpfl a few photograph albums

containing pictures of Baba. He indicated that we could look them over at our leisure in Meherabad. He also entrusted to Lud some small boxes containing locks of Baba’s hair that had been cut when he was thirty years old. Baba’s hair at that time was reddish gold. After we had looked at the albums and the hair in Meherabad, Lud was to return them. Later, Baba referred to these items again and said that when we returned them to him they would come back with our love.

We then went with Baba up to the top of the hill a little distance from the back of the house. He said that it was not far from the place where Krishna used to play with the gopis. My letter describes this experience: “. . . [W]e followed him to a small, pointed mountain, or hill, nearby, and he led us up the winding pathway to the top, where he formerly had two cabins. Here he stayed in seclusion during one



Meher Baba seemingly blessing all of creation: Kumar holding umbrella, Seclusion Hill, September 16, 1954.

phase of his work. The view from the top is very expansive. Walking along this hill with Baba was reminiscent of Galilee. On the way up, Baba stopped several times, sat down, and appeared to be working inwardly.”⁴⁷

Baba appeared so gloriously Christ-like, standing at the top of the hill. While I was gazing at him, he held his hand up as though blessing the whole world. I was able to take some photos of him doing this.

We then returned to the patio of the house with Baba. There, he said, “You are all really fortunate to have come with me on the hill, with me leading the way. That is a very dear piece of land, that hill.

When I was there I fasted on only very weak tea. The hill is now barren, but a time will come when there will be much construction there by my disciples.”⁴⁸

Baba had us then sit for about five minutes silently, after which we drank some juice.

Someone then brought Baba’s patched coat that he had worn for eight years, beginning in 1921. Baba said that this coat was the most sacred of his possessions. He said, “What it has in it will be revealed

after I drop the body. Then thousands and thousands of men and women will come to worship.”⁴⁹ A pair of sandals and a white robe, both of which he wore when he wore the coat, were also produced for us to see. He stopped wearing the sandals after he first went up Meherabad Hill.⁵⁰



*Meher Baba posing for photographs,
Meherabad, September 16, 1954.*

I documented this part of the day in my letter home by writing, “When we returned to the house, Baba showed us garments he had worn in the early days, which were being preserved. We took many pictures. Ludwig Dimpfl has a movie camera, Fred Winterfeldt a camera, others too. Baba told us stories and incidents which were amusing and instructive.”⁵¹

Before sending us back to Meherabad, Baba said he would see us the next morning. Regarding the rest of our stay, he said, “What would be best would be for you from now on to play with Baba’s love. You have only fifteen days more now to absorb Baba. After you leave, you will be

free. You can play, work, be with your family and children as much as you want. But here, now, try to absorb as much of Baba as you can. What I would like, in short, is for you to take me with you when you go back."⁵²

In the afternoon, Sarosh took us to Happy Valley. My letter to my family describes this outing. "We returned to the hill at Meherabad for lunch and in the afternoon again went over past Pimpalgaon to Happy Valley. This was a very charming place where Baba often goes. He wasn't with us on this occasion. Happy Valley is a place where Ram, the Avatar of 1500 years ago, and his wife, Sita, lived for twelve years while in exile. There is a temple there and an old Mogul-period mosque, which is now a dharamshala, or resthouse."⁵³

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

The letter to my family written on the morning of the 17th, describing the activities of the previous day, ends thus: "Baba is coming this a.m. to give us explanations. All is well here in every way. You are ever in my heart while here with Baba. In his love which you always have, [signed] Dad-Dar."⁵⁴

When Baba arrived, he said that he had wanted to come early but was delayed by some printers in Ahmednagar. My notes of that day record, "Baba says that he is so much disturbed by all these things that he doesn't like all this." Then he said, "On very special occasions I hold prayer meetings with a few of my most intimate disciples, so today I am thinking of having that meeting to have you also included in that. So you will all come down with me. After prayers, we will return and Baba will start explanations. You will see Muslim, Zoroastrian, Hindu, and Christian prayers, also the confession."⁵⁵

"On the 20th," Baba continued, "we go to Sakori. We leave at 7:00 a.m., so on that day I want you to arise at 5:00 a.m. and at 6:00 have

breakfast; and at 7:00 be ready to leave. Monday the 20th. We return at 1:00 p.m. and have lunch here. Today Sarosh might take you to some place here in the evening.”⁵⁶

Baba asked us if we went to Happy Valley and if we liked it. “From tomorrow,” he continued, “you all stay here and do as I instruct you after prayers, as not much time is left, and you must do one special thing I want you to do.”⁵⁷

SPECIAL PRAYER MEETING

My notes, written as events were happening, record:

Baba leads us down the hill to the large Ashram Room [Old Mandali Hall]. We remove our shoes and leave them outside. Incense burning. Atmosphere peaceful. We sit on rugs around a divan. Baba has water poured over his hands; he touches his head with the water. Kaikobad assisting in front of a large picture of Baba. Kaikobad intones a hymn to Baba, first on one side of the picture, then on the other side. Baba washed his hands between times. Zoroastrian Ahuramazda prayer, ceremony of the string.

Next came the Muslim prayer; a prayercloth is spread. Baba covers his head with a red shawl. Ali Akbar [Aloba], a Muslim disciple, intones the Muslim prayer ceremony. Baba and the disciple stand on the prayercloth facing the west. The disciple kneels and salaams up and down while intoning the ritual. Baba's hand is moving, his fingers especially, as though working [internally]. At the close of the ceremony, Baba stoops and touches the disciple's foot and then places his hand to his head.

The Hindu ceremony: Nilu and Vishnu intone the prayer,

facing Baba’s picture. Baba stands on the right, facing the picture. Baba sways to the rhythm. The Hindu prayer was composed by Upasni Maharaj in Sanskrit.

The Christian ceremony: Don [Dr. Donkin] and the Bible. Don is asked to hold the hand of Eruch while Eruch reads from the Bible, the three arranged around the picture. Don washes his hands and feet before and after prayers, the others likewise. Don returns from washing hands and feet, stands facing Baba’s picture. He reads repentance and confessional [Repentance Prayer]. Baba bowed down to the picture of himself. Baba returns to the divan.⁵⁸

After we all sat down around Baba, who was seated on his divan, I began writing what he conveyed through the alphabet board. “Today, you have joined God praying to God. I and God are one.” After that I noted, “Baba paces up and down the room.”⁵⁹ The atmosphere throughout these ceremonies was profoundly sacred.

Baba then escorted us back up Meherabad Hill, stopping to point out the dispensary of Dr. Donkin, whom we were instructed to consult for the slightest ailments. Here I wrote down what Baba said, which was, “I have nothing to worry about [regarding] the health of the others, because here is the doctor, and he is most dear to me. The faith and love with which this dear son of mine has stuck to Baba is unique.”⁶⁰

When we got back to the Retreat Building, Rano showed us some photographs of Baba and two paintings she had done under Baba’s direction.⁶¹

ONE SPECIAL THING

Baba now told us about the “special thing” he wanted us to do. “I

want you all from tomorrow to think exclusively of me alone for one half-hour for seven days only. You should sit aloof from others; select your own spot, close your eyes, and just try to bring before your mind's eye Baba's figure. If you cannot do that, then just look at my picture and mentally repeat 'Baba, Baba,' etc. If thoughts come and bother you, let them pass away and try to keep your mind on Baba's figure for one half-hour. Select your own spots where you are not disturbed. One half-hour silent contemplation for seven days, from tomorrow. Anyone who wants to ask about this point?"⁶²

Lud asked about mosquitoes, and Baba said we could use our mosquito nets.⁶³

Baba concluded his instructions by saying, "You must be undisturbed by any external things. For seven days of Baba's atmosphere, I want you to do this wholeheartedly. Just bring Baba's figure before your mind's eye. From 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. on the 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th. [We were exempted from the 20th because of the scheduled trip to Sakori.] From the 26th I will not be available. I have many other things [to attend to]. And if Francis [Brabazon] coughs – good!"⁶⁴

Actually, after being around Baba for a few days, I had begun seeing his form everywhere I looked. It was as though his image had become burned onto my consciousness and projected itself onto objects. I assume others had the same experience, as well.

My notes go on to quote Baba as saying, "Tomorrow, if time permits, I will explain about God and the Universe, Substance and Shadow, etc."⁶⁵

PURITY OF HEART

Baba then introduced the theme he wished to address on this day. These are my notes:

Christ and his inner circle and Christian mystics all stress purity of heart. Muhammad and his imams also stressed purity of heart. So did Zoroaster and the Magi; so did Krishna and his companions and the Vedantists. So does Baba stress purity of the heart. So, today, we will see what this means: what heart is, what mind is. Is it only the organ that is meant, or something deeper?

One Sufi said, "The abode of love is infinitely higher and above the domain of intellect. He alone out of millions and billions of people can touch and kiss the threshold of the Beloved who has his life in his sleeves." This is a literal translation. What does that mean, Malcolm? [I did not record Malcolm's reply.] It means also that if you want to see your Beloved God, go before Him with your head in your palm, which means intellect can never reach One who transcends mind.

So, we now come to the understanding that God cannot be understood. He is not visible, because He is infinitely visible to that "I" which has no veil over it. Veil of desires, veil of I-ness – which is called ego. Mind has dual functions. I have explained this at length in the book *God Speaks*, so I'll give [only] points.

Mind has dual functions. The impressions that lie dormant have to be worked out, so they appear as thought. This thinking function of mind is known by Vedantists as Man [pronounced "mun"]. The second function of the mind is of feelings, of emotion. This is called Antah Karana. That means the heart. So what is known as heart is actually this second function of the mind itself.

The impressions that are called "sanskaras" are spent both

through thinking and feeling. To the first functioning of mind belong just thoughts. Any kind of thoughts. To the second functioning of mind – the heart – belong feelings and desires. All feelings of joy, pain, disappointment, happiness, shock, etc., belong to this Antah Karana. What happens is, in sound sleep – when you sleep – the impressions lie in a latent dormant state. We won't talk of dreams; they have been explained in God Speaks.

Now, what wakes you up from sound sleep? Impressions. They wake you up. Impressions of actions done. And these impressions are spent first by thoughts, then desires, then by actions. So Krishna in his Gita said once, "Let impressions be spent only through thoughts." Then no new impressions will be formed. If you cannot do this, let impressions be spent through desires, longings, feelings – but not through actions. Then new impressions will be formed, but not so deep.

But if impressions are put into action, then new impressions are bound to form. This means that the first function of mind is not important. It is natural. But the second functioning of mind [i.e., heart] is important, because it is the seat of desires, and unless the heart – which I have just explained to be the second functioning of the mind – unless the heart is devoid of all desires – all feelings – that means, unless the heart is pure and naked, then God, who is your innermost Self, cannot reveal Himself.⁶⁶

At this point, Baba asked if what he had explained was clear; Malcolm asked about repression, but Baba told him not to ask about that now.⁶⁷

Baba continued:

Now, God is your innermost Self. That means, behind this limited body – the spirit that appears – you have energy, you have mind, which both take function. You as “you” also are there. That means ego. And behind this all, imagine God as Infinite – Infinite in space. You have your thoughts; you think just “you” is this figure, but behind this “you” is something that cannot be got rid of, even if body is not there. If both hands are cut off, you still exist as you. Even if both legs are cut off, you are still you. That means you are not the body. Even in sound sleep, you have no consciousness of your body, but still you exist.

Who is this “you” who exists as “you” as a child, young man, and old man? Who is this you? Your innermost Self. Now, we have to find this in our own self, this “I.” Who am I? I am not this “I.” I still feel I am [Charles] Purdom, the same Purdom that I was when I was a child. I feel I am the same Purdom now that the body has grown. So if I am not this body, who am I?

I might be energy, but when I do not move, do not act, when I am unconscious, energy does not display; and yet I exist, so I am not energy. I might be mind, but the same applies here. Where you are unconscious in sound sleep, mind is still – not functioning – yet I exist; so I am also not the mind.

Then who am I? (comments made by men) [which I did not record]. Don’t play on words. Let us try to understand that which cannot be understood. I am that which is not body, not energy, not mind. So, that which is not body, energy, mind – I am That. So in sound sleep, what do you experience? Nothing! Nothing! That is you.

I am – I tell you something that is not said, not written,

and must not be said, but I say it – I am sound sleep. Why? If I am not body, not energy, not mind, then I am that which has no body, no energy, no mind; and only sound sleep answers that. So only sound sleep answers that. You are not body, energy, mind. Yet body, energy, mind is there; only consciousness of body, energy, and mind is not there.

I will now go to the original point.

The first, the original state of the beginningless Beginning was of the Infinite Sound Sleep state of the Infinite One. In the beginningless Beginning, where there was no creation, no universe, not even nothing – [there was] only WAS, the state of WAS; and then started the ten states of God, which you will find in that book God Speaks. It is all about the ten states of God.

During the evolution and reincarnation process, impressions were gathered, so body, energy, and mind developed; and the soul, in spite of its infinite state, experienced itself as finite body, energy, and mind due to impressions.

Coming back to the original point: So, in sound sleep, Malcolm is not conscious of his body, energy, [and] mind, and only Malcolm as real Malcolm exists in that state. So, the important point is that Malcolm in the sound sleep state exists as “I am Malcolm,” and is absolutely unconscious of I-ness. This ego in the sound sleep, or absolute unconscious state, is called the “natural ego.”

There are three kinds of ego: First the natural ego. What wakes you up? The impressions that lie on your mind. They say, “Malcolm, wake up. We want to be spent.” So Malcolm wakes up and spends the impressions through thinking, desiring, acting – and Malcolm, while spending the impressions,

thinks, "I am this body"; this "I" is called the "false ego." So now let us not go very deep into this. Let us skip.

So Malcolm, who really is Malcolm and not this body, according to impressions takes one form after the other, and goes on spending impressions; and while spending old impressions, new ones are formed, and they need spending too. So new forms are taken according to good and bad impressions. Woman-man, good-[bad], ugly [-beautiful], tall-short, etc. – just like clothes.

And all along, this false ego persists; and then comes a time that I have said in that book [God Speaks]. Then comes a time when impressions get fainter and fainter, scarcer and scarcer, so that eventually they fade away, so that when impressions are not there, mind stops. Heart is now naked, pure, because no desires, no longings, no feelings – and yet you are there; and the "I," devoid of all impressions, has no bindings, no limits. It now experiences that state which is above mind. Because mind is no longer there, and because this "I" now experiences the Infinite Original state of real I-ness.

Now the ego is called the Real Ego, and just as with the false ego, Malcolm said, "I am the body, or I am this energy, or I am this mind," now he says, "I am God." So, natural ego, false ego, real ego.

□ *So, only the pure in heart can see God.⁶⁸*

Baba concluded, "What I want to explain – this is not the thing; this is what Purdom asked about: pure in heart. All this that I explain will take you nowhere, because how to explain One whom mind cannot grasp?

"Hafiz said once, 'The bird of paradise who feels this God never comes down on earth. Don't try to ensnare God with the intellect. You

will always find in that snare – you will only find – wind.’ So, however much I will explain, God cannot be explained. But if I wish it, in a split second, you see God and you know. And so it is said, only love, and God will be yours. Love – not intellect – but love. For the world I have to explain, so I want some of you to take notes.”⁶⁹

BECOME WHAT YOU ARE

Baba explained the function of love in uncovering one’s true identity:

The book God Speaks explains: God and Universe, Reality and Illusion, One and Many, Substance and Shadow, Everything and Nothing, Knowledge and Ignorance.

Ramakrishna was what they call illiterate, and yet in an instant he gained all Knowledge. Then many literate people flocked around him without understanding things. So love; the secret is – in a few words – When you are there, God is not.

Now, to explain and understand, you must be there. But when you are there, God is not. So explanations mean that instead of drawing Him, you drive Him away. When you understand, then you have not understood God. God Is.

“My one and the same Beloved,” it is said, “appears in different guises and different garbs, and with different names, and appears always to be different; yet He is always the same Beloved.” You have to become what you already are. You are God, but you must become God. Christ humiliated himself, God Himself crucified Himself, to teach this: Through love, become what you already are.”⁷⁰

Baba then told us the story of the Emperor Janak to illustrate his explanation. I quote from my notes:

Janak Raja, Sita's father, King and Emperor, was indeed a full Emperor, with all its paraphernalia (jewels worn, etc.). He was also a Perfect Master. One day, one youth outside his empire longed to see God. "I must see Him," he said, "as I see all these [external] things."

He traveled out long distances, walked long distances, through sun, rain, without food: for two months he traveled. It was seven thousand years ago. He came and he stood outside the courtyard of the Palace, and the guards prevented him from coming in. And that youth was standing outside, crying loudly for Janak, and he was shouting his name, his glory, and his fame. Janak heard him and asked his ministers to ask him who he was.

"I am a lover of God; I want to see God. Janak must show me God."

He was brought to Janak, who said to his ministers to throw him in prison. The youth started to think, "This Janak, who calls himself all-knowing, sends me to prison."

After a few days, after he had no food and was thirsty, Janak ordered him to be brought to audience. Janak folded hands to this youth and ordered his ministers to give him a bath, food, and to treat him like a prince. He was brought back to the Palace and was made to sit on the throne.

"Let him enjoy this state for three days," said Janak.

The youth did not grasp what Janak meant. Poor people came begging; he knew nothing, so he kept quiet. He didn't know how to run the affairs of state. So then he appealed to the ministers to tell Janak to free him from this. Janak came and ordered him to get down from the throne and asked what greater life he had, life in prison, or life on the throne. The

boy said the two were both prisons, but of a different kind.

Janak now said, "Go and return after twelve years."

The youth left the Palace, roamed about and grew into a rich man, and took the name of Kalyan [meaning, "happy in every respect"].

He returned after twelve years, rich and prosperous. The guards checked him and prevented him to go in, asking him who he was. He said, "I am the rich Kalyan." Janak told him to go forth for a few years more. He returned to his home, and he lost everything. After twelve years, he returned to Janak, who asked who he was. He said, "I am the miserable Kalyan." Then Janak sent him away once more.

Then Kalyan started thinking, "What is this? First I wanted to see God. Then I was thrown into prison and then placed on the throne." So after twelve months he came back. And the guard took pity on this man and told him, "You fool, when Janak asks, 'Who are you?' say, 'I don't know.'" [This time] Kalyan said, "I don't know." Then Janak turned his gaze on him, and he lost consciousness of all bodies, the whole world, and yet remained conscious of his own Self as Infinite God.⁷¹

"So this means," Baba said, "unless you lose the 'I' that you think you are, you cannot see and become God. Because where you are, God is not."⁷²

Baba then spoke about himself as a boy:

When I was a boy, I did not know about anything. I had nothing to do with spirituality. [I was] always mixing with the boys. My father, who was a dervish before he was married, roamed

about India and Persia, begging and contemplating on God. So Father taught me some verses from Hafiz and other poets. I was not interested in all this. I was interested in playing: kites, marbles, etc.

Then one day a friend gave me a small book on Buddha. I opened the book to the place that told about the second coming of the Buddha. I read about the name "[Lord of] Mercy." All of a sudden I felt that "I am That." Then I forgot for years till I met Babajan while cycling. She kissed me on the forehead. Then for nine months, God knows, I was in that state which very, very few in cycles go. I had no consciousness of my body. I couldn't take food. Mother thought I had gone mad and called a doctor. The doctor couldn't do anything. Father understood but said nothing.

I did not sleep because I was unconscious. Then what happened was very rare: only for Avatars, who take on themselves the sufferings of the world. One day I felt nature's call. I wanted to move my bowels, but it was impossible because I had had no food. As I sat there, I saw with these gross eyes of mine circles after circles – whole universes. I could not move my bowels. I just sat there and, instead of giving me the divine bliss that I was in for nine months, I got such tortures that you will never understand – no one in the world can understand.

I used to bang my head on floors and walls to relieve the pain. In spite of this, I could not contain myself, as if the whole universe was on my head. I used to tie a kerchief around my head. At Manzil-e-Meem I used to knock windows out with my head, but I could not contain myself.

I was drawn to go to Sai Baba. It was [through] an intense image. He directed me to go to Upasni Maharaj. As soon as he saw me, he picked up a stone and threw it at my

head; and instantly I felt calm and at the same time I knew I was the Ancient One. Seven years passed with Upasni, and then he said, “Merwan, you are the Avatar.”

Now I am infinitely enjoying bliss and infinitely suffering. As soon as I drop my body, I will go to my abode of Infinite Bliss. I suffer and suffer, and from October, for three months, it will be the climax of my suffering; and then the world will recognize me.”⁷³

“Sometimes I feel ‘Why explain anything?’” Baba said. “Just come sit down. You all be here, keep quiet, be in the company of Baba. Sometimes I feel like explaining things.”⁷⁴ Baba said next, “I wonder which is better. What shall we do? Shall we go on explaining, or shall we be quiet?”⁷⁵ After a discussion, Baba decided that he would give explanations one day and on the next day we would just sit quietly with him.⁷⁶

My notes continue, quoting Baba, “Your work has to be defined.”⁷⁷ He added, “It has to be practical yet divine.”⁷⁸ “Practical in the sense that in everyday life it can be achieved. Not just sitting quiet, aloof, renouncing the world. At the meeting on the 29th and 30th, I’ll give new and original – but the same – One Truth.”⁷⁹

Baba continued, “A form of Zoroastrian prayer is called Kusti. All four prayers say the same thing. Since Babajan kissed me on my forehead, I bow down to my own Self. Why?”⁸⁰ Someone answered, “Because there is nothing else to bow down to.”⁸¹

Baba said, “That is my actual, continual experience. What is needed is to become – and not only to see – but to become God. You have to become what you already are. You are God, but you have to become God. Christ humiliated himself. God crucified [Himself] to teach us through love to become what you already are.”⁸²

Baba stayed with us until after lunch.

C H A P T E R

E L E V E N

The Second “Incredible Week”

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

A letter to my family records the beginning of this day: “Baba came out this morning at about 9:45 a.m. He is staying at Pimpalgaon, you know. We had just finished a half-hour period during which we were to sit quietly by ourselves and visualize him. He brought with him a phonograph and records. We all gathered around, sitting in chairs in the big room downstairs, with Baba seated on the small sofa facing us all. He gave us very few explanations today, but some were given.”¹

After mentioning in the letter that we listened to records, and the fact that Baba liked the Peruvian singer Yma Sumac, I added, “Baba was very beautiful sitting there, like a combination of all the Avatars, which he actually is. He gave us a few pointers about Samadhi, spoke of the Meeting of 29th & 30th September, and the possibility that he may give up his body soon.”²

The Awakener reports that Baba asked each of us to describe our

experience after sitting alone for a half-hour.³ As I recall, I said that I felt completely in tune with him. Indeed, I would have found it difficult not to visualize and think of Baba!

INNER SIGHT

My notes for this day begin with Meher Baba's explanations. He said:

I will explain about trance and inner "sight" – Samadhi. Trance, which Sufis term as Hal, and Vedantists Bhav, is just momentary ecstasy which, in the true spiritual sense, has no great value. During the state of Hal, one feels unconscious of his surroundings and of his own body, but is conscious of an overpowering force of bliss pouring in on his soul. As soon as this Bhav ends, he is just his ordinary self.

Now, Samadhi I have dictated in the Discourses also. Yoga Samadhi, Tantrika Samadhi, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Sahaj Samadhi, Yoga Samadhi and Tantrika Samadhi spiritually have no importance; one in these Samadhis feels at peace with everything and everyone and finally finds his mind still, but as soon as this Samadhi is over, he is again his own ordinary self. And mostly, many yogis, after these Samadhis, feel the strain of illusion more. Like taking intoxicants, one feels fine with everything; after the intoxication is over, he gets a headache.

So, Yoga and Tantrika Samadhis are like getting drunk completely. One feels like he's the Emperor and can do anything, but as soon as it is over one gets the stress and strain again.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, [which] the Sufis call Fana, and

which means “Union with God,” the soul identifies itself with God. This Samadhi is the Real Samadhi, Fana. Here one becomes God. God’s Knowledge is his knowledge, God’s Bliss is his bliss, God’s Power is his power, God’s Beauty is his beauty.

During this Samadhi he has no consciousness of body, energy, mind, or universe, but is only conscious of Self as God. It is said very, very few get this Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is said cycles after cycles one gets Fana. He is called Fana Fillah, meaning “one who has been made One with God.” Very few of such ones regain normal consciousness, and such a one who has regained normal consciousness has Sahaj Samadhi.

Sahaj means that spontaneously and simultaneously he is always in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Such a one when he eats, sleeps, moves bowels, he enjoys [Nirvikalpa Samadhi]. Nirvikalpa Samadhi refers to the consciousness of the universe yet also, simultaneously, of God. Such a one when he is playing or moving about enjoys Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

He is a Qutub. Qutub means in Persian “the center of everything.” He is now on every plane of consciousness: One with God or level even with an ant, and simultaneously he is in the gross, subtle, and mental worlds – yet he is above everyone and everything. Sahaj Samadhi – automatic, or without effort.⁴

“So, tomorrow if you remind me,” Baba concluded, “I might explain how, when thinking of me, you can still do everything in the world. It is not Sahaj Samadhi, but it will be *Sahaj Dhyan*. *Dhyan* means meditation. Even while eating, drinking, doing jobs, working, you still feel Baba with you. So tomorrow, when we play Indian records, I intend to explain many things. If in the mood I will explain.”⁵

ENGLISH MUSIC

"Today, let us keep silence," Baba went on. "After a long time, I [now] have time to hear this with you." He was referring to the English records he had brought. "The girls there [women mandali] today forced me to take these records and gramophone."⁶

Baba then said, "While the records are being played, be here in this room mentally, and not elsewhere. Kabir [a poet and Perfect Master] said, 'Any music is the seventh shadow of that Word.' In *God Speaks* I deal with this. As soon as I break my silence, that first Word will make your hearts vibrate."⁷

The following records were played: by Marian Anderson, "I Know the Lord Has His Hands on Me" and "I Am Fancying That Heaven Is My Home"; by Fritz Dreisler, a selection from "The Student Prince" and "Indian Love Call"; by Richard Crookes, "The Song of Songs" and "Love and Love Alone"; and by Yma Sumac, "Lure of the Unknown Love" and "Virgin of the Sun God."⁸

Baba then said, "The Yma Sumac record reminds me of my original state; as long as it goes to the highest and the lowest I like it. It reminds me of my original state; I feel happy. 'I love only Thee, I worship only Thee, to Thee only I surrender the key to my treasure' (Sumac record). He who could do this would know me."⁹

Baba continued: "This reminds me of the time when I will drop my body. The violence, etc. Not one will be near me at that time. Not one from my mandali, not one of my lovers, but only those who would kill this body. The circumstances will be so created that in that confusion, Baba will not find one near him. Only afterwards they will flock around. It's just staring me in the face. It might happen before the end of the year. My breaking silence, dropping body, and all this. In the meeting I will say all this."¹⁰

Two more of Yma Sumac's songs were then played: "High Andes" and "Monkeys."¹¹

My notes record Baba as saying, "Dear Charles, can anyone imagine how I am here and simultaneously everywhere? Can anyone imagine that? Can you? And I am being crucified every moment; and I would willingly die a million deaths to make someone love our Beloved God, who alone is worthy of real love – of our love."¹²

Baba called for more Yma Sumac songs, and then two additional ones were played: "The Dance of the Winds" and "The Chant of the Chosen Maidens."¹³

THE JAPANESE MAN

My notes are sketchy at this point, but I remember well what happened next. In the midst of the music playing, a card was brought in to Baba. It was from a young Japanese man outside, who was begging to see him, even for a moment. He had come to India in search of Baba. Baba said he could come in.

A very dramatic scene followed. As I wrote to my family, "The Japanese young man was beside himself with love and joy. He kneeled and melted into Baba's embrace. One more searching soul had found the Divine Beloved."¹⁴ Baba gave him grapefruit juice from his own cup and said, "You have come far, drink it all."¹⁵ I think we all felt very moved by this scene.

This was K. Hitakar, a young man from Tokyo who had heard about Baba years before from a Dr. Muir, the leader of a Theosophical group in Japan. He finally had the opportunity to come to India and make contact with Baba.

My notes record the conversation of Hitakar and Baba as follows:

Baba: "Why did you come such a long distance?"

Hitakar: "To see you."

Baba: "I am everywhere."

(Hitakar then asked Baba to come to Japan.)

Baba: "After seven hundred years."

Baba told Hitakar to go right away to Calcutta to get an extension of his visa and then to come back in time for the 28th, in time for the big meeting.¹⁶

BABA'S INSTRUCTIONS

In my notes I also recorded Baba later as saying to us that he might have Hitakar "[sit] alone one week without food, or water. Then he may catch a tiny glimpse of me. He is a fine man – very much in love with Truth."¹⁷ Baba then said, "I have drawn him. He has no idea how."¹⁸

Baba gave us a schedule for the coming days.

1. *20th Sakori*

2. *21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th Baba comes here.*

3. *25th Baba will not come here. [Baba said,] "I have work all alone for the meeting."*

4. *26th nothing [till] noon, at 3:00 you all be there till 6:00.*

5. *27th & 28th no more coming here.*¹⁹

I then record Baba's telling me, I believe referring to the above schedule, "Put it on each one's bed – a slip near their pillow." He continued, speaking to me, "Also, [to] Ben, when he arrives, inform [about the schedule]."²⁰

Baba told the two Australians, Bill LePage and John Ballantyne, to

sit in his tomb from midnight to 12:30 a.m. (a half-hour), repeating his name "and Baba must hear them [inwardly]," I record Baba as saying. He told Francis Brabazon, the other Australian man, that he would be responsible if they fell in the crypt. Then Baba said to Francis, "If they fall in the pit, what will you do?" Francis jokingly replied, "It's not what I'll do but what you'll do to me!"²¹

Sometime before Baba dismissed us to lunch, he said, "Tomorrow, Indian records, and with the music I will explain along and you have to remind me of the point: How to do everything and anything and yet feel Baba always. It is called *Sahaj Dhyana*."²² As it turned out, he did not explain this until the 21st.

The letter to my family records the delightful scene that happened next. "Baba stayed with us till after lunch, though he did not eat with us. He came to our long table and patted each of us on the shoulders. For a while he sat on the ground nearby, leaning forward with a shawl thrown about him. Often, as we are with him, we sense that he is working inwardly."²³

The letter continues, expressing my amazement, "Tomorrow he will be out here again. Monday he is going to take us to Sakori, where Upasni Maharaj lived, and to Shirdi, where Sai Baba lived. Isn't this incredible? In fact, this whole experience here with Baba is simply unbelievable."²⁴

The letter ends on a practical note, showing how Baba saw to every detail: "Donkin is looking after our health. We are to let him know of even the slightest indisposition."²⁵

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Meher Baba arrived at about 10:30 on this cloudy morning, suffering but smiling, and said that he would sit with us for many hours.

“Today I have plenty of time; let us go slow. From tomorrow I have no time,” he said.²⁶ Baba sat in his usual place, on the small sofa.

After asking for health reports from each of us and referring us to Dr. Donkin for our minor complaints, Baba asked us what we experienced during our daily half-hour of meditation on him.²⁷

My notes for this day begin with Baba’s words. “I feel funny today,” he said. “How to describe my feelings when there are certain things I cannot describe? For example, while I was coming up I threw that stone. This reminded me of the old days. While at Meherabad years back I used to pick up a stone at every step and throw the stone. Now sometimes I do that, but before, it was every step from Meherabad. Why do I do it? If you ask me, I cannot describe it. Divine play.”²⁸

To the young Australian men, Bill LePage and John Ballantyne, who sat in his tomb for a half-hour, from midnight to 12:30, Baba gave the following advice: “Do not be frightened. There is nothing to fear. Don’t force your attention.²⁹ Keep awake and don’t move.³⁰ Even if a snake comes, let it pass by.³¹ Keep steady and love Baba during those half-hours for seven nights.³² Fear means no love, so be natural; sit there and think of Baba from the bottom of your heart.”³³

Baba turned to Francis Brabazon. “Why this fear, Francis?”³⁴ Francis of Assisi and Francis Xavier: they loved Christ with all their might, and what they suffered and what difficulties they faced! None of you have known these, I know that. [They] suffered, and yet they had no fear. Why fear? Love.³⁵

“Try to keep your eyes open, and when you see Baba there, try to be happy,” Baba concluded. To Francis he said, “So from tonight, Francis, see that they sit there and close the door.”³⁶ Then he added, “So you sell all and follow the Cross.”³⁷

Baba said, “I am in a peculiar mood, moving from one subject to another. I seldom sleep, that too after 3:00 a.m. The night watchman

sits there and Baba calls him often.”³⁸ Baba then instructed us, “Tonight go to sleep at 10:00 and get up at 5:00 a.m.”³⁹

I recall that Baba’s presence was so intense the previous night that it awakened me. It was as though he had looked in on us.

Turning toward Malcolm, Baba said, “You asked about planes.”⁴⁰ My notes quote Baba: “Now, planes mean what? What does Baba mean by planes?” Malcolm: “States of consciousness.” Baba continued, “This present state you are having now is the gross conscious state. The gross senses are used, and all the gross experiences of seeing, eating, moving about, and all the other things you do through the gross senses: This is the gross world. It is not the gross plane. Although the consciousness is gross, you are not in the gross plane.”⁴¹

MANZIL AND MUQAM

Baba then explained about the first three planes of consciousness and about the difference between *manzil* (destination) and *muqam* (station, or place of stay). I quote from my notes.

“Now you are already in the gross *manzil*, and there are innumerable *muqams*, or places of stay. First I explain. Now you are in Meherabad. Your *manzil* is one and the same, but now your *muqam* is Meherabad. You experience [in] Meherabad with gross senses all the gross things. When you are in America, France, England, Japan – any place – the *manzil* is the same [gross], but the *muqam* is different. There are innumerable *muqams*. According to the *muqam*, you have different experiences of the gross itself.”⁴²

Baba then illustrated this with an example. “A man in the Arangaon village [a *muqam*] who seldom goes even to Ahmednagar. If he were to be blindfolded and made to sit on an airplane and put in Broadway [in New York City, another *muqam*], with eyes open in the night, his

experiences will be wonderful and fantastic to him. Yet it is of the same gross [*manzil*]. The innumerable different experiences are due to different *muqams*, and due to different circumstances of the one and the same *manzil*. Is it clear so far?" he asked.⁴³

Baba continued to explain:

□ *Now, even in the gross manzil – that means gross consciousness state – glimpses of the first manzil of the subtle plane are possible. Just try to grasp now. Manzil is gross now, and even in the gross manzil it is possible to get glimpses of the first manzil of the subtle.*

The subtle plane has three manzils. So what happens? This human being with gross senses experiences the first manzil of the subtle in a hazy way, because the senses are gross; and experiences of the subtle cannot be fully gained except through the subtle senses, so the gross experiences are now hazy.

□ *One sees colors, and they disappear. One sees circles – colored circles – and they disappear. One smells perfume never smelled before, yet they all vanish. One hears celestial music of the best type – that also disappears. Then one gets inspired.*⁴⁴

"Now we go to –" Baba interrupted himself. "First of all [you] must understand that all *manzils*, all *muqams*, all experiences of the planes are illusionary. Only God is real. Understand this. This is the fundamental fact."⁴⁵

THE SUBTLE WORLD

Baba continued, "Now, when one through his Herculean efforts, or by the grace of a guru – not Sadgurus – [but] *walis*, saints, etc., he gets

into the first plane, that does not mean he enters another sphere, or world. His consciousness is now raised, and he can now use his subtle senses directly, fully; so what he smelled, what he heard and saw temporarily, he now smells, hears, and sees continually. He is now in the first *manzil* of the subtle world. We call it 'world' because just as this gross world has innumerable *muqams*, so also the subtle world has innumerable *muqams*."⁴⁶

Baba explained, "[In the] first subtle *manzil*, through subtle senses you see different sights, different smells not of the gross. Just as in the gross world you have in Meherabad different types of languages, smells, etc., it makes the difference according to the *muqam*. So in the subtle, the first *manzil* has innumerable *muqams*, where you see and hear different things and you feel differently, just as when you are in Meherabad you feel differently, just as you feel differently at your home with your family, although you are always on the gross [plane]. So in the subtle, in the first *manzil*, you see wonderful sights, and if you get enchanted with these sights, etc., you lose your gross consciousness and you begin to see, hear, etc., in the subtle and enjoy this."⁴⁷

Baba continued:

□ *But if you are wise, through fortune [or] past sanskaras, and if the Guru is capable, you leave the first manzil and enter the second manzil of the subtle. The consciousness is subtle, but now it is more intense, and in this second manzil of the subtle, you will see, hear, and smell (all things like that) through subtle senses more intensely. The same muqams of the subtle now appear more real. In this second manzil one becomes such a "talisman" [magical charm] – the only word [for it]. The word means that what one sees, feels, hears, etc., "overpowers."*

All this enchantment rebounds on him. He cannot get free of it. It is so overpowering that the sights he sees – the light that he sees – is a billion times more brilliant than the sun and millions of times more cooling than the moon. He gets enveloped in this light. This gross body is then enveloped in this light. So he feels he is light, but it is delusion. He feels he is Voice; so intense is the voice that so overpowers him that he gets into it from head to foot, completely wrapped up.

The same thing with the smells he experiences. It is called the “spiritual talisman.” One has no consciousness of the gross, and if the Murshid or wali is not capable, and if his past impressions do not allow him, he remains in that state and drops his body, takes another form, and comes [back] in the same state – and yet it is pure illusion.

If the Guru is adept in the spiritual line, he advances his state and the third manzil is reached. Consciousness is still subtle; the muqams are the same muqams. The subtle senses are now used at their zenith: [their] fullest use, maximum. And now what he sees – the innumerable sights of the innumerable muqams – what he smells [and] hears now does not overpower him. The man controls the senses and he experiences all this with full control, not only over his senses but on the gross manzil and the two previous subtle manzils. He now is Energy personified.

He still has his gross body; he still is in the gross world. Also, simultaneously, he is in the subtle world. That means he uses his gross and subtle senses simultaneously. Francis, if he were in the third manzil of the subtle, you will [would] see him sitting like this. He will see you all and at the same time he will simultaneously experience the subtle muqams. So he is gross-

and subtle-conscious simultaneously. So he has infinite energy at his control. He can use this energy for the gross world. Still, poor Francis is in illusion. He knows not the Truth.⁴⁸

FARCE VERSUS REALITY

"The day after tomorrow," Baba said, "we will see about the 4th, 5th, and 6th planes. Until we arrive at Reality and know that all this is just *tamasha*, or farce. Lovers of God do not care for this *tamasha*. Yogis of the first *manzil* of the subtle can stop their pulses and heartbeats; they can cover themselves under the earth; they can live for nine hundred years. Some can raise their bodies, also. Yet it is all farce."⁴⁹

Here Baba said, "The Indian records are all about love. So I will explain some lines on the records."⁵⁰

Baba went on: "The seventh *manzil* is called *maksood*, the Real Goal, where the soul is free from all illusions and becomes united with God. And dear ones, I will also make it clear when we arrive at the seventh *manzil* that all this is within you. God is within you, so everything must be within you – all *manzils*, all *muqams*.

"When we go outside this room, we see the hills, etc. Why? Because we have projected it out of us. It is all we. Being in God, we are the sole producers of all phenomena, and we get entangled in that. [It is] very difficult to come out of that entanglement.

"He [Baidul, one of the mandali] says, 'We produce everything and, like fools, we become the slave of what we are the masters of.'

"Yes," Baba continued, "just as when we breathe, we do not all then turn and pay attention to our breathing: It is automatic. Even in sound sleep it is automatic. It is our constant companion, but we do not pay attention to this. Just as when we go to sleep we put on sleeping garments. We dress automatically. Even when we eat, go

about town, the dress is with us, but we do not pay attention to it.

“Baba is with you all, all the time, but you do not pay attention. Eruch wears a cap so much, he is unconscious of it. All the time Baba is there, but you do not feel it. I will show you how to feel me all the time.”⁵¹

INDIAN MUSIC

Baba signaled one of the men mandali to get ready to put the first small, 45-rpm record on the record player located off to one side of him. Before playing the records, Baba said, “Norina [Matchabelli] and Jean [Adriel] loved to hear all this music. Margaret [Craske] does not like them [i.e., the records]. Some may like, some not. It [the music] is all about love.”⁵²

“A record is played,” my notes state. Then Baba said, “This is the wonderful state of the love of the lover. The lover is not concerned with the planes and different states of consciousness. He only knows to love God. He arrives at a stage when this love spreads over his world and the pangs of separation are so unbearable that he says, ‘I now want to forget you, but the more I try to forget you, the more I remember you.’ This torture is unbearable.”⁵³

Baba translated the lyrics of another song: “He [the singer] says, ‘Oh, my Beloved God, only he is fortunate and big-hearted who cannot stop shedding tears in your love. Oh you who are claiming to be a lover of God, beware: In this spot you will be shown innumerable supernatural sights (*tamasha*). So, beware; you only love God, love Him and do not be ensnared by those visions, the sights and powers. Oh you who dared to talk of love, you do not know the difficulties and hardships facing you. The Master tests you on every step that you take on this path of love.’”⁵⁴

After this, Baba asked us each to say whether we liked the music.

Only Charles Purdom said he did not like it. "The majority has it," said Baba.⁵⁵

Baba then said, "The first song that I sang – the whole universe has come on my chest."⁵⁶

He continued, "God is Infinite. God is eternal; God does not change. Illusion changes. Your shadow [illusory self] is always with you. The length is changed according to the rays of the sun. At twelve noon, you don't see your shadow."⁵⁷ So "the shadow is semi-eternal."⁵⁸

My notes record, "Malcolm asks, 'Does God enjoy illusion?'" Baba: "God as God-man enjoys illusion, but is free from illusion: He governs illusion whilst illusion governs the ignorant. All these are words," Baba added, "but words based on experience; you have that much solace."⁵⁹

More music, then Baba's translation: "Here the Sufi of experience says, 'Oh you who have arrived at the Goal and know the secret of God, see that you do not reveal that secret to all, except to the only few select ones.' Mansoor [al-Hallaj] said, 'I am God.' The Muslims got wild about it and hanged him. So he [the singer] says, 'Oh Mansoor, even if you are hanged, do not reveal the secret.' He says, 'Oh, Shams-i-Tabriz, because you raised the dead and the Muslims were furious about it and got you skinned alive, do not reveal the secret.' In the end he says, 'Oh lovers of God, do not let what is in your heart come to your lips.'"⁶⁰

More music, then Baba's translation of the song: "He [the singer] says, 'Remember, he who really loves God, God annihilates him; God mixes him with dust.' This was true of the apostles of Christ and the Saviors," Baba added.⁶¹

Baba continued translating, "Oh lover beware, God tests you by being cruel, by giving you false hopes, by even cutting you to pieces. But love God.' [Kalyan says] 'The Master ties you, hands and feet, on a wooden board, fully dressed, and throws you in mid-ocean, and says, "If you love me, let not one drop touch your dress.'" Christ told Peter,

the most select, 'You will deny me.' Why?" Baba asked. "Why did he say that and have it done, too?"

He explained, "Jesus took the whole burden of the world, and to make Peter share that, he did this so. In short," he continued, "to love means to lose your whole self with all its paraphernalia. That means tortures, suffering, longings; and if one in all this is firm in his love, he becomes the Beloved."⁶²

"How does this tie in?" Baba asked rhetorically. "What was the height of suffering for having denied his beloved Master? This suffering was a share of Jesus' suffering."⁶³

More music, then Baba's translation: "The lover says, 'Now the effect of your love has so infinitely widened my vision that wherever I look, whomsoever I see, I see no one but You.' He says, 'I know, Beloved, I will not be able to stand your glory, and yet I am ready to die. Just show me your face!'"⁶⁴

Baba spoke about the Om sound. He said, "Try all of you to keep your lips tight and to say something. The sound will be OM. That is the seventh shadow of that Word. The Sanskrit language is based on Om. I personally prefer Persian."⁶⁵

More music, my notepad records. Then Baba's words: "The singer is the greatest Indian singer of such music. Here she sings about masts, who, in love for God, have discarded everything and don't care for their comforts and appear as mad. So the mast says to the Beloved, 'If you want to make me mad for you, do it so, but do not let my luck make me fun for the onlookers. Oh you people of the world who think me mad and throw stones at me, if you were fortunate enough to have this love, you also would be mad like me.' He says, 'Oh you who talk of loving God, you have to bow down to Him at every step as if every particle of dust was the threshold of the Beloved.'"⁶⁶

Now a Persian record of a Hafiz poem, according to my notes.

Baba: "He [Hafiz] says, 'Who says do not have procrastination in life? Start to love from this very moment. Do not forget the Beloved for one moment.' The master of Hafiz – his name was Attar – had long tresses. Hafiz says, 'Beloved, do not let your hair flow freer, because with every hair, my heart receives an arrow.' And in the end, Hafiz says, 'Oh Beloved, these tears that I shed are tears of blood, but so precious that you should consider them as palms [*sic*] [pearls] and use them as earrings.'"⁶⁷

Baba continued, "God says, 'Oh lover of mine, if you want to enter my Lane, first let your head roll under my feet and be kicked by me as a ball.' He [Hafiz] says, 'I have been so killed by your love and yet you, cruel Beloved, do not even glance at me.'"⁶⁸

PRIVATE TALK WITH BABA

Before Baba dismissed us to go have lunch, he said, "There, we have tried to love God, because we talked of love, sang songs of love; so we tried to love God today."⁶⁹ He then said, "I am the most busy in the world. I have to look after the details of these meetings, and work on all planes. Yet I am the most inactive one."⁷⁰ So we today resolve that we must love God at any cost, and the most practical way to do it I will tell you at the meeting [on the 29th and 30th]."⁷¹

Baba then told us about a college friend who used to complain every morning that he did not feel hungry but then would eat the most compared to the other boys. He said, "Every day, same thing. So we boys told him, 'Start complaining only when you feel well,'" meaning that all complaints would stop."⁷² Then Baba told us to eat lunch.

Before Baba left, I had a private talk with him. One of the women of the Schenectady group, Jeanne R. Foster, had said that if there was

anything that she would ask me to do in connection with my seeing Baba, it would be to try to bring back a small stone that Baba had touched. On the 16th, when we had walked to the top of Seclusion Hill with Baba, I recalled Mrs. Foster's request and picked up a small white quartz stone and put it in my pocket, hoping to have an opportunity to tell Baba about it.

So now I told him of Jeanne Foster's request and showed him the stone. He smiled and held out his hand for it. After holding it for a few seconds, he handed it back to me. (In due time, when I returned to my home in America, I gave this precious stone to Mrs. Foster. The stone contained Baba's charge, and Mrs. Foster carried it with her the rest of her life.)

Baba said to me, "The girls [the women mandali] all love Jeanne and the girls [my daughters]. They want to send them something and they keep asking me what they should send, but I say I don't know."

"Their love and your love is enough," I replied. Baba nodded affirmatively.

Baba then said, "Darwin, your health is very important. Gargle after every meal and when you get up and before you go to bed. See Don [Dr. Donkin] if it doesn't clear up. You must be in good health for the meeting [the meeting of the 29th and 30th]. Try to bring to the meeting the atmosphere of this place, and don't worry about anything. I will look after everything."

Baba continued, "Darwin and Jeanne and the family are very dear to me. I love them all very much. When I am with Darwin I feel at home. We understand each other. You are mine. Your family is mine. Don't worry about anything – I will look after my dear ones.

"Give my love and blessings to all at home – to all whom you contact in Baba's name. When you see Michael [Kohanow], tell him, 'Don't worry, I have you here.' He will feel the effect of the meeting."⁷³

After Baba had given several other short interviews, he walked down the hill to the car, turning to wave to us twice.⁷⁴

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20: VISIT TO SAKORI

As prearranged by Meher Baba, we were up by 5:00 a.m. and after morning ablutions and breakfast at 6:00 a.m., we were taken in the station wagons to Ahmednagar. Meantime, Baba, who was staying overnight at Meherazad, was driven in from there and we met him near the Sarosh Motor Company garage at 7:00. Just seeing him there filled our hearts with great joy as we drank in the Beauty of his presence. He wore a pink jacket and white pants, and he looked so vibrant and sparkling, flashing loving smiles at us as he waved a cheery "good morning."

EXCURSION

Soon we were on our way toward Sakori to visit the ashram of one of Baba's Masters, the late Upasni Maharaj. As a letter written to my family the next day relates: "Baba was in a jovial mood. We started for Sakori, which is about fifty miles away. Baba was in a car driven by Sarosh. Gulmai [Baba's "Spiritual Mother" and Adi Sr.'s mother] was the only woman along. We had six vehicles in all – quite a caravan."⁷⁵

The vehicles were two station wagons, two cars, a truck, and another old car.⁷⁶ Baba rode in a car ahead of us, we Westerners rode in the two station wagons, and the others divided up among the cars and the truck. We stopped at Rahuri, a village where Baba once had a mast ashram, to wait for the others. It turned out that the old car had broken down a short distance outside Ahmednagar,⁷⁷ and the ones we were waiting for finally came along by bus.⁷⁸



Meher Baba looking directly at Darwin Shaw, Rahuri,
September 20, 1954.

“Baba’s in wonderful spirits this a.m.,” I noted in my diary.⁷⁹ We

waited for them at a pleasant place near the road. “Baba sits on a bench and all gather around and tell him funny stories” which he encouraged the Westerners to relate.⁸⁰ “As you might know, I couldn’t think of any,” I confessed in my letter home.⁸¹ Some of us who had cameras saw this as an opportunity to snap a nice picture of Baba, and he obligingly turned toward our cameras with a delightful expression on his face.

In a nearby field on the opposite side of the road, farmers were drawing water up from a well in the ancient way, using sewn skins, which were attached to ropes and pulleys, drawn by a team of oxen. Many of the villagers joined us as they found themselves blessed with this unexpected chance to see and be near Baba.

My letter describes the scenery. “We pressed on, crossing many streams, passing fields of sugar cane and grain. At each stream we saw the women washing clothes. Sometimes we saw herds of water buffalo wallowing in the water. We drove past many neem trees and banyan trees.”⁸²

I recorded in my notes, “We stop at Rahata. Baba gets out of the car, and crowds surround him.”⁸³

As we arrived at Sakori, it did not take us long to realize that this was to be a memorable occasion. We were greeted by a large crowd of

villagers, and even a small band playing lively music. Baba was garlanded with beautiful flowers. My letter records: "As the crowd surged around Baba's car, we maneuvered along the side, snapping pictures. When Baba got out of the car and went into the temple area, we struggled to keep close to him [as he had instructed us to do]. For the next two hours we witnessed many ceremonies and, of course, participated in some. The people followed their traditional practices in paying respect to the Avatar. The crowd was not permitted in the temple area, but still it was crowded at times."⁸⁴

I wrote in my notepad: "Garlands of white jasmine, pink roses, green leaves, yellow daisy-like flowers, and red roses. Baba's forehead has a red mark which was placed there when he arrived at Sakori."⁸⁵

BABA'S RESPONSE TO A DILEMMA

Godavri Mai was in charge of the ashram in the town, and, after greeting Baba, led him, the mandali, and the Western men on a short tour of the ashram. Our tour terminated at the tomb-shrine of Upasni Maharaj. Baba said, "This old man was God incarnate."⁸⁶ Baba also said, "I had said during my last visit that I would not again step in Sakori, but I remembered once he [Upasni] had said, 'Westerners will come here and do bhajan.' So to fulfill that I had to come again today and bring you dear ones here. Now my work here is finished – over. After the meeting of September 29



Godavri Mai with Meher Baba
at Sakori, September 20, 1954.

and 30, three months will be for my final work: to break my silence and to manifest, and then to die a violent death, all following in quick succession. Each of you should bow down to my master here. I am the Ancient One . . . [illegible: your Ancient One?].”⁸⁷ Then Baba reverently bowed down and kissed the low stone tomb. This was followed by the mandali, taking their turn to pay their homage.

As we watched, it became obvious that the Western men were expected to follow suit. As one after another of the Western men bowed down and my turn approached, I found myself silently wondering, “Have I come halfway around the world to bow down to strange gods?” (Apparently it had not yet sunk in that Upasni Maharaj was God-realized and therefore worthy of homage.) Just as I had the questioning thought, Baba, who was standing nearby, smilingly stepped up to my side and placed one of his hands on my forehead and the other on my back so that when I bowed, it was to Baba’s hand, to which I had no objection whatsoever.

I was deeply touched by Baba’s instant reaction to my inner dilemma, and as I stood marveling at his insight and love, he smiled and placed his hand on the foreheads of some of the other men as they in turn bowed down. Thus his actions did not leave me feeling or appearing conspicuous, but there was no doubt about his loving and understanding gesture.

Baba told us more about Upasni Maharaj. “He had been in a small temple in Shirdi, where I first met him. He lived on coffee only.”⁸⁸ Baba added that he “used to serve him.” Baba continued, “There was little space, scorpions, etc. He had only one piece of sackcloth [for clothing]. When he threw that stone, I knew I was the Ancient One.”⁸⁹

Then we were taken to the place where Upasni dropped his body, a room about fifteen feet by twelve feet. I recorded that Baba said, “He was in good health, apparently,” at the time of his death.⁹⁰ While I do

not recall whether Baba recited Upasni's last speech or it was posted at the ashram, I recorded it: "I am immortal and even if I leave this mortal body, I exist forever. Those who are attached to me will come with me in that [illegible: Satchitananda?] Samadhi state – and their ancestors."⁹¹ Baba said, "He [Upasni] asked after the health of his disciples, stretched, and died."⁹²

LIKE THE "LAST SUPPER"

Being with Meher Baba was an experience so far removed from ordinary experiences that every moment with him seemed to be imbued with a divine significance, too profound to fathom or ever to be fully explained. Sometimes while with him, one might become aware of an unfolding event which was so filled with meaning that one was astonished and almost overwhelmed to find oneself a part of what was happening.

One of these situations took place on this day in Sakori. When it came time for lunch, Godavri Mai led Baba and the Westerners up a rather narrow stairway and into an "upper room" which had been especially prepared for us. Tables were



*Meher Baba sitting outside at Sakori ashram,
September 20, 1954.*

arranged, banquet style, almost in the shape of a U, so that everyone would have a clear view of Baba and Godavri Mai. I was sitting on the left side of the table, not very far from Baba.

My letter conveys the immediacy of this scene and my wonderment. "Tables down through the center of the room were set and laden with Indian food and delicacies. Of all things, we Westerners were the only ones to be sitting there eating with Baba. The Indian devotees of Sakori stood around the room in back of us, the yellow-sari'd girls near Baba, singing sacred Indian music. We would all join in on the 'Avatar Meher Baba.'

"The people have gone to great lengths to make the occasion a festive one. Beautiful designs have been made in various places on floors and on the ground. They are mostly of floral patterns and are white and a pinkish red. Baba wore a beautiful garland of jasmine, roses, and daisies."⁹³

Baba looked exceptionally radiant, like a beautiful flower, but there was also a look of deep sadness in his eyes. A monk came in and, standing a few feet to Baba's left, looked adoringly at Beloved Baba as he sang a sweet hymn of praise to him. Our eyes were drinking in the exquisite beauty of this scene.

From the moment we came into this "upper room" with Baba, I became alert; I was instantly reminded of the scene of the "Last Supper" with Jesus. But now, while beholding this poignantly beautiful tableau, I became intensely aware that in some mysterious way I was in the midst of a living experience of Christ and the "Last Supper." Here we were in the "upper room," and there he was in our midst, sitting in sublime simplicity, silently filling that room and illuminating our innermost beings with the unmistakable sweetness and wonder of his divinity.

Almost overwhelmed with the awesome significance of this scene, I felt reluctant to actually start to eat some of the well-prepared and delicious-looking food which was placed before us, being much more

inclined to continue to behold and remain absorbed in this living page of a new "New Testament." Like the others, however, I did eat some of the food, but Baba scarcely touched his food. Toward the end of the meal, Baba began playfully tossing fruit to various ones around the room, to deftly change the mood and atmosphere – and perhaps to seal what he had given to our hearts.

At the end of the meal, Baba said, "To find me, you have to lose yourself. But these are just words when spoken and heard. Losing oneself and then finding oneself is for very few lovers who, as I said, take their life in their sleeves."⁹⁴

"SAKORI MOTHER"

After this, we visited the nuns' dormitory, and Baba sat on a swing. I recorded that Baba said of Godavri Mai, the "Sakori Mother": "She is love personified. Her love is intense."⁹⁵

There was no time left to visit Sai Baba's shrine at Shirdi as originally planned, so we returned to Meher Retreat "at about 2:30 p.m."⁹⁶



Meher Baba with Sakori nuns,
September 20, 1954.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Baba came to us at 10:15 a.m.⁹⁷ "Today I feel tired," he said. "The burden of the whole universe is on my head. Today I intend to stay longer than other days and finish everything: explanations, interviews with Malcolm [Schloss] and [Charles] Purdom, because tomorrow Ben [Hayman] is coming. He should feel he has missed nothing, so Baba

someday will take him to Pimpalgaon and give him more contact.”⁹⁸

He said he would speak to us of many things, but that he would talk as the thoughts came to him, rather than following any special order.⁹⁹

Baba said, “I don’t want the slightest confusion in your heads. First, marbles: Do you remember I promised to teach you to play marbles? I am above promises, but these fellows reminded me.”¹⁰⁰

My notes record: “Baba demonstrates how to play marbles. So we play marbles with the Avatar!”¹⁰¹ I remember that Baba placed a large marble some distance in front of us. Then he gave each of us a smaller marble. Baba demonstrated how to play by tossing a marble at the large one. Then we each took a turn. I don’t believe any of us were successful.

MIRACLES

After settling into a chair in the corner of the lounge at the Retreat Building,¹⁰² Baba said he wanted to talk to us about Sakori, where we were the previous day. I recorded Baba’s words:

“Today, first about Sakori, later about the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh planes. Today I will finish explaining about these things.”¹⁰³

Baba began:

First about miracles: why I think that from the spiritual point of view miracles are nothing but farce. When Jesus said “I and my Father are One,” he meant he was and is God! Is this true? So, it means he was God, he is God. So now God is said to have created all the illusion, all this phenomenal universe: This is God’s miracle – the miracle of Jesus. And that means innumerable beings [were] created by Jesus and die according to his will. And then to lay down Jesus’ greatness for having raised some few dead to life – how ridiculous it sounds,

unless it is given some inner meaning. To create an insignificant illusion amidst his greatest illusion and to say Jesus was the Savior because he raised the dead, gave sight to the blind – all this is insignificant illusion compared with that great illusion of his creation. And yet it is said he did it. But why?

*That means he says "I am God, I am the Savior, I am everything," and people are not impressed. Yet if he raises the dead, people are impressed. People [are] not impressed with his own great Self, but with so-called miracles.*¹⁰⁴

"Charles, why did he do it?" Baba asked.¹⁰⁵

Charles said that "Jesus did not do these things to impress people, because he told them to say nothing about them; whatever he did was because of his love."¹⁰⁶

Baba explained, "Had he not raised the dead, had he not performed these miracles, take it from me, he would not have been crucified; and he wanted to be crucified."¹⁰⁷

Baba continued, "Many miracles have been attributed to me, and since my Andhra and other trips for darshan, people have been writing about Baba's miracles that he cured the sight, etc. – and believe, me it is all news to me. I don't perform miracles. I don't attach importance to miracles. Their faith does it all. But one miracle I will perform, and for that the time is nigh. I have said my miracle will be not to raise the dead, but to make one dead to himself and live in God."¹⁰⁸

Baba emphatically stated, "I have repeatedly declared, and I repeat it now, that I won't give sight to the blind but will make one blind to the world and see God."¹⁰⁹

Baba then said:

I explain about miracles because it has to do with Sakori and Shirdi. Yesterday we did not have time to go to Shirdi. There you would have witnessed a different atmosphere. People come from all parts of India to see Sai Baba's [place]. His shrine is there. His picture is in almost every house in India; his pictures you will find in all the shops and restaurants in India. This great Divine Being is now being commercialized, and now they sell ashes from the dhuni there and get contributions. Now I hear lately they are now circulating circulars, tickets costing eight annas for admission to the shrine. You have to pay to go in to bow down. People are flocking from all over India.

All this was due to one very good soul who made a mess of things because of his ignorance. I won't call anyone selfish or bad, because all are mine and all happens by the Will of God. Sai Baba was Perfection personified, and now this state of affairs there I don't like; and soon I will turn the whole atmosphere there. What happened: This dear erring soul called Narasimha Swami came first to me in Nasik and said, "I want to stay with you and write your biography." I told him, "I don't want that, and you can go to Sakori and write Upasni Maharaj's biography. I don't need one like you to write about me." The dear fellow got very upset. He went to Sakori, stayed there for some time, and wrote the book Sage of Sakori, which Baba yesterday took away from your hands."¹¹⁰

Baba continued:

One-half [of the book is] good, and one-half absolutely nonsense. Anyway, he wrote that book about Maharaj without

including the girls [nuns] and gave his own interpretation of things. And later on, he began to doubt Maharaj. All there know about it. He then left Maharaj and spread rumors about Maharaj's keeping young girls, etc., and left Sakori. But his book was published.

He then went to Shirdi, the shrine of Sai Baba, who was not in the physical body. He gathered some information from local people about miracles of Sai Baba and wrote a book about miracles. That too about petty things: how Sai Baba blessed women and they got children; how Sai Baba placed [his] hand on a man's head and he got rich, etc. – all this compiled in this book and published with wide publicity. And from that day, people are flocking to Shirdi from all parts of India for money, to get children, for jobs, etc. Now this man wrote this book about Upasni Marahaj – it's before he began to doubt. But now one other interesting episode.¹¹¹

Baba said:

When I was in that superconscious state (it is called superconscious but sounds foreign to me, like "Superman") – this consciousness is of God – when I was in that state for nine months, I was drawn to Shirdi near Sai Baba. Sai Baba was coming from the spot where he moved his bowels. Every day, when he wanted to move his bowels, people used to take him with a band and in procession. He would stay there one hour. Then he would return with the band, etc., to his seat.

The first day I was drawn there to Sai Baba, I had blood-shot eyes – no sleep – and the first thing, I laid down my head on his feet, and he loudly cried, "Parvardigar!" i.e., "You are

God!” As soon as I heard that and he showed me the direction where Upasni Maharaj sat, in a dirty spot in that temple, I went to Upasni, who was lean and weak.

As soon as Upasni saw me, he hit me with a stone on the forehead, and I was normal in consciousness instantaneously. Then I went to Sakori with Upasni and was with him seven years. There was a small hut for Upasni, and an old lady, Durgamai, who loved him and me equally. Then people started gathering around Upasni Maharaj, too – mostly Brahmins, because Upasni was by birth a Brahmin.¹¹²

“Shall I stop now and go on to the planes?” Baba asked. “No!” was the shouted answer.¹¹³

He continued, “Who was the Master of Jesus? John the Baptist. You must have read about the disciples of John and Jesus, how they were sometimes in conflict (about ease and asceticism), how the disciples of one were drawn to the other. So I will tell you how history repeats itself. Very interesting story.

“Do not doubt, do not worry. God knows, really. I am one with Him continuously, consciously. Yesterday, a very peculiar thing happened. Someone, the president of the Divine Life Society, in the south of India, Negapatam, asked Baba to send some mantra. They would preserve it and the letter to Baba in a copper can. In the letter to Baba they [wrote that they] wanted something from Baba in his own hand. Baba replied, ‘I have only one mantra.’ So Baba dictated, ‘I am the Highest of the High. I am the Ancient One.’ Baba signed this declaration. [This was the] first time Baba put his signature with his own hand to such a declaration. (Eruch also got a signed copy for the records.)”¹¹⁴

Baba said, “Why not sign what I really am? Divine honesty demands it.”¹¹⁵

Baba then said, “John the Baptist is not here. John the Baptist was a wonderful being. Master of Jesus, he gave his neck. Jesus got himself crucified. Last night I died a million deaths. This morning I was so full in the head I almost cancelled coming. Now I feel 100 percent well. I am ever disturbed, and never disturbed.”¹¹⁶

Baba returned to the subject of Upasni Maharaj. “So, people then began to come pouring in for Upasni Maharaj’s darshan – mostly Brahmins; and then gradually another structure was built. People came and stayed there, and a Brahmin atmosphere prevailed there.

“Upasni Maharaj and I used to sit every night, and these Brahmins got jealous. ‘Why is this Zoroastrian so favored by Upasni Maharaj?’ [they asked]. So Maharaj gradually gave hints about my divinity to them. Few could swallow what Maharaj said; others resented [it]. But our daily sittings continued.

“People continued coming. Temples were built, Hindu temples. Puja and arti were performed according to Hindu customs.

“Then one day, Maharaj declared to all the mandali, ‘Merwan is Perfect.’ Many of the mandali were there: Sarosh, Adi Sr., Patel, Ramjoo.”¹¹⁷

Ramjoo: “We were there. Upasni Maharaj wanted us all to follow you – thirteen – and he also told us we might find it difficult but not to worry; carry out your orders completely, follow you and you would help us. Upasni Maharaj had given up everything to you.”¹¹⁸

Adi: “Upasni Maharaj asked us to stick to you through thick and thin. ‘I have handed over the key to Merwan’ [Maharaj said].”¹¹⁹

Baba continued, “Anyway, he declared it and from that day I didn’t go [to] or stay at Sakori, and from that time the atmosphere there was changed – a Hindu atmosphere – and even Maharaj encouraged them to be more and more jealous of me. Only Durgamai and Yeshwant Rao (in the green turban) – a unique man! – were faithful to me.

“So Maharaj had told [the two of them] about Merwan, that Merwan is now the *Malik* of the Universe, [and] they kept their secret. Others he encouraged against me sometimes. Why? It was my key, only Brahmins are so fanatic that they would not stop at any cost. They don’t let *mahars* (untouchables) to be near their temples or their shadows fall on it. When Maharaj declared that Baba was the *Malik*, the Brahmins got upset. If they could, they would have killed me. But we were both unaffected by the atmosphere.

“But later on, what happened? Godavri Mai had not yet come. Now I tell you something private. Keep it private. The Sakori people know something about it. Upasni Maharaj was given a deadly poison. Taking it would not [have] allowed even a minute’s rest for life. The blame was put on Durgamai, and Maharaj was only numb for a time; [he was] not able to walk for a few days. That dose of poison would have killed all of you here.

“Then Godavri came. Then Maharaj said, ‘I do not want this Brahmin atmosphere of men.’ So he began to have girls of pure character, who wanted God alone, to be kept there. Like now, they are called *kanyas*.

“Later on, Maharaj sent word by Gulmai, ‘Tell Merwan, now I will soon drop this body. He knows it, so tell him to come see me.’ I sent word, ‘I will not step in Sakori!’ So a meeting place was arranged in [Dahigaon, 1941] between Maharaj and Baba. The meeting took place in a hut.

“In the hut, both embraced each other. Maharaj started crying bitterly. I placed my head on his foot. He said, ‘You are the *Adi Shakti* (Original Source).’ Again he started crying. He said, ‘Keep your eye on Sakori.’

“We came out of the hut. In three to four months, Maharaj dropped his body. Godavri was given charge of the nuns. Godavri was in on the secret all the time, but never breathed one word to anyone about me.

“The atmosphere there was Hindu. I have come to destroy in the world all rites, rituals, [and] ceremonies, which are superfluous and superficial.

"Godavri loved me in secret and did not reveal [it] to anyone. The men there at the ashram, just to make it appear [that] Baba is not the spiritual heir of Maharaj but only of Babajan, began to say that Godavri was in charge of the ashram and spiritual heir of Maharaj. Poor girl, she's so dear to me, you have no idea how her heart is. She is a wonderful soul, rare among women. She was in a fix, but her [good] nature kept her going on.

"Then my disciples started increasing. Then Sakori Brahmins got more and more annoyed, like the disciples of John the Baptist. Then the miracle happened. Mr. Wagh, who used to spit when anyone spoke of Baba there, now he bows down to Baba and performs bhajans.

"All this was due to Godavri, her loving me. Her loving nature overcame the Brahmin atmosphere there. She saw me at 'Nagar [Ahmednagar] and asked me, 'Baba, come once to Sakori.' I said, 'Yes, I promised Upasni Maharaj I will keep an eye over Sakori.' Now a funny thing happened. She invited me to Sakori, so I took the occasion of Yeshwant Rao's housewarming ceremony there, and I went there.

"Wagh's group there didn't like the idea and got nervous about it. Now, if Godavri invites Baba and bows down before Baba, what will be the situation there? Godavri played her part very well. Godavri greeted me, garlanded me, placed her head on my feet, performed puja, and sat me in the swing. Wagh's group got very nervous, but gradually got over it.

"I am infinitely shrewd. I then called the manager (Wagh). I embraced him, and he gave a sigh of relief. I began to embrace all of the group there, and they all melted. Godavri then began to show her love to me so openly that the whole atmosphere changed.

"Then on the 12th [September], Darshan Day, Godavri and all the Sakori group came to darshan. Now all there love me. Yesterday you saw how they behaved. Now they all take me as Avatar.

"What I want you all to gather is that the miracle instinct which

Narasimha Swami created is still at Sakori, though not to such an extent as at Shirdi. So if anyone goes to Sakori, they first produce books which contain miracles, etc. Some things [are] very good, some [are] nonsense. So I took away the book to save you from confusion. Now, when anyone goes there, they start telling so much about miracles.”¹²⁰

Baba then told this story:

One man who was not very intelligent but good at heart always used to tell his wife everything – all he had seen, spoken – everything. One friend of his told him, “For God’s sake, don’t tell your wife all those things! She is a very inquisitive woman and will someday get you in trouble.”

He said, “She is [a] wonderful girl and will never get me in trouble.”

The friend said, “When you go home today, tell [your] wife, ‘Don’t tell anyone, or I will be killed.’”

[So he did.] She said, “I love you and would not tell anyone.”

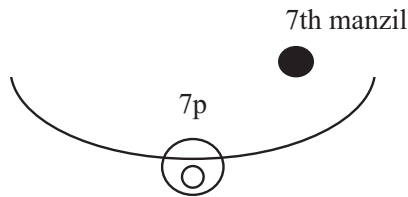
He said [to her], “Today, while I was passing my stool, a crow flew out of my stool! Don’t tell anyone.”

*Next day at the bazaar, one woman told another about this man. He wondered how this happened, since he had only told his wife!*¹²¹

Baba then said, “So, those people tried to raise the status of Upasni Maharaj by all these [petty] things. I will now put an end to all this because God, Love, Truth, and Purity are absolutely free from every kind of complication, confusion, and witchery. And most of the rituals [and] ceremonies [are] done with no heart and understanding, but done just because of custom.”¹²²

THE PLANES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Baba then took his seat on the couch. He said, "Rest for five minutes." He talked about other matters. He then said, "Do you want me to go on about planes?" We said yes. To illustrate, he drew some lines on a piece of paper and (because he was no longer writing) had Eruch write the labels.¹²³ I copied this down in my notepad, as follows:¹²⁴



6th Manzil	<u>6p</u>	1 Mukam - God
5th Manzil	<u>5p</u>	Mukams
x	<u>4p</u>	x
4th Manzil	<u>3p</u>	Mukams
3rd Manzil	<u>2p</u>	Mukams
2nd Manzil	<u>1p</u>	Mukams



Baba began by saying, “Now about planes: something new.”¹²⁵

Now the pilgrim goes through the fourth plane of consciousness, and the plane is known as the junction between the subtle and the mental planes. It is also called Asthana, meaning “Threshold.” Here there is no manzil, no muqam. Just the junction where all the infinite energy and the desires, emotions, and feelings of the mental plane influence directly.

This soul is now neither in the subtle nor in the mental plane, but all powers of the subtle and all influences of the mental are continually with him in the fourth plane. Not the fourth manzil. This fourth plane has no manzil, no muqams. One now is overpowered with desires and so powerful to accomplish whatever he desires that in this plane the soul is said to be in the greatest danger of falling down from the spiritual height. If desires control him, he falls down. He can now do anything, even raise the dead, create new forms, anything he wants. And now desires are influencing him with all their force. So if he succumbs to these, he falls down. The “how” is explained in God Speaks.

The new thing is manzil and muqam. If he does not succumb to desires to use his infinite energy for selfish ends, he is pushed on to the fifth plane and the fifth manzil. Now, in the gross world, the first manzil with its innumerable muqams are there. In the first plane of the subtle, the second manzil with innumerable muqams are there. In the second plane of the subtle, the third manzil with innumerable muqams are there. In the third plane of the subtle, the fourth manzil with

innumerable muqams are there. In the fourth plane, no manzil, no muqams.

In the fifth plane, which is in the mental sphere, the fifth manzil and muqams are there. Now in this fifth state of mental consciousness, what happens? The soul is now working directly from the mental plane. Have this clear.

So now he is master of the mind. The whole mental plane is now governed by him. He knows the thoughts of all. He knows the desires of everyone, and yet he is now said to be safe, to have passed this dark spiritual night of the fourth plane. He now cannot fall.

But which section of the mind does he now control? Now he knows the thoughts of all. He knows the desires, but cannot control desire. In this fifth plane, when he controls and knows the thoughts of all, he cannot have that intense longing for God which lovers of God who do not care to know about planes have.

When he is pushed onwards to the sixth plane, i.e., the



Page from Darwin's notepad with original sketch of diagram.

second section of the mind, he now is feelings, desires, and emotions personified, and as all infinite feelings come out of God, who is in the seventh state of consciousness, this man of the sixth [plane] now directly sees God everywhere, in everything, and yet feels himself aloof from the Beloved. And now there is the great valley where the lover sees the Beloved beyond that. In between is the valley. The Beloved says, "Come to me." The lover says, "I cannot. You come to me." And this glorious state is described as one end of a hair in the hand of the Beloved, the other in the hand of the lover.

For years the tussle goes on. The Beloved sees that if he pulls too fast and hard, the hair will snap. So it goes on for years and years. For years and years, such lovers of the sixth plane – If millions of such lovers were to long for union, one will be able to reach the Beloved. And on the sixth [plane], very, very few lovers are to be found. And when one crosses the valley and unites with God, he finds it was he himself that he was seeking, he himself that he loved, and then he declares "I am God." And it is said, out of thousands of such united ones, one comes down to normal consciousness; and he is called Qutub, Christ, Perfect Master.

*Last, the seventh plane has a manzil but no muqam. The sixth plane has a manzil and one muqam, God, whom he sees everywhere.*¹²⁶

Referring to one of the men, who had fallen asleep, Baba said, "I talk of God and you go to God in sound sleep. That is good. Malcolm, is it clear?"¹²⁷

Baba summarized, directing our attention to the diagram, "So,

manzils are seven. The first *manzil* of the gross [plane] is gross. You find innumerable *muqams* in six *manzils*.”¹²⁸

SAHAJ DHYAN

Now Baba came to the explanation he had promised on the 18th, when he said that he would explain *Sahaj Dhyān*: the practice of thinking of him while doing everything we have to do in the world and feeling that he is with us all the time. At that time he had told us that *Dhyān* means meditation.

Baba said:

□ *After all it is Sahaj, the “natural way.” Breath is unconscious, except when we run or exert. Clothes – when you listened, were you thinking about your clothes? No, yet they were there. That is the meaning of Sahaj.*

Remember me in Sahaj and you are in Sahaj Dhyān. How to remember me Sahaj [naturally]? The easiest and surest way is to do as I tell you now how to remember me. At first, it will be somewhat of a task. At first you will have to do it and then it will become natural, automatic.

There are said to be four main watches. Just like the four main watches in a man’s physical status: childhood, young man, middle age, old age. So, four watches, which Kabir calls the signposts.

The first thing in the morning, even for one second, think of Baba and then begin the day. Baba now has been [is being] worn by your soul, just as when you put on your dress in the morning. So dress your soul in the morning with your thought of Baba.

I have never asked anyone to do this, [not] even the mandali. So do this honestly, and you will feel me with you.

Then, exactly at 12:00 noon, think of Baba for one second, then at about 5:00 p.m. for one second again think of Baba. Then you do whatever you like, go to business, etc. Then when you retire, a second for Baba. Then Baba will be always with you, and soon after that, you will feel Baba's company with you.

You have asked, and now you must do it. It only takes four seconds altogether. [It is] most practical: being in the world doing everything, attending to all duties, and yet to have Baba with you all the time – like your breathing. This is the beginning of Sahaj Dhyān. My loyal one who does this honestly will automatically be keeping me with him in thought. This is the beginning of Sahaj Dhyān. When you do this, first you will think it difficult.

□ *Once a habit is formed, it will become automatic.*¹²⁹

This practice of “natural,” or “spontaneous” meditation is one I have been doing and sharing with others ever since. In following Baba's instructions of clothing myself with his Being – not his form, but who he really is – I find that it helps to think of Baba with love each time, remembering that he said he would always be with us if we do this.

“KEEP ME BEFORE YOUR MIND'S EYE”

Baba then spoke of other things before returning to the previous subject. “*Jhula* means that swing. It is attributed to Krishna's birth, and his mother rocked him in a cradle. And when he grew up, even then gopis made him sit in a swing and would rock him and sing songs. So it is the custom for Perfect Masters and the Avatar to be made to sit in a *jhula* and be swung. But it is not to keep him awake, but sort

of a lullaby. 'Krishna, you sleep, and don't make trouble' is the main theme. He was very mischievous, [full of] practical jokes. Christ had a different atmosphere, Buddha another. Krishna was very active, playful, mischievous, yet one with God. I think I am a mixture of all.

"Babajan – her face so very bright, and [with her] years at one hundred twenty-five, so active. Under that tree she sat in all weather. You could feel and see love flowing freely out of her. She once told the group that was there, 'I have so made this child of mine that one day he will make the whole world dance around his fingers.'

"No talk of money there; they just came for darshan. If anyone asked for anything, she would get out her stick. All night she used to sit under that tree doing this: running one hand down the other arm – a habit I can't explain. But it was done knowingly, purposely.

"You have seen me walk fast. The mandali used to try to keep up on bikes and walk fast. Babajan at age one hundred twenty-five used to run like a young child. She gave me the Divine Bliss, Sai Baba gave me the Divine Power, Upasni Marahaj gave me the Divine Knowledge."¹³⁰

Baba concluded, "To sum up all this: We have to feel in our heart of hearts that only God is real. He alone exists. He is in us all. He alone is to be loved: God and God alone."¹³¹

Then Baba said, "Now, no more sitting for one-half hour. On the 24th, I want all of you to lie awake and think of me. Do this with all your heart. At least one of you will see me; I am there. All of you, or at least one of you. Seeing me means a picture. Keep me before your mind's eye. 12:00-12:30. Eyes open or closed, but keep me before your mind's eye."¹³²

Baba had us sit for a moment and picture him with our eyes closed, after first looking at him. Afterward he asked what happened. Francis Brabazon said, "It comes and goes." Baba replied, "Because you come and go! I am there always."¹³³ I do not remember exactly what I said, but again, I would have found it impossible not to picture Baba.

Baba then spoke of Saint Francis: “Do you know how Francis loved? Anyway, he loved Jesus as Jesus ought to be loved. Among Francis’s group, there was one whose mind was on the kitchen [i.e., thinking of food]. Juniper loved Francis [but] did not sit for meditation or anything. He gave so much trouble to Francis [yet loved him] very deeply – that love. When we love secretly from the bottom of our hearts, we want to give and give and give all our good, and give all our bad. We give and we give [our] trouble. Why not give everything? The lover gives everything and doesn’t demand anything.”¹³⁴ He added, “I give everything and demand nothing in return.”¹³⁵

“So love like that and Baba is your slave. Even if you can’t do that, don’t worry. As long as you are mine, don’t worry. If you can’t make me yours, don’t worry. You are mine. I have drawn you from a long distance because you are mine. If you can’t bring my picture before you, don’t worry. I love you. If you can’t love me, don’t worry: I love you.”¹³⁶

Baba referred back to the instructions he gave for picturing him. “On the night of the 24th, do not bring my picture on by sheer force;¹³⁷ be natural, keep calm; don’t sit like yogis.”¹³⁸

“It is said of me that I am most slippery,” Baba said.¹³⁹

He continued, “Now, one secret [and here my notes for the day end].¹⁴⁰ Try to picture your wife and child: in an instant they are here. This is of no great importance, but it helps a little. You can bring them from Australia, but you can’t bring Baba from here.”¹⁴¹

We then ate lunch, and Baba ate a small amount with us. While we were eating, he walked around and patted each of us on the back. He tickled Ramjoo, who was extremely ticklish. Then he tickled each of us to see who would laugh. It was hilarious. A Parsi who was there played Ping-Pong with Baba. Afterward, Baba gave each of us *prasad* consisting of a bite of pudding. Before Baba left, he said, “Rest awhile, [then] walk a mile.”¹⁴²

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Meher Baba arrived at 10:30 a.m., appearing tired. He said that he did not feel like coming but he wanted to see us "dear ones." He said, "I have much to think about before the meetings. My thinking is not just thinking; the whole burden is upon me."¹⁴³

During his inquiry about our health, Baba spoke to Will Backett. "I call you my archangel, and you are very devoted to me, and I love you intensely; but I can not understand your saying every day, 'I am better today.'" Will said that he meant he was sleeping better every night.¹⁴⁴

Baba then spoke about maya, the principle of illusion. "I always used to say to the mandali that in God's work maya always opposes. It is necessary. Just as illusion is necessary for the realization of God, so maya's forces when opposing God's work give strength to the work every time. The more and greater the opposition from maya, the result is better."¹⁴⁵

He then told us what happened before the darshan program on the 12th. He said:

Before the mass darshan on the 12th, Ahmednagar had record rainfall – pouring all day and night! Sarosh came rushing to see Baba in Poona, and said, "If the rain does not stop, we will have to postpone the darshan meeting." I said, "What God wants will happen."

Since then, we had clearer days, and all think it is Baba's miracle. And it is absolute nonsense. I don't say this just to manifest humility; it is a fact. Padri every day repeats to Baba, "On the 29th and 30th [of September], if rain comes, it will lie a mess. I say, "I don't know anything about it. God may want rain on those two days. If God wants rain, it will rain. If it rains, they will get drenched. They will change their clothes. I also will change my clothes. The body only will get wet."¹⁴⁶

Baba then said of the meetings on the 29th and 30th: "This is the last meeting and first of its kind. So, as the days are approaching nearer, the burden is lowering on Baba's head,¹⁴⁷ just as the clouds lower in the sky. If you don't keep your health, it will be an additional burden."¹⁴⁸

Baba also said, "I sometimes seem to be speaking at random, but I am really working elsewhere."¹⁴⁹

"WHO ARE YOU?"

Then Baba spoke at length about identification with the body. My notes record:



When you say "I am ill, I am hungry, I want this food, I am thirsty, I am old, I am young," do you not identify this "I" with the body? "I am thin, weak, very healthy, strong. Today I am not feeling well and I am not hungry" – all this "I" means identifying with the body.

Now, when you say "I, I, I" – "I am old, sick, weak" – you mean the hands, chest, etc. You don't mean [left blank]. Included in this "I" are head, hands, shoulders, legs, etc. If your two hands are cut off from your body, and also your legs, you still say, "I am hungry, thirsty, etc." So even after losing your arms and legs, even after severing that, the "I" remains as it was. "I am weak, I am hungry." So this means the "I" is definitely not the body.

So why this continual identification of "I" with the body, even after understanding that the body is not "I"? But you continue for twenty-four hours [a day] with this body. Now you must answer this: [How] do we identify "I am going out"? Now you still identify this "I" with the body. In sleep, the body does not move, but you are still there, so "I" can't be the body.

Yet for twenty-four hours you identify your "I" with your body.

Will [Backett] used to say when he was a child, "I am thirsty, etc." Now his body has grown to old age. Will still says, "I am better," meaning the body. Now Will grew from a child to this age; Will is just this limited body [in this instance]. All this is, in Vedantic terms, Aham, i.e., false identification. Now answer me: Why do we identify the "I" with the body?

You understand after Baba has explained, in the Discourses, etc., so why do you still identify with the body? Every time you say, "I am feeling hungry, thirsty, etc., at the same time you don't try to say, "I am not this body." Make yourself alert. Continually realize that when you say "I" you don't mean this body.

In sound sleep the body does not want anything, even if in dreams you move about, eat, etc. In dreams we eat, drink, and do all the things we do in the gross world, in the sub-subtle world (but that is a different chapter).

We continually identify with the body because since ages the Self, which is not limited but is infinite, due to the first illusion, has been in the habit of identifying itself with the body, because in those states, intellect was not developed. Consciousness was not developed.

In the human form, intellect and consciousness were developed and consciousness could identify itself with the Self. But the habit of ages persisted and made the Self identify itself with the body.

Hafiz says, "You who do not come out of this age-long habit of being ignorant can never realize your Self as infinite."

Now it is said, and truly said, "God had no beginning,

has no end. He is Eternal.” Now just think [this] over. If He had no beginning, what was there before Him? The answer is God. What was there before God? The answer is God. You can never reach beyond where no beginning was. The answer is God. You can’t reach.

So, after billions of years, what will be there? God. God has no beginning and no end. This means that actually in Eternity, there being no time, nothing has ever happened. Nothing ever happens. Nothing will ever happen in Eternity. You all were, billions of years ago. Today you are, you will be ever afterwards, and today all that has happened to you billions of years ago does not appear to you (is not there) now, because nothing has ever happened.

When one experiences Eternity, one knows that nothing happened, nothing ever will happen. Only God is. To say He was, is, and ever will be is also wrong, because we give time to Him [think of Him as time-bound]. Just God is, and so I have said that nothing has happened. Nothing will happen. All in Eternity happens NOW, at this moment, so I say, “God Is.”

[To Malcolm Schloss, regarding his deceased wife:] Mona was with you, but now she is not with you. Actually, she never was. So all never was. She is eternally in God. I try to explain intellectually, but cannot; it is beyond intellect. It is a secret, which here I cannot give. It must be given in experience. But I try to reach as much as I can reach intellectually. But it is beyond the intellect.

What happened yesterday, due to the impressions of what happened yesterday, today produced temporary results; but the actual happenings of yesterday have stopped. It means, nothing

happened yesterday. So it goes on cycle after cycle.

Thank God [this] same God and the illusory go parallel. So illusion says everything happens. God says nothing happens. And when you are in the grip of the "I," which, due to ignorance, identifies itself with the body, illusion governs you. But when you know the Truth by experience, you govern illusion.

Even Nothing exists, so this illusion which runs parallel with God is nothing. But it exists, and all this you see, you hear, you experience in this world is not God. Whatever you understand is not God. Whatever is explained is not God. Whatever is expressed is not God. Whatever you see is not God. God is to be lived, experienced, and loved.

Lover says to the Master, "You have taught me something which has made me forget everything. You have created in me a desire which says, 'Do not desire for anything'; you have given me that one word which says, 'Words mean nothing,' etc. And in the end, he, the lover, says, "Oh, Master, I was seeking God and thought Him to be this and that. And now You have given me something [of which] even my imagination could not produce its shadow."

So it is all words when we say "self," when we say "God," "Infinite." What do we mean by this? Nothing [more] than [that] to understand by words, hearing explanations, reading – [all this] would be an insult to Beloved God, who is beyond all understanding. It would be like lowering His status. So the only solution is Love. If we love God, definitely we become Him. There is no question there, but we must love with all our heart so that only God exists for us.¹⁵⁰

DANCE FOR JOY

At this point, while music was being played, I felt inspired to write the following in my notepad:¹⁵¹

*Dance for joy in the meaningless array,
For all is void in the sight of God.
Cease thy struggles with the coils of illusion;
Let it go on unchallenged, unclaimed,
And smile with God.
For all is a trick, a joke which never was.
Be not deceived by the enchantment of a distant freedom,
Oh ye who were never bound;
Laugh at the trammels of Maya.*

I also was inspired to write on an undated page in my notebook sometime during this week the following:

*Retain no sanskaras. Be careful that you do not unconsciously cling to them, especially in the solar plexus center, but other centers as well. Give them all to the Master. Let them flow to him without restraint.*¹⁵²

Ben Hayman then arrived, and Baba went out to welcome him. First he put on his pink coat, saying he wanted to look his best.¹⁵³ “I wanted you here, so you came,” he said to Ben.¹⁵⁴

Baba said, “One who knows everything knows nothing.”¹⁵⁵ He also said he loves to play marbles. “The Universes are marbles for Baba,” he said.¹⁵⁶

"YOU CAN LOVE GOD"

Baba went on to say:

I am so full of humor that it makes it difficult even for Rishis, Munis and Saints to know me as I am. I am at every level and act according to the standards of that level. With a child I will be a child; with saints of the highest, I will be above; I appear glorious.

It is my nature to be absolutely natural, even with Beloved God, who is one with me and I one with Him. If you understand this, it is absolutely easy. The solution is in your hand!

God is Infinite Honesty, and unless we love Him honestly, we cannot know Him. He is beyond all understanding, but the heart full of love can understand the un-understandable. So just words, explanations, and readings will not help. All this means nothing; only if you love God, you become one with God. That is the only solution. And you can love God.¹⁵⁷

Malcolm then asked Baba if we love God by loving others. Baba said, "You can, only you don't know you are loving God. God loves Himself through us all."¹⁵⁸

Baba continued:

When I wash the feet of the poor and bow down to them, I do it with all my heart into it. And I not only play the part of one who bows down and gives gifts, I become that. I not only play the part, but I actually become that.

When Baba washed feet on Darshan Day, this washing of the feet is something due to Perfect Ones,¹⁵⁹ according to Hindu

custom.¹⁶⁰ Then Baba gave gifts to the poor, Dev-Dakshana. So I became the devotee [and] disciple of the seven Perfect Ones when I placed my head on their feet. Then again I resumed my seat and became again the Avatar, and people began bowing down to me. Honesty demands that what I am I must express.¹⁶¹

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

At 9:30 a.m. Meher Baba arrived. He inquired about our health, saying that we all had to be healthy by the time of the big meeting on the 29th and 30th.¹⁶² Regarding Baba's health, I quote from a letter to my family written two days later, telling about this special day. Baba "told us in the morning that he had slept very little the previous night. In fact, I think he said that he had had practically no sleep for the past several nights. Still, he did not look haggard or especially tired. He has a way of refreshing himself, it seems."¹⁶³

Baba also said, "Tomorrow will be the last day for Baba to come sit with you on the hill, but don't worry, I will go with you."¹⁶⁴

POOREST OF THE POOR

"So," Baba said, "all explanations are stopped from today. Tomorrow I will take you all to the village there and show you the temple and houses. I love these poor people of Arangaon. Tomorrow at 3:45 p.m., all be at the dhuni."¹⁶⁵ Baba told us that the villagers wanted to perform the arti ceremony.¹⁶⁶

Baba continued, "I am the poorest of the poor. I always say that, and I am really that: emperor and beggar at one and the same time. This reminds me: From the day I stopped speaking, I also stopped touching money. I don't touch money. Disciples from West, East, North, and South

– they give money. Money flows. Baba has that and gives of that, but he does not touch [it], only when I give to masts and the poor on special occasions, like on the 12th, when he washes feet and places [his] head on feet.”¹⁶⁷

Baba went on, “Sometimes Baba has distributed grain with his own hand, but the important thing is washing feet and bowing down to them, because, as I told you yesterday, I don’t only play the part, but I become that. So this Arangaon village is very dear to me. You must have read years back, there was a dispensary here for boys. Baba used not only to supervise everything, but give the baths also to lepers and masts. Baba also used to wash their clothes and clean the latrines. Not for show of humility: I became that. So this village, the people, are very dear to me. And tomorrow you will see how they live in small mud huts.”¹⁶⁸

Baba explained, “I say this, because yesterday Frank and Ben were seen going toward the village, and I sent a message that they were not to go. You must be fit for the 29th and 30th. But I thought these men, women and children are dear to me and why not let you see them? I have no time myself nowadays even to take a bath; I have not had my hair washed for three months. I have no time and no sleep.”¹⁶⁹

YESHWANT RAO

“My mood constantly changes, so try to absorb Baba in every mood,” Baba said. “I am One with God; there is no doubt about it. Always remember this.”¹⁷⁰

“At the meetings, people are coming from all parts of India and Pakistan who love me. This is my last meeting, and I want to say some things that will last till I come back in seven hundred years. So be fit and in the mood to listen,” Baba urged.¹⁷¹

I wrote in my notepad: “Yesterday Baba said that he will explain about Yeshwant Rao, the man in the green turban.”¹⁷²

Baba said:

When Upasni Maharaj came to Sakori, first there was the hut, and every night Baba used to be there in that hut with Maharaj. Maharaj told this man Yeshwant Rao that Merwan is the Parabrahma, i.e., God Beyond, so do whatever Merwan tells you to do. And as I told you last time, Baba did not sleep during those days when he was with Maharaj – for nine months.

I was with Upasni Maharaj until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., and then went to a small hut nearby. And Yeshwant Rao was there with me. He would press Baba's feet. He would carry an ample supply of betel leaves. Baba did not eat at that time, but by [within] five minutes he asked for betel leaves and nuts. For hours together he [Yeshwant Rao] could not sleep, as he had to do what Marahaj said. So for seven years this man served me with such love as is rarely found.

When that atmosphere prevailed at Sakori, it was Yeshwant Rao who was the target of these Brahmins, for adhering to Baba. But Yeshwant Rao was adamant and obeyed Upasni Maharaj. So this man was put to great suffering.

You have seen how the atmosphere has changed now. Yeshwant Rao does not remind anyone about the old days. He is a rich man; he helps the people with corn and money. And this man is Upasni Maharaj and Baba, and has them in his heart. [Baba is speaking metaphorically of Yeshwant Rao's closeness to Upasni and Baba.] All the food and other things there were due to Yeshwant Rao. He loves me and would lay down his life for me.¹⁷³

BE AS HONEST, LOVING, AND HAPPY AS GOD

Baba then changed the subject by saying, "People say Baba is above promises and seldom keeps promises, but now the mandali remind me to keep promises, so I try to keep them. I promised to play marbles with Ben, and to keep that promise I kept awake all last night.

"We are all meant to be as honest as God, as loving as God, as happy as God; and only the Christ suffers for humanity, although he is the source of all happiness. Dear Ben, you see me here in this physical form, but every moment I am crucified, every moment. Only those few fortunate individuals spread in the world know this. I suffer as no one could suffer, and I suffer because I love."¹⁷⁴

Baba cautioned Malcolm Schloss to be careful not to unwittingly create disharmony by saying "a few words here and there" to the Sakori people who would be coming to the two-day meeting. He also praised Godavri.¹⁷⁵

Baba continued, "Now, this reminds me, Malcolm, that during the meeting, Wagh and others from Sakori will be coming, and I do not want again the present atmosphere of Sakori to be affected by a few words here and there, because Godavri is to me one of the most lovable beings in the world, and what she has tried all these years! Let there not be a change in that. Wagh might ask . . ." [nothing further recorded].¹⁷⁶

My notes resume, quoting Baba:

□ *Godavri: How she loves me, and what a virgin she is! To me she is like Yashoda, Krishna's mother. A month or two back, at Sakori, someone had come to pay homage to Upasni Maharaj. He was an astrologer, etc. After paying homage, he said – [Baba interrupted himself to explain]: Meanwhile, I*

have circulated here in India that soon I will break my silence and meet a violent death. Sakori received that circular, also Godavri, and she was much depressed. Baba's birth date was given to the astrologer, who also said that November and December are very hard for Baba. He emphasized the fact and [they] asked for some relief. That man said there is only one way to give relief to Baba. For fifteen days they will have to perform certain ceremonies. They are doing it on their own. There was a letter from the chief priest that laid great stress on Baba's suffering, etc., and that they will perform the ceremony. They sent ashes [and] Baba has to apply this on [his] forehead, etc.¹⁷⁷

Baba concluded, "Nothing can stop what has to happen. I have to soon break my silence before the end of the year, then manifest myself, then drop the body. What is ordained must come to pass. But only if people love God as I want them to do is my work accomplished."¹⁷⁸

MORE ILLUSIONS ARE NOT BABA'S MIRACLE

Baba asked if there were any other questions, and Malcolm reminded Baba that he had promised to talk about repression.¹⁷⁹

"In a few words I will tell you about impressions," Baba said.¹⁸⁰

Baba discoursed at length:

Illusion is just a temporary passing phenomenon as long as it seems to exist. This is illusion: something that is not, appears to be. Try to grasp [i.e., understand]. And this illusion then creates innumerable other petty illusions; and the experience of each illusion leaves behind it the marks of experiences in the form of impressions.

If, for example, during a dark night you have gone to sleep and on waking up your hand goes to a certain thing near the bed and at once you think it is a scorpion. So you have created a scorpion which is not there. Now you shrink with fear. Very gradually you try to get out of bed and get hold of a stick and with the tip to beat that scorpion. But you see it was not a scorpion. You got out of bed, killed that scorpion, but none was there.

But the impressions of all this are now stamped on your mind, and they must be spent somehow and sometime, and so illusion continues due to the impressions that I explained that day. Gaining impressions and spending impressions, and all the time illusion is there [and] is preserved.

Once in Meherabad, down the hill, when there was a big colony, after Baba had dissolved Meherabad Ashram [and moved] to Toka, a few mandali Baba kept here; the rest were taken there. One Irani who was good in heart but a bit goofy was to keep night watch. This man who was on watch, every night he used to shout out, "All's well!" to keep himself awake and to show others that all was well.

During that period there was a notorious thief who had murdered so many people. He was the well-known Satyamang. That robber had not yet come to Baba. The mandali who were left behind had become nervous about this robber. The night before this incident happened, Satyamang had robbed a man on horseback, and the mandali heard about it.

The night [of this incident] this dear, goofy man – something happened in his head. A donkey started away toward the ashram in the night. He thought it was Satyamang who was coming, and he rushed into the sleeping room [where] all [were] asleep and

shouted that "Satyamang is coming! Satyamang is coming!" All were so alarmed that they started to embrace each other.

One man, so nervous, kept saying, "He is here!" After the first nervousness lapsed, he came to his senses and saw that only the mandali was there. He opened the door and saw only the donkey. He gave a sigh of relief and told the others, "Nothing to worry about; it's only a donkey."

When Baba heard the story, I told them that this illusion beats the Universal one I created ages ago! Then Baba returned from Toka to Meherabad and called Satyamang, the robber. He was so proud of his strength that people feared him. They were afraid to report him to the police. He stayed in a village seven miles from there. The police could not trap him. He would pay them money, etc.

Baba sent someone to Satyamang. He said, "I don't know Meher Baba!" and abused [Baba] and said, "Get out!" Later, Satyamang himself came and said he saw Baba on his chest and was frightened. He came near Baba. As soon as Baba's sight was on him he prostrated himself and started weeping like a child. I said, "I want you from today to give up robbing and killing. You must never do this; disperse your gang. For your maintenance, come here and Baba will supply all this."

He gave his promise to Baba and from that day he has not done any single thing of the old days, except one thing. He took Baba's photo. All were surprised. After some months he again got the idea to rob someone. He was tempted to rob a moneylender's house. The house was locked. He opened the house. As soon as he entered a room he finds Baba standing there. He was so frightened that he came straight to Baba for forgiveness.

Then again when Baba was leaving [for Persia] I told the family [left here], "What is here is for [your use] to maintain your family." The time comes in the mandali's life when there is plenty of money and also when it is all gone. The family here was given certain instructions: They were not to go out, etc. Satyamang had stopped robbing. He heard about the difficulties of the family here. He went about begging for food and got fuel wood for them. Such a change came over him.

And many other incidents are attributed to me as my miracles. As I told you that day, even now people write letters that they saw Baba in his physical form there. Dear Ben, as I told them the other day, I have not yet performed a single miracle. Their love and their faith give them the experience of miracles. When I break my silence the greatest miracle of all time will be performed. That will be the first and last miracle of this incarnation of mine. So if people tell you Baba performed miracles, take it as their love.

*Baba's greatness does not lie in performing miracles. His greatness lies in suffering for the universe, because he loves all.*¹⁸¹

"LET THE WHOLE REALM GO"

At some point during this day I typed these thoughts:

Does everything function: the opposites, the gains and losses, the beginnings and endings? Let them function, automatically. Don't interfere; just observe and rise as you let go of one after the other of the necessary functions of the dual realm.

Cease striving to mould the functioning elements of your aspect of the dual realm into Truth. You will only achieve another crystallization of one of the opposites in that realm. What you seek, what you are, is not in that realm. So let it function only to give you consciousness in that realm, and be detached.

In the dual realm we do and must struggle with contrast-ing values. In this realm we must adhere to the karmic laws and strive to improve our characters: to purify and live in accordance with our ideal. This we will always continue to do.

Beyond the dual realm, however, the same values do not hold true.

One cannot escape the vortex of the dual realm while clinging to it. It is not a matter of perfecting one's self in the dual realm. It is a matter of escaping the bondage of identifying one's self in that realm at all.

Escape from the dual realm means a new rate of vibration, a new perspective of values, a new sense of dissociation from the necessary functioning elements of the dual realm.

Why strive to become something in the dual realm when you have to let the whole realm go? It functions. Let it function, and be free.

“SONG OF THE WIND”

On the afternoon of September 23 we Westerners and some of the Eastern mandali gathered with Baba in the large room at upper Meherabad, where we had been meeting with him nearly every day. But this afternoon seemed different than usual. It was a warm, sunny day, and there was a gentle breeze blowing – or rather sighing – through the

windows high up on the walls. Baba sat on the small sofa facing us as we sat on comfortable chairs in a circle facing him. Despite the natural rustling of the wind, there was a deep inner stillness in the atmosphere.

Baba's Beauty was breathtaking, and his love for us was so tangible that we were quite literally permeated through and through, as though the whole room became Love's Sanctuary. In retrospect, it seemed as though our Divine Beloved felt that there was no further need for discourses, music, or games: It was a time for love alone to fulfill the deepest longing of every heart there.

I gazed at Baba, transfixed with the beauty of his love, and my love for him deepened into adoration. Then, as I watched with intoxicated astonishment, veil after veil fell away from his lovely face, and I was able to journey into his Kingly Being. As I did so, more and more of his real Self was revealed. There was nothing there but Love, an immeasurable Beyond of pure, warm, glowing Love. His eyes, ordinarily very beautiful, became open windows of Heavenly Beauty, and I saw through them an endless Beyond of Pure Love, Light, and Selfless Sweetness which completely melted the heart. It was a love that, in some mysterious way, was intensely personal and at the same time infinite.

As we continued sitting quietly there with the Beloved, there was no sound but the gentle breeze sighing through the windows. Baba smiled and pointed significantly toward the windows, but no one felt inclined to break the spell by making a comment. However, Baba himself began to break the spell a little bit by pointing to first one and then another, asking us, "Are you happy?" Some seemed unsure, others quite sure of how they felt. When he asked me, I replied, "Very happy, Baba." Shortly after that, he began to ask different ones, "What are you thinking?" Of course, he knew well what we were thinking. When he motioned to me, I was still spellbound with wonder at what I beheld.

I could only reply, “Of you, Baba. You are all Love.” Through his Grace, I had seen this for myself; I knew it to be true.¹⁸²

After a while, Baba lovingly embraced each one of us and then left. Most of the Westerners followed soon after, but there were two who were so intoxicated with Baba’s love that they could not leave. They were Savak Kotwal, one of the Eastern mandali, and myself. While still sitting there, I felt that I must try to capture on paper this precious experience with Baba – his redeeming, awakening Divine Love. It was then that I wrote the two verses that later became known as “The Song of the Wind,” or “Windsong.” I wrote:

*Let the song of the wind ever remind you of My Love.
Let its soul-healing balm sigh through your being,
 wherever you are;
And know that I have loved you as only God can love;
And be sure that I will love you thus throughout Eternity.*

*Know, beloved, that you are Mine forever,
That I have called you from the realm of illusion
To caress you with Love, with LOVE DIVINE.*

C H A P T E R

T W E L V E

The Third
“Incredible Week”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

September 24 was one of the most significant days of our stay with Meher Baba; so many things happened. While the 23rd will always remain a wondrous day of days for me, as I expressed in a letter to my family written the following day, the 24th was “another day of days, but in a different way.”¹

“How Can One Fathom This Being?”

When Baba arrived in the morning, we met him at lower Meherabad, and as we walked with him up the hill to upper Meherabad, I occasionally glanced at him. He was, for me at least, very much “the Christ.” As we crested the hill, the reality of who he was seemed to shine through with startling clarity. Perhaps the powerful radiation of his divine presence had opened my inner vision, enhancing my power of

perception. I do not know, but, for me at least, the Christ stood out in amazingly bold relief! It seemed as though I were walking over the hills of Galilee with Jesus, and some words having a connotation of the New Testament crossed my mind, for no particular reason: "You all say, 'yes, yes,' yet you do not do." Just then, perhaps sensing the intensity of my gaze, Baba gave me a sharp glance.

We walked with him directly to the large room in the Retreat Building where we sat with him nearly every day. Baba sat on the small sofa, and we Western men sat in comfortable chairs around him, as usual. I sat opposite Baba, about ten feet away.

Baba had explained that this would be the last day of his coming to be with us like this. Then he went on to say, "Remind me and I will sip out of your fruit juice glass and then hand it to you. This time it is not the Last Supper, but the Last Drink, and I am happy that at least no one from you all will sell me [referring to Judas], although someone has to do that job, because my physical end has to be a violent one."²

Several times prior to this day, Baba had told us that within a very few months he would meet a violent end. This dire prediction was somewhat tempered when, ten days previously, on Tuesday, September 14, he had said the same thing but had added, "Otherwise, I'll be sitting there on top of the universe till I am ninety."

Although he did not die within a few months, his prediction about his early demise aroused a deep feeling of anguish within me; but it also stirred my heart to a deeper love for him. Baba's ways were, for the most part, inscrutable, so I never knew exactly why he had made the prediction. It seemed to be a ploy to dig deep into our hearts. In any case, it did make me wonder what would happen to our relationship with him when he did drop his body.

Baba's next comment seemed to answer that question when he said, "I definitely am the Ancient One, and you all who are here will

love me more and ever more after my body is dropped, and see me as I really am."³

Then, with a sort of bland expression on his face and not looking toward me, he said, "You all say, 'yes, yes,' yet you do not do as I say."⁴

When Baba said this, I thought in amazement, How can you fathom this Being?

Without looking at me and still having a bland expression on his face, Baba said, "My ways are so unfathomable sometimes that I too cannot fathom them!"⁵

Then, referring to photographs, Baba continued, "This is not Baba. Baba is quite different. If you catch just a glimpse of what Baba really is, you would lose consciousness. Just a glimpse of Baba! So love me and you will be loving God, and God is to be loved honestly, honestly. The slightest show of hypocrisy or dishonesty keeps you far away from God. You must be one hundred percent [honest], and God the Beloved, Who is here now in you all, He knows what you will think tomorrow. He is all knowledge, and when we love Him honestly, He becomes one with us. It is not that we have to become one with Him; He becomes one with us when we love Him honestly. So my last message to you dear ones is, love God honestly and you will find that Baba is one with God."⁶

Baba then adjourned us to give private interviews to a few of the men. When he returned, he looked at a photograph of himself as the young Merwan and said, "I love him very much."⁷

THE "LAST DRINK"

Baba then sent for the drinks. He said, referring to the poor and those suffering from recent floods, "I am in all, and I am in eternal bliss because of God, and in everlasting suffering through these souls."⁸ He

continued, “Now I want to make people not only food-minded but God-minded.”⁹ That is why I have called these meetings.”¹⁰

He also said, “I am infinitely restless, and infinitely at peace, simultaneously.”¹¹

Baba then went on to talk a little about Jesus.

“Jesus, being God, and omnipotent, allowed himself to be absolutely helpless, humiliated, and crucified. And he knew it all because he had planned it all long ago. And he did it for all, but to have the right result, he had actually to experience the helplessness and the suffering. Do not think that because he was all-powerful he did not suffer the humiliation and crucifixion. If not, it would not have had the desired effect.”¹²

Baba continued, referring to himself, “Some people think because Baba is one with God, his body is also omnipotent, not affected by anything. At such times, not to make their feelings hurt or their faith slacken, I have to act as though I don’t feel cold, or the wind or the sun, etc. Just as I said that day about cold. That woman who came and sat by Baba: She thought, ‘Baba is God, what can affect Baba?’

“Being on the human level, I must not only act but become human on that level. So when I saw that this woman had [a] cold, I thought if I don’t speak to her – [so] I used to speak to her holding the breath.

“This reminds me of London. It was drizzly, [with a] very cold wind, and all wore warm clothes. Delia wanted to have a film [made]. They wanted Baba to stand and pose, all in the thin clothes. Baba was then cheerful, etc., but Baba was feeling the cold. As soon as he got inside, he told Kaka to bring a coat.

“All know that when Meherabad was active – school, etc. – Baba was very thin at that time; and when I discarded that old black coat of mine, I stayed out in the wind, which was very sharp. I supervised everything, and Baba used to keep fit. Even now I feel fit, but . . .”¹³ Here my note taking stopped, because I was sitting fairly close to Baba while

nursing a slight cold, and he smilingly motioned for me to move to a different chair, farther away from him. He went on to say, "... I think I shall catch cold from you all."¹⁴

Then a young man came in carrying a large tray with many glasses of fruit juice. He placed the tray on a small table in front of Baba. Baba motioned for the Indian men mandali who were there to leave the room, except for Eruch, who closed the door and came back and stood near him. While this was taking place, the atmosphere seemed to change, and I of course remembered that Baba had said earlier that we would share the "Last Drink" with him.

Baba became very serious, and the solemnity of the occasion emphasized my feelings of him as the Christ. In some unfathomable way, what was taking place seemed to embody the significance and flavor of the "Last Supper" with Jesus.

Baba said, "For one minute close your eyes and ask God, Who is the innermost Self of us all, to help us to love Him honestly."¹⁵ He then drank a little from each glass before personally handing it to each of us. "Drink slowly," Baba said.¹⁶ In my notepad, I wrote afterward, "When Baba was preparing to give us the Last Drink he asked us – the Western men – to close our eyes for one moment and ask Infinite God to help us to love Him honestly."¹⁷

It was a very profound experience. At last, the meaning of the chalice in Jeanne Foster's vision of the man from the Far East, predicting that I would be making this journey, was revealed. Just as the disciples of Jesus shared the "Last Drink" with Jesus from a chalice, we shared in the "Last Drink" with Baba.

Then Baba got up and took us to visit his tomb-shrine and his room. Then we sat with him under a tree for a while. When he left to go down the hill, he took only an Indian boy with him.¹⁸

“HE RESTORETH MY SOUL”

When one was with Meher Baba, one's love-longing for him did not diminish. Sometimes, during the soul-fulfilling experience of being near him, the fire of love would become transformed into blissful happiness. However, generally Baba would, in his own unique ways, add fuel to the burning fire of love's longing.

One day, when Baba was with us on Meherabad Hill, I had to go up to the second floor of the Retreat Building to get something, and when I started to come back down the outside stairway, I stopped on the platform at the top of the stairs. There below me, Baba was slowly walking along with some others. Beholding his Spiritual Beauty sent a deep wave of love-longing through my heart. Baba suddenly looked up to me and held up his hand with the index finger and thumb, making a circle, his sign of approval.

Being with Baba in intimate companionship day after day in India was an incredible experience of the disciple-Master relationship. The intensity of Baba's Divine Love seemed to become greater with each passing day, and as it did, our love for him became deeper and deeper. During our stay with Baba, he seemed to reveal more and more of himself as the living Christ. And sometimes we caught glimpses of him as the unlimited Ocean of Infinitely Pure Divine Love.

One day I stood alone on Meherabad Hill, contemplating what a great blessing it was to be one of the few Western men who were there with Baba and to be the recipient of so much of his sweet love. I could not figure out how I could be so incredibly fortunate. I thought, “There must be countless thousands of people throughout the world who deserve to be here far more than I do, but, oddly enough, here I am.” I fully realized that this was a unique experience. Every moment was filled with the essence of spiritual wakefulness, as compared with

the illusory dreams of one's ordinary life experiences. But it was also a unique opportunity to respond to the gift of Meher Baba's love by trying to surrender all that was false within one and to completely give one's self to the Beloved.

In trying to do this, I found myself plunged into a deep inner working, wherein I was able to sort out and shed many things. At that time, I thought I was acting on my own, but later I realized that Baba must have precipitated my consciousness into this deep inner working, and that he was thereby helping me to draw closer to him. As this inner working continued, I finally came to an inner block, which I felt in the abdominal area of my physical body, and I was unable to shed it. My inner working seemed to come to an abrupt halt. I felt grateful to have been able to shed as much as I had, but it did not occur to me that Baba might intervene and dissolve this block.

However, in the afternoon of the 24th, to my great surprise and relief, Baba did intervene. While he was standing among several people about ten or fifteen feet away from me, suddenly what seemed like a great wave of Divine Love came from him and passed through me, sweeping everything before it, including the inner block with which I had been struggling. I never know how to describe this amazing experience.

The fire of Baba's Divine Love was a mighty force of irresistible light. As it swept away the inner block, I discovered that I had been holding on to the block in my struggle with it. But when it was swept away, I realized that nothing could stand in the way of Baba's Divine Love-Grace. That love could easily dissolve or sweep away any obstacle or burden.

This all happened in a matter of a few seconds, and when it was over, I just stood there, transfixed with unspeakable wonder. I was completely relieved of the inner struggle; the block was gone, and I felt great inner joy and peace. I felt restored to wholeness; I felt complete. There was a deep inner awareness, and in trying to assess what had happened

and what I was experiencing then, I found my thoughts centered on the Twenty-third Psalm. As I realized what Baba had done, with great wonder and joy, I silently exclaimed, “He restoreth my soul!” I felt that Meher Baba had truly revealed and restored to me my own soul. The sense of completeness was glowingly blissful, deep in Baba’s love.

Meantime, Baba and the others started walking down the hill to lower Meherabad, where he was going to light the dhuni fire. As I trailed along behind the others, I exclaimed to myself in wonderment, “Baba is the dhuni! Baba is the Fire, the Fire of Divine Love!”

In a letter to my family, I described what happened and then added, “His love that day was like a fire; and every obstacle only seemed to intensify that love. In my own case, I felt one obstacle after the other being consumed in that love, till finally there were no more obstacles; there was nothing left but his great love: his truly Divine Love. Perhaps this was just a glimpse. I’m sure that’s all it was, because we cannot even faintly imagine his true glory. In fact, he told us that if we were to catch a glimpse of him as he really is, we would lose consciousness, and I am sure we would. His love was exquisitely beautiful and soul embracing, and I truly felt that he was literally fulfilling the words of the Twenty-third Psalm. Somehow, that day I felt I partially understood the meaning of the dhuni – the sacred fire.”¹⁹

WALK THROUGH ARANGAON VILLAGE

During his many years of work, Meher Baba visited many villages throughout India, bringing his love to countless thousands (many of whom would not have been financially able to come to him). We were privileged to accompany him when he visited the village of Sakori and, on the afternoon of the 24th, Arangaon village, which was within walking distance of Meherabad.

First, Baba took us directly to a large room [Old Mandali Hall], where we were joined by the Eastern mandali and others for a ceremony before the dhuni lighting. Vishnu recited Upasni Maharaj’s “Praise of the Ten Avatars” and M. Ramalinga Shastri, one of Baba’s devotees from Madras, read a passage from the Bhagavad Gita in Sanskrit.²⁰

After Shastri had chanted on and on in Sanskrit, I recall that Baba made a questioning gesture to me as though to ask, “Did you understand what he’s saying?” I spoke up, saying, “We didn’t understand it, Baba.” Baba then said, “I have created everything, but don’t know Sanskrit. I just nod my head as if I know.”²¹

The passage read by Shastri was the one in which Krishna says, “Age after age, from time immemorial, for the destruction of ignorance, for the preservation of Truth, I have taken human form.”²²

Baba interrupted another chant, saying, “You say it (the prayer) as if you were in mid-ocean and being attacked by sharks.”²³

Baba then had one of his resident disciples, Sidhu Kamble, sing a devotional song.²⁴ Baba translated the song in part: “One who loves cannot talk about living, and my Beloved seems not to care for me. When my heart was drawn to the locks of my Beloved, I thought the locks were near. Now I have walked all my life till my feet are full of blisters, yet I have not reached them.”²⁵

Baba added, “So also Baba is so near and yet so far.”²⁶

He continued translating the song: “When the lips of separation tried to touch the cup of Union, hundreds and hundreds of lovers got burned.” (“Baba applauds,” I also recorded.)²⁷

Then we went outside with Baba to the place where he was going to light the dhuni. Many of the villagers had



Meher Baba and village children at the site of the dhuni, September 24, 1954.

gathered there to accompany Baba after the ceremony to their village, a quarter of a mile away. Among them were many children. The way the children crowded around Baba showed their love for him. Baba seemed delighted to be with them, and he playfully patted, hugged, and teased them as pictures of this happy time were being taken.



*Meher Baba at dhuni fire; seated man blowing elephant horn,
September 24, 1954.*

Baba, the mandali, the Western men, and some of the villagers gathered around the site of the dhuni. Baba was handed some lighted paper tapers, and with these he ignited the wood that had been prepared in the dhuni fire pit. Then Baba sat in a chair nearby while the mandali lined up on both sides of the dhuni in front of him

and sang his arti, the villagers joining in. As it was a bit drafty where Baba sat, he wrapped a kerchief around his head.

At the conclusion of the arti, Baba motioned to a nearby elderly village man to blow the elephant horn he was holding. This was the signal for the walk to the village to begin. A group of village men doing a very energetic harvest dance led the way. They were accompanied by the music of drums, bells, and cymbals. Someone held an umbrella over Baba's head as he walked toward the village. By this

time, a large crowd had gathered and everyone joined in the procession.

Arangaon village is very old, dating back to the sixteenth century, and many of the stone buildings seemed quite dilapidated. Nevertheless, it was said that approximately two thousand people lived there, most of whom were farmers.

As Baba moved forward, his Divine Love filled the atmosphere with a unique sweetness and beauty. Every heart was touched by the waves of love emanating from him. I was walking with Malcolm Schloss, and we often exclaimed, "It's incredible!" Baba was so divinely magnetic that the people were irresistibly drawn to him, trying to touch him or bow down to him. The mandali had to form a hand-to-hand cordon around him so that he could move through the crowds. We watched in amazement, and some of us felt that this was what it must have been like to walk with Jesus through the villages of Galilee.



Walking to Arangaon village after the dhuni ceremony,
September 24, 1954.

In the letter to my family the next day, I wrote:

□ *It was an experience that was absolutely incredible: the way Baba went through the streets of that village, surrounded by the people who live there. Where they all came from I can't imagine. They are poor people, all of them, but some were poorer than others, and least of all in worldly riches and respect were the Harijans, the untouchables.*

We moved, close to Baba, from simple home to simple temple, and as we moved along, living pages of a new Divine Dispensation unfolded before our eyes. How the people would come close to Baba, bow down to touch his precious feet, receive a long-to-be-remembered pat from Baba, or a loving embrace, or a glance, or even touch his sleeve as he passed by. These people are poor in worldly goods. But they are not poor in love and respect for the spiritual values. God, in the form of the Divine Beloved, came to their village yesterday, and they received him with garlands and bouquets, with artis and
 □ *bhajans – with devotion and songs and simple ceremonies.*²⁸

As Baba was slowly moving forward in the midst of the crowd, I saw a little elderly lady off to the side. She held a metal tray with a small camphor lamp and matches on it. It was apparent that she wanted to approach Baba and perform his arti, but the crowd was so dense that she could not proceed. I thought, “This is such a shame: Baba doesn’t even see her!” Baba passed by some fifty feet away, and there was a look of fading hope on her face when suddenly he turned toward her and waved for the crowd to part and make way for her to come to him.

The look on her face immediately changed to joy, and she quickly made her way to Baba, who lovingly waited for her. She tried to light

the little lamp, but she was so nervous that she dropped her matches to the ground. As she stooped to pick them up, she kept glancing up to see if Baba was going to wait. He lovingly gestured his reassurance to her that he would. Finally, having succeeded in lighting her lamp, she waved the tray with the lamp in front of Baba in performance of his arti. This was very touching and beautiful.

“Baba went into many homes, participated in so many simple scenes of devotion and love that one is quite amazed by it all,” I wrote to my family.²⁹ A few of us went into some of the buildings with Baba. I especially remember one very poor, elderly couple. The old man prostrated himself at Baba’s feet. Baba helped him get up and lovingly embraced him. At another house, where the family of one of Baba’s mandali lived, they greeted him in front of the entrance, bowed down to him, and broke coconuts at his feet in symbolic, and actual, complete surrenderance to him. Baba lovingly embraced them and many others, including the poorest of the poor.

On undated pages in the section of my notepad chronicling the 24th, I quote Baba as saying:

There is an age-old custom among the Hindus that signifies that they surrender. They dedicate everything to the Master: [their] good, their bad – their everything – at the feet of the Master – good thoughts, bad thoughts.

The outer crust of the coconut means the gross body; the lining of the kernel is the subtle; and the whole coconut itself is the mental body; and the water is the soul. So by placing a coconut at the feet of the Master, the disciple says, “My body, my energy, my mind, my soul are all yours.” This is called [illegible]. You must have seen [this] at the darshan.

John, Peter, the great fishermen, were great men. They

*sacrificed everything for Jesus. They knew how to do it, not merely ceremoniously, but by their every act in life. Their life was not their own, but belonged to Jesus to do as he liked with them.*³⁰

Baba, the Western men, the mandali, and village elders rested for a while in a scalloped alcove facing the street.

Some of the village girls danced for Baba, and as I gazed at Baba in this setting, I thought he resembled Lord Krishna. Afterward, in a merry mood, Baba tossed fruit to many who were gathered around.

When it came time to leave the village, Baba sent the Western men back to lower Meherabad while he went to visit patients in a nearby tuberculosis hospital. When he returned, he gave us aspirin and quinine to take prophylactically against an outbreak of malaria. Then he embraced us, saying it would be our last personal embrace, as

he would not be able to see us privately anymore.

In the letter to my family, the account of the walk through Arangaon village concludes with this observation: “Thus the work of the God-man goes on. It is strenuous enough on the outer plane, I wonder how strenuous it must be on the inner planes. Throughout them all, this Glorious Being is ceaselessly working and loving, and loving, and loving.”³¹

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

I quote from my notes chronicling this day: “Baba didn’t come to



Meher Baba sitting in scalloped alcove in Arangaon village, September 24, 1954.

see us today. Nariman and his brother [Hoshang] came up. Also, Rano came up about the list of names, had lunch with us, and showed us her painting.

"A walk alone in the late afternoon. Freedom in God the Unseen. Evening, till late under the stars talking of Baba: [the] love of God and the joy of doing His Will."³²

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

"Well, here it is Sunday evening, but where you are the day is young yet," I wrote to my family. "This has been another day of days. It seems that on the 12th of September, all of the people did not get to see Baba and have his darshan; accordingly, he agreed to allow them to have his darshan today. The place was just outside Adi's office in a large compound [called Kushru Quarters]. In one corner an open, but covered, shelter had been placed."³³

"I AM WHATEVER ANYONE TAKES ME TO BE"

A low platform had been built there and a chair was placed on it for Baba to sit on. As it turned out, though, he sat most of the time during the program on the edge of the platform with his feet on the ground. About eight thousand people³⁴ from all walks of life came, and they were guided into a line which moved toward Baba. It was a very colorful crowd with many of the women wearing brightly colored saris and many of the men wearing colorful shirts and turbans. There were also many children and babes in arms. The program was an afternoon event, and it lasted for several hours.

"When we arrived, the darshan had already begun," I wrote in my letter, "but Baba interrupted the procession in order to embrace each one of

us Western men disciples. Then we sat or stood nearby to watch. This darshan program was much more orderly than the [one on the] 12th, because they had a way to control the crowds and make them file past Baba.”³⁵

Many of the people brought flowers for Baba. Women and children came first, followed by the men and boys. Each one received a loving contact with him. One poor woman placed on Baba’s foot a coin worth less

than one cent. He moved his foot so that the coin fell off, and then he used his foot to bury it in the gravel. Baba seemed to become absorbed in staring at it for quite some time. I wondered what inner working he was doing.

As they moved along, Baba said, “I love them all, big, small, high, low, rich, poor, all.” Then he turned toward us Westerners and said, “I AM WHATEVER ANYONE TAKES ME TO BE.”

When Baba said this, I wondered what he meant, but could not figure it out. Since then I have come to believe that Baba was speaking of himself as the One behind his form, the Infinite One, or God. If so,

it was quite a revelation. People think of

God in many different ways, ways which have been taught through the various religious traditions. He seemed to be saying that he reflects their individual perception of him.



Meher Baba giving darshan; Darwin seated in foreground, “Little Darshan,” September 26, 1954.

Special Stone

On this day, Baba fulfilled an unexpressed wish I had. During the private talk with Baba on September 19, when I was asking him to hold the stone I had picked out for Jeanne Foster, I had been carefully trying to avoid any thoughts or feelings that would indicate that I, too, would like to have a stone that he had held. Now, during this darshan program in front of Adi's office, Baba quite unexpectedly picked up a stone and tossed it to me. Caught off-guard, I missed it, but Baba lovingly picked up another one and this time prepared me by pointedly taking aim first. I have carried this black stone in my pocket ever since.³⁶

The darshan program was supposed to end at six o'clock, but by that time there was still a long line of people who had not had their contact with Baba. At six o'clock Baba made his way to his car and was helped to climb on top of it as the crowd surged forward and a cordon of men held them back. From his high perch Baba gave a mass blessing to those remaining. He had instructed us to leave immediately in the cars provided and return to Meherabad. As we left, we could see Baba's car creeping slowly away from the compound amid shouts of acclamation from the crowd.



Meher Baba standing to perform some inner work, "Little Darshan," September 26, 1954.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

According to my notepad: “Baba paid us a surprise visit for about half an hour. He gave us each



Photo of Meher Baba with his signature and the inscription
‘I AM THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH’
written by Mani, for Baba, September 27, 1954.

copies of his picture with his signature and the inscription ‘I AM THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH’ [written by his sister, Mani, for Baba]. Then Baba gave out gifts. He said, “To all you meet and see, give my love. It is the only thing worth receiving.”³⁷ Baba also gave me one of his sadras and said that it should be in the room where we held meetings.

Baba gave us instructions for the upcoming meeting: “Wednesday, the 29th, be down below at 8:45 a.m. Mingle with the crowds, if you like. Feel free to move about. Come back up to the hill if you like, etc. Thursday, the 30th, be down below at 8:45 a.m. and stay there.”³⁸

To Mr. Hitakar, the Japanese man, who had returned from Calcutta, Baba said, “You may spread the message of my love throughout Japan. Wait until you experience and feel me before speaking. Don’t be hypocritical. Say only what you feel.”³⁹

Baba then embraced us very tenderly and left to deal with matters pertaining to the upcoming meeting.⁴⁰

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

From very early in the morning on this warm day, we experienced what is called an “elephant rain,” a torrential downpour. High winds

coming from the northwest broke part of the wall surrounding the Retreat Building. Water leaked into the covered outdoor refectory (near Baba's gadi), dormitory and other places. We Western men were unaffected, however.

Baba had invited nine hundred forty-eight men from all over India for this special two-day meeting on the 29th and 30th, called "The Love Gathering," and preparations had taken several days. A huge pandal, or tent, had been erected between the road and the railroad tracks. A field kitchen was prepared to provide food for the men. A large tent to house the men had been put up, and hundreds of beds were set up under it. A platform for Baba had been built at one end of the pandal, and enough chairs had been brought in to provide seating for everyone.

Now, all was awash in mud. We Westerners remained in the Retreat Building, where we were safe and dry and had everything we needed, but we felt concern for all those men who were having to cope with the rain and mud down below. We found out later that they were taking it all in their stride.

I remembered that Baba had told me, during our private interview on the 19th, to bring to the meeting on the 29th and 30th the atmosphere of Divine Love that pervaded Meherabad Hill, where we had spent so many precious hours with him. I spent this day trying to assimilate and fathom all that it had been my incomparable privilege to experience so far during this incredible time with Baba.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29: THE LOVE GATHERING

The 29th and 30th were to be the last two days of our stay with Meher Baba, and on these days the long-awaited big and very important meeting was held at lower Meherabad. It was attended by the nine

hundred forty-eight men followers of Baba who had come from all over India, plus us Western men who were staying at Meherabad as Baba's guests. Baba had said several times throughout the previous weeks that it was because of this meeting that the Western men had been invited to come to India.

The rain had stopped early in the morning. We Westerners found seats under the pandal more than halfway back, as many of the Easterners had already claimed seats farther up, closer to Baba. As we were taking our seats, Baba, some of his mandali and a few others assembled on the platform.

With Eruch reading the words that Baba spelled out by pointing to the letters on his alphabet board, Baba said, "I called all you dear ones for the meeting. What is meeting? Meeting means we meet. So, before we begin anything, we meet in embrace for the last time. So meet me with all your heart, but not so tightly so as to break my ribs!"⁴¹

What followed was one of the most touching scenes of the meeting as Baba embraced each one of the men with Divine Love.

Baba then said:

□ *Last night, all the time I was thinking: Why the rains started especially on the 28th when you all were to arrive here; because all these twenty-eight days there was sunshine and all the programmes went off very cheerfully. The darshan programme of 12th September, the explanations to the Western group here, and another programme at Sakori, where I went to lay my head at the shrine of my Master, and the programme at 'Nagar [Ahmednagar] on the 26th at Sarosh Motor Works [actually Kushru Quarters], went off cheerfully.*

Then for the first time I asked Myself, whether I was the Avatar; and the clear and definite answer was "Yes, I am the

Ancient One, the Highest of the High.” Then I asked Avatar Meher Baba, why this rain – this inconvenience to the lovers who have come all the way to meet You! Avatar Meher Baba replied, “Those who really love You would come with their heads on their palms, and this inconvenience would be a happiness to them.”⁴²

(My notes, which were sparse on this day, quote Baba as saying, “Not to take such inconveniences, for lovers of Avatar Baba, would mean that they are not lovers.”)⁴³

Baba’s remarks continue:

In all parts of India, every year thousands of pilgrims go to pay their homage to the holy places and the tombs of the Saints and Masters, undergoing all kinds of hardships on the way – sometimes journeying long distances on foot, and many die on the way from illness, exposure, and contamination of disease, none of which deter them from their objective. How much more hardship and inconvenience you should be prepared to undergo therefore, when you come to the living Master! For, instead of the ordinary pilgrimage to tombs and holy relics of the past, you are gathered today at the shrine of the living Avatar, Meher Baba.⁴⁴

Now after embracing you all one after the other for the last time, be brave and confess all your weaknesses, because very soon I am going to destroy all bindings of the religious ceremonies.⁴⁵

My notes record: “Baba tells his lovers to file past him for the final embrace.”⁴⁶ As everyone lined up, Baba said, “As I am going to drop this

body soon, this will be the last opportunity for you to embrace me – my last embrace. May you all be worthy of my love and may you all not let me down: Don't sell me.”⁴⁷

As Baba stood and embraced the men one by one, it became apparent that many of them were deeply touched by what he had just said. Perhaps for many of the men this actually was the last time they would get to exchange an embrace with him. I felt that this was Baba's way of deepening their love for him, and I watched in wonderment as men openly sobbed.

Following the “last embrace,” everyone returned to his seat, and the same prayers that had been said on the 17th were recited; they were the Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Hindu prayers. Also, a prayer of the Sikh faith was said.

My notes record: “Baba washes his hands with muddy water.”⁴⁸ What had happened was that before the prayers were recited, Baba had washed his hands using clean water, which was poured over them. Then, after Kaikobad had recited the first prayer, someone shouted out “Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!” Because of the interruption, Baba wanted to start the ceremony over. However, there was no more clean water, so he instructed one of his men mandali, Padri, to scoop up rainwater from a puddle under the pandal. He used this muddy water to wash his hands.

“Now the Confession Prayer [Repentance Prayer],” Baba said after all the other prayers were recited.⁴⁹ Baba asked if anyone was tired and wanted a break before doing the prayer. He added, “Baba never feels tired; if you are not tired, we will go on.”⁵⁰ When everyone shouted that they were not tired, Baba said, “Pay proper attention and make this confession for yourselves and for all the world with all your hearts.”⁵¹

Then Baba said, “God is deaf to the dictates of the mind, but keen to the words of the heart. So if you put your heart into the confession,

then God will definitely make you love Him.”⁵² He also said, “What is known as virtue and sin is nothing, but it is strength and weakness.”⁵³

Baba stood for the Confession, as he had stood for the embraces and the other prayers. Baba then called for Francis Brabazon to come up to the microphone and call out “Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!” Everyone took up the cry for some time.

Baba planned to spend the rest of the day meeting with the Easterners in small groups to give talks and also to give a few private interviews. He sent us Westerners back up the hill, telling us, “Whether it rains or not, be here tomorrow morning at 9:00 and in the afternoon at 3:30 p.m., when I will say precisely for the last time what I have to say.”⁵⁴

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30: FINAL DECLARATION

The day was cool, partly sunny, with no rain. I took notes as events unfolded on this day, and they begin: “8:35 a.m. Baba leads the large crowd of men devotees up the hill. He stops to rest by a tree. All are seated for a while.”⁵⁵ Everyone had been waiting for Baba down by the railroad tracks, as we had been instructed, and when he got there he took us all up the hill to an area on a level with, but some distance from, the Retreat Building. While Baba sat under a tree there, he allowed us to take pictures. On the way walk-



Baba sitting under tree, Men's Meeting, September 30, 1954.

ing up the hill I was quite close to Baba, and while he sat under the tree, although we all were grouped a respectful distance away from him, I was fairly close to him, only a few rows back.

My notes continue: "Then Baba leads us up to the tomb. Story of the tomb and coffee."⁵⁶ Standing just outside the tomb on the right side, on a concrete platform at the back of which were five tiny meditation rooms, Baba had us Westerners sit in front of him as he told once again about his 1927-1928 five-month-long seclusion there, and about the boy who drank half the coffee intended for Baba each morning and evening. "For one complete year I took the prasad of that boy," Baba said.⁵⁷

Returning to my notes: "Baba had Pleader locked up in a small room in seclusion two and a half years only on milk, not to speak." Baba told us the story of Pleader's seclusion in one of the five tiny rooms, and of the cobra who would come and drink Pleader's milk, and how he was helpless because he had to keep silent. Then Baba said to us, pointing to Pleader, "May God one day make him realize that Baba is the only Reality, the Highest of the High."⁵⁸

According to my notes: "Baba has the door of the tomb opened and tells the crowd of men to file by and look in. Baba then summons the Western men to the platform, where he moves about giving each a pat or a greeting while moving pictures are taken."⁵⁹ We were planning to leave for Bombay that very evening, so as far as I knew this was our parting contact with him. He told us to go down to the pandal and get good seats.⁶⁰

My notes record: "We all assemble in the large pandal. Chairs are furnished so that all may be comfortable. Padri tests the two microphones. Baba arrives at 9:50 a.m. and takes his seat, which is a divan, or chaise longue, up on the platform. Baba is wearing his pink jacket and white dhoti and underjacket."⁶¹

"GO DIRECT TO YOUR DESTINATION"

Meher Baba then said:

Before I give my Final Declaration, I want to say a few words regarding other matters. After the meeting procedures are over, Baba will leave at 6:00 p.m. Before leaving he wants to say certain other things, too. All those who want to get the full benefit of the meeting with the atmosphere of this place, I wish that you all, after leaving Meherabad, go direct to your destinations. Those who are from the north or the south and want to stop at Bombay or other places for other business, it is not coming and going only for Baba work. I want you to go directly to your destination to carry Baba's atmosphere there.

Before Baba declares anything to you all today, he will say a few words to you regarding his Masters. Today, during both sessions of the meeting, I will be precise concerning what I want to convey to you.

(Baba asks for the five from Sakori and has them come up front and sit on the platform on his right.)

What I am is what I was, am, and will be, as the Ancient One is always, due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba, Narayan Maharaj were the five Perfect Masters of this Age for Baba. I bow down to them. Only Upasni Maharaj and Babajan played directly the main roles. Babajan, in less than a millionth of a second, made me realize that I am God, and in a period of seven years, Upasni Maharaj gave me the Divine Knowledge that I am the Avatar.

Before Maharaj dropped his body, we physically met in a

secluded place, and so now, before I drop my body, I had to meet him; so I went to Sakori and bowed down to [his] shrine and told him, “You know I am the Ancient One.”

Maharaj was Perfection personified. Now at the head of the Sakori Ashram is Godavri Mai, whom I call Yashoda. She is a unique female personality, and she loves me beyond words. And to me she is the dearest of the dear. Today you will be shown [pictures] of my visit to Sakori so that you can feel that you, too, were there.

(Yeshwant Rao is asked to stand up.)

He is the link between Maharaj and Merwan. Mr. Wagh, who has for years most faithfully and honestly carried [out] the office work, [and] takes the arrangements at Sakori Ashram, he can be called one of the few main pillars of Sakori. Sakori’s high priest, Mr. Deshmukh: But even his priesthood won’t save me from the violent death. Mr. Purandhare, one of the most honest, faithful workers at Sakori; and this old Parsi father loves God wholeheartedly and longs for God and lives at Sakori near the feet of Maharaj.

(The Sakori group are sent back to their seats.)

Since I stopped speaking and also stopped writing – only when I had to sign I used to put my signature – I carried on with this alphabet board all these years of my silence. From the 7th of October, 1954, I will give up this board, too. And I won’t make signs like Gustadji to convey thoughts. So, from 7th October, 1954, I won’t be speaking. I won’t be using the board nor the fingers for the signs.

I will be as if withdrawn within myself. And this is because now, at last, the so long-promised and repeatedly promised time

of my breaking of my silence is very near. From October 7, 1954, I shall completely retire from my present activities. No mass darshans, no programs, no meetings, no messages, no correspondence; so take this all seriously and do not write to me after 7th October, as I will not pay any attention to any correspondence. Only I will go with Gadge Maharaj to Pandharpur, if he has the fortune to do it soon, as I will drop this body soon.

The mandali have asked me today to tell in a few words exactly, precisely, what will happen to me. So I tell you – note down: In October at Satara I will be appearing to lead a retired, normal life – eating, going out for walks – but from the 7th of October, there will not be any use of the board and other things just told [to] you. By April 1955 end, I will definitely drop this body.

During six months, from November, December, January, February, March, April, three phases of the Avatar-life will manifest themselves. First, a very strange, serious disease will attack this body, and that will be the cause of my Humiliation that I have been saying about. The Humiliation will end in my sudden breaking of my silence and uttering that Word which only God can utter. Glorification will replace Humiliation. All the pent-up infinity in me will splash and spread over the universe.⁶²

Baba then called for Dr. Donkin to come up, saying that what he wanted to say next was very important, and that he should grasp it fully and then convey it over the microphone to us. As I recall, one of the Eastern men mandali – Eruch or Adi – read the alphabet board to Dr. Donkin as Baba conveyed what he wanted to say.

“Baba wants to use a simile about the atom bomb,” Dr. Donkin said.⁶³ Then, according to my notes, Donkin said to us, speaking for Baba:

As the atom when split spreads havoc throughout the universe, so also when the atom of my infinity is released when I break my silence, the spiritual havoc, or earthquake, will be something that no one can imagine. And it will happen.⁶⁴ Just as in the case when a colossal earthquake which happens suddenly [causes] all in the area [to] feel it, so also the breaking of my silence will create a spiritual havoc and everybody will feel it in their heart. And, unbelievable as it may seem, very near my physical presence the Universal Glorification will not be manifested – unbelievable as it may seem, my Universal Glorification will not be felt in the surroundings where my physical body will then be.⁶⁵

Baba continued:

At the time of Glorification – all will feel the time of my Glorification. There will be those who will be surrounding me, and those near there will not be interested in Baba. Those who are now hostile will be surrounding Baba there. For example, I may be in Poona with no one from the mandali with me. About thirty or forty of the hostile group will not feel the glory of my Manifestation. Otherwise the whole world will feel it. No one of my mandali or lovers will be near me when I am beaten and finally stabbed.

And yet I never die. I am always the Ancient One, and you should all remember that God alone is real and all else is illusion.

Your attending this meeting and hearing in precise definite terms about these happenings will be worth it if all of you, if not some of you, if not at least a few of you, spread the message of my love to others. From 3:00 to 5:00 will be read my

Final Declaration in all the four languages. From 5:00 you are all free to depart, and you must depart by tomorrow noon.

Today after lunch, all of you will be shown the pictures of Baba's Sakori visit. But do not now try to embrace Baba, garland Baba, or ask Baba for anything.⁶⁶

FINAL DECLARATION

My notes resume in the afternoon, recording, "A group of five young men stand at the mikes and sing devotional songs.⁶⁷ Apparently, they had requested permission to do so and Baba had given them ten minutes."⁶⁸

"Baba's Final Declaration at his last meeting at Meherabad, September 30, 1954," I wrote next.

At exactly 3:00 p.m., Baba had Eruch read out the declaration. In it Baba spoke about his Humiliation, the breaking of his silence, his Glorification and the dropping of his body. He also made other prophetic statements, all of which were difficult to understand. He later gave out notes explaining that some of the things he said were in his language and some in our language.

I started writing it in my notepad as it was being spoken but soon gave up. A little later, I obtained a written copy and recorded it in the notepad. That was the last entry I made. The conclusion of the lengthy Declaration reads:

To affirm religious faiths, to establish societies, or to hold conferences will never bring about the feeling of unity and oneness in the life of mankind, now completely absorbed in the manyness of illusion. Unity in the midst of diversity can be made to be felt only by touching the very core of the heart. That is the work for which I have come.

I have come to sow the seed of love in your hearts so that, in spite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of oneness, through love, is brought about amongst all the nations, creeds, sects and castes of the world.

In order to bring this about, I am preparing to break my silence. When I break my silence it will not be to fill your ears with spiritual lectures. I shall speak only One Word, and this word will penetrate the hearts of all men and make even the sinner feel that he is meant to be a saint, while the saint will know that God is in the sinner as much as He is in himself.

When I speak that Word, I shall lay the foundation for that which is to take place during the next seven hundred years. When I come again after seven hundred years, the evolution of consciousness will have reached such an apex that materialistic tendencies will be automatically transmuted into spiritual longing, and the feeling of equality in universal brotherhood will prevail. This means that opulence and poverty, literacy and illiteracy, jealousy and hatred, which are in evidence today in their full measure, will then be dissolved through the feeling of the oneness of all men. Prosperity and happiness will then be at their zenith.

This does not mean that oneness in illusion shall remain so eternally. That is because all this that is, is illusion, and the consciousness of oneness as well as of manyness in illusion is part of the process of evolution. The time is bound to recur when there will be again the same beginning, growth and culmination of the heights of manyness and oneness in illusion.

My next advent, after I drop this body, will be after seven

hundred years, and that will mark the end and the beginning of a cycle of cycles. All cycles of time in illusion end and begin after seven hundred to fourteen hundred years, and there have been and will be millions and billions of such cycles in a cycle of cycles; thus, there is no end to illusion, which always remains illusion.

Age after age I come amidst mankind to maintain my own creation of illusion, thereby also awakening humanity to become aware of it. The framework of illusion is always one and the same, but the designs in illusion are innumerable and ever-changing. My advent is not to destroy illusion because illusion, as it is, is absolutely nothing. I come to make you become aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion, which is nothing but the shadow of my Infinite Self, and through me you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness.

My manifestation as the Avatar of the time will be of short duration. This short period will, in quick succession, cover my Humiliation, the breaking of my silence, my Glorification and my violent physical end. Everlastingly with all the Divine Bliss within me, I eternally suffer for one and all – thus I am crucified eternally and continually for all.

During this short period, my Word of words will touch the hearts of all mankind, and spontaneously this divine touch will instill in man the feeling of the oneness of all fellow beings. Gradually, in the course of the next seven hundred years, this feeling will supersede the tendency of separateness and rule over the hearts of all, driving away hatred, jealousy and greed that breed suffering, and happiness will reign.

While the four translations of the Final Declaration were being read, the crowd was completely silent, and a few drops of rain fell. When the reading was over, Baba gave out prasad to each of the men. As we Westerners filed past him and received the prasad, he held out his hand for us to kiss.

Then the meeting – and our stay with Meher Baba – ended with Baba's departure. While for some days I had been aware of a sense of impending separation from Baba, I did not experience sadness about it, because I felt an inner rapport with him.

“I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU”

That evening we were served a fine dinner at Meherabad, during which Charles Purdom expressed gratitude on behalf of our group to Sarosh and his wife, Villoo, for all their hospitality. Sarosh answered that they and the rest of the mandali had grown to love us and were proud of the way we conducted ourselves.

At 8:00 p.m., we were taken by bus to Ahmednagar, where we caught a night train to Bombay, via Nasik. We were four to a compartment; I shared a compartment with Meherjee, John Bass, and Frank Eaton. Most of the American men had the same itinerary; my airplane seatmate was usually Frank Eaton, although sometimes it was Fred Winterfeldt. Conversation was difficult, due to the noise of the plane engines, so we did not talk very much. Our stops included Karachi, Cairo, Athens, Rome, Geneva, Paris, Shannon, then the Azores (due to storms at sea), Gander, and finally back to Idlewild Airport in New York City, where Jeanne and my son, Lowell, were waiting.

The impact of being with Baba so intimately for three weeks was tremendous. In my case, for example, somewhere deep in my consciousness, exposure to Baba's Divine Love, Light, and Beauty had

created a condition which I can only describe as a prolonged Divine Love shock, which I was conscious of for many years.

After returning from India I had some dreams, three of which I recount here.

October 6, 1954: *Last night I dreamed that You came to me, Beloved, in a dazzling ball of Light, and as You absorbed me, I surrendered completely and wholly to You.*

October 7, 1954: *Last night I enjoyed Your blessed companionship again, Beloved. In a dream, a man near me began to pray in a kneeling position. I thought that I, too, should pray, and, realizing that You were seated close to me, I turned while kneeling toward You with bowed head and asked that the other man's prayers be granted. You took my head in Your hands and raised it. I felt Your love.*

December 21, 1954: *Last night, in the midst of my dreams, I became conscious of Your lovely face; You were nearby. I loved You with all my being's love. Wherever You went, I could not take my eyes from Your lovely face, and my heart still clings to the lingering memory of Your loving Presence in my dreams.*

Although my life in Schenectady picked up where it had left off, it took me quite a while to gather enough sanskaras (impressions) to feel that I was really back in the world. The challenge was how to keep divinely attuned and yet still hold down a job. I had to work to achieve

a balance between feeling Baba's presence and keeping my mind on my work. Sometimes during planning meetings, for example, I would feel transported to Meherabad and find myself walking with Baba up the hill. Inwardly I seemed to actually be there. When I would "come to," I would look around to see if anyone else noticed my absence.

While I did not know if Meher Baba would drop his body soon or if I would ever see his beautiful form again, I continued to experience the "silent communion" Baba had referred to in an undated letter he had once sent to me (with the salutation "My ever dearest"), in which he wrote: "... [T]he silent communion with all the dear ones, wherever they are, continues as ever. For there is no separation in Love, and wherever I am, under any condition of seclusion in the remotest corner of the globe, I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU, who love me so and are ever so close."

P A R T F I V E

1956

C H A P T E R
T H I R T E E N

*Meher Baba
in New York*

*T*he Western men who were Meher Baba's guests in India for those three "Incredible Weeks" were very fortunate. However, there were many, many others in the West, both men and women, who had not seen their Beloved in quite a while, and there were many others who had yet to meet him for the first time. Their hearts were filled with longing to see and be with him. When the news reached us that Baba might come to the West in 1956, a great many hopes were raised that the visit might actually happen.

Then came the news that a cable had been received in Myrtle Beach outlining Baba's plans to come to the West in the summer of 1956. The plan was for Baba and four of his close men mandali to fly around the world, spending a few days in London, New York, Myrtle Beach, Hollywood and San Francisco. Even while these plans were taking shape, Baba announced that he would begin a year of very strict seclusion, beginning on February 15, 1956. However, Baba planned to

interrupt this seclusion just long enough to make his trip to the West and on around the world.

The trip was contingent on the ability of Baba's Western lovers to raise \$15,000 to pay for the airfares, hotels, and other expenses of Baba and the four mandali traveling with him. When the required amount was raised, we received the most welcome news that Baba would be arriving in New York on July 20, 1956, and that those who wished to could travel with him by air as he moved from coast to coast.

In this regard, I received a letter from Baba's sister, Mani, saying, among other things, "It gives me great joy to be able to write to you a message from Baba. He wants me to write and tell you that you should be with Baba all the time he is there, and to accompany him all the way to San Francisco. Jeanne, Lowell, and the girls [my daughters, Leatrice and Renae] should come as far as Myrtle Beach – and further only if it is conveniently and easily possible. If not, then they should be with him up till his departure from Myrtle Beach."

As it turned out, since Lowell, Leatrice, and Renae were working and could pay their own way, I had only the expense of Jeanne and myself, so we all traveled with Baba together with some thirty-four others, some of whom, I am sure, were asked by Baba to accompany him on this trip.

For what follows, I rely on my vivid, treasured memories, with help from Jeanne's diary and – especially for direct quotations from Meher Baba – *The Awakener's* series of volumes chronicling that period.

A JOYOUS REUNION

Once it was certain that Baba was coming to America, a Hospitality Committee was formed, with Marion Florsheim as the chairperson. Marion dubbed the effort "Project Topsy" and engaged many people

all across the country to assist her in working out the innumerable details and arrangements.

Accordingly, as part of his tour around the world, Baba came to America for the fifth time, on Friday, July 20, 1956, accompanied by the four mandali, Adi K. Irani, Eruch Jessawala, Meherjee Karkaria, and Dr. Nilu. The Pan American plane, called the “Rainbow,” arrived early in the morning at Idlewild [Kennedy] Airport, from London.

Between fifty and sixty people had gathered outdoors at the airport around 6:00 a.m. to await Baba’s arrival. At a few minutes before 7:00, someone said Baba’s plane had arrived. I felt impelled to go over to where the plane could be seen. Four or five others followed, and behold! There it was, and there was Baba sitting in a window seat. We waved to him and he waved back to us. Jeanne later wrote in her diary, “Tears came to my eyes to be so lucky to see Baba’s face at the window.”

Within a few minutes some of the passengers began coming out of the plane door and walking down the steps, but Baba was still sitting there. Jeanne, becoming impatient to be with Baba, impulsively waved to Baba, saying, “Come on!” Baba immediately got up and soon came down the steps, wearing his pink jacket and white sadra, followed by the mandali. We kept on waving to Baba and he to us as they walked toward the customs building. Baba’s visit to America was sponsored by the Universal Spiritual League in America, represented by Elizabeth Patterson, and Sufism Reoriented, represented by Ivy Duce. They, of course, were the first to greet Baba, as they had to be present as Baba and the mandali cleared customs.

When Baba and the others came out of the customs building about forty-five minutes later, a wonderfully joyful scene took place as the



Marion Florsheim,
Myrtle Beach, July 1956.



Meher Baba in the Florsheims' convertible car, July 20, 1956.

welcoming group of people surged around Baba. He looked radiant and happy as he began embracing first some of his long-time disciples – according to Jeanne’s diary, Elizabeth Patterson, Margaret Craske, John Bass, Ivy Duce, Ben Hayman, Fred Winterfeldt, Marion and Harry Florsheim, Adele Wolkin, Filis Frederick, Charmian Duce, and Jeanne and me – and then, one

by one, the entire group. Filis came forward with a garland of flowers, which Baba allowed her to place around his neck.

Many bystanders seemed quite impressed as they saw Baba embracing each one of such a large, welcoming group, and they stood nearby, some asking who Baba was. Marion and Harry Florsheim had brought their convertible car over to where Baba was standing, and they helped Baba and Eruch to get into the back seat. As they tarried for a few minutes, those who had cameras were lucky to get some wonderful pictures of Baba. Jeanne wrote in her diary, “Baba looked so radiantly happy and smiled beautifully and waved as the car started off.”

Soon they were on their way, with most of the group following in taxis, to the Delmonico Hotel, at 59th Street and Park Avenue in New York City. Some of us got there before Baba and were waiting outside as he and Eruch arrived. Baba greeted us with a big smile and a wave of his hand. We waved back and managed to get some more snapshots of him.



Meher Baba entering the Delmonico Hotel in New York City,
July 20, 1956.

PREPARATIONS

Baba and the four men mandali went directly to their rooms on the eighteenth floor of the hotel to rest and have lunch. After a few minutes, however, Baba invited the Hospitality Committee to come up to his room to discuss the procedures, the program, and the publicity.

Meantime, some of the people traveling with Baba went to the two large, nicely furnished rooms on the mezzanine floor provided for Baba's use and started making preparations for the interviews that were scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. We were among them, and Jeanne immediately noticed several things that could be done to improve the setting. She asked Harry Florsheim to see if he could arrange to have a chaise longue brought down from someone's room for Baba to sit on during the interviews. He succeeded (someone at the hotel offered to lend it for Baba's use), and soon it was brought in.

But then Jeanne thought the chaise longue should be covered by something clean. She asked Anna Rosa Karrasch if she would go to her nearby apartment and bring something suitable. Anna hurried away and soon returned with a new white counterpane, which was then draped over the chaise longue. A cushion was also provided. Also, a small table, covered with a pretty cloth, was set beside the chaise longue, and on it were placed a vase of fragrant gardenias and a bowl of white seedless grapes, as Jeanne knew that Baba liked to give out fruit as his prasad.

People began to arrive and gather at the mezzanine rooms for the interviews. Ella Winterfeldt was at the registry table at the entrance, with a few others to help her take down the names and check on the appointment times of those who had come to see Baba. Ann Kohanow was at the book table, with Leatrice and Renae assisting. Those on duty to help with the work of the interviews were Bili Eaton, Anna Karrasch, Beryl Williams, Sylvia DeLong, Filis Frederick, Adele Wolkin, as well as Jeanne and I.

JEANNE'S INTUITION

Suddenly, Jeanne hurriedly walked out of the interview room. I followed close behind her, asking her where she was going. She simply replied, "Out here," and walked directly to the hall toward the elevator.

Just then the elevator doors opened and there was Baba, with Meherjee. They came straight over to Jeanne, and Baba took her hands and held them, and then allowed her to kiss him on the cheek. Meherjee then handed Jeanne a parcel, saying that it contained some of Baba's clothes, and that Baba would like her to wash them and have them ready for Baba to wear at 7:00 the following morning. Jeanne said that she would be glad to do so.

All of this took place as though it had been prearranged, but of course it had not. Jeanne was very intuitive around Baba, and this was one example of how well she responded to her intuitive feelings.

Later in the day we were walking toward our hotel (it might have been the Willoughby), which was nearby. Jeanne was carrying the package of Baba's clothes – his pink jacket and a white sadra. I asked her if I could carry the package for a while. She handed it over to me, and as we walked along, I felt as though Baba himself were embracing me with his love. It was amazing! The clothes were so permeated with Baba's love that they seemed to be loving me – or anyone else who might hold them.

THE INTERVIEWS

It was a little before one o'clock when Baba emerged from the elevator and went to the interview room. Before starting the interviews, Baba called in the members of all the committees, a few members of the Sufi group, a few of the New York group, and the Schenectady group leaders, which consisted of Jeanne and myself. This was the first of

several occasions when Baba would have a group come in to be with him. There was a sense of special intimacy with him on those occasions.

“I am very happy to meet you all today,” Baba said. “I give my love to you all. I know that you all love me. It is because of my love for you that you love me. If you can love me more and more, then there will be a day when you will realize me as I am. I am not this physical form. I am the Ocean – the unlimited Ocean of Love. Try to love me more and more and you will know me.”

After a few minutes, Baba gave his usual hand sign that we should leave and let the interviews begin. People would first check in at Ella Winterfeldt’s table by the door. As their names were called, they would stand in line behind a screen at the entrance to the interview room. Those on duty to help with the interviews served by stationing themselves at the door between the two big rooms and stepping forward to introduce people of their acquaintance to Baba. Many of those with appointments had come from great distances just to have this brief contact with Baba.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in Baba’s receiving individuals and

groups. Loretta Weller had the first appointment, Jeanne recorded in her diary. She was from New Jersey and was a friend of Virginia and Harold Rudd’s.

Baba was radiantly loving and showed a personal interest in everyone. As a person came into the room and was introduced



Meher Baba on chaise in interview room at Delmonico Hotel, New York City, July 1956. Bowl of gardenias and covered bowl of grapes for prasad to Baba’s right.

to Baba, he or she was directed to approach him closer. To many he gave a warm embrace, and to some a clasp of the hand. Some were moved to tears; some knelt before him. To some Baba gave a brief message, with Eruch interpreting Baba's gestures; others received a wordless contact. To each one Baba gave a grape as his prasad.

People emerging from their contact with Baba reacted in a variety of ways. Some wept openly, some smiled radiantly, some looked puzzled, some bubbled with joy, and some were so deeply touched that they silently walked away with a deep look of inward knowing. Some approached committee members with questions or to request literature to find out more about Baba.

Mrs. Jeanne Foster, our dear friend, supplied to *The Awakener* a written account of these New York "darshan days" that describes the scene and no doubt speaks for many.

No one could forget Baba sitting on the chaise longue, radiant in white and a pink coat. Flowers in tall vases perfumed the air. Two large sprays of yellow roses had been brought in. There were attar-sweet red roses, pink and white ones with their buds and many other flowers. There were old-fashioned nosegays and certain devotees and children brought long-stemmed single blooms and offered them to the Master.

Baba's mandali were beside Him. From the right, certain of the faithful came in from time to time. Darwin Shaw was there and brought me to Baba. To my eyes, there was light around Him [Baba]. I took out the fragment of quartz Darwin had brought me from India, which Baba had held in His hands and which I worshipfully carried, as always, in my handbag, and asked that Baba should once again charge the

little sparkling stone. Baba smiled and took the stone in both hands, pressing His fingers together over it and then gave it back to me. I felt His blessing and the lift of my consciousness to a point where my body could scarcely bear the tension.

Out in the anteroom people spoke of Him with hushed voices. There were the old, the mature, the young, white, black and brown; there were small children. Those that had appointments were waiting for their interviews. Others who did not have appointments were eagerly picking up scraps of information about Baba. Among those waiting to see Baba was an expectant mother who wanted Baba to bless the child she was to bring into incarnation. The members of the committee at the table by the door were continuously busy directing the line of visitors; others who had been with Baba many years moved in and out like ministers of Grace guiding and helping those that were finding Him in the flesh for the first time.

Men and women stood in the hall outside the audience room all day waiting for a glimpse of Baba when He walked to the elevator to go to His private rooms on an upper floor. There was no sign of fatigue on their faces, only expressions of great joy and gratitude for even a glimpse of the Beloved. Even during His brief progress to the elevator Baba seemed to be gathering the joys, the sorrows, the aspirations of each and every one and charging them with the benediction of His Love. One woman, a stranger, said "You have never loved until you [have] found Baba." I agreed. All the loves of our human lives are but tiny blades of grass under the towering tree of His

□ *Divine Love.*

ONLY LOVE COUNTS

When one woman came with her two children and her brother, carrying armloads of gifts for Baba, he called in all the women. The vignette that follows is reconstructed here from Jeanne's notes.

Baba said to everyone, "In India, when my devotees worship, they forget I am human, too; they burn incense and bring gifts. The incense makes Baba's eyes water. They crack coconuts at my feet and in short behave as if I were a stone statue of a god, and Baba is uncomfortable. Baba is human, too."

To the woman, who was named Pia, he said, "Why all this? Why all these gifts? Only love counts. Give these gifts to someone who needs them." She replied that she does this because she loves Baba.

Baba then said, "Isn't it enough to bring me your love? You are poor."

"But Baba," she said, "I must express my love."

Baba replied, "If you must express your love, give them in my name to the poor people. I accept these gifts from you; now they are mine. Right? So now you give these away as gifts from me to someone who needs them."

Pia was happy to do this, Jeanne noted in her diary. Then Jeanne went on to comment: "It was a wonderful sight – to see this wholehearted devotion shown to Baba by this sweet woman, her lovely children, and the woman's brother. They knelt, grouped around Baba's couch during the whole interview with Baba. Baba embraced each of them as they left the room."

LIFE IS BUT A DREAM

More interviews followed. At around 4:00 p.m., Baba called Ella Winterfeldt in to ask her about the interview program. She told Baba that she had dreamed of him. He then told her that the world is an

illusion and that only God is real. Baba then called in the whole group from the other room – over one hundred people – and asked Ivy Duce, who was present during Baba's exchange with Ella, to repeat what he had just said about the world being an illusory dream.

She spoke a bit vaguely, and Baba quipped, "You speak as if you were in a dream!" He then went on to repeat his message, which was recorded in *The Awakener*.

"All this is nothing but a dream. Only God is real. And God is in everything, in you and in me." Baba went on to elaborate: "When Ella goes to sleep and sees the dream in her sleep, her body is on the bed. Yet she goes about, engrossed in the body; she enjoys a good dinner, eats well, feels happy. Then sometimes she feels very sad, she suffers. Both pleasure and pain are there in the dream, yet the body is there on the bed. It doesn't go anywhere, it doesn't do anything; yet it enjoys.

"Baba comes there in the dream while she is enjoying or while she is suffering an illusion; and Baba tells her, 'Ella, don't worry, this will all disappear. It is nothing but a dream.' But she answers, 'Baba, how is that? I suffer. How can I help it, Baba? I see you. I see others. Some are troubling me, some are giving me pleasure. How can I believe it is nothing but a dream? How can it be so real?'

"But as soon as she wakes up in the morning, she realizes that she saw only a dream; that Baba had come in her dream and explained that it was nothing but a dream, that she should not suffer, she should not weep. But she did not listen to Baba, so she starts weeping as she works, remembering the dream at night.

"Then Baba tells her, 'Ella, that was a dream while you slept. But now I say this is another dream; while you are living and working, while you are sitting here near me, all that you see here, this New York City, and Baba-lovers here and Baba himself sitting here, it's nothing but illusion. It's a dream.'

“Then Ella says, ‘Baba, this is too much! I can’t believe that, because I see them, I hear them. I see you here, sitting near me, explaining to me.’

“Still Baba insists, saying to Ella it is nothing but a dream. Then, after years, after Baba’s Grace descends, Ella suddenly wakes up from this vacant dream, and what does she find? She finds only God is Real, and Infinite. When she experiences that bliss, that Infinite Bliss, unlimited, continuous, then she realizes what Baba said was true.” Jeanne’s account differs from this part slightly: “Only God is real and when by Baba’s Grace or after a long time, the whole dream vanishes. I am the Ancient One. In your dream you hear sirens (actually an air raid [siren test] was going on that day). You hear noises, see people. They’re all there, but still when you awake it’s been just a dream. Only God exists. . . .”

Baba continued, as quoted in *The Awakener*, “Christ said the very same thing. Why do we need another prescription? Because humanity would never listen to him. He said the same thing: ‘I am the Reality. All follow me. Wake up from the dream!’ None listen. The same thing is repeating again. That’s why I tell you, love me more and more and make others love me.

“Through your own example, make others happy. God will listen to that. As soon as we make others happy, then God knows about it immediately, and is pleased. No amount of prayer and meditation or artistry you can say will please God – He is deaf to that. But when you help others, or serve others at the cost of your own happiness, immediately God knows and hears – your actions, your activities – and is pleased.”

This intimate time with Baba not only involved messages. As Jeanne records of this gathering with Baba: “We had fun – Baba threw fruit to us, and we had pictures taken.” This was the first of what turned out to be eighteen very wonderful days with Meher Baba.

GIVE EVERYTHING TO BABA

On the second morning, Saturday, July 21, a hot, cloudless day, Baba invited several individuals and groups up to his suite of rooms before the scheduled 9:30 a.m. interviews. Our family of five was one of the small groups. Jeanne was given another parcel of clothes – a sadra, a silk coat, and pajamas. “I felt deeply moved while doing this privileged task for Baba,” she wrote in her diary. On one of these occasions, Baba asked Jeanne, “Do you know why I give you these?” She replied, “Because you love me.” Baba nodded.

To the five of us Baba said, “One must give everything to Baba if you really love him. He is in everything and everyone. You belong to him, so keep nothing to yourself. Give it all to Baba, and be free. Give your whole self to Baba; your pain and pleasure is Baba’s pleasure. Give it all to Baba. What you feel, Baba feels. It is Baba in you doing through you and feeling in you. Baba is the whole universe. Love Baba with all your heart.” Baba was to repeat this theme several times to his lovers while in America.

After seeing several groups of the workers, Baba went downstairs for the scheduled interviews at 9:30 a.m. Baba went back to his room for a lunch break and then came back down for more interviews.

INNER WORKING

When there was a pause in the interview schedule, Baba had everyone come into the room. The blinds were closed to make the room dark, and my son, Lowell, as well as Charmian Duce, Don Stevens, and an NBC-TV cameraman proceeded to film Baba. Brilliant movie lights were shined on Baba and the mandali standing beside him. Baba gave a message, telling us, among other things, that “When you become

One with God, the bliss that you experience is eternal, infinite. There is no break in that bliss; it is continual. And then you can make others happy. You get the authority to make others happy. The only thing that I have been repeating ever since the first time I came is: *Love God*. Age after age I have been saying nothing but *Love God*.”

After the message, Baba took a peach from the bowl beside his chaise longue and asked, “Who are experts in catching?” He began tossing several pieces of fruit in his unique way, looking in one direction and throwing in another.

Suddenly, the lights went out due to a blown fuse. While help was being summoned, Baba told us to close our eyes and make our minds blank for five minutes. When we opened our eyes, we saw that Baba was engaged in an inner working. He was glowing, and his eyes were turned upward and inward. His left hand was above his head, with his fingers making quick movements. We stood by quietly while this was happening.

When the lights went on again, some of the people who had interviews scheduled for this afternoon stepped up to have their personal interviews in front of us all. Afterward, Baba gave us another message, saying, “Baba is eternally happy, yet eternally suffering. Baba is free here as Baba, but in you as Baba he is bound. If you loved me truly, with all your heart, you could be as free as I. Then it would be unbroken eternal bliss.”

He then spoke about the love his own sister, Mani, brother Jamshed, and father, Sheriarji, had for him, and ended by saying, “I tell you all with authority, as I have been telling others at other places, *I am the Ancient One*. When I break my silence, the world will know who I am.”

Baba lightened the mood again by throwing fruit, this time white grapes. However, after a while, Baba again began working inwardly, his

gaze turning inward and his fingers vibrating. Suddenly he got up and shot out of the room. Eruch told us that in 1954, at the Indian sahavas program, Baba had left abruptly to do special work.

Baba returned after a few moments and seated himself back onto the chaise longue. The NBC cameraman filmed Baba gesturing, "I am God, the Ancient One. I am the Avatar."

AT THE THEATER WITH BABA

That evening, at 8:00 p.m., all the workers and mandali went with Baba to the Imperial Theater to see a musical comedy called *The Most Happy Fella*. Baba sat in the first row of the balcony. We had reserved seats for the whole group, and as we filed in, we seated ourselves according to where we were in the line. Elizabeth, Ivy, and Margaret sat on one side of Baba, and Eruch, Nilu, and Adi sat on the other side of him.

As it turned out, I sat directly behind Baba, and Jeanne sat to my right, behind one of the mandali. In blue ink on a tiny piece of lined notepaper, Jeanne sketched a lovely profile of Baba.



Jeanne Shaw's sketch of Meher Baba,
July 21, 1956

The air conditioning made the theater cold, and as I noticed that Baba seemed to be chilly, I placed my raincoat around his shoulders. When I did, Baba gave me a quick glance that made me realize that I should have asked him first.

Even at the theater we noticed that Baba's fingers were moving rapidly; apparently he was using this opportunity to do some special work. At the intermission Baba, looking very tired, left with the mandali to return to the hotel. Most of us also left shortly after that.

DIVINE APPETITE

The next morning, Sunday, July 22, Jeanne stayed behind at our hotel to press Baba's clothing while the rest of our family went to Baba's hotel. In her diary, Jeanne wrote, "When done, I went up to Baba's rooms to leave the clothes. Baba lovingly shook my hand."

The reception room at Baba's hotel was bulging with flowers that Baba had received from devotees. The room was much smaller than the previous one and was too cold from air conditioning. The individual interviews, which were to begin at 9:00 a.m., were delayed while someone from an Indian TV news service interviewed Baba up in his room and also filmed him downstairs tossing fruit prasad to all the people there. Because it was getting so late, Baba sped up the interviews, yet managed to give each person his full attention.

Baba invited in people from the Schenectady group. This group consisted of my parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Shaw; my brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Shaw; their daughter, Helen Shaw; Josephine Ross and her two daughters; Marie Shaw (no relation); and Pearl Conklin and Mr. Cowan.

To the Monday night group of New York City, Baba said, "All this world is nothing – an illusion. I am in everything. I tell you with my authority, I am in everything. Love me, and that way, when you drop your bodies, then you are with me eternally." To some of the Sufi group, Baba said, "I have said many times, I am the Lord of Love and at the same time I am the slave of my lovers. This is not idle talk, it is a fact. I am the Lord of Love and the slave of my lovers."

Then Baba had everyone present – over one hundred people – come up to his room. When we entered the room, Baba greeted us warmly, giving each one of us a hug, a pat, a handshake, or a kiss. We all sat around on the few chairs and carpet while Baba sat in a large

chair in front of us. Eruch interpreted Baba's gestures as he made light conversation for a few moments, giving us all this treasured opportunity to be intimately near him. Baba had Don Stevens read prepared messages, "The Real Gift" and "The Eternal Now" (which were later printed in the book *Life at Its Best*).

As it was getting late, Baba indicated that now we all should leave and get some lunch. As we all began filing out, Eruch called out softly, "Darwin, Jeanne, and your children, Baba wants you to stay here for a few more minutes." We were delighted, and as we turned back toward Baba, he indicated that we should sit close to him on the carpet.

Baba seemed relaxed, radiantly beautiful, and sweetly loving. He made us feel completely at ease with him, and we felt the great joy of inner rapport with him. He commented that there was no need for much conversation, but he did say, "Darwin is a jewel." We realized that this was to be a communion of love. As we sat there, Baba's sweet love quickly opened our hearts so that we were not only able to love him but to adore him from the fullness of our very souls. These were precious moments of heavenly intimacy with our dear Lord and Divine Friend. During this interlude of love's encounter and exchange, we felt as though we had all become One, and some of us were aware of our being enveloped in light.

Baba stroked each of us on the face lovingly and gestured. Eruch interpreted for Baba: "I am very, very happy when I am with my lovers. I feel very happy. When do people of the world feel happy? When they have an appetite and enjoy a good dinner. After they have enjoyed it, they feel a sort of satisfaction and happiness. It is a pleasure to eat when hungry. What is my appetite? My appetite is satisfied only when I meet my dear lovers. When I see your love, I am satisfied. That is my food."

Right before we left, Baba gave each of us a piece of chocolate. Although it was lunchtime, after the divine repast of Baba's love and the chocolate prasad from his hand, we felt no need for other food.

"BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE" AT LONGCHAMPS

One of the most memorable events for many took place that same Sunday afternoon and evening. A reception and dinner were given for Baba by the Meher Baba Hospitality Committee at the Longchamps Restaurant in Manhattan House on East 66th Street and Third Avenue, the apartment building managed by Fred Winterfeldt. Around one hundred fifty people attended, many having come to New York from distant places to see and be with the Divine Beloved.

At around 4:30 p.m., we all assembled and found seating at the elegant tables, which were angled so that everyone would have a good view of Baba at his table. We had all dressed up for the party, and the women on the committee wore gardenias.

Baba entered the restaurant at about 5:00 p.m., and everyone rose and waited in complete silence as he made his way to his seat, looking radiantly beautiful in his pink coat and white sadra. Baba's place was at the center of the long head table, and two of his men mandali, Eruch and Adi, sat one on each side of him. Also assigned to his table were some of his longtime disciples: On Baba's left, next to Eruch, were Elizabeth Patterson and John Bass; on Baba's right, next to Adi, sat Dr. Nilu, Enid Corfe, Margaret Craske, and I.

After everyone was seated, waiters efficiently served grape juice and brought bread to each table. We then all stood again, this time drinking a silent toast to our Beloved. Baba touched his glass to his lips in response.

Not only did we have the treasured opportunity to feast our eyes on

Baba, but twice during the event Baba left his seat to walk slowly among the people who were seated at separate tables in the large dining room, greeting his lovers with a loving touch, a smile, or a tender look.

WELCOMING REMARKS

The program began with Marion Florsheim making some welcoming remarks. Then several of us took turns at the microphone to say a few words of greeting to Baba. What follows are those messages, transcribed from the reel-to-reel audio tape of the program made by Mike Loftus.

□ *IVY DUCE: In a guileless moment, I thought that perhaps I'd have a few minutes to think up something gracious to say to the Master, but I will have to instead repeat a little joke that some of you have heard before. There was a large cruise ship out on the Atlantic Ocean, and they were all busy having a very good time, when a huge storm broke. People began getting rather discouraged, and finally a nervous little woman walked up to the captain, and she said, "Do you think there's going to be any danger, Captain?" And he said, "Madame, we are in the hands of God!" And she said, "Oh dear! Has it come to that?"*

Fortunately for us, it has come to that a long time ago, and we're so happy to be in the hands of God.

FRED WINTERFELDT: Beloved Father, from the depths of our hearts we welcome you all. May our hearts be wide open to let You enter. And I say to You, Beloved Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

ELIZABETH PATTERSON: . . . [unintelligible] those from India, and all seekers of Truth that are here. What can we say except that we welcome Baba with all our hearts. In India most of the love songs, if not all of them, are spiritual songs. And we have one American song that didn't have much meaning until ... [unintelligible] Baba came the other day. And that is "This is the day for which we have waited. This is the hour for which we were born."

We Americans are always said to be a little bit crazy. And I guess we are. And when a silent Master comes to us, we, instead of listening, make little talks, and we give after-dinner speeches before dinner, like this! But one thing we know, together with the thousands in India, that in loving Baba as the Compassionate Father, we can come to love all mankind as his children. And we welcome Baba with all our hearts.

MARGARET CRASKE gave her greeting in silence.

DON STEVENS: Trying to welcome Baba is completely impossible; this is one of those things that must be telegraphed from heart to heart. But since I knew that I had to use up sixty seconds, there was one little phrase that kept running through my mind. It's something that Baba originally gave out during the sahasvas program last fall when he first announced the thought that perhaps he would come to the United States and the rest of the Western world this year. Baba said: "It is the love of my devotees in the West which draws me again." And, Baba, each of us would say, "It is You who sustain us by Your Love."

DARWIN SHAW: Beloved Baba, all through the years that

we have known You and known about You, we have seen innumerable examples of Your loving-kindness, the warmth of Your feeling for everyone and everything. And once again we have the privilege of Your presence through this great Divine Love which You have for everyone. And we want You to know how very grateful we are for Your interruption in Your seclusion to come here and give us the privilege of Your Presence. So, when we welcome You, may I speak on behalf of those who have no voice here, that we all welcome You from the very depths of our hearts.

BABA'S REPLY

Baba's response was made by Eruch, who began by saying, "In response to these greetings, Baba wants you all to hear this from him." He then spoke for Baba:

I feel very happy to be with you all today. It is your devotion that has made Me come to the West during the period of My seclusion. If anything ever touches My Universal heart, it is Love. I have crossed the limited earthly oceans to bring to you all the limitless and shoreless Divine Ocean of Love. Those who do not dare to love Me seek safety on the shores. You who love Me are swimming in this Divine Ocean. Love Me more and more till you get drowned in Me. Dive deep and you will gain the priceless pearl of Infinite Oneness.

BIRTHDAY PROGRAM

Music followed, while we all sat for a few moments in silent wonderment as waves of Divine Love emanated from Baba and poured over us.

We felt as though we were indeed swimming in the Ocean of his love.

As the dinner was being served, David Ross, a radio and television personality, read poems of Kabir and Hafiz, as well as two poems of his own; a poem contributed by Baba's sister, Mani; and compositions by others, including this inspired piece by Norina Matchabelli, entitled "Universal Selfhood":

*Whatsoever your creed, church, belief, or station in life,
live in the Truth.
The limited individual selfness has to make room for
Universal Selfness.
Step out of the crippling selfhood of separative ignorance.
Be settled in the unaging immortality of Universal
Selfhood.*

David then presented a toast to Baba, asking us all to raise our glasses of punch. Alva Coil Dennison, introduced as a longtime student of Malcolm Schloss, played a background piano accompaniment throughout the dinner.

While Baba appeared to be enjoying the program, at times he seemed to be working elsewhere. And, as Jeanne noted in her diary, "Baba didn't eat his dinner. He said the love of his lovers was all the food he needed." I do not recall what we ate. In fact, I think that even at the time, we were all barely aware of the food: Baba was our "divine food!"

BIRTHDAY FESTIVITIES

This was an especially joyful gathering, for we celebrated Baba's birthday, even though July was nowhere near his actual birthday,



Children garlanding Meher Baba, Longchamps Restaurant, New York City, July 22, 1956.

February 25. Harry Florsheim made a humorous presentation of our collective gifts of five clocks – which were designated for various members of the mandali rather than to Baba, since he had prohibited giving gifts to him. A travel clock set to India time was presented for Mani (who was in India), one set at London time was given to Nilu, one set at Myrtle Beach time was given to



Meher Baba sitting at the banquet table, Longchamps Restaurant, New York City, July 22, 1956.

Adi, one set for San Francisco and Los Angeles was given to Eruch, and one set for the time at Avatar's Abode in Australia was given to Meherjee.

Marion then supervised two children who presented Baba with a garland, and Ivy Duce introduced the birthday program. The lights were put out, and the headwaiter wheeled in a large, four-tiered white birthday cake blazing with lit candles and decorated with Baba's seven-colored flag and the

words: "The Goal of Life – to be united with Him through Love." We all sang the traditional "Happy Birthday" song several times to Baba. Baba smilingly rose to cut what we called his "Birthday Remembrance" cake. Three women had made tiny replicas of Baba's seven-colored flag out of stiff paper and patterned after one that Mani had sent. We each took one with our piece of cake.

A large kite with Baba's picture on it was being passed around for people to sign. These words from Baba were printed on it: "Where the kite goes, its tail goes, as long as it sticks to the kite. So long as you keep your grip tight, it matters little whether you are a saint or a sinner." Baba later took the kite with him to Myrtle Beach for safe storage.

For a second time, Baba rose to circulate about the room, giving precious personal contacts to many. When he returned to his seat, he indicated that all those who did not receive a contact should now come up to his table. Fortunately, movies and photos were taken of Baba and the activities of this wonderful gathering.



Meher Baba cutting birthday remembrance cake, July 22, 1956.

PREPARED MESSAGE FROM BABA

This was followed by a message from Baba prepared ahead of time and later mimeographed for distribution to all who were present. It was entitled “Divine Bliss and Human Suffering,” and was intended to address a question that had arisen in the minds of some after Baba’s auto accident in 1952. Don Stevens read it out. The text, in full, is presented below. (Perhaps it also was intended to prepare us for the auto accident that was to happen in December of this year in India.)

Divine Bliss and Human Suffering

How can the individualized soul that experiences Infinite Bliss continually suffer bodily ailments and be susceptible to ordinary heat and cold?

To this Baba answers: It is true that one and all illusory things, individual and collective, local and universal, cease to exist, even as illusion, once man becomes God-realized – the Perfect One, eternally conscious of his own Infinite Oneness. Whether the gross, subtle and mental bodies of such a Perfect One remain or drop, they DO NOT EXIST for him. There is nothing in illusion that exists for him – yet he exists for all things within the illusion of ignorance, and his abundantly overflowing Godhood takes care of them, including his body. Until dropped, the physical body of the Perfect One remains immune to ailments and is unaffected by heat or cold, because these are automatically neutralized through his own all-pervading God-consciousness.

It is rarely that a Perfect One becomes a Perfect Master (like Saint Francis of Assisi), returning with God-consciousness

to the realm of illusion. When he does, he is fully conscious of his physical body and of one and all the spheres of illusory existence, without experiencing a break in the Infinite Bliss of the indivisible Oneness of His Being.

In short, the God-realized or Perfect One has God-consciousness with no consciousness whatever of anything else, as nothing besides God exists for him. The Perfect Master has God-consciousness plus consciousness of illusion.

It is the complete and absolute unconsciousness of his body (as of all other illusory things) that keeps the body of the Perfect One untouched by environmental conditions and effects, whereas the Perfect Master, regaining consciousness of the body, makes himself susceptible to its ordinary ailments and sufferings.

Not only do Perfect Masters not use their divine power to avoid or alleviate their own physical suffering which they consciously experience as illusion, but they take on themselves physical suffering in order to alleviate the spiritual ignorance of others in the bondage of illusion. Saint Francis of Assisi suffered such excruciating headaches as to have to dash his head against stone, though others could be healed by a touch of his hand.

Jesus Christ suffered the tortures of crucifixion to take on the suffering of the universe. Being simultaneously the Father and Son, his own Infinite Bliss was neither interrupted by the cross, nor did it intervene in his bodily suffering which he suffered as an ordinary human being. The sublime difference in individual suffering lies in the fact that ordinary man suffers for himself, Masters suffer for humanity, whereas the Avatar suffers for one and all beings and things.



Now David Ross read Baba's Sermon and "The Religion of Life," and the program was concluded by dance mime Tom Marlowe, with Don Marshall at the piano, performing a pantomime of an old Charlie Chaplin movie and another of an old Mary Pickford film.

The "Birthday Remembrance" dinner party was over at about 8:00 p.m., and before Baba left, he urged us all to keep our tiny flags. Jeanne and I kept ours, along with all our "Baba treasures."

LAST DAY IN NEW YORK

The following morning, Monday, July 23, Baba received many more people, giving each one so much of his precious love. Late in the morning, cameramen from NBC-TV came and filmed Baba greeting some of them and giving them prasad. Then Don Stevens read Baba's message "Deathless Living."

Baba then said to us:

It is the birthright of every human being to be happy, but most feel miserable. It is due to the load of sanskaras, or impressions, gathered throughout evolution. In our evolution, through all the forms – stone, worm, bird, fish, animal – we gather impressions. Once human consciousness is gained, then there is full consciousness. After that, it is only a question of directing one's attention to the "I" in order to become free.

Everyone can be happy, but some feel happy and some miserable. Those who constantly want something will never feel happy. Misery is bound to accompany wanting. Those who never want for themselves but for others, they can feel happy. Why? Because they want others to feel happy.

God, Who is in everything and in everyone, is deaf to for-

mal rituals, ceremonies, prayers in mosques, churches, and temples. But he hears the voice of the heart. When you help others, God knows instantly and is pleased. No amount of prayer or meditation can do what helping others can do.

The main thing that counts is love for me. How will you love me? By loving God as well as others. If you make others happy, God pays heed. Do you follow? I have been saying the same message throughout the ages that all are One. We are all One, and all of you love me.

I am in everything, and everything is in me. In India I bow down to the lepers, the poor, the lame. Why do I bow down? Because I am one with everything! God is in everyone. Age after age, I have been bringing the same message, but mankind does not listen. Christ had to be crucified; otherwise,

□ *humanity would not have listened to him.*

At 4:00 p.m., after Baba had answered reporters' questions and then met with people who had not yet had a contact with him (as well as some who had), he went upstairs to rest for an hour. At five o'clock, those of us who were going with Baba on a sightseeing tour of New York City gathered in the lobby.

Baba boarded the sightseeing bus first, and we followed. A tour guide pointed out the sights as we made our way through the city. Quite often Baba seemed to be "working" very intensely; his fingers would move rapidly and he would seem to become absorbed inwardly.

We drove past the United Nations building, rode down "Millionaires' Row" (a residential section for the very wealthy), drove across Central Park, and made our way down the West Side Highway to the piers, where enormous ocean liners were moored. On the way

back we got caught in a traffic jam in Times Square. I watched Baba the entire time, instead of the sights.

That evening, Baba called the members of the Hospitality Committee into his room to discuss the trip to Myrtle Beach and California. During a discussion about finances, the subject of Baba dropping his body came up. After Baba settled the financial issue, he said, "Those of you who are accompanying me on the forthcoming trip to Myrtle Beach and San Francisco should not worry about anything, but be happy to have had my sahavas. Do not think of my dropping the body."

Of this meeting, Jeanne wrote that Baba "gave us all a pat or hug." She added that Baba came to her in the vestibule, where she was standing, and kissed her on the cheek. This was Baba's last day in New York. The next day we headed for Myrtle Beach with Baba.

C H A P T E R
F O U R T H

*Meher Baba
in Myrtle Beach*

*M*eher Baba's 1956 visit to America was especially wonderful for the thirty-nine of us who had the extraordinary privilege of accompanying Baba and the four men mandali on the entire American tour: from New York to Myrtle Beach to Hollywood and San Francisco. Our family of five was among them. Being with Baba every day, flying with him, having personal contact with him so much was quite literally a living experience of the Romance of the Soul.

I am sure that each one greatly appreciated this amazing privilege, and each had his or her own perception of Baba. I saw Meher Baba as the Christ, and I was in a state of awe and wonderment most of the time as I contemplated the almost unbelievable fact that we were in close companionship with the Christ himself.

Due to Baba's love for us, we could function in an ordinary way and feel completely at ease around him. While traveling with him, riding with him on buses, cars, and airplanes, spending time with him in airport waiting rooms,

and sitting near him on planes, everyone behaved in a way that respected Baba's privacy and yet responded to his occasional playful or serious moods.

Part of the incredible experience of traveling with Baba in America was knowing who he was and being amazed not only that he was here on Earth among us but that he was moving among people almost like an ordinary person. Judging from what we found out about Baba having groups of his lovers traveling with him, I came to feel that Baba's allowing us to travel with him was not just for our pleasure, but that in some unexplained way we were part of his inner working.

TRIP TO THE CENTER

The first leg of our tour with Baba began early in the morning on a drizzly Tuesday, July 24, the day we were to go to Meher-Center-on-the-Lakes, as the Myrtle Beach Spiritual Center was then called. Jeanne recorded in her diary: "Awake 4:30, left for hotel Delmonico to board airline bus for airport. We went in the second bus with Baba."

While we waited for our plane at the Newark, New Jersey, airport, many people were attracted by Baba's appearance. At that time he was wearing his hair combed back and braided. He wore a pink jacket, white cotton trousers, and Indian sandals, and a garland of lavender orchids had been placed around his neck. But of course Baba's Beauty – which was far more than physical – his loving eyes, and the fact that he was at the center of a large group made him far more outstanding than the average person. Some people inquired, wanting to know who he was. Some wanted to be introduced to Baba.

Jeanne wrote of the airplane trip: "Such a thrill – no fears: Baba sat in the middle. After the plane was in the air, Baba walked around and touched each one. . . . Had breakfast on the plane. Stopped for twenty minutes at Washington."

It certainly was a novel feeling to be riding in a plane far above the Earth with the Beloved. One time I looked out the window and saw that we were flying over the Pentagon.

Although we thought that our group would fill the entire plane, as it turned out, there was one woman on board who was not a Baba follower. When she asked about Baba's identity, she was given a pamphlet.

Once during the flight, Baba called me over to his seat and asked about the race situation in America. On an earlier visit to America, Baba's close disciple Dr. Nilu, who had a dark complexion, was not allowed to eat in a Southern restaurant. I was happy to be able to tell Baba that the situation had greatly improved, but that there was still quite a bit of discrimination. As we were getting near Wilmington, North Carolina, which was as far as we were to go by plane, Baba asked me to lead him to the restroom as soon as we arrived.

When we were descending the steps from the plane, Baba was way ahead of me in the line, so I called down to Otto Troegel, who was waiting among the group on the tarmac, and asked him to lead Baba to the restroom, which he did. I later found out that Otto had directed Baba to the "White" restroom. Baba went in there, then came out and went into the restroom labeled "Colored."



*Meher Baba arriving in Wilmington, North Carolina,
July 24, 1956.*

Baba did not, however, make any comment about his actions.

The weather in Wilmington was clear, sunny, and hot. Most of the group traveled to the Center in a chartered bus; others rode in cars and station wagons. Jeanne notes in her diary that she rode with the Troegels. Baba indicated that Margaret Craske and I should ride in the station wagon following the car in which he rode. "Arrived at the Center at noon," Jeanne recorded. The bus and most of the cars entered the Center through the main entrance gate, and the passengers all found their cabins and ate lunch.

The car Baba rode in and the station wagon Margaret and I were in entered the Center through the Briarcliffe road. A small group of people was waiting there to wave a greeting to Baba when he arrived. They included Kitty Davy, Laura DeLavigne, my mother, my niece Dolores Shaw, Ruth Troegel, and Hilda and Sylvia DeLong. Baba had his car stopped just long enough to pick up Kitty.

When we arrived at Baba's house, Kitty left on foot to walk to the Guest House to prepare food for Baba. Baba, the four men mandali, Margaret, and I went onto the porch, where there was a white wooden swing. I said to Baba that the swing reminded me of the time in 1954 when the nuns rocked him on a swing in Sakori while a girl sang the song Baba had composed for Upasni Maharaj.

TWO MISTAKES

After a short time, Baba walked into the house. Without thinking, I followed him in. The men mandali were in the living room, and we joined them. Right away, Dr. Nilu started to scold me. At first I could not figure out what it was all about, but then I realized that he was scolding me for coming into the house. Apparently I was not sup-

posed to have come inside. Baba quickly came to my rescue, however, by pointing out to Dr. Nilu that I had been very much involved in the development of the Center, including the building of Baba's house. Actually, although I had been very active right from the start in developing the Center, I had not been very much involved in the building of Baba's house. However, what Baba said served to calm down Dr. Nilu, who hastened to apologize to me, saying, "Sorry, sorry, sorry."

Soon we all left the house and got into the station wagon. As we started out, Adi, who was driving, was uncertain about the road ahead and asked me which road to take. Somehow I made a mistake and directed Adi to take the wrong road. We had gone only a short distance when I realized that we were not on the right road, so I directed Adi to back up, and soon we were on the right road.

This mixup appeared to upset Baba, who gave me a sharp look. The whole atmosphere became surcharged with tense, volcanic energy. We quickly reached the Guest House compound, and, after getting out of the station wagon, Baba motioned to Margaret and the men to go on in. Baba remained standing by the car, his hand on the roof, for a few minutes. I understood that he was waiting to get control of his irritation before going in to see the women. Reading Baba's gestures, Eruch said, "You want to stay here to cool off." Baba nodded, and Eruch went on into the Guest House.

This left me alone with Baba. I realized, of course, that he did not expect me to go to the Guest House, so I said, "I guess I should be going over to the kitchen." Baba nodded in agreement, and I left. This incident did not disturb my spiritual equilibrium; in fact, I felt buoyed up spiritually to a level of detached perception. The next time I saw Baba, it was as if the entire incident had been erased, and for my part, I did not dwell on it or allow it to disturb my relationship with Baba.

CROWDING CLOSER TO GOD

The Center accommodations were not sufficient to provide rooms for all the people who came to the Myrtle Beach area to see and spend some time with Baba. Consequently, many, including some of the people who were traveling with Baba, stayed at various motels in the vicinity. However, Baba wanted to crowd in as many people as possible on the Center so they could be near him, so additional cots were put in some of the cabins for them – Virginia and Harold Rudd even slept in the boathouse.

I stayed in the Caretaker's Cabin with Frank Eaton, John Bass, and, I believe, my son, Lowell. Jeanne stayed in the Cabin-on-the-Hill, and our daughters, Leatrice and Renae, stayed on one side of the Lantern Cabin.

Jeanne noted the crowded conditions in her diary: "I was quartered in Cabin-on-the-Hill (Mrs. Clark there). . . . That [first] evening Mrs. Kohanow was with me in the cabin on the right side room, and next day Mrs. Dimpfl was in the room next door. Also later, Virginia [Rudd] slept in the room – Bea Dimpfl moved to a cot on the porch. Stella [Kusovitch] and her daughter moved to the Center the next day and slept in the Interview Cabin [Lagoon Cabin] but used the bathroom at our cabin – rather crowded."

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SNAKES

Shortly before 3:00 p.m. on that first day at the Center, Baba came walking briskly across the wooden bridge spanning the lagoon, where many of us were waiting for him. Baba then led us all down the dirt path through the pine forest to the Barn. There he sat in the same high-backed chair as he had in 1952. He told us that in four days, on Saturday, he would ask us to keep silence with him in the Barn at 7:00 p.m.

Baba brought up the snake problem by telling us to be careful and

to wear the right shoes: no open-toed shoes, he indicated. If we saw a snake, we were to say “Baba!” and it would not hurt us. He said that even if we stepped on a snake but remembered to say “Baba,” it would go away without harming us. But, he emphasized, if we were wearing open-toed shoes – even if we said “Baba” – the snake would not go away! If we did not heed Baba’s words and a snake bit us, he said he would drop us in the lake! (In the early days of the Center’s development, Elizabeth and Norina made the rule that we had to wear heavy rubber or leather boots because of the snake problem.)

After Baba concluded his remarks, we all went outside, and Baba sat under a pine tree. Eruch held an umbrella over Baba’s head. We all stood a respectful distance away, but Baba would call first one and then another over to him for more personal contact.

On another day, Jeanne was standing outside the Original Kitchen when she heard a suspicious rustling sound, presumably from a snake, in the brush nearby. Just then Baba came along and pointed authoritatively toward the brush, and the noise immediately stopped.



*Meher Baba walking up boathouse steps,
July 1956.*

THE ROUTINE

Baba and the four men mandali slept at Baba’s house and would go to the Guest House for most of their meals. After breakfast in the mornings,



Crowd waiting for Meher Baba near kitchen,
July 1956.



Darwin Shaw (right) and Otto Troegel.



Leatrice and Jeanne (right) on
bench with others near Lagoon
Cabin, July 1956.

Baba and the men would walk down the footpath and cross the picturesque bridge at the lagoon, where nearly everyone waited for them. This would always be a joyful scene, with Baba greeting everyone with pats, hugs, and loving smiles.

Much of Baba's time was spent in the Lagoon Cabin, where he received individuals and groups, giving us all many opportunities to be with him for precious moments of personal contact. He would inquire after our health, answer questions, and give us the incomparable blessing of the Divine Love that continuously radiated from him, lifting up our spirits and in his own inner ways inspiring us to discard worldly ways and draw closer to God.

On many mornings, Baba led us all along the path through the beautiful woodlands of the Center to the Barn, where he sat in the big chair by the fireplace while we would gather around him, sitting on chairs or the floor. Sometimes Baba told us, with Eruch interpreting his gestures, about his life in India, gave discourses, or had short messages read out, generally by Don Stevens. All of the messages that were read out during the course of the entire tour were later compiled into the little book *Life at Its*



Meher Baba greeting Darwin Shaw's niece,
Dolores Shaw, July 1956.



Meher Baba walking on the Center, July 1956.



Meher Baba sitting in area between the Lagoon Cabin and the Caretaker's Cabin, July 1956.
Jeanne Shaw on left in the back, with white cap; Darwin Shaw seated in front of her.



Meher Baba walking to the Barn. Darwin Shaw and his mother, Helen Shaw, in background, July 1956.



Meher Baba sitting left of fireplace in the Barn, July 1956.

Best.

Baba's longtime and very dear disciple Norina Matchabelli, who was unwell, stayed at the Center during Baba's visit there, and Baba, knowing that she would not be seeing him again in this lifetime, took time to be with her privately several times, enfolding her deeply in his Infinite Love.

BABA'S HOUSE

On Wednesday, July 25, the second day we were at the Center with Baba, at about 3:30 p.m., after conducting interviews in the Lagoon Cabin, Baba invited us all – about eighty people – to walk with him from the kitchen up along the winding path to his house. When we arrived in Baba's garden, he walked over to the edge of the slope overlooking the lake and the ocean beyond. There he sat down with his back leaning against a tree. The area was quite open at that time, and we sat on the ground facing Baba.

Baba wore a garland of seven sand dollars, which were supposed to represent the seven main evolutionary stages, from unconscious stone to conscious man. (It was a gift made by Betty Thibodeau.) In a happy mood, Baba reached over to Dr. Ben Hayman, who sat near



*Meher Baba and group sitting on ground near Baba's house.
Baba is wearing Ben Hayman's cap, July 25, 1956.*

him, and took his cap off and put it on his own head.

Then, in a more serious mood, Baba said, "I want you to know that I have stayed in many, many places in India. When I went on mast trips to different places, I stayed sometimes in palaces, sometimes in dharamshalas, or special resthouses, sometimes in temples or huts, and sometimes under trees or on station platforms, where the sweepers, or untouchables, would follow me. But here Elizabeth has built a very comfortable house for me. Everything here is her contribution to me. She has given the whole five hundred acres as a gift to me. She has made everything possible just through her love for me. Tomorrow is Elizabeth's birthday. I am just in time to celebrate her birthday. Tomorrow I will have to embrace her seven times. None of you must give any gifts, however.

"Now the house is open. Go in and see everything, but do not run away with anything. Don't slip – the floor is very slippery! It's some kind of special carpet.

"Of all the places in the world, I feel most comfortable in this house. Even though the climate here is hot and humid, I like this place."

Baba led us all to his house and, as the most gracious host, stood on the porch welcoming each one as we entered. Our daughter Leatrice and I came in together and Baba stopped us, wishing to communicate something, especially to Leatrice. He made a circular motion with one hand, as though indicating turning over, to which I interpreted aloud, "Tomorrow," and he nodded "Yes." Then he indicated the number nine by holding up nine fingers, and I said, "Nine o'clock." Again he nodded. Then he pointed toward the main part of the Center, and I said, "the Lagoon Cabin."

After he again nodded to confirm my interpretation, I said, "You want us to meet you at the Lagoon Cabin tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

He nodded. I understood that he meant my whole family was to come to the meeting. We then moved on into the house with all the others.

Baba came in and sat on the bed in his bedroom while many of us crowded in there with him for a few moments. After a short time, Baba smiled at us and gave us his usual sign of dismissal, and we all walked back to the main part of the Center in a happy and reflective mood.

INNER WORK

That night a terrible electrical thunderstorm with torrential rains hit us. The following morning, Thursday, July 26, was sunny and clear, and raindrops lingered on the leaves. Baba crossed the lagoon bridge and was joyfully greeted by the crowd of his lovers and devotees. Standing near the boathouse, he soon became withdrawn and seemed to be working inwardly. The fingers of his hands were moving rapidly, and he gazed out toward the lake.

For a while he sat on the big bench nearby and seemed oblivious of the people who respectfully remained at a distance from him. After ten or fifteen minutes, Baba refocused on his surroundings and the people there. He inquired of the Rudds, who had slept in the boathouse, how they had fared through the thunderstorm. They said that they were fine.

Baba walked up the brick stairs with everyone following him. He walked past the kitchen and sat on the low railing for a while, still in a partially withdrawn



*Meher Baba walking up the boathouse steps,
July 26, 1956.*



Meher Baba standing near the kitchen as he faces the four points of the compass as part of inner spiritual work, July 26, 1956; Dr. Nilu holding umbrella and Baba's jacket.



Meher Baba pacing near the kitchen, engaged in his inner work, July 26, 1956.



Meher Baba sitting on low railing near the kitchen, engaged in spiritual work, July 26, 1956.

mood. Then he stood up and faced west. He appeared to be working again, his fingers moving rapidly. Dr. Nilu stood near Baba and held Baba's pink coat. Baba slowly moved about, facing by turns the four main points of the compass.

We felt that Baba was engaged in some very significant inner working, perhaps in connection with the future of the Center. Some believed it was connected with Abdel Nasser's seizing of the Suez Canal on this day and perhaps with the sinking of the ocean liner Andrea Doria, which also occurred on this day. However it may be, there never was any explanation of those periods of Baba's inner working.

After a while, Baba seemed to be completely finished with that period of his working, and he started walking along the path toward the Barn with all of us following. A few hundred feet along the path Baba stopped, and when we all gathered around him, he asked us all to concentrate for one minute, looking into his eyes. This was a rare and wonderful blessing. In fact, it was something that many of us longed to do – to be allowed to just gaze at his Beauty, to lose ourselves in the Ocean of Divine Love that shone through Baba's eyes.

LEATRICE'S EYES

Following this precious moment, Baba noticed some newcomers arriving by car, and he returned to the place where they were to talk with him. Then he went to the Lagoon Cabin. As it was then about nine o'clock, our family also went into the Lagoon Cabin to keep our appointment with Baba. We sat closely around him.

At this interview Baba seemed to be in more of a businesslike mood than he had been in previous ones with our family. Turning to Leatrice, he motioned with his hand and said – with Eruch interpret-

ing his gestures – “Tell me about your eyes.” Leatrice shares her account:

Throughout my childhood my mother took me to eye doctors for glasses for my condition of alternating crossed eyes. Naturally I always wished to be able to overcome this difficulty. In my heart I knew that Baba would help me somehow.

In my last year of high school, Baba sent a message to my brother and me, asking us to write to him as to what we were studying. Among other subjects in my reply, I said that I was learning to do the Bates method of eye training exercises which Norina had suggested. Baba sent his reply to me, saying to study certain subjects very well and to continue with the eye exercises.

Later on, because of further eye difficulties, I took a leave of absence from my full-time job to continue eye training in binocular vision. I returned to work in spite of having the same difficulties. After some time just before Baba came to America in 1956, I was called into the head doctor’s office of the company where I worked. He told me that an anonymous person had offered to pay for me to have eye surgery. Knowing that I would soon see Baba and could consult with him about it, I said that I would give my answer after returning from vacation.

Our family, along with the Schenectady group, was called to Baba’s room in the Delmonico Hotel in New York City in 1956. After the group departed, Baba kept our family in the room with him longer. At one point in our conversation, Baba turned to me and said, “In Myrtle Beach I’ll tell you what to do about your eyes.” I felt Baba’s Compassion in revealing that he knew right along how I was feeling and relying on him. This

was a part of building my inner faith and trust in him through the years.

So, in Myrtle Beach, before showing everyone through his house at the Center, Baba stopped our family on the porch and gestured to us (in particular to me) that tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. we were to meet him in the Lagoon Cabin. Our family gathered so happily in the Lagoon Cabin the next morning to be with Baba. Baba said to me, "Tell me about what happened." I sensed that he knew all about the offer for surgery, and I proceeded to tell him what had happened. Baba consulted with Dr. Nilu, who said the surgery was advisable. Baba then turned to me, saying, "Go ahead with the operation. Have it done in October and say my name for five minutes beforehand."

Our family was part of Baba's 1956 tour, which included a stay in San Francisco. While there one day, we were called into Baba's room to have tea with him. After tea, Baba turned his attention to me with a motion for me to be alert to catch a small crystal type of paperweight. Baba was sitting in a chair near the end of the couch where I was, so the catch was easy. Baba said to keep it with me, and I got the feeling he meant especially to keep it with me for the surgery. Baba said not to worry.

In October I cabled to Baba the date of the surgery, and Baba cabled back, sending his love and [telling me] to be brave in his love. After the operation, there was a five-week recovery period with complete covering of my eyes for two weeks and partial covering for the remainder. During that time I had the real surgery within. Instead of seeing the world, I was blind to

it. I saw only Baba. My days were spent in remembrance of Baba with the vivid images in my heart and mind, still so fresh with having been with Baba. I never got restless. Inwardly I was experiencing a kind of inner death and knowing a deep renunciation, as well as strengthening my inner companionship with him. Baba took me to a place of no return in my journey with him. By his Grace and Compassion, he brought about a transformation in me.

My mother was the first to notice that I had changed not only in appearance. I discovered to my delight that I had binocular vision – due to the earlier eye training. I cabled to Baba the good success. When Baba came back to the Center in 1958, I first saw him in the Lagoon Cabin. He leaned over to me to take a close look at my eyes as a doctor would in examining his work. Baba smiled lovingly and said, “Beautiful!”

“ALL ARE GOD”

The rest of the morning Baba stayed in the Lagoon Cabin giving interviews. He had his lunch at the Guest House, and it was while he was there that he explained how Saint Francis of Assisi became God-realized. Many people had wondered about this, since Baba had said that the individual cannot attain God-realization without the help of a living Perfect Master. Don Stevens had asked Baba about this. Baba explained that the ancient Sufi prophet Khwaja Khizr, who sometimes took on a physical body to attend to spiritual problems on earth, was the one through whose Grace Saint Francis became a Perfect Master.

In the afternoon, the birthday party for Elizabeth began in the Original Kitchen dining room, with Baba cutting the cake. He also

gave Elizabeth seven hugs, as he had said he would. After everyone ate a piece of cake and some ice cream, we all walked to the Barn, with Baba leading the way. When we had all come into the Barn and were seated, Baba presented Elizabeth with a large bouquet of flowers – yellow chrysanthemums and lavender gladiolas – which was a gift from all of us. Baba said that of all the places in the world, he was most comfortable here.

Baba told us that when he returned to India he would be in deep seclusion for five months, working very intensely and fasting. He also said that he was thinking of having a very large meeting in India, calling Western men and women and several saints from various places in India. He said it would be on a very large scale. This announcement aroused a great deal of interest, and some began to wonder if they would be among those to be invited. Baba mentioned this meeting again when we were with him in California.

During the next hour or so, Don Stevens read several of Baba's messages. They were "The Law of Karma," "The Binding Past," and "Freedom from Opposites." Baba introduced a bit of humor after one of the messages was read by asking Don to explain it, stating that he himself did not understand it. Baba also explained the illusory nature of heaven and hell and karmic bindings.

□ Baba said, in part:

All of you here are very old – ancient ones. All are God. God is within each one, and God is not bound by time. He is eternal. Now you are bound. You feel you are bound, and you continue to get bound, but there will be a time when every individual gets freed, gets liberated. Then that individual realizes that all his bindings were just in a dream – he was seeing a

dream. Christ took upon himself the sufferings of others. Why? To liberate humanity. And the bindings are still there. Mankind is still bound. Yet liberation does not require time. You are bound for ages, but when you get liberated, it is instantaneous – it comes in a flash!

Just think of it – God is within all, in everyone, and He is Infinite. God is all-powerful, God is all-bliss. And yet, though God is in each one, how helpless we feel! We weep, we feel pain, we feel sorrow, although God, who is so infinitely powerful and blissful, is there! Why? It is because of our own bindings. But there is one way to get liberated from these bindings, and that is through love.

Following a second reading of Baba's message "The Freedom from Opposites," Baba said:

You have heard this read out, and everyone listened. But it is not the EXPERIENCE, just hearing all these things. It can be understood mentally. Mind can appreciate it. Mind understands all this. But what is wanted is actual experience. As soon as you get the experience, YOU KNOW. You KNOW that everything is illusion and that God is Reality.

When I was studying in school – in college – I was not interested in reading about all these things. I had nothing to do with spirituality. I never read philosophical or spiritual books. My father, Sheriarji, was thinking all the time of God and searching for him. He was a seeker, a great seeker. He roamed on foot from place to place in Iran, then came to India. He was searching, but he couldn't find what he was looking for. In

India he married. Why? Because of past connections, past impressions, or sanskaras.

When I was in college, I met Babajan. I was going to college on my cycle, and Babajan was sitting under a tree. Around her she had a group of some Pathans. They are a very stalwart people, very fierce looking. Babajan, the old lady, just called me, beckoned me, and I got down from the cycle. Then she kissed me on the forehead – and I knew that EXPERIENCE. At that very moment everything disappeared, vanished completely. Why? Because I found myself INFINITE. There was no room for anything else. Everything vanished but me.

How can I explain that experience to you! But when you get that experience, you come to KNOW. When I experienced that bliss, that Infinite Bliss which had no break, it was continual. It is continuing even now. Of course, it is eternal; it has no break. Then I went to Upasni Maharaj; I was drawn there. I do not know how. He brought me back to normal consciousness. You have no idea what that means, to come down to normal consciousness. Every little thing, every moment, was a crucifixion for me. To come down from that Infinite Bliss to normal consciousness of this material, illusory world is crucifixion. Even now it is the same. You all find me very cheerful, happy, but inwardly, within, I am in infinite agony. Why? Because I experience through all of you your own bondage.

If you can love me, love God, your love will make you know me. If you can make others happy through your love without seeking your own happiness, you can free yourself from this bondage. You can then find me as I really am. No sooner do you get that EXPERIENCE than you feel liberated

and experience Infinite Bliss.

Concluding this session at the Barn, Baba led the group through the woods to the main part of the Center. A short time later, Baba sat on the white swing, which was placed in the area north of the Original Kitchen, and gave out prasad to everyone, tossing wrapped pieces of candy to many and hand-

Meher Baba on white swing placed in pathway
left of the kitchen, July 26, 1956;
Ruth White next to Baba.

ing pieces to others.

AMUSING INCIDENTS

This same day, Thursday, July 26, someone alerted us to the presence of a snake in the compound near the Caretaker's Cabin. A small group gathered, concerned about what to do. When I saw that it was a copperhead – a poisonous snake – I ran to the tool shed for a bush ax and then promptly killed it. I had not realized that while I was fetching the ax, Lud Dimpfl had run to ask Baba if it was all right to kill the snake. Fortunately, Baba gave permission to do so.

On another day, after being with us at the main part of the Center, Baba and the four men mandali left to go to Baba's house. We did not expect that Baba would be back that afternoon, so we thought that we would have some free time to do whatever we wanted or needed to do. Since the weather was very hot and the ocean was nearby, a group of us decided to go for a swim. At that time the Center had a large ex-Army truck, which we all climbed on for a drive to the beach.

We enjoyed a refreshing swim and then returned in the truck to the central area by the kitchen. Many of those who did not go swimming with us were standing about, looking very doleful. From some of them we learned that Baba had unexpectedly returned to the Lagoon Cabin and that he had been asking for us. They told us that Baba wanted us to go to him just as soon as we got back from the beach.

So, realizing that we were in trouble, we all trooped into the Lagoon Cabin, despite our wet bathing suits. Baba was sitting there looking very sober and stern. I sat on the carpet close in front of him. We all expected that Baba would reprimand us, and we waited remorsefully. Instead, Baba just sat there looking at us, and, as he did so, I began to ritually strike my chest with my closed fist in the traditional *mea culpa* ("the guilt is mine") gesture. Baba could of course see that we were remorseful, but seeing me make that gesture seemed to amuse him. He smiled, the mood lightened, and he motioned, "I forgive you all." Then he dismissed us.

On another occasion, after Baba had lovingly embraced everyone, one man, a local chiropractor whose last name was Thibodeau, came over to me and asked me to ask Baba to embrace him. Without saying it, he seemed to be implying that Baba had neglected to embrace him. So I asked Baba to embrace him. Baba did so, and, as the man walked away, Baba looked at me and gestured, "I had already embraced him!" (Incidentally, Baba would sometimes have this man's young son called to play Ping-Pong with Baba.)

One day when Baba was giving interviews in the Lagoon Cabin, Adi approached me and said, "Baba wants you to fix the shade over the front door." This was the door facing the lake, and the problem involved a malfunctioning pullshade.

Happy to comply, I went in, stood on a chair and began working. As I worked, I stole glances over at Baba. I was completely oblivious to

whoever was there having an interview with Baba. I thought, “This is great! Here I am with Baba – I’ve got to make this last as long as I can!” Soon, however, Baba began giving me rather sharp glances, so I thought, “I’d better hurry up and get out of here!”

Later, I wondered why Baba had wanted me there. Any of the workmen could have done the job. Was this an excuse to call me in to be with Baba for a few minutes? Were my thoughts of Baba so strong that they were interfering somehow? I never did find out.

One day, in preparation for a large gathering at the Barn, some of us were working there, cleaning and arranging chairs. Elizabeth, who was sweeping the outside path, handed Jeanne the broom she had been using so she could attend to something else. As Jeanne began sweeping, Baba suddenly came along, accompanied by about two hundred people. Jeanne knew that in India, sweeping was associated with the lowest caste, and she felt embarrassed. Baba hurried over and took the broom from her and began sweeping.



Meher Baba at Guest House compound.

On another day, close to the time when Baba and those of us traveling with him would be flying to Washington and then on to California, a few of the people who had originally planned on going with Baba only as far as Myrtle Beach began to think of continuing on with him to California. As there had been some inharmonious situations in connection

with one of the people, John Bass, Marion Florsheim, and I thought we should consult Baba about the person's going on to California with us.

Baba was on the Guest House porch, where we approached to meet with him. He motioned for us to sit in chairs close to him, and as we began to express our concern, he leaned forward, and his eyes took on a very mischievous twinkle, as though he were joining us in some kind of secret conspiracy. At that point the whole situation became very funny. We all smiled, and Baba assured us that everything would be all right and that we should not worry about it. And sure enough, the person was no longer a source of disharmony.

“LEAVE EVERYTHING TO BABA”

On Friday, July 27, in the morning, everyone gathered near the Barn, where some simple ceremonies dedicating the Center were to take place. It was also “open day” for local people who wanted to come for Baba's darshan; a notice had been published in the newspaper. Baba was in the Barn, and prior to the ceremonies everyone filed into the Barn. Baba gave each one prasad of fruit or candy. He had assigned Margaret Craske and Agnes Baron to the front steps, and they wrote down the names of everyone coming for darshan. Jeanne was stationed on the back porch of the Barn; as people exited, she would tell them to eat the prasad Baba had given them. Nearly three hundred people came for Baba's darshan.

The mayor of Myrtle Beach had been invited but was reportedly out of town, and cameramen from NBC Television flying in from New York were delayed because of engine trouble. Meantime, representatives of several newspapers interviewed and photographed Baba.

At noon or shortly after, everyone walked over to the dining area

for lunch. Then we gathered with Baba inside the Guest House compound. Baba sat on a chair near the gate with his back to the fence on the south side of the compound. In a humorous mood, Baba took Ben Hayman's cap and put it on his own head. Shortly thereafter, we walked with Baba to the Barn.

We were still waiting for the television men to arrive. As we sat there, Baba said, "I want you all to listen very carefully to what I say. It appears so simple, yet it is so very important for my lovers. To love me is to lose yourself in me, and to find me as your own Self is to leave all your pleasures and pains to me. What does that mean?" Someone spoke up and said, "Leave everything to Baba."

"Everything," Baba repeated. "And remain happy. Leave your pleasures to me, leave your pains to me, and then you remain free. It is a great thing, a difficult thing. Say you have three children and all three of them die at one stroke. Naturally, what can you say? You must not only say, but feel, 'I leave all this to Baba. It is his wish; it is his pleasure.' Kabir [a poet and Perfect Master] said a nice thing. This morning when I was strolling here, I asked Eruch to write it down."

Eruch explained, "Kabir was a Perfect Master. All over India people revere him and love him. He said this to his own Master: 'Nothing that I have belongs to me. All that I have belongs to You. What will I lose if I surrender to You what belongs to You?'"

Baba then said, "That is what I want to tell my lovers: Your pains and your pleasures – leave them all to me."

"I COME DOWN TO YOUR LEVEL"

The sky, which had been overcast, now opened up, and heavy rain began to fall. Soon the rain turned to hailstones. Baba seemed to become restless; he rose from his chair and began pacing. He went

onto the veranda of the Barn, and we watched his fingers moving quickly. Presently, he sat down again in his chair, and soon after that, Kitty Davy came in and announced that the television men had arrived at the airport.

After Baba quipped that the television men had brought the rain, he spoke about the next day's meeting, saying, "When you are here, I want you to keep alert. Try to remain alert and fresh. Don't feel drowsy when you come tomorrow evening. Tomorrow is an important day. Avail yourself of the opportunity I want to give you all here in this Barn."

Then Baba said, "I come down to your level to such an extent that I mix with you all. I appear to you to be gay, cheerful, playful. You have no idea of my divinity, of my all-pervading state. I have the greatest sense of humor, like Krishna. That sense of humor should not mislead you or make you forget who I really am. Don't mix me up as one of you. It is possible only for the saints and those on the higher path, the real saints of higher consciousness, to know me a little. If you had just a glimpse of me, you would lose your body consciousness completely.

"I am like a child, playful, free, and also like an old man. I am soft as butter and hard as steel, simultaneously. Only those who love me sincerely, with all their hearts, can know me a little. Mind can never know me, mind can never touch me. I am beyond that, beyond Mind. . . ."

The television men finally arrived, and soon they were filming Baba giving prasad and all of us who were sitting around Baba on chairs and on the floor of the Barn. Baba explained about the significance of prasad. It was after 6:00 p.m. by the time the day's filming was finished. The rain had stopped, and we all followed Baba back to the main part of the Center. Baba, now in a humorous mood, was striding rapidly down the path when he suddenly stopped, causing

us all to pile up. He then cautioned us to keep up with him but never rush ahead.

THE CAUSE OF MISERY

The following morning, Saturday, July 28, Baba sat on the low railing south of the kitchen, while the television men filmed him answering some questions from Ivy Duce. One question was: "Why should misery perpetually exist on earth in spite of God's Infinite Love and Mercy?"

With Eruch interpreting his gestures, Baba replied, "The source of eternal bliss is the Self in all. The cause of perpetual misery is the selfishness of all. As

long as satisfaction is derived through selfish pursuits, misery will always exist.

"Only because of the Infinite Love and Mercy of God can man learn to realize through the lessons of misery on earth that inherent in him is the source of Infinite Bliss and that all suffering is his labor of love to unveil his own infinite Self."

Later, at about 8:30 a.m., we all walked with Baba to the Barn, where more filming of dedication ceremonies took place. One of Baba's messages was read out by Don Stevens. To the west of the Barn, perhaps fifty feet away, Baba, with Elizabeth Patterson and Adi K. Irani's assistance, planted a small holly tree, with the group standing

Meher Baba sitting on railing south of kitchen,
July 28, 1956



Meher Baba and Elizabeth Patterson plant a holly tree west of the Barn, July 28, 1956



Meher Baba outside Barn, July 28, 1956.



Meher Baba sitting under pine tree near Barn, July 28, 1956. One of several taken by Darwin.



Meher Baba sitting under pine tree near Barn, July 28, 1956; similar to photo over fireplace in the Barn.

behind, observing.

Then Baba sat under a pine tree at the northwest corner of the Barn. I took some excellent pictures of Baba sitting under the tree.



Meher Baba in Fred Winterfeldt's station wagon, excursion to Brookgreen Gardens, July 28, 1956.

STARDUST AND FIREWORKS

In the afternoon, at about 2:30, two chartered buses came to take us for an outing to Brookgreen Gardens, formerly the plantation of

Aaron Burr, about twenty-five miles south of the Center. Jeanne had told Baba about the place and how much our family had enjoyed going there during the year we lived in Myrtle Beach, and Baba had agreed to go. Buses and carpools were arranged for the excursion. Baba rode in a car driven by Fred Winterfeldt; our family rode in our own car.

Baba seemed to enjoy walking leisurely through the extensive gardens, with its numerous large sculptures placed throughout. Sometimes he would sit on the ground, leaning against a tree, and the group would sit nearby. My son, Lowell, took some film footage of Baba and the group.

On one occasion, when Baba was walking along at the head of the group, I walked about fifty feet to one side to take a picture of everyone. As I looked at them, I was amazed to see that the whole group following Baba was enveloped in stardust! Thousands of tiny sparks of light flowed from Baba like the wake of a comet, permeating the whole group. I snapped the picture, hoping this phenomenon would be captured on the film, but of course it was not.

In the evening, everyone walked with Baba to the Barn for a “med-



Meher Baba walking with John Bass and group, pointing to statuary at Brookgreen Gardens, July 28, 1956.



Group following Meher Baba at Brookgreen. Darwin perceived "stardust" enveloping everyone behind Baba, July 28, 1956.

itation meeting.” I believe I was doing some errands for Baba and was not at this meeting. Earlier, Baba had urged all to put their hearts into the meditation meeting, as he wanted to give a special outpouring of his love. Before beginning, he had them remove their shoes and wash their hands and faces at a standpipe at the south end of the Barn. As they did so, Baba paced back and forth around all four sides of the Barn. It was reported that a great stillness descended.

After everyone returned to the main part of the Center in the black of night, some of the Sufis put on a fireworks show out over the lake.

“YOUR SHORES ARE SAFE!”

On Sunday, July 29, in the morning, we all walked to the beach with Baba. Before starting out, Baba called me aside and made some motions with his hands, which I interpreted to mean that I should lead the way, which I did. I had the impression that Baba wanted me not only to lead the way to the beach, but to watch out for snakes ahead of Baba and the group.

Baba had also prearranged with my daughter Renae to lead him to Gator Lake, a small pond near the south end of the property that had

a reputation as an alligator hangout. Accordingly, when we got to the path to Gator Lake, Renae led Baba and the men mandali and Elizabeth along the narrow path to the pond.

Baba gestured to Elizabeth, “Where are the alligators?”

Elizabeth replied, “I don’t know, Baba. They’re usually here.” We all then contin-

ued on to the beach.

When Baba and the group arrived at the beach, Baba walked briefly



Meher Baba walking into the ocean, July 29, 1956.



Meher Baba creating "first man" from sand, July 29, 1956.



Meher Baba with "first man"; Elizabeth Patterson looking at shell Darwin found for Baba, July 29, 1956.

into the ocean and stood there for a few moments. Nariman Dadachanji, who was standing near us, declared, "Now your shores are safe!"

Returning to the sandy beach, Baba sat down and began scooping the sand into a pile with his hands. Someone asked, "What is that?" to which Baba replied, "The first man." We felt that Baba was just having a little fun. Baba told us to find some nice shells for Mehera and the other women mandali in India, so he had us all scurrying around looking for some. Nice ones were hard to find, but Baba accepted a few that were brought to him. Gradually it dawned on some of us that we could bring any kind of shell; the perfect ones he accepted, the imperfect ones he would hold briefly, then give back to us: souvenirs from the Beloved! Needless to say, we kept them because Baba had touched them.

BABA FULFILLS A SECRET WISH

Sometimes around Baba even a seemingly simple thing would become an astonishing, sublime experience. I recall one such occasion that took place at the Center during this period.

Being naturally reserved, I was even more shy about expressing my inner feelings while with Baba and, when away from him, I would sometimes fantasize about some little thing I would like to do with him. On these occasions it never occurred to me that Baba might be aware of my secret wish, much less provide for its fulfillment.

This incident took place at dusk in front of the Lagoon Cabin. It happened so unexpectedly, but it was truly the right moment. I stood facing the lake; apparently there was no one around where I was just then. Hearing light footsteps behind me, I turned around, and there was Baba. His countenance was indescribably sweet and beautiful, his eyes divinely loving.

In that instant, he somehow allowed all veils between us to vanish.

I was dissolved into the essence of my total love for him, and as he held forth his arms to embrace me, he flashed to me the reminder that this was my opportunity to fulfill my secret longing. And so, as I melted into the Ocean of his sweet love, from the bottom of my heart I whispered into his ear the most precious word I knew: “Beloved!”

ON TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Monday, July 30, was our last day at the Center. We left the Center mid-morning, most of us riding in a chartered bus. Baba rode in a car. At the Wilmington, North Carolina, airport, where we boarded our plane for Washington, Baba mingled with us, smiling and giving all a sense of great joy as a part of his family. In a humorous mood, Fred Winterfeldt put on a multicolored striped cap with Bili Eaton’s feathered hat over it. Baba joined in the fun by having Ben Hayman stand on one side of him while Fred stood on the other side, and with a twinkle in his eyes, Baba had us take pictures of them.

After a happy flight to the Washington, D.C., airport with Baba, he, the four men mandali, Ivy Duce and her daughter, Charmian, went into the city of Washington to Ivy’s home. About two hundred people came to meet Baba there. A delicious dinner was served to Baba, the mandali and several others.

Meantime, many of the group, including some of our family, went on a sightseeing tour around Washington and Arlington National



Meher Baba posing at Wilmington airport;
Ben Hayman (left) and Fred Winterfeldt. July 30, 1956.

Cemetery. After that, back at the airport, Jeanne records that we “browsed through the air station, made out insurance, also bought a lunch box for the plane. We had a grand dinner at the very nice restaurant there overlooking the airfield. We could see planes go up and also land from there. If we could have afforded it, we would have bought souvenirs (too expensive). Besides, our minds and hearts were on Baba, awaiting his return and looking out for him.”

We were there to greet Baba at 9:30 p.m. when he and his party arrived back at the airport. It was about 10:30 p.m. when we boarded the plane for California.

LOCKED IN TO BABA

It was a day of feeling that I had Baba all to myself, and I am sure everyone felt the same. But in a way, during the flight from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, I almost literally did have Baba to myself. The entrance to the plane was situated about three-quarters of the way back, near the tail. It was a rather small plane, with a prop jet engine.

In the confusion of the large crowd boarding the plane, Jeanne and our children boarded ahead of me, and, like most of the others, went to the left toward the front of the plane, where everyone expected Baba would be sitting. However, when I came into the plane, I looked to my right and saw Baba sitting in a window seat toward the back of the plane, with Eruch beside him. To my surprise, I noticed that there were some empty seats behind Baba. I glanced once more to my left at the others in the main part of the plane, but once I had seen that opening in the section where Baba was, I could not imagine choosing another place to sit.

So I made my way back there, and when I got close, I motioned

inquiringly to Baba, "Is it all right for me to sit here?" Baba nodded encouragingly, so I chose a seat not directly behind Baba, but behind and one seat to the right of him so that I could observe him freely. I recall that Dana Fields had taken one of the other seats nearby, but as far as I remember, the other seat directly behind Baba remained empty the entire trip. So I had this seat behind Baba and Eruch for the entire flight. Needless to say, I felt extremely fortunate to be so close to Baba.

It was late at night when we got under way, and the lights were turned low so people could sleep. But Baba kept the lights over his seat turned up, and it did not seem that he had any intention of sleeping. He turned around and gestured to me by putting his hands together under his head, indicating that I should get some sleep. I did try to sleep, but being so close to Baba I could not. Instead, I remained wakeful, consciously enjoying and deeply appreciating this blessing. Baba and Eruch remained wakeful throughout the flight, and occasionally they carried on a conversation, Baba gesturing and Eruch murmuring his reply.

We made one stop, at Dallas, Texas, where many of us, including Baba and Eruch, got off the plane to stretch our legs and get a snack. While at the airport, I bought a roll of peppermint-flavored Lifesavers, small doughnut-shaped candies. Back on the plane, I offered Baba some of the Lifesavers, which he accepted. Even this simple exchange somehow increased the sense of inner intimacy with the Beloved.

By the time we had landed at the airport in Los Angeles, I felt very locked in to Baba, with a deep inner attunement. I felt that Baba trusted me. It was as though I were one of his hands and knew with an inner knowing what needed to be done, and that I had to be true to that trust. And when I was told that Baba had not slept for eighteen days before coming to America, and that he had not been sleeping while in this country, my heart went out to him in sympathy and love,

C H A P T E R
F I F T E E N

Meher Baba in California

W and I felt very concerned to do all I could to help him. This, together with the effect of being close to him physically, drew me very close to him within.



Meher Baba at Los Angeles airport. Ruth White, Hilda Fuchs on Baba's left; Marguerite Poley and Gladys Carr (holding Baba's hand) on his right, July 31, 1956.

e arrived at the Los Angeles airport at about 6:00 a.m. on July 31. The weather was rainy and foggy – "fog like pea soup," Jeanne wrote. Meher Baba was greeted by Marguerite Poley, Gladys Carr, and Hilda Fuchs. This was their first physical meeting with Baba.

Baba was driven in a car to the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, in the heart of Hollywood, where most of us were staying. After we got our luggage, we were taken to the hotel by chartered bus. Baba arrived ahead of us and went directly to his room, where he was interviewed by newspaper reporters.

Jeanne noted in her diary that "Hollywood is rather disappointing (honky-tonk), not much to see. We were opposite Grauman's Theater. There were many knick-knack and gift shops. We went out to lunch-eonettes to eat. We had dinner and breakfast at the hotel once or twice, only when we ate as a group or were invited with someone. . . . We had a beautiful suite at this hotel (reasonable, too)."

While staying at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel with Baba, both Jeanne and Filis again had the opportunity to launder some of his clothes. Jeanne wrote, "Baba sent up his garments for me to launder. . . . It was a good thing that we had a travel iron and there were many towels for padding the nice table (for pressing). I rolled the clothes in towels, then hung them overnight on hangers in the bathroom and when almost dry I rolled [them] in towels and pressed before breakfast – all ready before 7:00 a.m." Baba's clothes were so filled with his love that both Jeanne and Filis felt that it was a blessing to wash them.

LOS ANGELES AND HOLLYWOOD

I was well aware that this was to be a busy day for Baba, with no time for rest before meeting people and conducting interviews. No

arrangements had been made ahead of time for a reception for Baba, so Jeanne and I immediately began seeing to that. We found a table – even a nice tablecloth – and set it up on the mezzanine of the hotel near the room where Baba would be interviewing people.

I took Ruth White aside and explained to her that since she knew the people who were coming to see Baba and we did not, it was up to her to introduce them to Baba. “You mean that I get to go in and introduce people to Baba?” she asked. I assured her that this was the best way to handle things.

All these activities might appear to be simple mundane events that would occur in one’s day, but around Baba they took on a timeless quality. For the person involved, there was such intimacy, such a feeling of being involved in the Romance of the Soul. It is very hard to convey what it was like, but that indelible sense of timelessness will ever remain with me.

NO REST IN HOLLYWOOD

At about 10:00 a.m., Baba came down, and shortly after that the interviews began. I had arranged for some of the California people to bring individuals and groups in to meet Baba and to introduce them to him. They were delighted to have this opportunity to be with Baba many times. Stationed at the door, I, too, got to see Baba quite a bit.

I was happy for Baba when in mid-afternoon there were no more people waiting to see him. I told him and he quickly took advantage of this break to go up to his room with the men mandali, and I hoped that he would take some rest. It was with mixed feelings, therefore, that I had to deal with the arrival of several other people who had appointments to meet Baba. I was glad for them, as they would get to see the

Beloved, but dismayed that I would have to disturb Baba, as I assumed that he was finally resting.

So it was with some concern that I went up the elevator and, after getting off at the right floor, started walking toward Baba's room. As I turned a corner, I was surprised to see Baba walk out of his room and, looking toward me, raise his hand in an inquiring gesture. Apparently he knew that I was coming to his room and he had come out to meet me.

In response to his inquiring gesture and look, I apologetically said, "I'm sorry, Baba, but some more people have come." Still looking at me inquiringly, Baba pointed first to himself and then downward, silently asking, "Does that mean that I should go back down to the interview room?" I nodded, "Yes, I'm afraid so, Baba."

Then, in a most loving but weary way, Baba put his arm around my back and rested his head on my shoulder, just for a few seconds. For me, this was an indescribably sweet and loving gesture, somehow uniting my heart with his in the mood of the

moment. Baba then straightened up, put a smile on his face, and motioned with his arm, "Let's go." Returning to the interview room, Baba seemed somewhat refreshed and cheerfully ready to receive the people who were waiting for their personal contact with the Beloved.



Ivy Duce leading Meher Baba to Hilda Fuchs' house,
Eruch following, July 31, 1956.

AT THE HOME OF HILDA FUCHS

But this was not the end of the day's activities for Baba, as he was

scheduled to go to the home of Hilda Fuchs to meet a group of people. Still feeling very strongly for Baba and how tired he must be, I asked someone who was going to Hilda's house ahead of me to ask her to arrange a room where Baba could rest if he wished.

Jeanne recorded the afternoon's events in her diary:

Hilda arranged a gathering of approximately thirty people to see Baba and receive darshan at her home in Hollywood. Preparations were made beforehand. Phyllis [Filis], Adele and myself assisted, serving punch and cakes to the people as they came in. Hilda introduced her friends to us and to others. When all were assembled, Baba arrived, accompanied by the mandali, Don Stevens, Elizabeth, Kitty, Margaret Craske, Mrs. Ivy Duce, Charmian, Darwin, Lowell, Leatrice, Renae, Marion Florsheim, Sparky, Dana, and John Bass.

Baba sat in a chair facing the assembled group as they sat around the spacious room and said, "I am very happy to see you all." Don Stevens read the messages "Have Hope" and "Ignorance of the Separative Ego."

Baba asked Ivy Duce what she was thinking, and she replied that she was wondering what Baba was thinking. Baba replied, "I was thinking that God within each of you is free, infinite, yet he feels himself bound in each of you, and therefore he suffers. I am infinitely happy, eternally blissful, yet I suffer every instant through you because I am in you all."

Ivy questioned, "Why this suffering, Baba?" Baba replied, "I experience that I am eternally bound in you all. Darwin, for example, has hands, eyes, fingers. When his finger is sore, he feels it, though it is the finger which is sore, not Darwin. So I feel all your suffering because

you are all in me. Jesus Christ got himself crucified, though he had Infinite Power. He took on suffering and made himself helpless for the sake of humanity. He felt Infinite Bliss, but also human suffering. He felt the suffering of all the world. I continually feel both Infinite Bliss and human suffering.”

Baba was referring to soreness on my finger due to eczema, but I had not told Baba about it.

Jeanne’s diary continues:

There was a dish of grapes beside Baba which he began to give as prasad, first to each of the mandali and some of those standing nearby, then to others of those assembled. The people came slowly to Baba to accept the grapes; few of them seemed reverent, some even seemed casual about it. I sensed that the people did not fully appreciate Baba and the wonderful opportunity it was for them to have a personal contact with him.

As I approached Baba to receive the prasad, I felt impelled to bow to Baba. Also, I wanted to express my feeling of reverence somehow, thinking to myself, “Oh you people, how little do you appear to really understand who is here before you and what it means to have his prasad.” After receiving the grape from Baba and putting it in my mouth to eat, I suddenly felt a surge of feeling rise up in me with such



Meher Baba leaving Hilda Fuchs’ house,
July 31, 1956.

force that I had to retire to the next room, because the tears were flowing profusely. I was so moved by the love-force received through the prasad. Baba then went on to explain the nature of prasad, saying, "In India it is accepted with great reverence; they know it comes from God."

Hilda Fuchs had offered Baba the use of a room to rest in if he wished, and at this time he went to the room for a few minutes.

THE GARDEN OF ALLAH

Shortly afterward, we left with Baba to attend a dinner at the Garden of Allah restaurant. Most of the group had arrived at the restaurant ahead of us and were already seated and waiting for Baba. When Baba arrived, he greeted everyone – he even pointed out my placecard to me – and sat down at the main table, which was beautifully decorated with flowers and a large heart-shaped floral arrangement. A marvelous cake for Baba was also on the table.

At the last minute it was discovered that there were not enough seats for everyone, so Baba had the men mandali give up their seats so that those without seats could sit down. After saying how happy he was to be there and urging us to enjoy the dinner, Baba left with the men mandali. This had been a long and wonderful day with the Beloved for all of us.

OPPORTUNITIES MISSED

The following morning, Wednesday, August 1, Baba called for the whole group, but some had gone for a walk and others were not to be found. He chided a few as they came straggling in. He wanted to give

us a message, he said, but because not everyone was there, we would have to wait seven hundred years for the message. He then went on to say that we had all spent so much money to be there with him, but there was no time now, with all the appointments. But, he said, he wanted to be with us all the next day – “to eat with us, to play with us and to fight with us.” We were scheduled to make a trip to Meher Mount, near Ojai, the following day. This day turned out to be a very busy one for Baba.

The hotel manager had asked the group to remain in a rather small room and not to congregate out on the mezzanine floor. In her diary, Jeanne describes an amusing incident about the manager’s problem with “crowd control.”

There was a large room near the interview room where the “traveling group” loitered around – just waiting for glimpses of Baba as he went to and from this room to his room. The manager of the hotel was an old meany-type. He didn’t want anyone to hang around in the corridor of this mezzanine floor and was always chasing us back into the room and threatening to restrict us more (the whole group). But when Baba came out of the room, all rushed to stand by and walk with him to the elevator.

It seemed that every time that we came out of the corridor, the manager happened to come by checking – yet each time missed seeing Baba. I was bold and told him the reason that all were gathered in the corridor. I told him that he came up just at that time – that other times we sat in the room provided. But he said, “Funny, I don’t see the man,” meaning Baba. I said, “You missed him” – and thought to myself, “. . .



Meher Mount terrain.

because you're a meany!"

That evening, Baba went with a few people to Dante Cardella's apartment in Hollywood, but I was not among them.

MEHER MOUNT

Thursday, August 2, was a day we had all been looking forward to, a day when Baba would be free of interviews, when we could all be more closely with him in the beautiful setting of Meher Mount.

Two buses had been chartered to take the group; Baba and the men mandali rode with Agnes Baron in her station wagon. Agnes had been living at Meher Mount, looking after the place for Baba for quite some time, so it was a special

joy for her to be driving Baba at long

last to visit Meher Mount. The ride of about eighty miles north of Hollywood was very scenic and pleasant. Everyone was in a happy mood for the day's outing with Baba.

Meher Mount is situated a short distance from the town of Ojai, and the top, where the buildings are, is rather flat and includes quite a few acres of land. On a clear day the Pacific Ocean could be seen from the top; however, when we arrived there, it was foggy and the view was



Meher Baba and mandali approaching main building, Meher Mount, August 2, 1956.



August 2, 1956.

Meher Baba with Agnes
Baron. (top left)

Meher Baba and group
at
Meher Mount swimming
pool, which was filled with
foul-smelling sulfur water.
(top right)



Meher Baba and group
touring Meher Mount.
(right & bottom)



somewhat limited.

When we arrived at the main building, we all went inside and sat wherever we could, all sort of crowded around Baba, but in a comfortable way. Baba sat where everyone could see him. He seemed very relaxed and happy to be among his lovers.

Jeanne wrote in her diary:

Baba liked the place very much. He called us all (about one hundred fifty of us) into the room of the cottage and asked a few of us if we liked the place and asked our impression (asked me, too). I said, "It had an instant appeal, Baba." He nodded, pleased. . . . Baba even said "I know this place well."

Baba was in a very jolly mood there. He donned Elizabeth's coat and wound a turban around his head. It made him look years younger, and he looked at me and gestured, "How do you like it?" I exclaimed, "Baba you look so handsome!" I just love to see Baba in a turban. Elizabeth was happy that Baba wore her coat. Baba said, "Don't part with this coat."

Later on, after the fog had cleared, Agnes showed Baba and the group around the place, including a

swimming pool. We then came back inside the main building. Dana Field had been giving Baba some grapes to eat. Baba did eat some of them, but he explained that he never liked fruits or milk, as they did not agree with him. Then he asked us to close our eyes and sit quietly for a few



Group enjoying natural beauty on Meher Mount,
August 2, 1956.

minutes, which we did. After a few moments, Baba snapped his fingers, and when we opened our eyes, he asked, “Did you hear it? My stomach rumbling?” We had of course heard it, and everyone laughed. Baba said he would like to spend the night at Meher Mount, but there was no time.

“TAKE ME WITH YOU”

There was more lighthearted conversation; then Baba told us that we should go out, walk around, see the views, and try to love Baba through nature. He said, “This is all due to my love – this whole creation, this nature, all the beauty you see, all came out of me.” Then as we were leaving, he added, “And take me with you.”

Jeanne writes of her precious experience with Baba at this time:

I was especially impressed with Baba’s saying “Take Me with you.” It was like an order, so I began to imagine that Baba was walking along with me. I began to mentally converse with Baba. “It’s still a bit foggy out, Baba, and the view still isn’t clear . . . Oh, there’s a big beautiful tree over there, Baba. I’d love to see You sitting under it.” Then, as I walked on, I heard people coming from the direction of the house. Turning around, I was surprised to see Baba, followed by several people, rapidly walking toward the big tree.

Right away I wondered, “Is he going to sit under the tree? Did he hear me say that I’d like to see him sitting under that tree?”

I started walking toward Baba and the tree, but the crowd moved in front of Baba, and I couldn’t see if he was actually sitting under the tree, but it appeared that he was. [Baba actually was sitting under the tree.] The crowd started to move away,

and I was afraid I wouldn't get there before Baba left. To my surprise, Baba waited and motioned for me to come to him.

When I reached Baba's side, he reached over and most lovingly kissed my cheek. As Baba and the others moved on, I remained there for a while, completely overwhelmed by the sweetness of Baba's love. It was so wonderful that all I could do was to seek out a quiet place and sit there by myself in a state of great bliss. I don't know how long I sat there. Time and place seemed to fade into the background, and I was taken over completely by Baba's precious love and bliss.

After a while, I began to get hungry and realized that it must be long past lunchtime. I hurried to the house and found only a crust of bread left, but it tasted like manna from heaven. Quite some time later, when thinking over this wonderful experience with Baba, it dawned on me that in kissing my cheek, Baba was acknowledging and expressing his approval of my obedience. I really had tried to quite literally "take him with me."

The rest of us ate a very nice lunch under the trees. We also walked around outside with Baba and enjoyed his company in a very relaxed and intimate way, marveling that all this could really be happening. We were ever mindful of who Baba was and how fortunate we were to be with him.

THE AVATAR'S "MOODS"

On one occasion, when we were inside the house with Baba, he said, "This afternoon you all have a chance to laugh and feel relaxed. Baba also has a chance to relax here for five minutes. You had no chance in New York; at Myrtle Beach, little chance; in Los Angeles,

none. But here today we feel relaxed, happy. I come down to your level so that we can laugh and be free together, but don't forget at the same time that I am the Highest of the High.

"Do not expect any discourse from me today," Baba said. "Yesterday I told you all that you would play, feel relaxed here. One thing I want you all to know. You do not realize how very fortunate you all are when I embrace you all. In India when I go out to give my darshan, in southern India, Andhra State, traveling about from east to west, there are thousands who come for my darshan, and they all love me very much, a number of them being ready to lay down their lives for me at my signal. Yet they have no chance for my embrace or my close company because the rush is so great. When they approach me, the person behind is pushing them on and the one behind him is pushing too, so just for a second they can have my contact and then it's finished. They do not have any chance of sitting near me or embracing me, although they love me very much.

"In Los Angeles there was no time for you all to come near me or sit near me as you do today, for the people came there and I was so busy. Therefore, I wanted particularly to have a day here. You have seen my mood changing – as it did in London."

Then Eruch said, "Sometimes all of a sudden Baba appears very gay, very happy, and he makes us feel very happy at the same time. He mixes with the children, he plays with them, runs about like a child, and he appears to be very, very, happy. Suddenly there is a change in Baba's mood. He appears to us very tired, very sick, as if something has happened to him. Yet there is nothing that we can see. He appears to be very loving sometimes – full of love, overflowing with love, and we feel as if we want to do nothing but love him. Again, there is a change in mood and he appears to us to be very stern or fiery, and at such moments we would like not to love him, but just to pay respect to him and wait for his orders and instructions."



Meher Baba leaving Meher Mount;
Kitty Davy holding car door, August 2, 1956.

Baba said, “No one can understand my ways. I am beyond your understanding. Only Perfect Masters can know me and my ways.”

Continuing, Baba said, “Another point, as you all become more intimate with me, with opportunities to come closer to

me, all that is good and all that is bad within you comes out in sparks, as it were. All the impressions of the past, the accumulations of past sanskaras – of all illusory things, which includes both good and bad – come out. My proximity, the intimacy with me, just changes that mass of sanskaras and sometimes you find good and bad flying out.”

We started back to Hollywood late in the afternoon and arrived at the hotel before Baba did. He returned in the station wagon, having taken the scenic route along the coast, where he enjoyed occasional glimpses of the Pacific Ocean. We were waiting on the sidewalk in front of the hotel for Baba when he arrived, and that was the last contact with him for that day. He said that he would be busy that evening and that we would too, packing our things for the trip to San Francisco the following day.

SAN FRANCISCO

It was now Friday, August 3, and we were on our way to San Francisco. When we arrived at the airport, Baba mingled among us, smiling and asking how we were and if we had slept well. After we boarded the plane and were airborne, Baba walked up and down the aisle a bit, reaching each one of us with his greatly treasured love-glances. In her diary, Jeanne

described Baba as “fatherly.” The day was clear and sunny, and the flight with Baba in our midst was especially joyful.

When we arrived at the San Francisco airport, Baba was greeted by a group of his lovers from that area, some of whom placed a large garland of bright yellow flowers around his neck. We were taken to the Holiday Lodge, where we

stayed while in San Francisco. It was an unusually fine motel with three floors of rooms facing a beautifully landscaped courtyard, with palm trees, lawn and bushes. Also, there was a swimming pool, which none of us used, and a large dining room.

Those who had made arrangements for our stay there had placed Baba, the men mandali and a few others in some duplex units facing the outside of the complex. Our family was placed next door to where Baba was. After bringing in our luggage, I walked over to Baba’s place, and when I went in, there was Baba, sitting on a chair and looking very unhappy.

I said, “You are not happy here, Baba!” He did not look up, but just shook his head “no.” He did not like being placed on the outside of the courtyard away from most of his lovers, who had rooms on the inside. He even threatened to leave two days early because of this. Those who had made the arrangements, thinking that Baba would like them, were greatly distressed by this development.



Holiday Lodge, August 1956.



Meher Baba happy in front of his room at Holiday Lodge, August 1956.

Jeanne wrote in her diary about the situation:

When we arrived at the Holiday Lodge there was some shifting about. Baba didn't like the cottage assigned to him and we had a cottage near his – all the rest were at the main part of the lodge with rooms around an inner court. We were unhappy

about our cottage because we were separated from the other groups and we knew Baba was changing (yet the cottages were considered the best.) We had a kitchenette and could cook there – still we wanted to get two double rooms with a cot at the main section. Baba moved that night to temporary rooms. Next day we were given

the rooms he had, while he took double connecting rooms on the next floor level.

All rooms were off a balcony, and we could promenade around and see Baba often. Weren't we lucky to get the rooms Baba and the mandali used?



Meher Baba with children, Holiday Lodge, August 1956.



Meher Baba grasping Fred Winterfeldt by the head, Holiday Lodge, August 1956.

FRANCISCO

There were quite a few children among the San Francisco families, and they felt so happy and free around Baba that they often crowded around him, hanging on to his arms and delighting in his close companionship. Baba, too, seemed very happy among them. He gestured, "Now that the children have monopolized me, the rest of you will have no chance." He added, "I, too, am a child."

That first morning, Baba indicated that he would like to go out for a little change, since he had been confined during his seclusion so much, and while in New York he had remained in the hotel most of the time. A bus tour of the city was suggested, and Baba liked the idea. So a tour bus was chartered and in the afternoon we went on a sightseeing tour around San Francisco with Baba.

Most of us rode in the chartered bus, while Baba rode in a station wagon that was driven by Lud Dimpfl. Ivy Duce, Adi K. Irani, Dr. Nilu, and several children accompanied Baba. We went to some of the popular sites, such as Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, and Coit Tower, where we all got out and enjoyed the view of the bay. After that we went to the Presidio Gardens and then returned to the Holiday Lodge.

Jeanne was very pleased with San Francisco. She wrote, "The city has a distinct personality – sort of French and Spanish – yet so American and much like the Eastern states."

In the evening we went with Baba to see the Ice Follies at the Cow



Meher Baba greeting his lovers at Holiday Lodge;
Enid Corfe in background.
August 1956.

Palace. As it was quite cool and damp out, Baba wore warmer clothes than usual. We all had seats in a group around Baba; our seats were in the same row as Baba's. About three-quarters of the way through the show, Baba and the mandali got up to leave. Baba motioned to us that we should stay, so we all did.

While in San Francisco, Baba also visited the homes of Ivy Duce, Don Stevens, and Fred Frey. I was not present on any of those excursions.

Jeanne noted in her diary that she got to wash Baba's clothes the full three days we were in San Francisco. She told me later that one of those times when she was returning Baba's clothes, Baba took both of her hands and very tenderly swayed her arms back and forth, almost as if dancing with her.

"GO MAD WITH LOVE"

The following morning, Saturday, August 4, we all gathered in Baba's room for greetings and embraces. Jeanne records: "It was in room 318 – when we met Baba (all of us) first thing in the morning of the second day – that I had such a wonderful moment with Baba. He kissed me on the cheek, and allowed me to kiss his cheek; a warm embrace and he held my hands lovingly. . . . All had a turn to touch or embrace Baba. I could smell the fragrance of his coat even outside for a long time." A short time later, Jeanne remarked to Meherjee that she could still smell Baba. Meherjee gave her a puzzled look.

For most of the day, Baba was busy with interviews. The room where Baba interviewed people was beautifully decorated with potted plants and flowers that had been brought there by Fred Frey. Baba looked exceptionally radiant and powerful while sitting on a chaise longue in this setting.

Prior to the interviews, Fred Frey was trying to lead Baba to the interview room but could not seem to find it. Baba teased him by saying, “Fred has now become one of my mad disciples.” Continuing, Baba said, “When you go mad for me, really mad, not just in the worldly sense, then you find me. Only those who go mad with love for me find me.”

As the time drew near for the interviews to begin, I saw that I could again take the post at the door of the interview room; but I felt that I should step aside in order to allow one of the San Francisco Baba lovers to assume this post, so I remained in the background. However, the next time I saw Baba, he looked at me reproachfully and said, “You used to stick your head in the door now and then!”

Many people came to meet Baba. There were intervals when Don Stevens read some of Baba’s messages. Jeanne records in her diary: “All day interviews took place in the conference room above the dining room. The group all sat in a room outside of the interview room. Baba called us in all together at the end of the afternoon, and a discourse was read. When all were dispersing, Baba came to me and touched my cheeks lovingly. I felt warm and happy.”

In the late afternoon Baba visited the Sufism Reoriented Center, and while there he said, “I am the Christ – no question of it. And when I break my silence, all the world will come to know about it.” Baba’s symbol for the Christ was a cross, made with his index fingers.

THE BEGINNING OF THE “EAST-WEST GATHERING”

During the course of this trip with Meher Baba, he had been dropping hints about a proposed big meeting to be held in India. Some had heard a little about it, and others still had not caught wind of this meeting. So, on Sunday, August 5, before breakfast, Baba summoned all of those who were traveling with him on this American tour to assemble in his small suite of

rooms. There were about forty of us, all crowded in there.

Baba's announcement was electrifying. He began, "Last night I thought over everything. I had to attend to much Universal Work. I decided about the meeting I want to call after my seclusion on November 7. I have decided the meeting will start November 7 and continue. I will send instructions to those whom I will invite from the West and others in India. These will include instructions informing the Western group when they should arrive, how long they should stay – one month. I will send the instructions in March 1957 to all invitees, and I will expect their early replies and suggestions. I will expect an early reply for the board and lodging arrangements. The group coming from different parts of the globe will have to stay one month. Dana, repeat all this so loudly that those on Mars can hear you!"

Dana Field loudly repeated what Baba had said. Baba continued: "I will require six months for the arrangements. There will be so many from different parts of India. All the Indian groups. That will take time, making arrangements for them." Then Baba had Don Stevens repeat in a loud voice all that he had said.

During the following moments, Ben Hayman asked if the meeting would be for men only, which brought out protests. Baba said, "The Indian women are annoyed with me because it was not possible for them to have my sahavas. This meeting will be for men and women. It will be unprecedented in the history of my activities. I will also invite saints – the seven favorites."

All this talk about a big meeting in India aroused a great deal of interest and excitement among the group – and especially so when Baba turned his attention to the matter of inviting members of the Western group. He forcefully smacked the open palm of his left hand with the fist of his right hand as Eruch interpreted, loudly declaring,

“Elizabeth MUST come!” This was followed by the same forceful gesture, and Eruch loudly saying, “John Bass MUST come!”

More names followed, and the excitement among the listeners increased, so that many among the group who had hitherto not seriously thought of going to India began to wonder anxiously if they were going to be left out. Meantime, Baba continued naming one after another until, to the relief of those who were fearing they might be left out, every single person there was named. This was the beginning of what later turned out to be the East-West Gathering, which took place in India in 1962.

PIERCING OF THE HEART

As I stated previously, the 1956 American Tour with Meher Baba was a living drama of the Romance of the Soul. Day-to-day living and traveling with the Divine Beloved offered many opportunities for love’s encounter. There were moments of nearness, the precious love-glances, the heartfelt feelings for him as one caught fleeting glimpses of, or rather sensed, the undefinable suffering of the Christ.

One such moment occurred for Jeanne and me that Sunday evening when we went with Baba to the Lilliput Puppet Theater to watch a performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It was the climax of an incredibly sweet day with the Beloved, filled with intimate group meetings with Baba. It was a cool misty evening, and Baba wore a warm brown wool jacket. Jeanne and I sat near the front of the small theater, while Baba and the men mandali sat in the back. We were all deeply in rapport with Baba at some inner level, filled with love-longing for him. Suddenly Jeanne felt this love-longing so intensely that she could not resist turning around to look at Baba. Just then, Baba and the mandali got up and left the theater. It seemed as though Baba’s

purpose had been accomplished.

I cannot speak for the others, but our hearts had become pierced with love for Baba. The delicate sweetness of his love for us had wounded our hearts in some mysterious way, and in spite of, or rather because of, his love for us, our hearts ached with love-longing for him.

“LOVE ME AS I WANT YOU TO”

On the last full day that Baba was in San Francisco, Monday, August 6, he had most of the group meet with him in the conference room to straighten out some misunderstandings about finances. Baba said, “Keep your hearts clean with all Baba decides. Let there be no lingering misunderstanding. If you all have the love and faith that I am the Christ, which I am, then you must obey me, you must love me. If you are not prepared to obey me or if you have doubts and wish to carry out your own will, then you must leave me. If you love me, you must hold fast to me.

“If you want to stick to me, you must have a clean heart. There is no use in sometimes having faith and sometimes having doubt. It is best then to leave me; then you can lead your life in the world and be free. If you want to love me, you should not try to create confusion among yourselves. All of you love me. But you will be loving me best by loving each other. If one has to say something behind the other’s back, how can you tell the world about my love? If you all cannot love me as I want you to love me, it is best not to speak to the world about me.

“Let’s put an end to all hypocrisy. Let hypocrisy be completely wiped out from your hearts. I would love to see that. You should all have one heart, a clean heart. We are one family. It all began this morning when I saw the breakfast. [Baba felt that the men mandali should not have spent as much money as they had on breakfast.] Then everyone had something to say about expenses. It reflected the minds of you

all. As I am leaving my lovers tomorrow, I wanted all of you to clear your hearts so there will not be any misunderstanding.

“Whenever you handle finances, be careful to have a clean and complete account of everything you receive and spend, and the balance. I want you all to work harmoniously with clean hearts, without prejudices. I will be leaving you all tomorrow. Today is the last day. Now we will make a confession. Who can say the Prayer of Repentance? Who has a copy?”

When Baba asked for someone to repeat the Prayer of Repentance, an awkward silence revealed that no one had learned the prayer well enough to recite it. Everyone was embarrassed. To make it worse, no one had a copy, and it was only after someone went out to get a copy that the prayer was read out.

Then Baba said, “Let us ask pardon of God for our misunderstandings, for unnecessarily hurting the feelings of others, for our faults. May God give you all one percent of the Infinite Patience Baba has. Let us ask God’s pardon!”

Following the reading of the prayer, Baba indicated that we should all come to him for an embrace. As it turned out, that was the last embrace of the trip.

MUIR WOODS

Although we saw Baba generally several times every day, there were some times when we would have a few hours for sightseeing or other personal things. On the previous day, Sunday, Bea Dimpfl had kindly driven our family out to Muir Woods, which is a park preserve of giant redwood trees over the Golden Gate Bridge to the north of San Francisco. The ride up there was very scenic. We enjoyed walking among the giant trees, and we were especially impressed by the oldest

and highest tree there.

On the way out of the park we stopped at the gift shop, and Jeanne bought an egg cup which had been carved out of redwood. I did not know what she had in mind when she bought the cup, but when we got back to the Holiday Lodge, she said that she wanted to give it to Baba. So we walked over to Baba's rooms and knocked on the door. Eruch came to the door and with Baba's approval invited us in.

As we approached Baba, who was sitting on a sofa, he looked inquiringly at us. Jeanne started right in, enthusiastically describing the giant redwood trees we had seen. She was like a happy child, reporting a great wonder to her father, who reacted appreciatively with his facial expressions. Jeanne wrote later, "I told Baba: 'Baba, I'd like you to see these woods; there is a tree eighteen hundred years old,' and Baba seemed enthusiastic and pleased. I gave him an egg cup made of redwood and said, 'From an ancient forest to the Ancient One.' Baba accepted it and

patted me on the cheek." As he took the egg cup, he made a grimace. Then he handed it to Eruch, who looked at it curiously. Baba smiled without comment like a loving, indulgent father as we left.

The following day, Monday, our last full day in San Francisco, we noticed that some from the group were hurrying as though they were going somewhere. When we asked them if they were, they replied, "Yes, to Muir

Woods with Baba." We were surprised and delighted to hear that. I



"The Ancient One" sitting under "the ancient tree."
Muir Woods, August 6, 1956.

turned to Jeanne and said, "It looks like Baba has decided to follow your suggestion about going to Muir Woods."

A bus had been chartered to carry the group, while Baba was to ride in a car. It was a happy excursion. Baba motioned for Jeanne and me to walk with him to the tree. Jeanne records: "I showed Baba 'the tree,' and Baba sat under it and looked real ancient."



Baba giving prasads from cookie tin. Shaw family visible: Lowell (top right), Leatrice (partially visible behind Lowell), Jeanne (behind Baba), Darwin and Renae receiving prasads.

When Baba sat under that tree, he truly looked like the Ancient One. The little children clambering over the large tree roots beside Baba, trying to get close to him, made an outstanding picture. Baba did not stay very long. Apparently he just wanted to see and sit under that special tree. "Baba only went as far as we had gone the previous day and no further," Jeanne wrote. He returned to the car directly, and we returned to our bus. Jeanne added, "While there, a butterfly perched on my sleeve for a long while." Everyone greatly enjoyed the brief outing with Baba, our last one with the Beloved.

Later that afternoon, back at the Holiday Lodge, we were all milling around outside Baba's room, longing for his company once more. At about 4:00 p.m., he came out with a tin containing cookies. Although he distributed the powdered-sugar-coated cookies in a playful manner,

we knew this was one last precious moment to bask in his physical presence and to receive his prasad.

“NO TEARS”

The following day, Tuesday, August 7, we all went to the airport to see Baba and the men mandali off to Australia. Jeanne wrote: “Left Tuesday morning from Holiday Lodge to the airport to see Baba board the plane for Honolulu and Australia. At the airport a large group (come by bus) assembled around Baba. He stood in the circle and looked at each one lovingly, not allowing parting embraces or handshakes. We all shook hands with the mandali.”

Baba mingled among us, and when he was saying goodbye to Jeanne and me, he was most loving. It looked as though Jeanne was about to shed some tears, but Baba quickly motioned to us, and I whispered to her, “No tears.” As Jeanne wrote, “Baba stood so near me I was overcome with tears, and Baba noticed and lovingly shook his finger at me and poked at my chin.”

Baba wanted us to be lighthearted, knowing that we would be seeing him again. Of course, there were equally tender parting scenes between Baba and all the others, as well.

Jeanne describes the final parting with Baba in her notes: “Everyone followed after him to the ramp and waved to him from windows. A few of us waved from a balcony when the plane took off. Baba waved his hand constantly from the plane window until the plane left. . . . After Baba’s plane left, all went back to the lodge to pack, eat breakfast, and get ready to leave for home.”

We realized to some extent how incredibly fortunate we were to have been among Baba’s traveling companions, and we were and always will be most grateful. Although we had no clue about the inner

working that Baba was involved in during the trip, we can only surmise that, in addition to the incomparably wonderful experience of both outer and inner closeness to the Beloved and the love-drama of the soul which took place, we were probably significantly important elements of work in which he was involved, as was always the case when Baba traveled with large groups.

A week later, we received a cable from Baba on his last day in Australia, sent to Marion Florsheim for distribution to everyone. Dated August 15, 1956, it read: "Convey My Love to My American Lovers." Baba then returned to India to resume his work there.

MEHER BABA'S SECOND ACCIDENT

Early in December we received the news that Meher Baba had been in an automobile accident in India, and that he suffered facial and hip injuries. Naturally, we were distressed and very much concerned for Baba. Others who were in the car with Baba were injured, and Dr. Nilkanth (Nilu) was killed.

In a circular issued in early July of 1956, Baba had referred to a personal tragedy that was to occur, and just a few days before the accident he had indicated that he would experience greater and more concentrated suffering, and that a number of his close ones would also share in this.

Once again we were confronted with the mystery of the Avatar's vicarious suffering for the world. Baba said that humanity finds its redemption from its karma through his vicarious sufferings, such as illness, humiliation, and accidents.

I attributed Baba's accident to the unfathomable Avataric workings, which are much larger than anything we can fathom. All we could do was trust Baba that everything he brought about and endured was

for the best. For the next two years we eagerly awaited news of Baba's condition and also the summons to India for the "big gathering" Baba had promised.

P A R T S I X

1958

C H A P T E R
S I X T E E N

The American Sahavas

Due to the strain on Meher Baba's health, it was decided that the Westerners should not come to India for a large, combined gathering with the Easterners in 1958. Instead, Baba decided to hold two Eastern sahavas programs during the months of January and February of that year, then come to Myrtle Beach in May for about two weeks, and afterward go to Australia for several days. So finally, on May 19, the two-year wait to see Baba again was ended, and the gathering that became known as "the American Sahavas" took place at the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach.

A few weeks before coming to America for the 1958 Sahavas, Baba sent the following message to us from Mahabaleshwar, India:

□ *I am coming to America solely to give my sahavas to my lovers, and I want each of you to come with the longing to receive just that. I want this sahavas to be above all a close*

companionship between your Beloved and his lovers; and if you wish to maintain this unique relationship, then do not come with questions or the desire to hear discourses and explanations. Come with preparedness to receive fully whatever I may give you, with the thought of being completely resigned to my will.

My suffering is becoming daily more intense, and my health is daily getting worse, but my physical body continues to bear the burden of it all. Despite it all I will hold the sahavas. I expect from you a deep understanding of my self-imposed suffering, which is begotten of my Compassion and Love for mankind. Also understand, therefore, that I will not undergo medical examinations or treatment for my injured hip either in America or Australia. No doctor or treatment will be of any help before the pain I am undergoing has served its purpose. Remember that my coming is entirely to give my sahavas to you all.

This sahavas will be unique in the sense that you will witness and share my present universal suffering by being near me as my fortunate companions – being with the Ancient One, who will at the same time be completely on the human level with you. It will be helpful to all those participating in the sahavas to know of the oft-repeated hint I have given to those living with me – reminding them of my “declarations” wherein I stated that my Glorification will follow my Humiliation, and pointing out that this period of my sahavas will fall within the orbit of my universal suffering and helplessness.

A similar circular was sent out prior to the Meherabad sahavas in February. My sahavasis who came with love and resignation to my will had the utmost happiness of receiving

far and above what they expected. Likewise with you all, I may give you more, much more than you expect – or maybe nothing, and that nothing may prove [to be] everything. So I say, come with open hearts to receive much or nothing from your Divine Beloved. Come prepared to receive not so much of my words, but of my Silence. My Love to each and all.

This message served to attune us to a deeper awareness of Baba's intense, yet poignantly sweet, infinite suffering, and to the true meaning of sahasvas, which is "close companionship with God."

Apparently, Baba wanted to make a quiet entrance into America this time. He had instructed that no one was to meet him at Idlewild Airport in New York when he arrived the morning of May 17. With him were four men mandali members – Adi K. Irani, Eruch Jessawalla, Nariman Dadachanji, and Dr. William Donkin. As far as I know, he was not greeted by any fanfare at the airport in Wilmington, North Carolina, either.

Clearly, the sahasvas was to begin in Myrtle Beach, at Baba's "Home in the West." No one was to see him until May 19, when we were permitted to arrive at the Center. On that day Baba stationed himself in the Lagoon Cabin, and as soon as people or groups arrived, they would go there and receive Baba's warmly welcoming, loving greeting.

BABA IS AMAZED

Our family of five traveled together by car from Schenectady. After we arrived at the Center, as the others unpacked the car, I went on ahead to greet Baba. As I approached the Lagoon Cabin, I noticed John Bass just coming out. John and I spoke briefly, and I asked him how Baba was. He replied that Baba told him, with Eruch interpreting, that

he was suffering quite a bit, but that his divine bliss sustained him.

I stepped into the Lagoon Cabin, and there was Baba, all alone, sitting in the northwest corner of the room. Eruch must have left while I was speaking with John. Baba looked a little heavier than when I had last seen him, also a bit older. He remained sitting as he gave me a most loving embrace. I then asked him, "How are you, Baba?"

He replied by showing a pained expression on his face and rubbing his hip. As he did this, I interpreted aloud, "You are suffering quite a bit . . ."; then Baba raised his hand above his head, and I said, " . . . but your divine bliss sustains you."

Baba gave me a look of astonishment at my apparent ability to read his gestures. I never did explain that John Bass had just told me those things. Shortly after that exchange with Baba, the rest of my family came to the Lagoon Cabin to greet him. Baba spent most of that first day greeting people as they came streaming in. I settled into Twin A Cabin, with Harry Kenmore and Fred Winterfeldt as roommates.

"COMPANIONSHIP WITH GOD"

The days that followed were truly days of intimate companionship with our Beloved. Baba gave personal interviews to all of the various groups and individuals who attended. We would all sit around him while he gave many talks at the Barn (all of which had also been given at the Indian Sahavas). We walked with Baba, played with Baba, and experienced the incomparable wonder of companionship with him.

We were deeply grateful that Baba had come to us, and, while we were very sympathetic about his suffering, the joy at seeing him again and the impact of his love seemed to somewhat mask the profound significance of that suffering. Even so, my experience of the sahavas was one of indefinable suffering and blissful love.



Darwin Shaw, Nariman Dadachanji,
Darwin's mother, Helen Shaw, May 1958.



People waiting outside Lagoon Cabin
to see Baba, May 1958.



Meher Baba sitting in Lagoon Cabin, May 1958.

Baba was still suffering from his hip injury sustained in the December 1956 automobile accident in India and walking was painful,



Meher Baba carried by dancers, May 1958.

so a special chair was prepared for moving him about some of the time. It had a seven- or eight-foot wooden rail along each side, parallel to the arms of the chair (I think attached with clamps). As it turned out, most of the time a group of young male dancers carried Baba in the chair, about four of them on

each rail. A few times, others carried Baba, including some of the women. One time, since I was standing near Baba when he wanted to go somewhere, I picked up one of the railings and helped carry him.

The first full day of the *sahavas* was on Tuesday, May 20, when two hundred twenty-five of Baba's lovers gathered with him at the Barn. We sat on chairs, the carpet, or the floor, clustered around Baba, who sat in a large chair near the fireplace.

Baba explained to us the meaning of *sahavas*. (I rely on *The Awakener* for exact wording on quotes, unless otherwise noted.) Baba said, "What is *sahavas*? It is companionship with God. It means that I come to your level or you rise to my level. We are not on the same level. Either I come to yours or you come up to mine. *Sahavas* means God becoming human."

Baba continued, "Relax and stretch and be comfortable. Feel at home because I have come down to your level. I want you to be here in spirit as well as physically."

He then explained briefly about the accident in India in 1956 in which he was injured. Baba's right hip was badly broken, Nilu died instantly, Pendu's pelvis was damaged, Eruch's ribs were broken, and Vishnu was also injured. Although Eruch, who was driving, felt responsible, Baba said, "Nobody is guilty; all was ordained ages ago. I am the Ancient One and have taken the suffering of the world upon myself. No one can cure me."

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OBEDIENCE

Baba told us about the Sahavas that had taken place in India in February. A short time later, we all stood up as Dr. Harry Kenmore, the blind American chiropractor who had spent quite a bit of time in India with Baba, recited the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance. Then Baba asked, "Is everyone here prepared to obey me one hundred percent? You should be very honest."

As we all put our hands up, Baba asked, "Can you obey me one hundred percent?" Someone replied, "It's impossible."

Baba said, "One should try. Harry Kenmore has a great discussion on this point and has said, one must obey, not *try* to do so. That is one of the reasons he has come here. What I want is love and obedience. I might manifest in you if you have them. Discourses and messages are good, but are mere words.

NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE

"What I want is your love and obedience, one hundred percent," Baba repeated. "I want one who does his best. In the time of Jesus I said the same thing: leave all and follow me! And the same thing in the time of Krishna and Zoroaster. I do not mean you to leave all your responsibilities, but that

my will become yours. My will should be your pleasure. God is Infinite Honesty. To love God you must be honest.”

Then Baba asked, “Who will try to obey me one hundred percent? I asked the same question at the Indian Sahavas. People said they would lay down their lives for me, including many intelligent people: scholars, lawyers, and the like.”

Harry Kenmore said, “If one says one will try, one will always find excuses. One must DO it. If Baba asks beyond one’s capacity and one fails, it is Baba’s fault.”

Baba said, “In the spiritual path there is no room for compromise. Raise your hands who cannot obey me.” No one raised a hand. “Now raise your hands, all who will try to obey me.” We all raised our hands.

Baba continued, “Age after age, when the Avatar comes, he has only a small group of followers. In this cycle it is different; this cycle is something special. Now thousands in the south of India follow me. Recently the government approved a textbook of my life for use in the schools. The Zoroastrians were once opposed to me, but now they come and love me. Many saints came to the sahavas, and loved and respected me, and many yogis came, too. Sudhananda Bharati, a famous yogi from the south of India, also participated in the sahavas, dressed in yellow, with a long beard. He came and sat on the platform with me. He said he, too, wished to take upon himself the duty of spreading my name.”

THE “DARK CLOUD”

Baba spoke about a “dark cloud.” He said, “It is approaching very fast. Only a few will hold on to me – those who are near to me, not in space, but in love. The rest will leave me. The age-old experience will be repeated in this incarnation; I have a large following, but again I

shall be left with a few. It is as if around me there are many beautiful buildings; it took years to build them, but when an earthquake comes, they are destroyed in a few seconds: Only a few survive. The doctors had said, ‘Don’t go to the West, this is a bad time,’ but I replied, ‘No, I must go meet my lovers and tell them these things.’”

Baba concluded, “If you love me one hundred percent, you will be able to hold on to me. Obey me at all costs – especially until July 10. You will never see me again in the flesh – all will come to pass in quick succession as I have said, any time after the 10th.”

For me, there was no question of not obeying him; I felt that we belonged to him and that we were holding on to him through his Grace. In other words: He would not let us let go of him. Despite Baba’s statement that we would never see him again, I still held out hope that he would later follow through on his original plan to call us to India for a gathering.

As for the “dark cloud,” I did not know what to make of that. It seemed to be symbolic of something on an international or universal scale that we could not fathom. He had already sustained two automobile accidents in connection with his momentous work; it was impossible to know what else was in store.

“YOU WILL FIND ME”

Always, any effect of Baba’s talk of dire events to come or of our not seeing him again was overruled by the Divine Love we felt in his physical presence. We were so happy to be with him, and our consciousness was raised to such a level of blissful love, that when we talked among ourselves later, it was almost always about this amazing love.

Referring to a Gujarati newspaper that sometimes printed articles against him, Baba said that they had published an astrological prediction

that a great Parsi saint would manifest this year. But, he added, "I am not a saint. I am the Ancient One; and I tell you the time has come.

"You will see me only in memory. When I drop my body, I will remain in all who love me. I can never die. Love me, obey me, and you will find me." He added, "Henceforth, no one must give me a gift in cash or kind. Only your love will be accepted. I want only your love."

FOUR TYPES OF OBEDIENCE

Baba said that the raising of our hands pledging to obey him had made him very happy. He then had Harry Kenmore explain the four types of obedience: the patriotic obedience of the soldier; the paid obedience of a hired servant; the compulsory obedience of a slave; and the

willing obedience of love. Of the latter category of obedience, Harry explained, there were four kinds: literal, word-for-word obedience; discriminatory, or commonsense, obedience; complete obedience without pleasure; and complete obedience with pleasure.

A very rare fifth type of obedience of love, Harry said, was "absolute obedience," where if at noon the master says it is night, the disciple runs to fetch a lantern to light his way.

Baba then said, "It is impossible to obey me one hundred percent unless you have one hundred percent love for me and accept me one hundred percent as

God incarnate. So it is for you who have raised your hands to do my will."



Meher Baba wearing garland
on Barn porch, May 1958.

Baba concluded by saying, “The purpose of my coming to the West has been accomplished. Tomorrow we will start discourses. Now let us have some jokes.”

Baba’s statement that his purpose of coming had been accomplished gave us a moment’s consternation. *Was he now going to pack up and leave?* we all wondered.

There was heavy rain all afternoon that first full day of the sahas, and it continued on throughout the night.

“YOU ARE BLESSED”

The next day, Wednesday, May 21, Baba spent most of the day, from 9:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., in the Lagoon Cabin giving interviews to various groups and individuals. Our family was called in together to see Baba. He was rather serious but very loving.

Jeanne recorded in her diary: “Baba gestured this message to Darwin: ‘Do you realize how blessed you are? You love Baba, wife loves Baba, son loves Baba, two daughters love Baba, groups of souls who love Baba – you worked with them to bring them to Baba – you are really blessed.’”

I did feel blessed. It has been a labor of love for me to serve as a medium of Meher Baba’s own working to awaken these many “groups of souls” to Baba’s presence and love. And in doing this work I have continued to feel blessed.

SEWING FOR BABA

The following morning, Thursday, May 22, before the meeting at the Barn, Baba received a group of his lovers from New York at the Lagoon Cabin. Informally known as “the sewing group,” this small

coterie, which included Filis Frederick, Adele Wolkin, and a few others, would get together and sew things for Baba. They had made some jackets, sadras, and handkerchiefs for him.

Jeanne had also sewn something for Baba. One time, when she and I were in the Lagoon Cabin with Baba, she gave him a white jacket she had made for him. He enlisted her help in putting it on and seemed very pleased with it. It fit well and Baba asked Jeanne how she knew his size. She replied that, as she knew that he was “a little smaller than Darwin,” who took a size thirty-nine, she made it a thirty-eight. Baba graciously accepted all these gifts, despite his stated “no gift” policy.

GIVE AND TAKE OF LOVE

After Baba finished seeing some people in the Lagoon Cabin, we all gathered with him at the Barn. There Baba disclosed that he had been suffering a great deal and was even considering breaking the sahasas here and canceling the sahasas in Australia and going straight back to India. This, of course, brought up mixed feelings in us. We were deeply dismayed that Baba’s suffering was so intense, but also unhappy with the prospect of having to part with the Beloved so soon. However, as it turned out, Baba stayed on until May 30 and also went on to Australia for the sahasas there.

Baba spoke a little bit about Australia. The Australian group had sent six thousand dollars toward the trip around the world for Baba and the four men mandali. Baba wanted Francis Brabazon to prepare a place for the sahasas in or near Brisbane. Francis found a good place and with the help of others had erected some suitable buildings and constructed roads. Baba had sent Francis a message saying, “I will come and give you my presence for six days.” Francis had replied, “It will be enough if you are here for a single day.” Then Baba said to us,

“This reminds me of Hafiz, who said, ‘To be with a Perfect Master for one moment’s time is equal to a hundred years of sincere prayer with all one’s heart and soul.’”

Baba then asked, “Are you all happy?” After we all raised our hands, Baba went on, “Nothing will help me. I am happy, as I also raised my hand.”

Baba then had Don Stevens read out notes from the first day of the Indian Sahavas, in which Baba explained the meaning of *sahavas*. “Sahavas is the intimacy of give and take of love. I am the only Beloved and you all are my lovers; or, I am the only Lover and you all are my beloveds. I want you all to remain happy in my sahavas. This will be the last sahavas.”

Although this statement did not explicitly say that this would be the last time we would be with Baba, it served as a hint to sharpen our focus on him and make the most of the present opportunity. Some of us had come to recognize statements such as this, and his hints about dropping his body soon, as Baba’s way of working with us. But the fact remained that we never knew when this precious time with him would really be our last!

The reading continued.

I am the Ocean of Love. Draw as much of this love as possible. Make the most of this opportunity. It rests with you to draw as much love as possible out of the Ocean. It does not rest with me to explain to you how you should love me. Does a husband or a wife explain to one another how to love? One thing is certain: I want to give you my love. It depends on each of you to receive it. The easy way to receive it is to forget your home, family and all worldly affairs when you are here, and be receptive to my love. This is the first thing to follow if you want

to receive the maximum of my love. The second thing to follow is to have a good night's rest, sleep well each night and feel fresh when you come here for my sahavas each day. I am God: If you remain drowsy in my presence, you will miss me and your drowsiness will oblige you to remain absent from my presence, in spite of your daily attendance.

"Sahavas" means intimate companionship. To establish this companionship you should be free with me. Sahavas is the intimacy of give and take of love between the lovers and the Beloved. There is no need to explain this give and take of love. To create an atmosphere of explanations and discourses is to mar the dignity of love which is established only in the closest of intimacy.

How do I participate in the sahavas? I bow down to myself. I embrace myself. It is I who smiles, who weeps; it is Baba who sits here on the dais seat and it is Baba who squats on the ground in the tent. Baba meets "Baba"; Baba consoles "Baba," pets "Baba," chides "Baba." It is all Baba, Baba, Baba. Such is my experience of participation in the sahavas.

Drink deep at the fountain of love, but do not lose consciousness. If you can but taste even a drop of this love – what a wonderful experience it will be! Have you any idea what this sahavas is? He who approaches me with a heart full of love has my sahavas. After I drop this body and pass away from your midst, many things will be said about this sahavas. Take fullest advantage of this opportunity in the living presence of the Avatar. Forget everything else but my sahavas and concentrate all your attention on me. I am the Ancient One.

DIVINE NUGGETS

Baba had Don read out key statements Baba had made at the Indian Sahavas. They included:

- • *I am Sakshat Paramatma. If anyone were to get even a glimpse of my real state, one would be glad to be cut into pieces a thousand times for me.*
- *If I were to turn the key, those who are opposed to me would change into real bhaktas (lovers) in no time. Anyway, even Virodh Bhakti (remembrance of those who oppose) is better than no bhakti (remembrance through love).*
- *Of what use is it to have my photo on paper? It is better to establish me in your hearts.*
- *If I am not all-knowing, what would it avail you to send me chits and notes? And if I am all-knowing, I know everything: I am all-knowing.*
- *If you all take me to be God, God is all-knowing. What is it then that makes you come to me with your difficulties? As it is, it seems to you that I do not know everything!*
- *It is definite that I am in everyone. And the glory of the suns is the seventh shadow of my real state of reality. Even a glimpse of this glory is enough for one to lose all consciousness. Nothing*
□ *but the effulgence then remains to be seen continually.*

Don asked for clarification about the “seventh shadow.” Baba said, “If you put the brilliance of the seven suns together, their glory would not equal the first shadow of my glory.”

Baba then told about Kaikobad, the Indian mandali member I had

met in 1954 who repeated Baba's name one hundred thousand times each day, saw Baba inwardly, and also experienced seeing the sun or moon inwardly. Baba said, "Once, when I returned from a mast tour one day at Satara, I found Kaikobad sitting with bruises on his head. He told me, 'Something happened; I had a spiritual experience and I fell down, but I cannot remember.' I gave him instructions on what to do when he experiences my glory, and since then he does not lose consciousness. But even the experience of Kaikobad in seeing me in everyone and everything falls short of my real state. When the seer and the seen become one, that is the ultimate experience."

The reading continued and included (in part):

- • *So far as birthdays go, every day is my birthday. (Baba interpolated: "I am born every moment and die every moment, so that every day is my birthday.")*
- *Love has no limit, but the mind is in the way. This hitch cannot be removed without my Grace. It is impossible to be removed, because mind has to annihilate itself. For example, if one were asked to jump over oneself, the most one would do would [be to] take a somersault! Yet it is impossible to jump over oneself; one may jump over others, but not over oneself. Thus, one may love Baba sincerely. One may want to realize Baba as he really is, but the hitch remains: This hitch can only be removed by my Grace.*

Books and discourses will not bring about one's spiritual regeneration. Mind cannot be annihilated by mind, as one cannot jump over oneself. Only by loving me as I ought to be loved can the mind be destroyed. Anyone may have love for me, but not the love I want.

My lovers may be likened to one who is fond of lions and admires them so much that he keeps a lion in his own home. But being afraid of the lion, he puts him in a cage. The lion is always encaged: Even while he feeds the lion, he feeds the pet animal from a distance and from outside the cage. Baba is also treated like the lion by the lovers. There is love, there is admiration, there is an intense desire to see Baba comfortable and happy; and Baba is also frequently fed by [the] love of the lovers.

But all this is done keeping Baba segregated from one's own self. What is wanted of the lovers is that they should open the cage and, through intense love for their Baba, throw themselves inside the cage to become food for the lion of love. The lover should permit himself to be totally consumed through his own love for the Beloved.

In spite of all explanations and reading of books, words remain mere words. They do not take one any further than mere intellectual satisfaction. Only love for God works the miracle, because love is beyond mind and intellect. Where then is the necessity to read? I authoritatively say: I am the Ancient One. I have been saying this to all the world. If you love me with all your heart, you shall be made free eternally.

- *(Taking the Indian sahavasis up Meherabad Hill, Baba said:) When I leave this body, it will have its rest in the Tomb on this hill. After seventy years, this hill will turn into a place of world pilgrimage where lovers of God, philosophers, and celebrities will come to pay homage to the Tomb. How fortunate you all are that you are here in my living*

presence and that you could come up the hill with me. Those of you who have not seen the Tomb before should go there and see it and pay respects, with a firm resolve that you will try your best to give happiness to others at the cost of your own and that you will love me with all your heart. Having made this resolve, try to follow up these two things honestly.

- *The affairs of the universe continue to go on without being burdensome to me in the least. But the discourses and explanations on the subject of the affairs of the universe are a headache to me. I am the Lord of the universe. The affairs of the universe continue without my paying special attention to them. They continue to work out as naturally as one's breathing. One does not have to pay special attention to it. But when there is exertion, or when one is pressed to give a discourse on breathing itself, one becomes conscious of the act of breathing. . . .*
- *I will tell you tomorrow something about my work and the workers. The selected workers should be those who do real work. I want to lay stress on workers and work. Work should be done as work; otherwise it would be no work at all. I cannot tolerate egoism and hypocrisy. He who works for me does not oblige me, for he works for his own self.*
- *The ultimate experience could be had only after the heart is completely purified. God forgives everything except hypocrisy.*
- *I am the Light of the universe. One day, as soon as you get a glimpse of my reality, you will come to know me, and you will get the glimpse. Very rarely, one can see me as I really*

am: You see everything (false) excepting me. It is the curtain that surrounds my reality. Fortunate are they who see even the curtain: Even the highest type of inner experience falls short of my real state.

- *. . . I have taken this body only to undergo suffering, hardships, discomforts, and inconveniences for my lovers. . . .*
- *. . . All of you gathered here are my near relatives.*
- *. . . The only qualification which I want you to have is love. I see to whether one loves me or not. You love me and I am pleased with you.*
- *. . . Emotion is not bad; but love is quite different.*
- *. . . I am the ocean of love and mercy. The worldly judges do their duty and pass judgment after [a] trial. They give justice and punishment depending upon whether the accused is guilty or not. If in their judgment the accused is found guilty, their justice demands that the person found guilty must be punished. I am the universal judge. There is one thing with me which is unique, and that is that not only do I give real justice by bringing guilt to the guilty, but [I] also forgive the guilty at the same time. My justice is tempered with mercy, and I always forgive.*
- *[After describing a mast, a God-intoxicated man, living in Meherabad:] . . . His mind does not function like the mind of an ordinary human being; and yet his mind is not blank. Intense love and longing for God has made him like dust. This mast does not belong to this world, though he is in it. This does not mean that I want you all to become like him;*

with your present normal mental state, I want you to love me as much as possible.

- *Saint and sinner, high and low, rich and poor, healthy and sick, man and woman, young and old, beautiful and ugly are all equal in my eyes. Why? Because I am in everyone. None should hesitate to come to me, meet me and embrace me with love.*
- *. . . Consummation of bhakti (devotion) is love. When one's bhakti is at its zenith, one begins to really love Baba. And when love burns the lover, i.e., when love is intense, there remains no curtain between the lover and the Beloved God. . . But you all should not take it for granted that you are in this stage of love. It is for very few to annihilate their very self to merge in me.*

So I say, love me more and more. Times are difficult; my daaman [hem of his garment] might slip out of your hands. I think within one year this body will drop. Do not miss this opportunity. With a clear conscience, love me sincerely and help those in need. I am eternal.

One thing is definite: I love you more than you love me. . . You all say that God is omniscient, and you accept me as God incarnate and as omniscient. I am all-knowing. But what do you mean by God being omniscient?

In illusion, how I play my own game none knows. It is a fact that in illusion there is time and space. In reality there is no scope for time and space. Listen carefully; this is turning into a discourse, however much I wished not to give one. I tell you, till this moment nothing has happened; and after

this moment, nothing will happen. Every moment of the present is the real moment. In the present is embodied the past and the future – in my real state from eternity. I am the Ancient One and the creation is my shadow: So I know what has happened and will happen before and after millions of years, which is nothing but illusion.

What I want to tell you is that I know everything. I am in each of you and everywhere. As conscious real “I” in this false “I” of yours, I know everything. You exist as you were existing, because you were there; you are there and you will continue to be there. You have been caught here in the snare of maya; and the accumulation of sanskaras (impressions) makes you get more and more involved in maya.

For example, take a man who is sleeping. He dreams that a thief is trying to murder him. He wakes up in a fright. He is now afraid to go to sleep again lest he might again dream the same dream. And the real fun of it all is that all the time he knows that it was all in a dream! Even so, all this life is a dream. The past and future are not there. There is only the Eternal Now in the everlasting present.

- *I will begin the talk by telling you not to worry! Whatever suffering may befall you, you should put up with it with full faith in and love for Baba. At the most what could happen? You might die. And it is so very obvious that you have to die one day; you have to drop this body sooner or later. Why not then think that your body is not there already and so act detached? One more thing you must remember: That is, be honest. I am in everyone and in everything. God is*

in everyone and in everything. And, because God is in everyone and everything, He knows everything. So be resigned completely to His will.

Once you were a child; now you have grown up. During the period from childhood up to now, you have gone through moments of great joys and sorrows. Where has all that gone? The fact is, neither joy nor sorrow was there; it is due to maya that you think of and experience things, which have no foundation. Within twenty or thirty years you will also forget the thoughts and events of today. So the best thing for you to do is just to love me. Love me honestly, work for me; I alone endure: All else is but a passing show! There should not be any trace of show in the work you do for me. You should have no expectations of reward for any work you do. In fact, I am much pleased and happy with your love and work. Don't worry.

Remember one thing. The time has come. After one year this body will definitely leave me. Show your mettle in this period: It is the time. The world will do my work when I am not physically here. There is no doubt of my being God personified. You love one another – as my workers, and then give that love to others. I know your family, financial and other difficulties. There is nothing more to tell you. The “dark cloud” is near to bursting. As soon as I return from America and Australia you will find what I say will come to pass. This body of yours is a temporary phenomenon; you cannot come to terms with it. But it is a great thing if you are near me on this physical plane. I tell you all, all this is a dream. You do not realize it. When you are asleep and dreaming and I give

you a sharp slap in the dream, you become wide awake. Only then do you realize that it was all just a dream. If you serve others, let your service be honest. Think of me always.

Baba then gave a discourse on “Split Ego, or Split I.” Jeanne recorded in her notes that Baba said, “One has to be in sound sleep, yet keep awake. In that state Baba Is. Only love can find Baba.” She also recorded Baba as saying, “Conviction is most important – more important than faith. Mind and heart support faith – this gives conviction. For this conviction, one would give up mind and body, but not the conviction.”

That afternoon the entire group, together with Baba and the mandali, went to the nearby playhouse theatre that Jane Haynes managed. (As of this writing, it is the Myrtle Beach Shrine Club at 9589 North Kings Highway.) There we viewed Charmian Duce’s 1956 film of Baba’s visit to America. Apparently, footage of the recent Indian Sahavas was also shown, but Baba did not stay the whole time, and I left when he did.

OPEN INVITATION

Baba and the four men mandali stayed at Baba’s house at night. Every morning it was my task to drive my daughter Leatrice, Bili Eaton, and Ella Winterfeldt from the main part of the Center up to Baba’s house and wait there until they had finished making the beds and giving the house a light cleaning. This was an especially pleasant morning task, because it gave us all a little extra time to be around Baba. Each morning, before going to the main part of the Center, Baba would sit in a chair in front of the fireplace in the living room and talk informally about various things. It was a relaxed and intimate time for

those in the house at the time – Leatrice, Ella, and Bili (if they were finished with their work), the mandali, as well as Baba’s close disciples Margaret Craske, Delia DeLeon, and Anita Vieillard, who would all walk up to Baba’s house early in the morning.

The first few mornings, I remained outside Baba’s house until time to transport Leatrice, Bili, and Ella back to the main part of the Center. I felt that I should first wait for a sign from Baba that I was supposed to go in. Meanwhile, I would occupy myself with wiping leaves and dew off the car with a soft cloth. Afterward, Baba would come outside and embrace me before he headed out to the main part of the Center, but he did not say anything about my coming in and joining the group at his feet in the mornings.

One morning at the Lagoon Cabin, however, Baba looked up at me and asked, “Why haven’t you been coming in mornings?” Dismayed to realize I had been missing out unnecessarily, I muttered, “I’m going to throw myself in the ocean!” Needless to say, I started coming in for those intimate moments with Baba every morning thereafter.

One morning Baba told me to help Dr. Donkin, one of the Western mandali who lived in India with Baba, to tighten the webbing on Baba’s bed instead of attending a meeting in the Barn. This turned out to be quite a chore. Instead of springs, Baba’s bed had, and still has, interwoven webbing as is used on Indian beds under the mattress. I felt that for some reason Baba wanted me to have closer contact with Dr. Donkin.

HANDS UP FOR OBEDIENCE

Evidently, some people resented Baba’s apparent partiality in calling certain people to be with him rather than spending more time with the



Meher Baba leaving Lagoon Cabin, accompanied by (from left): Harold Rudd, Adi K. Irani, Nariman Dadachanji, Eruch, May 1958. (left)

Meher Baba outside Lagoon Cabin, May 1958. (above)



Meher Baba carried by dancers, May 1958.

whole group. On Friday, May 23, Baba addressed the issue.

He said, "... I made it clear at the beginning that I might call a single person for half a day or I might not call anyone at all. I might call a small group to my house, or I might call the girls to my house. This means I cannot be bound by my decision. I feel some of you are thinking, 'Why does Baba call five near him, or why does he call Anita every day, or Margaret?'

"It all depends on my wish. It does not mean I love them more or others less. Maybe the one whom I do not call at all I love more than all the others."

Baba then outlined two alternatives, a Barn meeting or private interviews (which he had earlier said he did not want to do). "We still have to decide," Baba indicated. "So, hands up for the Barn?" Many people raised their hands. "Hands up for interviews?" he gestured. No one raised a hand.

Baba then said, "If I know everything, what is there to tell me? I know before you tell me. Only remember, the hands you have put up [were] for obedience. I will carry with me when I return to India the list of those who raised their hands; and if of a sudden I issue orders, individually or collectively, try to obey them implicitly. Everything else compared to the orders that I may send is insignificant."

Baba then gave a discourse on "Ego." At the end of the discourse, Baba said, "Be brave, be happy: I and you all are One. And the Infinite that eternally belongs to me will one day belong to every individual."

LOVE VERSUS DEVOTION

After the discourse and explanations, Baba called for music. Max

Haefliger, from Switzerland, played a Swiss yodel record. He told us that in 1935 Baba had enjoyed hearing yodeling after having been in seclusion. Max explained that the record was only the “seventh shadow” of the real yodel. After listening to the record, Baba quipped, “the fourteenth shadow!”

Max then played a record of beautiful Zurich church bells and the song the men of Appenzell sing before voting:

*Life eternal flows from Thee
In endless surging rivers.
And throughout all worlds upholds
The soul of Thy creation.*

*Oh, the joy I have, I know
You, the Highest of the High.
Oh, the love I have from Thee,
Master of my soul.*

*May Thy Presence be my guide,
May Thy Name forever lead me;
May my feet be kept securely
On the path of life divine.*

Baba told us the song reminded him about the 10th of July, the anniversary of his silence. Baba said, “This time no one should keep fast or silence, but repeat seven times in a just audible voice (not shout) exactly at midnight between the 9th and 10th of July, according to your local time: ‘Beloved God, Thy Will has come to pass.’”

One more discourse was read, the short one making the distinction between “Love” and “Devotion,” which is as follows:

Love and Devotion

Love burns the lover; devotion burns the Beloved.

Love seeks happiness for the Beloved; devotion seeks for blessings from the Beloved.

Love seeks to shoulder the burden of the Beloved; devotion throws the burden on the Beloved.

Love gives; devotion asks.

Love is silent and sublime, devoid of outward expression; devotion expresses itself outwardly.

Love does not require the presence of the Beloved in order to love; devotion demands the presence of the Beloved to express affection for the Beloved.

Baba then left the Barn and went to the Lagoon Cabin. First he called for everyone who had not seen him privately yet. Then he called for certain individuals and small groups to come in for interviews. His seven-colored flag, sent by his sister, Mani, was flying over the cabin.

Later, he toured the Center, going from cabin to cabin in his special modified chair. Various men took turns holding the poles attached to the arms of the chair to carry him.

C H A P T E R
S E V E N T E E N

Meher Baba's Final Week in America

*T*his 1958 visit turned out to be Meher Baba's last time in America, and Saturday, May 24, was the beginning of his final week here. In the morning, Baba started off the meeting in the Barn by inviting us to join him in reciting the Prayer of Repentance. He said, "Join me again today in the Prayer of Repentance, with all sincerity, and God in His Infinite Compassion will forgive all your weaknesses, shortcomings and failures up to date. Let the prayer sink deep into you, and concentrate on me." Jeanne records in her diary that we also recited the Parvardigar Prayer.

Baba then had Don Stevens read the discourse "I Am the Son of



Meher Baba emerging from
Elizabeth Patterson's car, May 1958.

God, the Father, and God the Mother in One” and one called “Love Is the Remedy.” This was followed by the story of Majnun, who loved his unattainable beloved Leila so much that he wished only for her happiness at the cost of his own. Baba said Majnun finally met a spiritual Master who said to him, “If you had tried to love God as intensely as you love Leila, you would have seen God everywhere, in everything.” The Master embraced Majnun, and he then experienced the “I-am-God” state.

SAINTS VERSUS PERFECT MASTER

This was followed by a discourse on the evolution of consciousness:

In the sub-human stage the consciousness of false self or false “I,” which is very slight, provides scope for evolution. In the human form, the evolution of consciousness is completed and the consciousness becomes full. Love comes into play actively for the first time. As love plays the part more actively and fully, the false “I” begins to get consumed more and more. Eventually, when love is at its zenith, the false “I” gets totally consumed by love. This results in consummation of both lover and love at the altar of the Beloved. Neither does the lover remain in love, nor does love reign supreme over the lover: The goal is attained. The Beloved is supreme over his self; there is nothing except the Beloved. Everything else is consumed.

Baba used Beryl Williams as an example as he explained the physical, subtle and mental bodies. He used a hat to represent her as the “self,” and on a pillow were placed a notebook, a box, and a pen, to represent the physical, subtle and mental worlds. The goal, Baba explained, is to “turn around” and see oneself as the Infinite (he turned

the hat over). He said that saints cannot help one make this turn, although they can change one's angle of vision by precipitating one's movement through the inner planes of consciousness. A Perfect Master, however, can instantly make one turn around completely and experience oneself as the Infinite.

Standing in the back of the room, I was unable to see clearly how Baba used these props, but after the explanation, he placed the hat on his head, to the amusement of all.

"The explanation gives me a headache," Baba joked. He continued:

Actually it does happen this way. Those on the subtle planes have different experiences from those on the gross plane. The angle of vision completely changes, but all is still illusion. On the mental plane you see wonderful things. Your vision changes and you see illusion from a different angle. But you have to go beyond illusion; then the gross, the subtle, the mental and God are all here. Don't think that the gross, the subtle, the mental are higher or lower than each other – all are here. It is your own angle of vision that makes the difference. You begin to see more deeply into the subtle, then more deeply into the mental sphere, then you take a complete turn and see yourself as infinite.

"Nothing matters but your Self," Baba summed up.

MEHER BABA'S WISH

Baba went on to discuss his workers and their occasional dissension. He then had someone read his discourse on "Baba's Work." Baba adjourned the meeting for a short break, and when he resumed, he announced the schedule for the following days.

“Kitty has requested me to send everyone out before 12:00 for lunch because of the children’s party that we have this afternoon,” Baba said. “Tomorrow I will call a small group of ladies to my house. It is Mehera’s work. Then on Monday we have a performance in the afternoon by Margaret’s group of dancers, from 2:30 to 3:30, in the Barn. All should be present, and nearly all will have to stand. Eruch stands all day, so one hour for you is not too much.

“On Tuesday there is a program from the men, a surprise to relax me. If you have not thought of it yet,” Baba said to the men, “start thinking. In the mornings, all should be in the Barn, from 9:00 to 12:00 with me. Baba’s 9:00!” he emphasized. “Every day after the Barn, from noon onward, I will be in the Lagoon Cabin,” he concluded.

A discourse on “Action and Inaction” was then read, followed by Baba’s clear explanation on impressions, or *sanskaras*, as they are called in India and have come to be widely known as in the West. He commented:

□ . . . *Hafiz has said, “The universe and its affairs are nothing into nothing!” Our bondage is due to actions. Good action is a binding and bad action is a binding. One has to go beyond actions, then there is no binding. One cannot go beyond actions unless one is in sound sleep, because of impressions which need expression. Expression in turn creates actions, and actions create bindings. Don, when you sleep soundly, you are in the original state of God. There are no bindings, no actions. But past actions demand that you get up, so you start putting your impressions into action.*

The goal is to go to that original state of yours of inaction, but consciously! In sleep you are unconscious and there is

conscious inaction. How can you be free of actions? Again, we fall back on love. Love is the remedy. Not only in this incarnation but every time I come I stress that love is the remedy. We have seen the masts: they love me so intensely there is no occasion for sleeping, talking or eating. Don't force yourself to love in that way. It comes naturally. What I want is this. Listen carefully; it is very important for my lovers.

This led to the reading of "Baba's Wish," a practical, spiritually sound list of guidelines for those who desire to make great strides towards inner freedom from bindings. Divinely sanctioned, Baba's Wish contains his spiritual help for all who sincerely attempt to follow it. Baba said:

The lover has to keep the Wish of the Beloved. My Wish for my lovers is as follows:

My Wish

- 1. Do not shirk your responsibilities.*
- 2. Attend faithfully to your worldly duties, but keep always at the back of your mind that all this is Baba's.*
- 3. When you feel happy, think: "Baba wants me to be happy." When you suffer, think: "Baba wants me to suffer."*
- 4. Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: "Baba has placed me in this situation."*
- 5. With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.*

I say with my Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes my name at the time of breathing his last comes to me. So do not forget to remember me in your last

moments. Unless you start remembering me from now on, it will be difficult to remember me when your end approaches. You should start practicing from now on. Even if you take my name only once every day, you will not forget to remember me in your dying moments.



Meher Baba carried from Barn
by dancers, May 1958.

Baba then lightened the mood by calling for jokes. Then Baba had “My Wish” read two more times, stressing the importance of obedience above everything else. He told us his Wish was to be followed in addition to the orders he would be sending us in June or July. Baba then left for the Lagoon Cabin for interviews, driven by Elizabeth in her blue Ford.



Meher Baba preparing to enter car outside Barn, May 1958.

THE CHILDREN'S PARTY

At about 2:00 p.m., Baba was carried in his chair from the Lagoon Cabin to an open area just east of and including where the Meeting Place is now. There the children's party was getting under way. A long table had been set up, and about forty children, dressed in party apparel, were herded into seats at the table. Baba's chair was placed nearby, east of the table.

The children ate ice cream and a piece of the three-tiered cake with the icing-inscribed words "The goal is to be united with Him in love." After that, the children crowded around Baba as he lovingly gave them hugs and candy prasad.

It was a wonderful party, especially for my wife, Jeanne. While Baba was sitting in the chair, different ones took turns holding an umbrella over him to shield him from the sun. At one time a little girl held the umbrella until her arm got tired and began to sag. Jeanne tells the story in her own words.

"I was worried that her arm was getting tired. So I said to her, 'May I help you?' and she quickly handed the umbrella over to me. Then Baba gestured for me to lean over. I don't know why, but really I thought that he was going to say something to me! Then, of course, as you see in the film, he took my face in his hands and kissed me." (This moment was captured on film and is frequently shown at the Center programs.)

When Jeanne took the umbrella, Baba quickly looked up and took the umbrella from Jeanne, gave her a kiss on the cheek, and then handed the umbrella back to her. He was apparently acknowledging Jeanne's quick response to the little girl's discomfort.



Meher Baba at end of long table, children's party, May 24, 1958.



Meher Baba ladling juice at children's party, May 24, 1958.



Meher Baba gesturing
at children's party,
May 24, 1958.
(left)

Children's party:
Joseph Harb on the
right, Anita Vieillard
holding umbrella
behind Baba,
May 24, 1958.
(below)



ILLUMINATING DISCOURSES

Sunday, May 25, when Baba came to the Barn in the morning, he commented that the rainy weather reflected his mood. “You have no idea how I suffered last night,” he remarked. He cautioned us all to keep healthy and not spread germs. He also told us that after the session in the Barn, he would go to his house, where he would call a group of women between 1:00 and 1:30. All the other women were invited to come after the first group left.

After ascertaining who had and had not slept well, Baba said, “. . . If you don’t sleep, don’t let it worry you. Remember me the more, but don’t purposely keep awake just to remember me. But if you can’t sleep for any reason, repeat my name.”

A discourse on “The Inexorable ‘Must’” was read.

The Inexorable “Must”

Everything and everyone in the universe is constrained to move along a path which is prescribed by its past. There is an inexorable “must” that reigns over all things large or small. Whether one is male or female, rich or poor, strong or weak, beautiful or ugly, intelligent or dull – one cannot escape from being such because one must necessarily be so due to the impressions of the past.

The freedom which man seems to enjoy is itself subject to inner compulsions; and the environmental pressure, which limits the scope of reactions or moulds the reacting self, is itself subject to the inexorable “must,” which is operative in the past, present and future.

This overpowering compulsion is exercised by the force of

innumerable impressions gathered in the past. These accumulated impressions cloud the consciousness of the "self" at every stage, in every incarnation of the future, which, in one's life, belongs to one's living present.

The rule of this inexorable "must" governs and reshapes the so-called destiny of man in every incarnation as long as the "self" of man remains conscious of impressions. The principle of "must" which overrides human plans is based on divine law which both adjusts and gets adjusted by evolutionary impressions. It is only the divine will that can supersede the divine law.

The so many deaths during the one whole life, beginning from the evolution of consciousness to the end of the involution of consciousness, are like so many sleeps during one lifetime.

One who lives for himself is truly dead and one who dies for
☐ *God is truly alive.*

Baba then challenged us to imagine a time when God was not – a time before the beginning of time, the beginning of the beginning. We simply were unable to fathom, with our limited minds, the truth of the statement "God is and always was."

Baba said, "To experience your real Self is the goal. You are and you will ever be. There is no one else but you. Instantly, in a flash, you will know everything, including why you have no beginning and no end. But this knowing will have nothing to do with mind, reason, logic. It is beyond mind. You know the answer to everything, you know that nothing has happened and nothing will ever happen. You then experience bliss, you become all-powerful, all-knowing."

Then there was a discourse on "Omnipresence," which showed how all three attributes of God – omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence

are linked. Baba then commented that only the eternal Now exists. He ended his comments by saying, "He who experiences the eternal Now finds all doubts, worries, everything dissolved like mist, and remains in eternal bliss."

A discourse on "Foreknowledge" showed the difference between the ordinary person's foreknowledge and that of a Perfect Master. After the reading, Baba commented, "I know everything. This means I know the past, the present, and the future. This means I know how many births you have taken in the past, how many you will take in the future, and I know what you will think when you are born after one million births. I know it in this Eternal Now of mine. This is the meaning of all-knowing."

"BEGIN THE BEGUINE"

Baba then called for music, and as "Begin the Beguine" was played, Baba beat the rhythm on the arm of his chair with his fingers. When it came to the part that goes, "Darling, I love you," I was deeply touched, because I had the impression that Baba looked directly at me. I later found out that Leatrice had the same experience! This made us wonder how many others had the same experience. Afterward, Baba said, "I always hear this record at Nariman's place when I go to Bombay."

We then played some Indian records. Baba revealed that he did not especially like classical music, whether Indian or English. He most appreciated music that expressed heartfelt longing and praise for God.

Jeanne noted in her diary some of Baba's comments about the Indian records. "God-man is the Ocean of Unity. The saints are the pearls in the Ocean. The singer says, 'Ask anything from Qutub [Perfect One], and he is wise who asks him for God, because he is the only one who can give union with God.'"

GIFTS FROM MEHERA

In the early afternoon, Baba had a group of about twenty women come to his house. They were women who had met Mehera when she was in America in 1952, or who had corresponded with her. Before Baba had left India for this visit to the Center, Mehera had given him little gifts for each of these women. Baba received the group of women while sitting in an armchair in front of the fireplace in the living room. The women sat on the carpet in front of him and enjoyed a few moments of companionship with him.

Baba confessed that although Mehera had told Baba for whom each gift was intended and that he had nodded to her at the time, he now could not remember! He said he could solve the universal problems but not this one.

Baba told the women that Mehera, his beloved, came first in his love. Earlier, in the Barn, Baba had asked Harry Kenmore, who was blind and the only male who had been permitted to “see” Mehera, what he felt about her. Harry had replied, “Mehera radiates love and purity. I felt she was the exact feminine counterpart of Baba.” When Harry said this, Baba turned and gave him a kiss, as though confirming its veracity. Baba told the women that his sister, Mani, came next. She was his true sister in work, he said.

Baba then handed each one her first gift from Mehera: a photograph vignette of Baba as a young boy and Mehera as a young girl. Mehera had commissioned Baba's brother Behram to create it.



Mehera's gift: photo vignette of Mehera and Meher Baba as children, May 25, 1958.

Then Baba went to his bedroom, where an assortment of gifts was spread on the bed. Baba had the women come into the bedroom, a few at a time, and gave each one a gift. Baba gave Jeanne a handbag from Mehera, and Leatrice and Renae were given similar gifts. Although the gifts were small, they were so charged with Baba's love that they still retain that vibration of Divine Love-Bliss. When Baba returned to the living room, he gave each one a lock of his hair as a special prasad.

After the first group of women left, the rest of the women arrived in dripping wet raingear. They too received gifts from Baba. Two days previously, Baba had referred to this meeting as "Mehera's work," so no doubt the gifts had added, unfathomable significance.

ONE BIRTH, ONE DEATH, MANY LIVES

The next day, Monday, May 26, at the Barn, Baba had many discourses read to us. The one entitled "Real Birth and Real Death" began with the statements, "There is only one real birth and one real death. You are born once and you really die only once." By the one real birth, Baba meant the creation of the individualized "drop-soul"; the one real death means the merging of the drop-soul into the Infinite. In between the two events, we experience many so-called births and deaths in illusion.

The discourse concluded, "Ultimately, consciousness, totally free of all limitations, experiences the unlimited reality eternally. Real dying is equal to real living. Therefore I stress: Die for God and you will live as God."

After the discourse was read, Baba said, "You are first a child, then grow old and drop the body, but you never die and never were born. In the East, Vedantists believe in reincarnation, in innumerable births and deaths, until one attains Godhood. The Muslims believe in one

birth only and one death only. The Christians and the Zoroastrians the same. All are right. But Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, Zoroaster all meant what I mean by real birth and real death. I say you are born once and die once.

“All the so-called births and deaths are only sleeps and wakings. The difference between sleep and death is that when you sleep you awake and find yourself in the same body; but after death you awake in a different body. You never die. Only the blessed ones die and become one with God.”

Before an esoteric discourse explaining *Fana*, *Nirvan*, *Nirvikalp*, and *Fana-fillah* was read, Baba told us not to worry if we did not understand it. “It’s nothing but words,” Baba assured us. “Only love counts. If the most unintelligent one can love me as I ought to be loved, he is infinitely more blessed than the most intelligent one who doesn’t know how to love me.”

THE SPIRITUAL PLANES

In a discourse on the “Planes of Consciousness in the Next Incarnation,” Baba asked rhetorically, “Do persons on the spiritual planes of consciousness take birth having consciousness of the same plane?” Baba explained:

□ Yes, but the consciousness is very gradual, as when a person of gross-consciousness dies and is reborn with consciousness of the gross world. The child gradually becomes aware, as it grows older, of the same old gross world according to past experiences of the gross. A child born with consciousness of a certain plane is not all at once conscious of the plane. The plane unfolds very gradually as the child gradually grows.

Later in life, this child, grown up as a man, gets established in the life of his respective plane-consciousness, as a man of the gross world gets established in his worldly life. Thus, a person of the gross world dies to reincarnate as of the gross world; so also a person of a particular plane of consciousness reincarnates as of that respective plane of consciousness and then gradually gets established in the plane of consciousness of his previous life.

He may or may not make further progress in the planes of higher consciousness. Progress will depend on the help of a spiritual guide of a higher plane, on the Grace of a Perfect Master, or on his own efforts in the life of that particular plane of consciousness.

Baba then emphasized, “As I said the other day, the gross, subtle, mental spheres and God are all in you, in your human form. Do not try to find them in some other world. They are in you. It is the vision of consciousness that gives you the experience of other worlds. In the gross world the whole cosmos exists; also in the subtle and in the mental worlds there are innumerable experiences. But the experiences you have in the gross world are different from those in the subtle world.

“You yourself do not change; all is in you. You do not go to ‘geographically’ higher levels. As the angle of vision of consciousness changes, your experience changes. In the end you experience yourself as God, which is the ultimate experience, the real experience. All other experiences of the gross, subtle, mental worlds are illusion. So are all the states of heaven, hell, limbo, planes. Don’t seek them anywhere but within you. Eventually, to become your own Self, you have to love me. There is no other solution.”

SURRENDERANCE, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE

Baba then had this statement on “Surrenderance” read:

He who genuinely surrenders to a Perfect Master surrenders completely without asking for permission to do so. He does not even expect acceptance of his surrenderance from the Master. Complete surrenderance in itself embodies the acceptance of one who has surrendered completely as he ought to have done.

Baba told us that when we ask how to love him, we are insulting love. “I can tell all how to obey me, but there is no answer to how to love me,” Baba said. “Love me in the way you understand love,” he counseled.

Baba went on to say, “I can tell you how to obey me: Do anything I tell you, even at the cost of life itself. And if you do obey me one hundred percent, with all sincerity, at any cost, it will be greater than loving me. Obedience is greater than love. But who can obey me? Only one rare one can obey me, but I have that assurance from you all. Just do whatever I tell you to do. You have all put up your hands – we’ll see.”

Then the discourse “The Lover and the Beloved” was read:

Beloved God is in all. What is then the duty of the lover? It is to make the Beloved happy without sparing himself. Without giving a second thought to his own happiness, the lover should seek the pleasure of the Beloved. The only thought a lover of God should have is to make the Beloved happy.

Thus, if you stop thinking of your own happiness and give happiness to others, you will then indeed play the part of the lover of God, because Beloved God is in all.

But while giving happiness to others, if you have an iota of thought of self, it is then not love but affection. This tends to seek happiness for the self while making others happy. As for example: (1) A husband's affection for his wife. The husband wants to give happiness to his wife; but while doing so he thinks of his own happiness, too. (2) A mother's affection for her child. From this affection the mother derives happiness purely out of giving and seeking happiness for her child.

Sometimes Baba made statements, such as those above, that made the attainment of the goal of pure love and true surrender seem nearly impossible. I never worried about such things; I avoided intellectualizing about them, and tried instead to open myself more and more to the flow of Baba's Grace. I felt that Grace was necessary, and that Baba himself was actively helping everyone. I have felt this even more since he dropped his body in 1969. I feel that we have only to cooperate with his inner working with us, rather than worry about how impossible or distant the goal might be. For me, it has always been a matter of trusting him, cooperating with his Wish, and remaining attuned to him inwardly.

INDIVIDUALITY AFTER GOD-REALIZATION?

"You are the individualized ocean," Baba said after the discourse was read. Baba then used the hat and other props to review his explanation about the movement of the drop soul to the goal, and how a Perfect Master can do instantly what saints can do only in stages.

Baba then clarified the issue as to whether one retains "individuality" after God-realization, even though, as Baba said during his demonstration with the hat, "The self goes, and God remains." He continued:

The question is, How is individuality retained? The stamp of individuality remains; it is left behind to say: "I am God." "Beryl [Williams] is God." Jesus said, "I am God." This stamp, or mark, remains. It is still real individuality. Remember, the Real Self is within. When helped by a Perfect Master, the Real Self is removed; the imprint that remains is the original individuality.

"That is as far as I can explain it or touch your understanding. The Real Self is removed and the Real Individuality remains as an imprint," Baba said. He then went into greater detail:

Suppose this is the infinite Ocean. It is full of drops. Each drop is the ocean as long as it is not separate. So there are innumerable drops in the ocean. One says, "I am stone," another says, "I am man," "I am woman," "I am this," "I am that." Suppose there are three drops whose Real Self is removed and God remains; but the individuality is there. So [Charles] Purdom (one drop) says, "I am God," and his experience of his own ocean of bliss is continuous, without a break. Another drop, called Lud [Dimpfl] is from the same ocean. Its Real Self is removed, individuality remains, and says the same thing: "I am God." And Beryl says, "I am God." Three drops of the ocean say the same thing, but the experience is individual. It's so easy to understand, so difficult to attain.

So what happens when you are pushed into the seventh plane? You leave your false self and also the Real Self, and instantaneously you experience yourself as God.

SAINTS AND SONGS

Baba called for an intermission, but many of us remained with him, especially the children. When everyone reconvened, Baba introduced some music by telling the story of Mira and her devotion to Krishna.

“I am Krishna,” Baba declared. “I want all of you to love me as Mira loved me.” He then commented, “Mehera’s love is different and cannot be compared to that of Mira.”

Baba also said of Saint Teresa of Avila, “She loved me; she devoted her life completely to me.”

Spirituals sung by Marion Anderson were played, and Baba gestured the circle of perfection. When the song “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” was played, Baba gestured, “I’ve got the whole universe in my palm.” Baba became very serious when the song “Let My People Go” was played. Twice he touched his right foot and then his forehead, apparently performing some inner work.

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Baba gave interviews in the Lagoon Cabin from 12:00 until 2:00

p.m. Later in the afternoon we all went back to the Barn for a very lively dance program put on by Margaret Craske’s group of young professional ballet dancers. Don Stevens introduced the program by saying, “Baba, your words have a deep effect on us. We know there is no yesterday and no tomorrow,



Meher Baba leaving Lagoon Cabin, May 26, 1958.

and we are giving this performance for you in the Eternal Now!"

The dancers used the southern half of the Barn for their performances, and we all crammed together, standing, in the northern half. Baba was seated in front of the audience, up toward the center of the Barn.

Peter Saul and Viola Farber danced "The May Apple"; a young man named Jean Cebrun danced "The Ambiguous Monster," for which he had created the music and the choreography, and "An Aquatic Vision"; Tex Hightower and Catherine Damon (nicknamed Skipper) danced the "Sevilliana," a Spanish dance; and a group of them danced "The Skating Party." The group consisted of Bunty Kelly, who had arranged the piece, Marie Adair, Naomi Westerfelt, Cynthia Mays, Viola Farber, Peter Saul, Jean Cebrun, Joe Fabian, and Zebra Nevins.

Baba smiled at Tex and Skipper's performance of a popular dance of the 1920s called the "Black Bottom." After the performance, Skipper gave Baba her cloche hat, and Baba put it on his head. He embraced Margaret Craske, and then each of the dancers and Don Stevens. He called Jean Cebrun to sit near him; he then requested that Jean do an encore. It was entitled "Time and Destruction." Jean Cebrun's style was extremely modernistic, and Baba seemed to like it very much. Baba embraced him again. He said, "I am pleased by this performance of my lovers, done with love for me." The dancers later were heard remarking that they had never danced as they had danced that afternoon.



Meher Baba outside Barn; Darwin far right, May 1958.

REMAIN HAPPY

The next morning, Tuesday, May 27, in the Barn, Harold Rudd read out a letter he had received from the famed producer Cecil B. de Mille. Harold, who had connections in Hollywood, had written Mr. de Mille, telling him that Baba had enjoyed his latest movie, *The Ten Commandments*. Mr. de Mille, recalling his great privilege in meeting Baba in Hollywood in 1932, replied that he was happy to know that Baba liked the movie. Baba told us that in Bombay he had seen the first half of the movie.

Baba then announced that the men's program would be held in the afternoon. "They want me to laugh, to be happy," he said. Harry Florsheim said, "We know Baba leaves halfway through a performance, so we shall make it short. We want to initiate him into the Supreme and Ancient Order of Alligator Watchers. The men will be initiated at the end, so how can he leave?"

Baba referred to the ballet dancing program of the previous day, when the audience had to cram in together, perspiring. Baba said, "And how about the perspiring dancers? They danced out of love for me. If you cannot stand heat and sweat for my sake, how will you offer your necks for me? I don't understand."

After two discourses on Compassion were read (Baba had given them to Irene Conybeare for her forthcoming book, *In Quest of Truth*), Baba said:



The explanations here are perfect, provided one understands how the law of karma works. In India, I said to the mandali, "I am now helpless physically. I am mentally helpless and spiritually helpless." The mandali couldn't understand how the Avatar of the Age could become helpless spiritually.

Last night, Eruch asked me, "How is it possible for God to become spiritually helpless? We understand your physical and mental helplessness." Now I repeat my explanation to him:

I am conscious of all power and I am conscious of all knowing. I know everything. I am conscious that I can do anything. If I use my power, the purpose of my suffering for the universe will not be served. Jesus was all-powerful, all-knowing. He knew he had to be crucified and would have used his power to avoid it, but he did not use his power and made himself so helpless as to say on the cross, "My God, even you have forsaken me!" Why? He could use his power but he did not want to use it. At present I have spiritual helplessness.

Baba asked Harry if it was clear to him, and when Harry nodded, Baba had him explain the meaning. Then he asked Charles Purdom, who said, "Jesus and Baba have no karma; they chose to be men." Baba seemed to like this statement.

After a few more comments, Baba said, "I want you all to be happy. I say to you, remain happy under every illusory circumstance." He ended with, "I am not happy when you don't love me!"

THE ANT AND THE AVATAR

Elizabeth Sacalis and I found ourselves in charge of the phonograph on this day, and I asked Baba if he wanted us to play "Begin the Beguine." Baba nodded in affirmation, commenting that the song has an eternal meaning. We then played a catchy version of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."

Two more discourses for Irene Conybeare's book were read, one on maya and one on the difference between auras and halos. Baba

then told us that we all are blind, unless we see him as he really is.

“Remember one point,” Baba urged. “Try to follow it: It’s so new and difficult. Why do I say, Everything is here within you? It is not above or beneath. The difference is only in the state of consciousness.

“For example, an ant is here on the Barn floor; it is free, active. You also do actions here on the same floor. But the consciousness of the ant when compared with yours is insignificant. You are conscious of jet planes flying over the Barn. You also know about air flights and so many things. But the ant on the same floor with you is not aware of planes. The difference between the experience of the ant and your experience is very great, though you both are on the same gross level. So similarly the difference between your experience and my experience is like that between you and the ant: We are here together in the same room and on the same floor, but to me you appear as the ants appear to you!”

Baba laughed heartily at a joke Harry told at Baba’s request, and then announced that he would be in the Lagoon Cabin until 1:30 with the blinds pulled down. “I may or may not call you,” he said to the whole group. Needless to say, most of us hung around the Lagoon Cabin in case Baba called us.

HILARITY IN THE BARN

In the afternoon, everyone went to the Barn with Baba to see the program put on by the men. Baba was carried aloft in his special chair to the triumphant cry, “Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!” Among the group were several musicians, and they had formed a small ensemble and stationed themselves across the room from the fireplace. As Baba and the rest of the group came into the Barn, they played, “Hail, Hail, the Gang’s All Here” and “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

Baba and the onlookers sat to the right of the entrance door. The room

was curtained off for the performance using white sheets hung over a cord. The program was being put on by the "Alligator Watchers' Club," and alligator appliques, made by Anita Vieillard and a couple of men, decorated the sheets. The comedy show, which consisted of skits and songs, was so funny that the Barn resounded with bellowing laughter.

Three of the men, humorously costumed as Viennese doctors, performed an emergency operation on Max Haeffliger, who was laid out on an ironing board operating table. The doctors diagnosed a bad case of *sanskaras* (impressions). So, using equipment such as hammers and saws, they opened up the patient and threw out the junk they found in him, things like old shoes. Finally, the loud popping of a concealed balloon indicated success in lancing the tumor of *sanskaras*. One of the "doctors" tried to wake up another "doctor," Ben Hayman, by blowing a whistle, and when Ben hilariously "awoke" and immediately started telling a joke, his colleagues frantically tried to stop him.

Some of the men told jokes and stories. One was told by Charles Purdom. It seems two monkeys were surveying the total devastation caused by World War III atomic bombs, and one of them said, "Oh, dear, I guess we'll have to start all over again." Baba asked for an encore of Ben's "awakening." The program ended with the initiation of the men into the Alligator Watchers' Club.

Baba laughed so much that he said, "Until now, I have not laughed so much in this incarnation." His face hurt from so much laughing, he said. Following the entertainment, Baba invited all who had participated to come to him for an embrace. When he said this, I found myself trying to recall anything I might have done to qualify as a participant, but I could not think of a single thing. Jeanne, however, remembered that she had supplied the safety pins that held the bed-sheet stage curtain to the suspended cord.

Baba's eyes twinkled as Jeanne approached him, and she felt that he

knew and was humorously conspiring with her flimsy qualification for getting an embrace. She said that when Baba embraced her, he also kissed her on the cheek and got her face wet with his tears of laughter, which were still streaming down his face.

“THOU ART THE ETERNAL OCEAN
OF INFINITE BEING”

As Baba was about to leave and had already started to rise from his chair, the small musical ensemble began to softly play “Begin the Beguine.” Henry Kashouty’s trombone solo part struck a mood of great depth and devotion. Baba hesitated and then settled back into his chair, going deeper into the mood. He seemed to be intensely with us, and yet withdrawn to a deeper level than usual. He looked around at the faces of his lovers, who stood silently around him, some perhaps inwardly repeating the pledge of love so beautifully expressed in the words of the song, “There we

are, swearing to love forever, and promising never, never to part. . . .”

Baba slowly shifted from the chair in which he had been sitting to the carrying chair. He was about to give the signal for the boys to pick up the chair and depart, but held back and seemed further engrossed in his inner working. The mood deepened, and everyone stood



Meher Baba preparing to rise from carrying chair,
still absorbed in inner work, May 27, 1958.

silently by, feeling great love and reverence for the Beloved. Finally Baba gave the signal and was carried out to the car. But even after arriving at the car, he remained seated in the carrying chair, working.

After a while, he stood up beside the car. A large turtle that was crawling nearby was brought over for Baba to see. As he was getting into the car, the Beloved's hand rested on the top of the door for a few seconds, and several people, including me, stooped reverently to kiss that sacred hand, the hand of Christ.

When the car reached the area of the Lagoon Cabin, Baba got out, but instead of going into the cabin, he went to a chair outdoors, near the cabin, and sat down. He was soon completely absorbed in inner working, his fingers moving rapidly. The mood was profound. The group approached quietly, one by one, and silently watched from a distance. Baba stayed there, working for quite a while. Adi and Eruch were standing near him, with Eruch holding an umbrella over the Beloved's head, protecting it from the sun.

The silence even affected the ordinary, natural surroundings. It seemed as though the birds, the crickets, the frogs and all of the usual natural sounds had become silent. Everyone standing around was wonderstruck, seeing Baba thus. The atmosphere became surcharged with tremendous and indefinable power and significance. One woman broke from the waiting group and, sobbing, tried to get to Baba, but she was restrained.

Meantime, Leatrice, who was standing among others a short distance from Baba, could not see his face, because there were people in front of her. From her heart, she longed to see his face when, to her surprise and great joy, Baba leaned back in his chair and looked directly at her. She later said that when she looked into Baba's eyes she was astounded as she realized she was looking into the eyes of God! She said, "I knew he was God when he gave me that indescribable look. I was dazed with shock, knowing that whatever God is, this Being, Baba, is God."

Finally, Baba rose from the chair and, leaning on Eruch's arm, slowly made his way to the car. I opened the car door and was awestruck by the look in Baba's eyes. Baba truly seemed to be the Omnipotent One, the Eternal Being, and, as I looked into those two pools of fathomless infinity, I silently exclaimed, "Thou art the Eternal Ocean of Infinite Being!"

"TO COME TO ME"

In the Barn the next morning, Wednesday, May 28, Baba made some remarks about the Perfect Ones and then asked God to forgive up to the moment all his lovers who were not physically present. He also announced that the men and boys would be allowed to come to his house and that the next day there would be no set program.

Charles Purdom asked Baba to comment on what he meant by saying that those who love Baba would "come to him" when they die. Baba replied, "To 'come to me' means liberation, experiencing me as I am. No more bondage of births and deaths. But it does not mean the state of a Perfect Master, of Perfection. That is only to be attained in the gross body. So if you are not blessed with this state of perfection, at least you can have liberation. If you just take my name just at the moment of dropping your body, you will come to me. Yes, anyone. It's not easy to take my name at the very moment of leaving the body. Then you individually experience bliss, Infinite Bliss. After liberation, you continue to experience Infinite Bliss eternally. Why? Because it belongs to you eternally. You experience what belonged to you eternally. Even spiritual ecstasy cannot be compared with divine bliss. Remember this!"

Baba then gave a marvelous analogy to illustrate the filtering of God's Infinite Consciousness through the layers of creation consciousness.

Let us take as an example that the sun is God. The sun is not God; it is gas. Let us say it is God: Infinite Power, Infinite Bliss, Infinite Knowledge. It is all there in the sun. Those on the mental sphere are near the sun and they directly receive the rays of the sun. Those in the subtle world are a bit further off. The rays of Knowledge and Bliss are filtered through the mental sphere and only the residue is received by those in the subtle sphere. The gross world is very far off. It is so thick, so crude. Only the last traces of Infinite Bliss and Knowledge come through to the gross world.

The saints in the subtle plane receive less of my rays. Those on the gross plane receive just a trace of my Infinite Power, Bliss, and Knowledge. In the mental plane, rays of Infinite Knowledge are received directly and those on this plane know the minds and thoughts of everyone. The rays of Infinite Knowledge when they strike on the mental plane are received directly by the saints, *walis*. The Knowledge is now converted into knowing the thoughts of gross and subtle minds. In the sun, Infinite Knowledge knows everything as God. In the mental plane, rays of that Infinite Knowledge make known the minds of all. When they percolate to the subtle, those on the subtle planes know the minds of those who are associated with them. The same Infinite Knowledge from the sun, coming through the mental, subtle, and striking the gross, gives mind-intelligence – the power of reason, logic and all that is associated with the mind. So this gross human mind – which is so powerful and able to think and act, to invent so many things, that is able to imagine anything – is really nothing but a trickle of that Infinite Knowledge of the sun.

NOT A GAME

In the afternoon, in response to Baba's invitation, all of the men and boys went to his house. Baba was seated in the far corner of the living room, to the right of the fireplace, when we all entered. He seemed to be in a merry mood, and he referred to the men's program, chuckling. He rose and embraced each of us, giving each one a candy prasad. He indicated that after the embrace, we should go and look around the house.

Then, led by Baba, everyone went out into the area northwest of the compound's entrance gate, near a magnolia tree. An upholstered chair was brought out for Baba, who sat in it and began throwing wrapped candies to the men and boys who were scattered around, more or less in front of Baba. He would look one way and throw in another, so

we had to be alert. When a piece of candy was missed, it was given to Eruch.

Although this seemed like a game and was fun, Baba said that it was not a game, explaining about the candy prasad, "It is the gift of God to man." He explained further, "If you eat with the feeling that it is that, you benefit. But if you eat it as mere candy, it has no meaning." He also said, "Don't give the candy to someone else." In fact, we were supposed to eat it immediately. Before departing, Baba allowed each one to drop down on one knee and kiss his outstretched hand.



Meher Baba walking from his house to northwest area of compound for men's and boys' gathering, May 28, 1958.



Meher Baba tossing candy prasad to men and boys in his compound, May 28, 1958.



Meher Baba at men's and boys' gathering in his compound, May 28, 1958.

This spot where Baba sat, as is true of other places on the Center, is still deeply charged with his divine energy.

UNDER THE MASTER'S FEET

Somewhere I had read about a devotee placing his head *under* the foot of the Master, and this conjured up thoughts and imaginings, not only about the feelings of love and devotion which prompted this act, but also about how it was done. Did the devotee kneel down and lift the Master's foot in order to place his head under it? Or was it brought about in some graceful manner? I could not figure it out but, in thinking about it, I wished that somehow I could do that – never considering that Baba knew my thoughts and feelings, or that it could ever come about. However, it seems that not only did Beloved Baba know about my secret wish but, out of his sweet love, he easily made it possible for me to fulfill this wish.

It happened on Thursday, May 29, in the Lagoon Cabin, during our family's last interview with Baba prior to his departure early the next morning. The interview itself was very informal, with no special agenda. Baba was sitting on the light blue chaise longue with his legs stretched out in front of him. Eruch was interpreting for Baba. When our family came into the Lagoon Cabin, I noticed that there were not many chairs, so I sat on the carpet directly in front of the chaise longue (which is now in Baba's house), and this put me very close to Baba's feet.

Still, I did not think of my secret wish. After a very loving interview with Baba, he made his usual gesture, gently indicating that it was now time for us to leave. As the other members of our family started toward the door – the door facing the lake – I suddenly realized that here was the perfect situation to fulfill my wish. Along with that, I was keenly

aware that as Baba's right hip was very tender, I would have to be very careful not to disturb his leg. All of this flashed through my mind like lightning – perhaps Baba flashed it all to me.

Baba and I exchanged a quick glance, which reassured me as I boldly but very gently responded to this opportunity. Reaching forward, I very gently grasped Baba's right foot, quickly kissed the top of it and, still holding it, placed the top of my head against the bottom of his foot.

Again, Baba and I exchanged a quick but intensely meaningful glance – a glance signifying complete surrender on my part – as I rose to follow the others out the door. It all happened within a few seconds and was unnoticed by the others. It was one more precious gift from the Beloved, a gift that permitted me to feel a very little bit of Baba's constant suffering and sweet Compassion.

LIGHT OF ASIA

After Baba finished giving interviews, he went over to the northwest side of the Caretaker's Cabin and sat in a chair in the shade. There he listened to a tape of Harold Rudd reciting a section of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, a very moving and inspiring poem containing deep



Meher Baba listening to Harold Rudd's taped recitation of *The Light of Asia*, May 29, 1958.



Meher Baba listening to tape outside Caretaker's Cabin, May 29, 1958.

wisdom and truth, couched in the form of a chronicle of the Buddha's life. The taped recitation went on for about fifteen minutes. As Baba listened to the tape, which featured the section where the young Buddha saw sickness and death for the first time, his face expressed a serious mood and his fingers began moving rapidly.

BABA'S LAST TIME AT THE BEACH

In the afternoon, we all went to the beach with Baba. Baba rode in a car, but his special carrying chair was brought along, and he was carried in it from the car over the dunes to the beach. Baba was being carried toward the ocean, where we supposed he would indicate that he wanted to stop. But instead, he motioned for the ones who were carrying his chair to continue. At that point, for a split second, I wondered what Baba was up to, as we were all walking beside him right into the ocean, with our shoes and all of our clothes on. But immediately following that split second's hesitation, I thought "Who cares?" and kept on walking into the ocean, socks, shoes, clothes and all.

Actually, we did not go very far into the water, about up to our knees, but we were prepared to go as far with Baba as he would go. As it turned out, Baba just wanted to be carried far enough to dip his feet into the water, and then he called a halt. We did not know what work Baba was doing by dipping his feet in the ocean, but through this situation, Baba took us through a psychological barrier. This was an opportunity to cast aside our innate sense of self-preservation and willingly go as far as Baba wanted to lead us.



Meher Baba carried by dancers at the beach, May 29, 1958. (above)



Women carrying Meher Baba at the beach, May 29, 1958; Agnes Baron, left, Elizabeth Sacalis, Anita Vieillard, right. (right)



Meher Baba and group at the beach, May 29, 1958.

In the morning, before starting out from his house, Baba had indicated that those who were with him then – including the women who

went every day to clean – should stick close to him during the day. Leatrice, who was among them, intuitively thought that she should take along her wool bolero (a short sweater). Now at the beach, when Baba was brought back to a dry sandy spot on the beach, Leatrice suddenly realized why she had been impelled to bring along her bolero. She quickly threw it to someone next to Baba to dry his feet. We gathered around Baba for a few minutes while pictures were taken; then groups of women, then men, took turns

carrying Baba to the car that brought him back to the Center.



Meher Baba at the beach, Beryl Williams and Eruch holding umbrella, May 29, 1958.

BABA'S LAST MOMENTS IN AMERICA

Meher Baba's last Sahavas in America came to a close the following day, Friday, May 30. We all went to Wilmington, North Carolina,

very early in the morning with Baba and spent the last few minutes with him in the airport.



Meher Baba sitting in car at Wilmington airport, May 30, 1958.

Baba remarked, "I am in you all. But I only can enter your heart when you have driven out everything else." He added, "I am God. I am in you all. But I feel shy; I do not enter your heart if I find there the slightest impurity."

When Anita Vieillard, who had come late, asked Baba how long he had been at the airport, Baba said, "Since eternity! I never come and I

never go. I am present everywhere. Isn't it wonderful that I never leave?"

Baba also seemed to do some inner working; his fingers were moving rapidly, and one time he tapped his right leg, then his left, then his right again.

Then, after embracing a few people, despite having previously announced a prohibition on embracing him, he was placed in a wheelchair and taken to the plane. We waved goodbye to him, and he waved back to us through his window on the plane. Baba then went on to California with the men mandali and Lud Dimpfl. After spending one night at the Dimpfls' home, Baba and the men mandali went on to Australia.



One last touch; Meher Baba wheeled by Lud Dimpfl; Renae Shaw in white blouse on left, May 30, 1958.

This was the last time Meher Baba came to America. The circumstances of this American Sahavas were unique. Our Beloved, out of love for us, had journeyed all the way from India, while enduring an ever-deepening suffering for mankind, to give us the incomparable blessing of his companionship, and to allow us to share his suffering in a small way.

Although this American Sahavas had been announced as a substitute for the big gathering in India Baba had described in 1956, I still felt hopeful that the time would come when the Westerners would have the chance to go to Baba in India. As it turned out, this opportunity would come four years later. Meanwhile, there was correspondence from Baba, including the orders he had told us he would be sending us in June or July, after he returned to India.



Meher Baba waving goodbye from airplane window, May 30, 1958.

INSTRUCTIONS

The letter with instructions for Jeanne, dated June 22, 1958, illustrates the kind of sacrifice Baba asked of us. The letter is as follows:

Pimpalgaon

22nd June '58

Dear Jeanne,

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

For forty days, beginning from July 14 1958:

- 1) *Repeat (audibly but softly) 1500 (fifteen hundred) times a day, at one sitting any one time during the 24 hours: "Beloved God, Thy Will has come to pass in that all our Baba has declared will soon come to pass this year."*

(When not found possible to do at one sitting, it may be done in two sittings).

- 2) *Give up one cherished item: i.e., some special food or drink, or smoking, etc.*

I might send you one special instruction in October. You should not let the possibility of this interfere with your work.

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

Love, Baba

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

The following cable was sent to Kitty and Elizabeth and distributed to the rest of us on August 25th, 1958:

Inform each concerned in U.S.A. my instructions as follows. Circumstances during these three months will put to test love and faith of my lovers, so try your best to keep firm hold on my daaman [hem of his garment]. Do not talk ill of others and try not to think ill of others. Remember, no correspondence with me or Eruch.

— Signed, Baba from seclusion

SEVEN SAHAVAS SAYINGS OF MEHER BABA

Snippets from some of the messages Baba gave us in the Barn were later affixed to plaques and posted around the walls of the Barn. They are as follows:

Desire for nothing except desirelessness. Hope for nothing except to rise above all hopes. Want nothing and you will have everything.

Seek not to possess anything but to surrender everything. Serve others with the understanding that in them you are serving Me. Be resigned completely to My Will and My Will will be yours. Let nothing shake your faith in me, and all your bindings will be shaken off.

Real happiness lies in making others happy. The real desire is that which leads you to become perfect in order to make others perfect. The real aim is that which aims to make others become God by first attaining Godhood yourself.

Be angry with none but your weakness. Hate none but your lustful self. Be greedy to own more and more wealth of tolerance and justice. Let your temptation be to tempt Me with your love in order to receive My Grace. Wage war against your desires and Godhood will be your victory.

Love others as you would love yourself and all that is yours. Fortunate are they whose love is tested by misfortunes. Love demands that the lover sacrifice for the Beloved.

Real living is dying for God. Live less for yourself and more for others. One must die to one's own self to be able to live in all other selves. One who dies for God lives forever.

This period of Sahavas is the period of My suffering and helplessness. My Glorification will follow My Humiliation.

P A R T S E V E N

*The 1960s
& Beyond*

C H A P T E R
—
E I G H T E E N

West Meets East

When Meher Baba came to America in the summer of 1956, he mentioned several times that he was planning to hold a big meeting in India and that he would invite both his Eastern and Western lovers to attend. Then, in 1958, Baba postponed the large gathering and instead held smaller ones, including the “American Sahavas.”

On November 4, 1959, this “Message to the Americans” was sent through Dr. Harry Kenmore on the day of his departure from Meherazad, India:

□ *Tell my American lovers that although they are physically*
□ *away from me, spiritually they are nearer to me than to them-*
□ *selves, and they are all very dear to me. – Baba*

Three years later, during the first week of November 1962, in Poona [now spelled Pune], India, the long-promised East-West Gathering took place.

A month before the gathering, I received a letter dated October 10, 1962, from Baba's sister, Mani. After conveying Baba's love to our family, she wrote, "I must add that during the afternoon East-West gatherings, there will be some messages from Baba read out in English. For two such messages, Baba has wished that they be read out by you (one each on different days – on 2nd and 3rd November). There will be the mike, and you will of course be given a typed or printed copy of the message, by Eruch."

On October 23 we received a cable from Baba that gave us concern. It said, "My health is very bad, but your love will help to support me during the days of East-West Gathering. Pass on this information to all concerned traveling with you." Copies of this cable had been sent to others, as well.

This sahavas program was not for the general public, but only for Baba's Western and Eastern devotees – men, women, and children. We were to come out of desire for Baba's companionship – true "sahavas" – and not for any hope for spiritual gain or individual help.

JEANNE'S HEART ATTACK

Our whole family was planning to fly to India to attend the Gathering: our daughter Renae and her husband, Eric, via the Pacific route from where they lived in Carson City, Nevada; our son, Lowell, from where he lived in Massachusetts; and my wife, Jeanne, our daughter Leatrice, and myself from our home in Schenectady, New York.

Only a few days before we were scheduled to start the long trip, Jeanne had a mild heart attack. Naturally, we were all dismayed by this development and were very much concerned. Jeanne did not have to be hospitalized, but she had to take it very easy and not do anything at

all strenuous. One of our first thoughts was to cable Baba, which we did. Jeanne felt that she might still be able to make the trip if Baba helped her, so she worded her cable carefully, hoping that Baba would help her to make the trip and not tell her to stay home.

Her cable said, "I have a mild heart condition, but I still want to come to India and will need your help." It was a peculiar situation, as we had all built up tremendous momentum for this trip. Jeanne felt distressed, not only because she might have to cancel her trip but also because she was afraid that Leatrice and I might have to cancel, too, in order to take care of her.

Jeanne was feeling quite a lot better by the scheduled day of our departure, so we decided to make the 180-mile motor trip to the airport and there make the final decision whether or not to risk the plane trip.

Jeanne wrote later, "Leatrice and Darwin packed my luggage and the day arrived for our departure, but there was still no reply from Baba. Intuitively, I felt that I should go ahead anyway. We rode in a station wagon from Schenectady to Kennedy Airport with Laura DeLavigne and her daughter, Marie Shore, who drove."

Jeanne writes:

□ *At the airport I was relieved and happy to be given a*
 □ *cable from Baba which had been sent care of the Winterfeldts.*
 □ *It said: "Make your heart beat in my love. — Love, Baba."*

When Jeanne read this, her spirits rose and, feeling that Baba was helping her, she decided to risk all to make the trip to her Beloved. She was truly courageous. We all felt that Baba inwardly helped her all the way, including the time spent in India and the return trip home.

THE JOURNEY

On the plane to India were a large number of Baba followers. While most people had arranged to return shortly after the East-West Gathering, six of us had made special airline arrangements whereby we could stay a total of thirty-five days, if we desired. Our group of six consisted of Elsie Rogers, Jeanne, Leatrice, and myself, as well as Hilda Thorpe and Charles Purdom, both of whom joined us when the plane touched down in London. Charles was the one who had informed us of this special plan; he wanted to stay on in India to do research for his forthcoming book, *The God-Man*.

After making several routine stops, the plane landed in Bombay on October 30, and some of Baba's local devotees helped us get on a plane to Poona. There we stayed at the Poona Club, which was somewhat like a motel.

The Indian Divali, or Festival of Lights celebration, was going on in Poona, and this contributed to the festive atmosphere. The first morning of our stay, I noticed wagonloads of chairs passing by, and I wondered where so many chairs could be going. Soon I realized that the chairs were for the five thousand Easterners and four hundred Westerners attending the East-West Gathering.

THE WOMEN'S GATHERING

Baba and his mandali were staying at Guruprasad, a spacious mansion belonging to Shantadevi, the Maharani of Baroda. Designed to remain cooler than the outside temperature, Guruprasad, with its polished gray marble floors, stately marble columns, ornately engraved glass windows, and sparse furnishings created the impression of understated splendor. It was here that the East-West Gathering was held.



The beautiful mansion called Guruprasad:
Jeanne Shaw (left) and Margaret Craske standing in front, October 1962.

As nearly all of the Westerners had arrived in Poona by October 30, Baba sent word around to the various hotels where we were staying, inviting the women to come the next day to Guruprasad for a pre-Gathering meeting with him. This was a delightful surprise for them. The following are Jeanne's diary notes on that occasion.

OCTOBER 31, 1962. Stayed at the Poona Club Motel. Arose early – before 7:00 a.m. – bathed, dressed, had breakfast, and awaited transportation (by car – with Phyllis [Filis], Adele, Ella) for our 9:30 appointment with Baba. As we approached Guruprasad, I snapped a picture of the palace-like building. We approached the veranda and took off our shoes and walked into the large, nicely carpeted room, where Baba sat on the couch, with a few women who preceded us sitting around Baba.

When my turn came to greet Baba, I fell to my knees to

embrace Baba and he hugged me for a long moment. I began to sob with such emotion and love. He took my face between his hands, kissed my cheek, and I kissed him. My earring fell off in his lap, and he picked it up into his hands and handed it to me. Then he kissed me and I kissed him. I was looking into his eyes, blinked my tears, and then I arose to be embraced by Mehera so lovingly, and dear Mani so lovingly, and then Meheru.

Later Dr. Goher came to embrace me, and I was also introduced to Naja and another lady, and Rano embraced me. I was vibrating from all the love from Baba and the dear ladies. I was so happy I could hardly keep the tears from flowing again. Other groups of women arrived and kept arriving, and each was embraced – some long and fervently, others briefly. Others received his kiss on their cheek. Some were greatly affected, some showed brief emotion, but all were touched, some more deeply than others.

More of the women came in by groups, each receiving an embrace. It was touching to see the emotion on most of the faces. The room was full, all mingling, chatting, hugging, etc. Since quite a few of the women didn't know the ladies of Baba's ashram, the ladies moved among them and introduced themselves, embracing each. It was really one of the happiest days of my life – if not the happiest. There was so much joy, the very air was vibrating with it, and I felt myself vibrating with the waves of Love. I felt warm, tearful, joyful, as did all of the women.

Baba had also questioned Jeanne about her heart attack. "How long before the sahasas did it happen?" he asked. She replied, "Four days." Baba seemed very pleased that she had come despite the danger.

THE MEN'S GATHERING

In the afternoon of October 31, Baba invited the men to visit him at Guruprasad. When I arrived there, Baba was seated on a sofa in the large room in the front part of the building. It was so spacious that a couple of hundred people could gather there. Baba was surrounded by Western men who had arrived ahead of me. After a most loving greeting and embrace from Baba, I joined the other men around him. Eruch was there, too, and we greeted each other.

Some of the Western men were asking Baba questions. The following comments of Baba are from notes in my possession, taken at the time and typed up later: some taken by me, some probably contributed by Filis Frederick, and others no doubt by a family member. *The Awakener's* account helped me fill in some of the gaps.¹

Someone asked about habits and becoming a slave to them. Baba replied by saying, "If you become addicted to God, then all of your problems are solved. Go on drinking the love of God until you become one with God. It is good to be addicted to the love of God."

Eruch was interpreting Baba's gestures, as usual. He went on to say, "Baba says that he is infinitely tired, with the whole world on his head. He has had to undergo all kinds of suffering within the past four or five days. One danger has been averted." (We understood this to be a reference to the Cuban Missile Crisis.) "But two more are facing [him]." (We assumed that one of these was the Chinese invasion of India, but we weren't sure what the other was.)

Continuing, Baba conveyed many "spiritual nuggets." I quote Baba's words from my notes:

One who knows what love is enters deeper and deeper within and finds that he has four journeys to make there. The journeys within have no space, yet it is an infinite process.

Only Christ knew what Baba knows – how to suffer.

No one is more eager than I to break my silence. As soon as I break my silence, everything goes easily.

God is so close to each of you – closer than the very breath of your life.

You have to give up everything, including yourself; then you have Baba to yourself. God is beyond religion, beyond love. When you love God intensely, then there is [the experience of] real separation [from God].

When you have the gift of love, you love your Self. The false self becomes the lover of the True Self. There is nothing but God.

Clean your heart completely: not a stain, no desires, not even a desire for God-realization, and just be conscious. That is the solution.

I have been always telling my lovers, “No ceremonies, just love me.” Ages have come and gone, but I keep on telling them that they should worship God with love, step after step within, until they find [within them] the infinite Ocean – yet they seek for God outside the same.

I am with those who wanted to come but could not come.

[Eruch said, interpreting Baba:] “Do you know what would happen if Baba gave us a real embrace? Maybe he would crush us and make us the dust under his feet.”

[Baba continued:] If I gave you the real embrace, you would burst. Christ did not give this embrace, even to Peter.

Repeating my name is not just repeating, but with all

*love and faith. You should continue to love me more and more.
It is true that man can become God just through loving me.*

*From [the Persian poet] Hafiz: "It is foolishness on your
part to desire Union with God; but if you are mad enough,
become the dust under the feet of the Perfect Master."*

What was supposed to have been a half-hour gathering to greet and embrace Baba turned into a two-hour meeting with him.

THE AIM OF LIFE

The East-West Gathering began on Thursday, November 1. I had the sense that the Gathering was of momentous significance, but I hesitated to try to fathom what that significance might be. The morning session, which was held in the large room at Guruprasad, was for the one hundred forty-four Westerners, who gathered there with Baba at around nine o'clock. Baba sat on a sofa or chair, with everyone else sitting on the carpet and chairs.

Baba spoke through gestures that were interpreted by Eruch. I quote from my notes:

"What is the aim of life? The aim of life is to see God and to become one with God. If God is, then we must see Him. That is our aim. We must see God and become God: become one with Him. Then why all these divisions, difficulties? There are different ways of seeing God; they are called yogas. Everywhere different kinds of yogis are trying to see God in these ways: Some try to see God through meditation and intense concentration.

"One in a million does see God through intense concentration, and then he just sits absorbed, sees God and forgets the world. It is a very long process. This process does not take one back far enough to help rip open the veil and see God within."

THE EASIEST WAY

Baba asked Anita Vieillard, “Do you want to be one with God?” She replied, “I just want to see you.” Then he asked, “How can you have two things – see me here, and see me as I really am?”

Eruch said, interpreting Baba, according to my notes, “Baba wants to draw our attention to how a simple way can become complicated. No amount of reading, talking, or listening to discourses can lead you to God-realization. When you are ready, you get that conviction through sight by the Grace of the Master.

“The simplest way to achieve the goal is to leave all and follow Baba through love. Don’t outwardly leave your family and come here, but have your family and just love Baba as he wants you to love him. That is the simplest. Still more simple is to obey Baba implicitly. If one tries, one has the help from Baba.

“If Baba were not to love you, you would not have come to Baba,” Eruch continued. Then Baba conveyed through Eruch, “It is not your love that has brought you to me. It is my love that has brought you to me.”

Baba concluded, “No amount of reading or understanding can lead to God-realization. You must be made to see God. When you get that conviction through sight by the Grace of a Perfect Master, then you are ready for Union with God.”

MESSAGE FOR THE DAY

Eruch then read out Baba’s message for this day. My notes record, “No one dies. No one is born. The only fortunate rare one who does die, dies the real death, and takes birth in God.”

Baba explained, “Our births and our deaths are nothing more than

going to sleep at night and waking up in the morning until the final death when we really die to illusion and ignorance and are born with God-realization.”

Baba then spoke in great detail about physical love and Divine Love. Here are Baba’s words, according to my notes:

Love of woman and love of God. Love for a woman is a longing. Physical love even one hundred percent is almost impossible. A man loves a woman who lives in a distant place, and he cannot eat and sleep. He longs for her and feels separation. When the longing becomes too great, he goes to her or has her come to him: This is physical love.

Majnun had physical love one hundred percent for Leila. Even this sort of love is rare. Majnun went everywhere in search of Leila. He came to a Perfect Master who told him, “There is no Leila, only God.”

Divine Love is a gift of God to man. Love needs no trying. It is a gift of God to man. This is the real love, love for God. Once you receive this gift, you are burning and longing and living for God.

Baba, describing the intense love and longing of the lover of God: “I am nonexistent in your love. I am so aflame with the fire of separation – don’t try to put out the flame, or your daaman [hem of the Master’s garment] will be burned up. I want only Union with Thee.”

But with this love one must suffer a lot, and one’s lips are sealed to complaints. Zechariah was sawed in half but said nothing. His lips were sealed in his love for God. For those who love God, the lips are sealed.

Love is one thing, obedience is another. It is almost impossible to obey completely. The disciples of Jesus knew it was impossible to obey him. There are many experiences one can have – seeing lights, hearing music (sounds), etc. – which make one think he has experienced God. But the only sign of having God-realization is when he realizes he is a part of everything. He sees himself in everyone and everything. This is the sign: He knows everything; then he suffers.

“The best is to just remember me and love me and leave everything to me,” Baba said. He continued:

There are some who exist to hate others, to be jealous, to make others unhappy. There are some who exist to love others and to make others happy. One who has become one with God exists for both good and bad. He is in both the good and the bad. To become one with God one has not to renounce anything but one’s own self. How we must renounce ourselves: You have to become dust at the feet of the Perfect Master.

If you wish to be the favored one, leave everything and obey the Perfect Master. There are infinite divisions in illusion. When one experiences God, there are no divisions. God is indivisibly One. He cannot be divided. What are these divisions? [Baba gives examples, using individuals who are present.] It is nothing but the veil of ignorance. God is the infinite shoreless Ocean.

The experience of the Infinite you get in a flash through the Grace of the Perfect Master. The Perfect Master can bestow his Grace with just a slight glance.

DON'T WORRY, BE FIRM

"To achieve the God-state, do absolutely nothing while doing everything," Baba said. "It is your duty to know all this to be illusion and love God, see God and become God. It is not in your hands. It is a gift of God to you. If you hold on to my *daaman* and receive my Grace, you do not need to worry. When you receive Baba's Grace, the journeys of the Path are immaterial. Hold on to Baba's *daaman*. You do not traverse the journeys when you receive Baba's Grace. He takes you directly to the goal. In Avataric periods you can in an instant be put where he wants you or where you should be, so no need of journeys while the Avatar is in your midst.

"Don't worry," Baba urged. "What is there to worry about? Nothing. So, don't worry. Let Baba do the worrying. He enjoys working things out. There is no need for both you and Baba worrying. If you are going to worry, then Baba won't worry. So stop worrying and leave everything to Baba to take care of. When you do not worry, it becomes Baba's responsibility."

Baba said, "You have to be firm like a rock in the way of love. The waves may roll over you, but be firm in your love. If you were to get completely drenched in love for God, it would be glorious. The sun would be dim by comparison with that glory."

Eruch said, speaking for Baba, "'Next year,' Baba says, 'I want to finish my Universal Work.' That is the reason he does not want crowds to come to him then – not even individuals."

Baba added, "If you had my real darshan, you would not have to come here. To find me in your heart is my real darshan."

Baba then had one of the mandali, Aloba, recite from the Persian poet Hafiz:

Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of “why” and “what.” About what you hear from the Master, never say it is wrong, because, my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand Him. I am the slave of the Master who has released me from ignorance. Whatever the Master does is of the highest benefit to all concerned.

Baba explained, “Individuals are like drops of water that go to make up the Ocean (God). The drops of water do not know they are the Ocean. They are not aware. Just so, we are not aware that we are all a part of God.”

Baba also said, “I do not speak with my lips but I speak with my heart – so I am speaking continuously.”

TWENTY-ONE POINTS

Eruch announced that Baba had given twenty-one points, some not even as long as a line. “They are not for the lovers of Baba but for general use,” he said. According to *The Awakener*, Baba said, in part:

1. *God is absolutely Independent. The only way to approach Him is through love, through constant repetition of His name and invocation of His Mercy.*
2. *Mercy is God’s nature [swabhav].*
3. *Bliss is God’s original state [assal halat].*
4. *Power is God’s existence [astitava].*
5. *Knowledge is God’s duty [kartavya].*

Here Baba commented, “God cannot be ignorant. It becomes His

duty to be all-knowing. God knows everything. He is Knowledge personified. Knowing the past, present, and future, knowing what has happened millions of years in the past and what will happen millions of years in the future, that is all-knowledge. He cannot help but know everything. Knowledge is His duty.”

- 6. *The infinite state of God gets lost in the infinite jumble of infinite contradictions.*
□

Baba said, “There is no time – only eternity. How can you grasp eternity? The one who has realized God realizes there is no such thing as time, space, or anything; there is nothing but God. God is all-knowing, He is all alone, He is One; but the infinite state of God gets lost in the infinite jumble of infinite contradictions. Then God, though all-knowing, asks, ‘Who am I?’ through each of you – that also is a contradiction! When he reaches the Christ-state, he says, ‘Oh, I am God.’ It takes many, many births for anyone to arrive at this answer to the query ‘Who am I?’

“In between this final answer and the original question, there are infinite contradictions, many false answers, such as, ‘I am so-and-so, I am man, I am woman, I am big, I am small, I am rich, I am poor, I am white and I am colored’ – and so on.”

Everyone laughed when Eruch said, “Baba says even he can’t follow it!” Baba then asked Harry Kenmore to give an explanation, which he did. Baba then said, “If I were in your place, I would say, ‘Baba, give me your love; I have nothing to do with all these contradictions, all this consciousness and unconsciousness and consciousness of unconsciousness – I just want your Grace.’ And that would settle all accounts in a flash.

“When through the Grace of a Perfect Master, one gets that experience

of the Infinite for which one has taken millions of births and deaths, it comes in a flash.” Baba then quoted some poets to illustrate.

Baba said, “You are fortunate to have the Avatar. My lovers are more fortunate to have God in human form in their presence. Just a glance from me can give you all you need – can turn your vision inward. You will be sitting here, without any outward change, but you will become what you really are. It will make an infinite difference.”

- 7. *To know God in His infinite contradictions is to become conscious of His consciousness of His unconsciousness (His Beyond-Beyond State.)*

Baba said, “It is not meant for you all, but for those too eager for spirituality and with an intellect to back them up.”

- 8. *To achieve the God-state, do absolutely nothing while doing everything.*

“You are not to do anything but become the dust-like aspirant, leaving all to the Perfect Master,” Baba explained.

- 9. *To find God you must find yourself lost to yourself.*
- 10. *To be infinitely conscious, you must consciously lose consciousness of yourself.*

“It’s not like taking chloroform – you must be consciously unconscious of yourself!” Baba remarked.

- 11. *Space is the gulf between Imagination and Reality. Evolution of consciousness fills this gulf.*

12. *Time is the interval between your very first imagination and your very last imagination.*

“ . . . There is no yesterday, there is no tomorrow. There is only NOW – the moment, the instant, and eternally it is only this NOW,” Baba commented.

- 13. *Where imagination ends, God IS and Godhood begins.*
- 14. *Imagination is an eternal mimicry of Reality effecting the shadow-play of Illusion.*
- 15. *God is not anything comprehensible. He is Reality – Consciousness – Absolute Consciousness, Infinite Consciousness.*
- 16. *Realization of God is absolute Consciousness minus consciousness of Imagination. Godhood is Absolute Consciousness plus consciousness of Imagination being imagination.*

Here Baba compared the consciousness of an ant crawling on the floor to the consciousness of humans sitting on the same floor. He said, “There is a world of difference between my Infinite Consciousness and your ant-like consciousness. . . . Though I am sitting here in the same room with you, we are really nowhere in space, just within God – neither up nor down; neither here nor there!”

- 17. *To be ever-present with God, never be absent from Him.*
- 18. *Do not desire union with God; but long for union till you go beyond longing for union, and long only for the will and pleasure of Beloved God.*
- 19. *“Mind may die. Maya may die. Body dies and dies. But*

hope and thirst never die.” Thus has said the slave Kabir.

20. *Complete forgetfulness of self is to even forget that you have forgotten.*
21. *Complete remembrance of God, honesty in action, making no one unhappy, being the cause of happiness in others, and no submission to low, selfish, lustful desires, while living a normal worldly life – can lead one to the path of Realization. But complete obedience to the God-Man brings one directly to God.*



We all went back to our hotels for lunch, with just enough time to return for the afternoon session.

EAST JOINS WEST

The afternoon of November 1 was bright and sunny, and thousands of Baba's lovers flowed toward Guruprasad in a colorful stream of humanity making its way under the giant pandal. The pandal had been erected behind Guruprasad, where the afternoon sessions of the East-West Gathering were held. An estimated five thousand people assembled under this pandal each day during the Gathering. The Westerners sat in seats reserved in the forward section under the pandal. Men and boys sat on the left side facing Baba, women and girls on the right, as is customary in India.

A large covered platform facing the pandal had been attached to the rear veranda of Guruprasad, spanning its full length, and this is where Baba sat during the programs. The supports of the platform and the pandal had been decorated with colorful bunting, which added to the festive atmosphere. There was a separate platform far to the left side of the pandal, and this is where the "Poona Bhajan Mandali," a



The women's side (left) and the men's side (right) of the pandal,
November 1, 1962.



Meher Baba seated in a chair on the platform; Shuddhanand Bharati and the
Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda are seated beside Baba on the platform.
Eruch, standing, is smiling in response to Baba's gestured remark,
November 1, 1962.

musical group of Baba devotees, sat and on occasion played their musical instruments.

The session began around 2:30 p.m., and Baba came out on the platform at about 2:40, accompanied by Eruch. As the great crowd greeted him with shouts of “Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!” Baba raised his arm and waved to everyone and sat down on a large chair covered with a fringed checkered cloth. Seated on the floor of the platform beside Baba were the Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda, Yogi Shuddhanand Bharati, and a young man named Balak Bhagavan, who was revered in Central India and whom Baba told us later he had had to warn against accepting homage. There were also four interpreters for the various Indian languages, as well as Adi K. Irani, on the platform.

Eruch spoke out Baba’s greeting: “Baba wants me to convey to you all that he is very happy that you are here. Your love has brought you here, but it is really Baba’s love that has drawn you to him for this Gathering.”

Dr. Harry Kenmore recited the Master’s Prayer, after which Baba said, “Your prayer has made a few feel that God is present here. May my love make you feel one day that God is in everyone.”

Baba then explained that he had already been seeing the Westerners and giving them his embrace. Now he wanted the Easterners to come to him one by one and to put their hands on his knees. He said he would pat each one and that would amount to his meeting and embracing the Easterners.

“The purpose of this gathering,” Baba said, “is not to give discourses and messages to my lovers. Many discourses and messages have been given in the past; another volume of my discourses will soon be printed in Australia. More than all messages or discourses, your love for me will bring you to me as you should come to me.”

A SIGNIFICANT RAIN

Baba had indicated the day before that it might rain on this day, but few paid attention because the sky was so bright and clear. The rain did come, however, in a sudden downpour, as the Eastern women were filing by the platform to receive Baba's darshan. At first, the rain began blowing in from the edges, and this precipitated a struggle among those sitting along the sides to scramble farther inside.

The cloth covering the top of the pandal, which provided excellent protection from the sun, was not water repellent, so before long the top of the pandal became soaked, and the rain began to seep through in steady drips. Soon the accumulation of rain became too much for the pandal cloth to retain, and rain dumped on the people as if from buckets. At this point, nearly everyone got drenched. I was perhaps the only one who had taken Baba seriously on his rain prediction: I had brought with me a compactly folded raincoat, and so I did not get wet.

Fortunately, it was a warm rain. The covering over the platform where Baba sat was more substantial, so Baba remained dry. However, he did get quite wet from his soaking-wet lovers, who continued to come to him, many of them kneeling and embracing his knees or trying to kiss him on the cheek.

The Western women who got wet were fortunate not to have brought raincoats, for Baba instructed Eruch to announce that they should come forward and go into Guruprasad, where his Eastern women mandali would lend them some dry clothing. This resulted in quite an exchange between the Eastern and Western women. Mehera, Mani, Dr. Goher, Rano, Naja, and Meheru lent the Western women dresses and saris of theirs. Baba said that the rain was very significant and that it brought about a unique meeting of East and West.

The rain ceased and the program of the day concluded with a very



Meher Baba on platform; Adi K. Irani smiling,
November 1, 1962.



Woman embraces Meher Baba's knees,
November 1, 1962.



Western women dressed in saris on platform behind Meher Baba, November 1, 1962.

colorful performance of the arti on the platform. The entire day was filled with the heartwarming wonder of Baba's love. During the arti, Baba's love was so sweet and magnetic that, to me at least, it seemed as though all the forces of nature were rushing toward Baba to fling themselves into the glory of his Being. After the singing of "Gatay Chalo," it was time for us to leave, but our heartstrings were tied forever to Baba's heart.

DIFFERENT YET THE SAME

The East-West Gathering was different from our previous occasions with Baba. While there were a few times of intimate contact where we could be physically close to him, generally a large crowd would be gathered around him. Such was the case in the morning sessions when the Westerners were with Baba in Guruprasad, and, of course, in the afternoon sessions under the pandal, when around five thousand would be sharing his presence.

One sensed that Baba was aware that his advent was drawing to a close, and of course he knew that this would be the last time many of his lovers would see him in this incarnation. So he enfolded us all in the sweet Compassion of his eternal love for us. It seemed that Baba was trying to give us all as much of his precious sahavas as he possibly could, and we were very grateful for that.



Meher Baba with serious expression on his face, November 1, 1962.

Yet somehow, perhaps because of the large crowds, Baba did not convey the personal sense of intimacy that many of us had enjoyed in the past. I could only guess at the level of Baba's physical suffering. I knew that in private he was wearing a surgical collar, removing it before stepping out before the public. Nevertheless, despite his intense suffering during this period, Baba's Divine Love for us all was not inhibited, but poured forth from him in oceanic abundance.

C H A P T E R
N I N E T E E N

Never to Part

*T*he next day, Friday, November 2, we were picked up by bus from our hotel and taken to Guruprasad in time for the morning session with the Westerners, which began at 9:00 a.m. The sun shone brightly, and Baba asked those who had been soaked by the rain the previous day to raise their hands. We all raised our hands. He then asked if anyone contracted a cold as a result. No one raised a hand. Baba then quipped, “It was a nice dress rehearsal,” referring to the dress exchange between the Eastern and Western women. Everyone laughed.

THE INWARD JOURNEY

Baba had Francis Brabazon set up a large chart showing the four journeys of consciousness. Rano Gayley, an artist, had created the chart under Baba’s direction. The chart was later published, with an explanation, in the book *The Everything and The Nothing*. Some of the points

Baba gave, according to my very sketchy notes, are the following:

External journeys are from place to place. Some journey to the planets: These are journeys into space. The real journey is the inward journey.

The infinite gross sphere – having millions of gross universes and numerous galaxies, some of them inhabited by human beings – is within Infinite God.

The Earth is the only spot among these universes which contains the subtle and the mental worlds. Only on this Earth can man realize God. The subtle world is within oneself. The mental world is within. All are within Infinite God and have nothing to do with infinite space. When one begins the inward journey, one is born on Earth.

In the subtle experience of the gross world, one does not experience the gross world. The same when one goes on to the mental world. In the mental world, man sees God.

Between the subtle world and the mental world there is an abyss. This is the fourth plane.

Only on Earth do people reincarnate and begin the involutionary path. There are humans on other planets, but they must migrate to this Earth for the sake of the heart's growth and in order to begin the involutionary path. They may be very intelligent persons on other planets, but they lack heart.

Christ said, "Come unto me. Follow me." He knew people could not understand all the details.

After describing the inner planes and God-realization, Baba concluded by saying, "In Avataric periods, one does not necessarily have to

make these inward journeys by stages. If you have the Grace of the Avatar, he just takes you from where you are to where you should be, where God wants you to be. There is no need for ‘trains or planes’ when he is here.”

Baba also said that all these explanations were for posterity. To us he said, “For you, it is sufficient to obey me, love me, and hold on to my daaman. Then wherever I am, you will be also. If you were to begin your inward journey, you would also be with me, because I am also there on those journeys. All this is illusory, God alone is real.”

He then had Francis Brabazon read a translation of a poem by the Perfect Master Hafiz, called Be Not Grieved.

Before dismissing us, Baba instructed us to write a letter directly to him as soon as we returned home. “Then no more letters,” he said. “Next year I want to finish my Universal Work, so I don’t want crowds of people coming to me, not even the Easterners. This will help me finish my work soon.”

Baba then spoke about worry. “If no one is worrying, I have to worry,” he said. “But my worry is great fun for me! It’s a very old habit of mine to worry for the whole creation, to worry continuously for the release of souls from the bondage of life and death. It’s great fun.” Baba continued:

Some come to me to heal their diseases, to bless them with better prospects in life, or for a job or for children, or because they have too many children! And I have to worry about all those things, in addition to my universal worries. You see me sitting here with you, but I am simultaneously on all the planes of consciousness, on all those stations on the chart that is here before you. There are souls in the subtle world who want me, and I am there with them; and there are those in the

mental world who want me, and I am there with them. You are in the gross world, so you find me with you in the gross world. Those in the subtle world find me in the subtle world, those in the mental world find me in the mental world. And one rare one who finds me as I really am is blessed. But remember not to worry! Take the advice of Hafiz and do not worry!

Baba dismissed us, telling us to be in the pandal at 1:45 for the afternoon session. He mentioned that there were to be no embraces.


“MY DEAR CHILDREN”



Darwin Shaw reading Baba's message "My Dear Children,"
November 2, 1962.

During the afternoon session, Baba's message "My Dear Children" was read out over the loudspeaker in various languages. This was the first of the two messages I was to read out in English, as Baba's sister, Mani, had informed me before I arrived in India. Late the previous day, Eruch had given me a copy of the message so I had only one evening to become familiar with it before reading it out.

Baba was sitting several feet behind me, and as I read I felt supported and sustained by him from within. I had never read so well before. I felt Baba's power behind the words. It was as though my "self" got out of the way and Baba was able to come through.



My Dear Children

Your coming to me from different places and from across oceans has pleased me. And although no sacrifice to be near me is too great, I am touched by the sacrifice that some of you have made to come here.

Those who have not been able to come to me should not feel disheartened, for my love is with them as always, and especially so at this time. I know how they are longing to be near me even for an hour, and how helpless they are in their circumstances.

You have come from great distances, not for some convention or conference, but to enjoy my company and feel afresh my Love in your hearts. It is a coming together of children of East and West in the house of their Father.

All religions of the world proclaim that there is but one God, the Father of all in creation.

I am that Father.

I have come to remind all people that they should live on earth as the children of the one Father until my Grace awakens them to the realization that they are all one without a second, and that all divisions and conflict and hatred are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance.

Although all are my children, they ignore the simplicity and beauty of this Truth by indulging in hatreds, conflicts and wars that divide them in enmity, instead of living as one family in their Father's house. Even amongst you who love me and accept me for what I am, there is sometimes lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

Patiently I have suffered these things in silence for all my children. It is time that they become aware of the presence of their Father in their midst and of their responsibility towards him and themselves. I shall break my silence, and, with my Word of words, arouse my children to realize in their lives the indivisible Existence which is GOD.

Throughout the years I have been giving many messages and discourses. Today I simply want to tell you who are gathered here in my love to shut the ears of your minds and open the ears of your hearts to hear my Word when I utter it.

Do not seek my blessing, which is always with you, but long for the day when my Grace will descend on all who love me. Most blessed are they who do not even long for my Grace, but simply seek to do my Will.

Following the reading of Baba's message, the darshan program

resumed, with thousands of Baba's lovers coming up on the platform, single file, to have their contact with their Beloved. Many brought garlands of sweet-smelling flowers for Baba, who gave each one a loving touch or partial embrace from his seated position. The scene of such tender love between the lovers and their Divine Beloved was a heavenly blessing in which we all shared.



Meher Baba with flower garland, giving darshan,
November 1962.

OUR LAST PRIVATE INTERVIEW

At about 8:30 on the morning of Saturday, November 3, many of the Westerners were arriving at Guruprasad. We were among them, and when we came onto the spacious porch, there was Baba sitting in a chair with a large group of Andhra villagers. We later found out that the villagers had gone to the bus station and were going to leave without having Baba's embrace. Baba had sent for them, and they were now in front of him.

Baba asked them to sing something for him, and this was the song they sang: "I bow to You in Your infinite aspects. Infinite Bliss, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power are in this human form of Yours. You are my real father and mother. I long for that day when I become one with You." Each of the villagers was given prasad and a loving embrace from Baba before leaving.

During the morning of that same day, Baba was seeing groups and individuals privately in one of the interior rooms of Guruprasad, and we came in as a family to see and be with him. Baba was very loving. One of us asked the question: "How to love Baba more and how to do his will better?"

Baba replied, "This was also the problem of the disciples of Jesus. Don't worry. Continue as you are. I am always with you."

To me he said, "It is because of your love for me that I chose you to read out my messages at the gathering."

Then he said to us, "This is the last time you will see me in this form. For a year I want to work toward the breaking of my silence, see no one, call no one, just work toward the breaking of my silence."

Baba also reminded us that everyone attending the Gathering was to write one letter to him. "No correspondence – just one letter," he said.

There were so many people for Baba to see privately that there was very little time for each group or individual to be with him. Although Baba gave us the lasting assurance of his abiding love for us, I missed the intimacy of previous times with him. When Baba told us this would be the last time we would see him in his physical form, I merely thought “maybe.” I had learned not to react to Baba’s statements, but instead just to stay in the “flow” of his constant inner presence. Of course, this Gathering did turn out to be the last time we would see him physically.

“MY DEAR WORKERS”

Under the pandal during the afternoon session of the Gathering, I read out the English version of Baba’s message “My Dear Workers,” the text of which follows.

My Dear Workers

In spite of telling you very often that I will not give you any more messages or discourses, I find myself doing just this thing which is what I do not want to do. This is because most of you do things which I do not like your doing.

I had to give you a message yesterday because you expected one; and the theme of the message was on your being my children, because despite much talk about a Baba-family, there is more a semblance than a reality of kinship among you who are the children of one Father.

True children of one Father do not greet one another with smiles and embraces and at the same time harbor grudges and ill-feeling, but they have an active concern in their hearts for

the well-being of one another and make sacrifices for that well-being.

If you make me your real Father, all differences and contentions between you, and all personal problems in connection with your lives, will become dissolved in the Ocean of my love.

You are all keen on spreading my message of Love and Truth and many of you in the East and West have labored hard in this work: publishing magazines and other literature, organizing meetings, sacrificing your vacations in traveling, building halls and having statues made of me. But I wonder how much of my Love and Truth has been in your work of spreading my Message of Love and Truth!

Unless there is a brotherly feeling in your hearts, all the words that you speak or print in my name are hollow; all the miles that you travel in my Cause are zero; all organizations for my work are but an appearance of activity; all buildings to contain me are empty places and all statues that you make to embody me are of someone else.

I have been patient and indulgent over the way you have been doing these things, because you have been very young children in my love, and children must have some sort of games to play. But now you are older and are beginning to realize that there is a greater work ahead of you than what you have been doing. And you have been searching your minds and hearts as to what this work might be.

It is not a different work to what you have been already doing – it is the same work done in a different way. And that way is the way of effacement, which means the more you work for me, the less important you feel in yourself. You must always

remember that I alone do my work. Although only the one who has become one with God can serve and work for all, I allow you to work for me so that you have the opportunity to use your talents and capacities selflessly and so draw closer to me. You should never think that in your work for me you are benefiting others, for by being instrumental in bringing others to me you are benefiting yourself.

My work is your opportunity. But when you allow your self to intervene between you and my work, you are allowing the work to take you away from me. When you put my work before yourself, the work will go right, although not necessarily smoothly. And when the work does not go right, it means you have put your self between it and its accomplishment.

The way of my work is the way of effacement, which is the way of strength, not of weakness; and through it you become mature in my love. At this stage you cannot know what Real Love is, but through working for me as you should work for me, you will arrive at that ripeness where, in a moment, I can give you That which you have been seeking for millions of years.

MUSIC OF THE HEART

This was followed by a music program that took place on the platform where Baba sat. Miss Lata Limaye of Ahmednagar, accompanied by strings, drum, and an instrument resembling an accordion, sang a ghazal written by Jigar, a contemporary poet whose poems Baba liked. Baba translated the words, with Eruch speaking over the microphone: "The lover says, never let anyone drink the wine of love! His life is then turmoil. He is like a fish out of water; he experiences a volcano with-

in. All his existence gets torn to pieces. And yet he pleads, ‘Let me have that Wine of Love!’ But once he gets that experience of Union with Beloved God, he realizes the Divine Bliss. Then he experiences himself as the only One, the Reality.”

After this, came a group from Andhra, four men who traveled around India spreading Baba’s name through a type of narrative song called Burra-Katha. One of the men narrated the story of Baba’s life while the others, representing a Muslim, a Christian, and a Hindu, questioned him. They were accompanied by a harmonium and a tabla. The one representing a Christian wore Western clothes. The one representing a Hindu had an exceptionally good voice and quite a flair for the dramatic. Baba commented, “My workers make me naked! They tell of my childhood – how mischievous I was!”



Traveling musicians perform, November 3, 1962.

Next on the program, a group of men came on the platform and sat a few feet away from Baba, facing him. They were Mr. Habib Qawaal and his qawaali singers. Accompanying themselves on harmonium, tabla, sitar, and tambura, they looked as though they might have come out of the heart of ancient India. This was the deep spiritual music that Baba loved. Most of the words were taken from the poems of Hafiz. The rhythm was especially lively and spirited, and the singers were very dramatic. They sat on the floor, most of them playing an instrument while singing. They sang to the audience and then to Baba.

In the tradition of the lover who pours out his heart’s longing and love to the Divine Beloved through song and gesture, there were Baba’s

ardent lovers, doing just that to the living Divine Beloved before them.

Meanwhile Baba responded to their serious singing appeals and declarations as only the living Divine Beloved could. Baba's facial expressions and his eyes expressed the response of divine appreciation. He translated the words of the qawaalis for everyone's benefit.



Mr. Habib Qawaal and qawaali singers, November, 3, 1962.

At one point Baba said: "Here in the meeting hall are the select few who dared to drink the wine of love. Here there is no room for those that are short-sighted and weak of heart. Here one must have great daring; one must be prepared to

carry one's head on the palm of one's hand."

After translating one of the songs, Baba said, "Only one in a billion can see me as I really am, in my Real Form. In this hall all the cups of wine are empty. But when the divine Wine-seller opens his eyes, simultaneously all cups will be filled with love. Let us hope it will be soon! When I break my silence with that Word of words, all your cups will be filled full of love – then you may drink to your hearts' content."

Baba concluded, "I am that Drop that has swallowed the whole Ocean. If you were to really love me, maybe one day you will see me as I really am. Love me wholeheartedly and you might one day get a glimpse of my Reality."

As the session wound down at twilight with the "*Gatay Chalo*" arti, I felt as though my cup was already overflowing with Divine Love!

PUBLIC DARSHAN

Sunday, November 4, was the day of public darshan – when anyone who wished could join the long line of people leading to the back of Guruprasad where Baba sat on the platform. Even before the morning session in the large room inside Guruprasad, Baba had begun the day on the dais embracing three thousand of his Eastern lovers. When the Westerners arrived to be with him, he had just come in from the dais and was very tired, but seemed to revive in the midst of his lovers.

He said, “I have been on the dais from six a.m. All rest is suspended for the sake of my lovers. I cannot give embraces. I have to be free for the public at two p.m. This morning I have done my duty of love; now you will help.” Baba indicated that our love would help him, and he actually did seem less tired after a while with us.

Baba told us some spiritually inspiring stories and explained about the lover – Beloved relationship the qawaalis had sung about. Baba said, “The Beloved seems very callous. The lover has to stitch up his lips about it. This is what happens when you get that gift of love from God. Thus, suffering is God’s gift to man.”

Baba mentioned Zechariah, the biblical saint who was sawed in half but said nothing. Baba said he was on the seventh plane and that his lips were sealed in his love for God.

“Instead of blood, let the love of God flow through your veins,” Baba said. “Is it possible, Francis?” he asked. Francis Brabazon replied, “Nothing is impossible when you say it.” Baba told about how rescuers found one of Krishna’s lovers in the ruins of a collapsed building by following the sound of the unconscious man’s voice automatically repeating the name of the Lord. Repeating the Lord’s name had become habitual with him, like breathing, Baba said.

“Let God’s Name become your breathing,” Baba said, according to

my notes. “Who knows when we shall meet again, but there won’t be another opportunity like this. Next year I will break my silence. I am preparing for the urge during 1963.” Eruch translated, “Baba said next year before, but he means next year. For the first time he takes the responsibility for his promise to you all. He cannot bear to keep the Word within, so he must break his silence – not in a year, but next year.”

Baba reminded us once again to send him one letter upon our return home, and he advised us not to travel around when the gathering was over but to go directly home.

It was a special treat to be close to Baba in the morning sessions and to be able to feast our eyes on his face. The atmosphere was surcharged with his love, in which we forgot our limited selves and experienced the unlimited freedom of the spirit in the Ocean of Divine Love.

We were also treated to a performance of Indian classical music by some exceptional musicians who played the sitar, flute, and tabla. The chief singer had an unusual voice and imitated a musical instrument.

In the afternoon we were again under the pandal behind Guruprasad. As usual, the Westerners were seated in the first few rows

near the platform, and several thousand Easterners occupied seats all the way to the back of the huge pandal. Off to one side, an Indian musical group sat on a small platform and played music over the public address system.

On this day of public darshan, many thousands



Colorfully dressed gypsies receiving darshan, Public Day,
November 4, 1962.

streamed into the pandal and filed past Baba, who was seated in a large chair close to the edge of the platform. Those filing past him placed their foreheads briefly on his feet or kissed them. Many of them brought flowers or fruit as a gift to Baba. The people were from all classes and religious backgrounds. A very large group of colorfully dressed gypsies was among them. Baba continuously moved his upturned hands from his chest to his knees, gesturing the constant giving of his love to one and all. At one point, the men mandali appeared in the line together, and as each one in tears was placing his head at Baba's feet, our hearts were touched when the word began circulating that although they had been living close to their Beloved, serving him for many years, Baba had not given them permission to take his darshan in a long time.

Once, Baba announced, according to my notes, "I am the Christ – the personification of Love. Also, I am Krishna. My advent from time to time amidst you is to protect you."

At one point, Harry Kenmore recited the Prayer of Repentance as we all stood. At another time, Don Stevens read Baba's "Universal Message." Toward the end of the day, the gates of Guruprasad were closed, and after the line of people finished passing in front of Baba, there was a song sung by Leonard Willoughby and the closing arti. There were still many people out along the streets who had come for Baba's darshan, so Baba went out in a car among them and in this way they, too, had his darshan.

OUR LAST EMBRACE WITH THE AVATAR

On Monday, November 5, in the morning, the Westerners gathered with Baba in the large room in Guruprasad for the last time. Baba asked us all about our health. "Are you all in good health? Tomorrow

is the day for your trip to Ahmednagar to visit my resting place at Meherabad and residence at Meherazad,” Baba said. “I want you all to go, health permitting. Meherabad, where I will rest after dropping my body, is now like a desert. After one hundred years it will flourish into a place of pilgrimage. People from all over the world will want to visit it in their lifetime. It has a definite atmosphere. Meherazad is now my residence. Mehera looks after the garden. How many are not going to Ahmednagar?” Several indicated they were not going, for various reasons.

Addressing Jeanne, Baba asked, “Are you going on this tour of Baba places?” Jeanne replied, “Yes, Baba.” “Even up the hill to the tomb?” Baba asked. Again, Jeanne replied, “Yes, Baba.” “Even if you die?” “Yes, Baba.” Then Baba said, “You would be very fortunate if you did!” to which everyone smiled.

This exchange was followed by a very comical play which had been hastily put together by some of the Sufis.



Meher Baba posing with the Westerners outside; Jeanne Shaw in foreground (far right)

A little later we all went out in front of Guruprasad with Baba, where we gathered around him while pictures were taken. When we returned to the large room inside Guruprasad, two musicians played some music. One of them was an exceptional tabla player.

One of the Western women said she was staying on in Poona. Baba responded by saying, "Then you make me stay!" He continued, "I am the Christ. If your eyes were opened you would see me as I am."

My notes record Baba as also saying, "Find God within, and when you find Him within you will experience bliss. No one can describe that bliss. God as Bliss is unimaginable – nothing to compare to that Bliss. If you can't describe bliss, what can you say about Infinite Knowledge; it makes God omnipotent: He knows all."

After this, Baba gestured for us to come to him for the last embrace. At that time I was sitting on a chair to the right of Baba and I thought I would wait and be one of the last ones to go forward. But as soon as I had that thought, Baba looked over at me and gestured for me to come to him immediately, which I did. As we were embracing, I quietly said to Baba, "We will never part." In response to this, as we disengaged, Baba made facial expressions and deep murmuring sounds through his closed lips as though trying to say something to me.

I thought about that many times afterward, wondering what Baba was trying to say. It finally dawned on me that Baba was joining me in our enactment of those poignant words from the song which he liked so much, "Begin the Beguine": *"There we are, swearing to love forever, and promising never, never to part."*

Each one came to Baba for a final embrace. Some prostrated themselves at Baba's feet; some kissed his feet. All were enfolded in the eternal blessing of Baba's Divine Love.

After everyone had received Baba's embrace, he slowly left the

room, assisted by Eruch. That was our last embrace with Meher Baba, the Avatar of the Age. It was supposed to be the last time we saw him, as well, but several of us who were staying on in India for a few more days were fortunate to see him once more, on November 10. But we did not know about this surprise meeting at the time.

A MOMENTOUS INNER SHIFT

Early the following morning, Tuesday, November 6, most of us Westerners boarded chartered buses and a few rode in cars, as we all journeyed the seventy-five or eighty miles to Ahmednagar, where we were taken to the home of Baba's longtime disciple Sarosh Irani. Sarosh and his charming wife, Villoo, greeted us and invited us to have breakfast. They had arranged tables and chairs on their lawn to accommodate the large number of people.

Soon after eating breakfast, we were driven out to Baba's home at Meherazad. On the bus I was meditating on Baba's omnipotence – his intervention to bring about the abrupt end of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the sudden end of the Chinese invasion of India. At the same time, I was gazing out the bus window at the mundane scenes of simple people going about their daily rounds.

As I was maintaining these contrasts in my mind, all of a sudden, without warning, I experienced a momentous shift in my consciousness. I actually witnessed a sense of my intellect dissolving. The whole foundation for all my set conceptions gave way and crumbled like a derelict building. What remained was the ineffable, absolute, supreme authority of Meher Baba, the Avatar, superseding the intellect and everything else. At that time, I tried to capture this experience in a few hastily written words.

Caravans of bullock carts with their drivers wearing brightly colored shirts and turbans. Sarded women with huge bundles on their heads gracefully walking along. Water buffalo soaking in the stream we ford. Naked children playing by their humble roadside huts. This is the road to Pimpalgaon.

Suddenly the background of Western thinking and reasoning dissolved. The false security of intellect and material might gives way to the otherwise inscrutable authority and supreme power of the Avatar. This is also the road to Meherazad.

“Azad” means “free.” So this was indeed “the road to Meher-azad.” I was free from the level of conditions. Meher Baba is directing everything, I realized; his Will rules everything. This experience terminated with an inner revelation that has stayed with me ever since.

At the time, I went on to try to convey this experience in words:

Baba is the Imperishable Sweetness of Divine Love. We are surrounded by the immeasurable sweetness of his Being of Divine Love, which is the true nature of all space, which permeates us completely, through and through, which is indeed our own true nature and being.

Within us is the wellspring of the Imperishable Sweetness. We find it within by seeing it in Baba within. He is the Imperishable Sweetness of Divine Love within us.

Seeing him thus, we forget all else.

MEHERAZAD AND MEHERABAD

At Meherazad we walked around the beautiful garden, went into the famous Blue Bus, which had served so well on Baba’s “Blue Bus

tours,” and slowly walked through the simply furnished rooms of Baba’s house, feeling a sense of wonder. We toured the men mandali’s quarters and viewed Seclusion Hill. All of this took quite a while.

At around noon we returned to the home of Sarosh and Villoo for a delicious luncheon. Then we stopped briefly at Adi K. Irani’s office to see where he lived and worked as Baba’s secretary.

In the afternoon we were driven out to Meherabad. At that time, the Pilgrim Center had not been built. We looked around the old ashram buildings and saw many things connected with Baba’s life and work there, including the desk on which he wrote the great book, which, as of this date, is still unpublished. We saw the small box-like Table Cabin in which Baba spent much time writing the book. The mast Mohammed was there, and he gladly accepted our gifts of bananas and chocolates. At that time he was said to be on the fifth plane.

The heat was intense – 110 degrees Fahrenheit – but my wife, Jeanne, was bravely persevering despite her serious heart condition. A car and driver had been arranged for her, as well as for Margaret Craske. However, Jeanne for some reason decided to walk up Meherabad Hill. She tells about walking toward upper Meherabad:

□ *Without thinking about the heat and that I wasn’t supposed to be walking up the hill, I started walking, and by the time I crossed the railroad tracks I was feeling tired and quite warm, so I thought I’d better get in the shade of a tree. Just then my driver came running up to me, saying, “Mrs. Shaw, you are not supposed to be walking. Wait here and I will bring the car.” I was very thankful for that, realizing that I was not ready yet to drop my body, as Baba had implied*
□ *could happen.*

At upper Meherabad we went into the building which some years later was to become Baba's tomb. Then we entered the Retreat Building, and I felt nostalgic for the incredible time I had spent there in 1954. I showed my family and others the tower which in 1954 one or another of the Western men would climb in the mornings to watch for Baba's car. We arrived back at Poona in the evening.

ONE LAST TOUCH

Although most of the Westerners were leaving, several of us stayed on at the Poona Club. Jeanne was feeling unwell, and I stayed with her, so we declined opportunities to go on outings. However, I believe we did visit Meherjee and his family, who lived in a pleasant house in Poona.

As mentioned previously, Charles Purdom, one of our traveling companions, was doing research for his book; Jeanne and I were simply biding our time until our scheduled date of departure. Thus, we were surprised and delighted when someone came to the Poona Club to tell us that we could see Baba again briefly at the Bund Gardens on the morning he was leaving to go back to Meherazad, November 10. This turned out to be one of the most beautiful times we ever had with Baba.

We arrived at the Bund Gardens quite early, and while we were waiting for Baba, some of his dear ones brought a huge Persian carpet and spread it on the ground in front of the big tree where the Perfect Master Hazrat Babajan used to sit. A large chair had been placed there. We were told that the carpet was for us to sit on. When Baba arrived, he was helped from the car to the chair. He looked divinely beautiful and radiant. As he sat silently smiling at us, once again we were enveloped in the wonder of his love. For me at least, the scene was an exquisite tableau

of the Divine Beloved in the midst of his lovers. This was one of the most precious moments we ever had with Baba. I snapped two beautiful photographs of Baba – the last I ever took of him.

Baba sat with us for about half an hour. As he got up from the chair and started slowly moving toward the car, his dear ones crowded around him to touch his arm or hand for the last time. At that time, Leonard Willoughby was in front of me with his outstretched hand on Baba's shoulder. I was extending my arm to touch Baba but could not reach that far. Lenny came to my rescue; he removed his hand from Baba's shoulder and took my outstretched hand and placed it on Baba's shoulder.

Even after Baba got in the car, with Eruch driving, and started to move toward the road, Baba's lovers were crowding around, reaching in through the window to touch Baba. Jeanne was close to the car, on the driver's side. She tried to touch Baba but could not quite reach him, so Eruch took hold of her hand and helped her touch Baba's arm. This was our last physical contact with the Beloved.

Although Eruch maneuvered the car forward, it seemed unable to move. It was as though everyone's reluctance to let Baba go was creating a psychic restraint on the car. Finally it did reach the road, and it drove on amid shouts of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai," bearing our Beloved's beautiful form away from us forever. This was the last time I saw Meher Baba in the beautiful cloak of his physical form.

At the time we did not allow ourselves to believe that this was to be the last time we would see Baba, so we were not really sad. Our hearts were full of Baba's love, and we were happily with him in Spirit. We stayed on in Poona for several more days and went up to Mahabaleshwar to see the places where Baba had stayed. We also went to Baba's cave and Arthur's Seat, where Baba had once posed for a memorable photograph.



Meher Baba sitting under Babajan's tree at Bund Gardens, November 10, 1962.
These were the last photos Darwin Shaw took of Beloved Baba.



Crowd surrounding car as Meher Baba leaves Bund Gardens, November 10, 1962;
people reaching in for one last touch of the Beloved.

THE LETTER

On our return to our homes, everyone was supposed to send one letter to Baba. The following is a copy of my letter.

2 Castine Street
Schenectady, N.Y.
U.S.A.
December 4, 1962

Beloved Baba,

We arrived home safely on the evening of November 20, tired, but well, and very happy in Your love.

The Blessing of seeing You again and having the privilege of spending precious moments and hours in Your dear Presence was wonderful beyond mere words to express. Impervious to the orderly sequences of time, the Blessing of this contact with You simply will not be relegated to the past, but continues to unfold new vistas of the incomparable sweetness and beauty of Your love.

There are so many things I should like to thank You for that if I were to list them all, my letter would surely become too long. I was deeply impressed with all of the planning, arranging, care, kindness and consideration extended to us, Your Western children, from the time we left our homes until our return; but again, I cannot discover a beginning nor an ending of these constant reminders of Your ever present "Blessings."

I especially want to thank You for the wonderful care You took of Jeanne throughout this episode of our life with You.

There were so many signs of Your consummate thoughtfulness: such as having us share with You in the pleasure of seeing and listening to those superb Indian musicians, and the

extraordinary singer “with the musical instrument in his throat”; and how I enjoyed the devotional singers, especially those qawaali singers with Your translations of their inspiring songs of love and longing for the Beloved.

But most of all, Beloved, my appreciation is boundless for the priceless moments and hours when the veils fell away from your sublimely radiant countenance, and we were allowed to gaze, without restraint or reserve, so deeply and immeasurably into the living Ocean of Pure Love which You are.

The East-West Gathering was very wonderful, not because of the great crowds, not even because of the large number of Baba lovers gathered together in that huge and brightly colored pandal, but because it was here that Beloved God allowed some perceptible measure of His resplendent Glory to shine forth; it was here that God the Beloved sat where all might see, and in exquisite simplicity poured into each human receptacle the elixir of Pure Beauty; it was here that Krishna once again played the divinely sweet melody of God’s Love for man, bestirring each one with loving strains of Soul’s gladness and joy; it was here that Christ – translucent through the few remaining veils – embraced each one and gave to all full measure of Compassion and Grace.

On that last evening, Beloved, even though You motioned us to go, it was so difficult to leave You, when in the glowing flames of arti’s soul-inspiring song, it seemed as though all of the forces of nature were bent on rushing wildly into the awesome beauty of Your all-consuming Love.

For lo, the glory of His Love is the Splendor of the Heavens, and those who dare to gaze into His radiant eyes

shall become transfixed; as the moth in the flame, they shall perish in the overwhelming awe of beholding; they shall be engulfed and dissolved in the infinite sweetness of His Being.

It was wonderful to see Meherabad again, to visit Meherazad, to wander freely through the simple but beautiful rooms and the lovely gardens. Surely You will see us there, as we return again and again – vagrant spirits from the scenes of our worldly activities – and in the night, when sleep has lost its enchantment, surely You will see us, quietly sitting near Your Blessed feet.

I think this time, as perhaps never before, Your love overflowed all confining banks, and as it found expression in our contacts with one and all of Your Eastern lovers, we found a great warmth of genuine feeling of true brotherly and sisterly love as children of one all-gracious and most loving Father. We were treated with loving kindness by everyone, especially dear Jal, Meherjee and his family, all of the Dadachanjis, Sarosh and Villoo, Donkin, Adi, and so many others, including each one of Your dearly loved intimate family and mandali. The girls here especially rejoiced in this opportunity to see again the close Eastern women mandali members and to renew their most loving contact with them.

With all the love that is my abiding existence in You,

Darwin

THE TREASURE CHEST

Earlier in 1962, in February, Baba had issued a message for his sixty-eighth birthday. It said, "On this anniversary of my birthday, I

give you my blessings for the deathday of your false selves, and for the birthday in me of your one true Self.”

This was published in *The Awakener*, and following it was a comment I had contributed in commemoration of Baba’s birthday. I had written the comment months before attending the East-West Gathering. I quote it in full:

Although I am unable to measure the full significance of Baba’s birthday Message-Blessing, I feel that it is as though his Love and Compassion for us could no longer be contained, and his Infinite Mercy spontaneously found expression as he dipped deeply into his immeasurable treasure chest to quite simply and most lovingly offer us the crown jewels of the Kingdom of God.

It is as though we, who had been struggling vainly to find some way to get into the impregnable palace of the King, were suddenly confronted by the King himself, who smilingly opens wide the door and says, “Please come in. I want you to come in and share my Treasure. It is my gift to you.”

And who would mind being crushed by the overwhelming beauty of his love, and who would care what became of the self, as one, thus enraptured, accepted the priceless, the timeless, the immeasurably loving hospitality of the King?

C H A P T E R
T W E N T Y

The Last Years

*A*fter the East-West Gathering in 1962, Meher Baba continued to keep us informed about his activities. At that time Baba's sister, Mani, was writing "Family Letters," as they were called, which contained the latest news of Baba and were sent to Baba's lovers all over the world.

We were delighted when in October 1964 Baba announced that, health permitting, he would give darshan to his lovers in 1965. His Eastern lovers would be permitted to see him in the month of May in Poona, and his Western lovers would be permitted to see him in the month of December in Bombay. However, by September 1965, Baba sent a message to his Western lovers canceling the darshan program. It seemed that his health would not permit it. His message said:

□ *Inform all concerned at your end I have cancelled
December sahasvas. I know how disappointed my lovers will be,
but I also know my lovers will accept my decision with*

complete resignation to my Will. What I have decided is in accordance with my heavy burden of universal work and suffering and is for the good of all. Sometime, somewhere, somehow I will meet my old and new Western lovers before I break my silence. My love and blessings to all my lovers.

Naturally, we were disappointed, but we remained hopeful that someday we would get to see Baba again.

PUBLIC TALKS

Meanwhile, I remained busy with work for Baba during the 1960s. Besides holding weekly meetings in our home, I continued giving public talks about Baba, mostly at universities in the Northeast. There were particular times when Baba would indicate that he wanted me to talk at a certain place.

For example, in August 1964, Baba conveyed to me indirectly through the Winterfeldts that he wanted me to speak at a gathering in Woodstock. I spoke of Meher Baba as the Avatar, the Divine Beloved, and told my story of finding him. As I spoke, Baba's Divine Love came pouring through me and I felt transported in his love-light. Timothy Leary, the chief spokesperson and advocate of LSD drug use at that time, was among the twenty-five or thirty people present. I heard later that after my talk, he was so impressed by my exalted condition that he asked someone what drug I was on!

In 1965 I gave another talk in Woodstock (along with Rick Chapman), this one to a large crowd with standing room only. As I was talking, a huge "mountain man" came forward and muscled his way through the crowd to confront me. Standing directly in front of me, he shook his fist and shouted, "How in the hell do you know Meher Baba is the Avatar?"

People began shouting at him to let me continue. I remained poised and calm and spoke to him in a civilized manner. I also looked intently into his eyes to connect with him. When I did this, his anger melted away and the man quietly stepped back into the crowd. After the talk, he came by, smiling and nodding his head affirmatively, and we both chuckled.

In 1967, during vacation time from my job, Jeanne and I went on a sort of speaking tour out west, including Denver, Colorado, and various cities in California – I even gave a talk on Pender Island, in Canada. Intuitively we felt we were supposed to do this, and Baba specifically conveyed to me through someone that he wanted me to give a talk to the Sufis in San Francisco.

MEHER BABA'S PASSING

Finally, in November 1968 the long-awaited announcement came. We received a Family Letter from Mani informing us that Baba would give his darshan to his lovers the following spring, beginning on April 10, 1969, and finishing on June 10. In a later Family Letter Mani said, quoting Baba:

Beloved Avatar Meher Baba wishes all his lovers to know that his three years of intense work has shattered his health. In spite of this he has invited his lovers from all over the world to come to him for his darshan next summer, for it is the time for them to come to him and receive his love. It is the time; and the place, Guruprasad, Poona, has been fixed.

Once again we were thrilled with the prospect of seeing Baba, and we began to make preparations for the trip. At that time, although we

knew that Baba's health was not good, we had no idea how precarious his condition was or the extent of his suffering. On January 31, I received a telephone call – I believe from the Winterfeldts – with the news that Meher Baba had dropped his body. I was shocked beyond belief.

When I received the news, Jeanne was away, visiting our daughter Leatrice, who by now was married and living in Bloomington, Indiana, and I called them right away. Then I called many others, both local and long-distance, and they all responded with surprise, shock, and disbelief.

In the midst of calling people to give them the sad news, I was struggling with the question of whether or not I should drop everything and hurry to India to be with Baba at the time when his body was interred. I finally resolved my inner conflict by remembering that under Baba's direction I had made a commitment to go to India for the 1969 Darshan, and intuitively I strongly felt that since I could go to India only once, that was what Baba wanted me to do.

Several of Baba's lovers did hurry to India and they were present during the days Baba's body lay exposed to view, and when his body was finally covered, they were among the mourners. As I saw later in the film, the scene was extremely poignant, with all of Baba's close mandali, both men and women, there to reluctantly bid farewell to their Beloved.

Within a couple of days, as I processed what Baba's passing meant in our continuing relationship with him, I began to realize to my amazement that nothing had changed – Baba's presence was the same! My relationship with him had not altered, and he was as available as ever. This awareness helped me immensely in my adjustment to the fact that he was no longer physically with us.

Soon after learning of Baba's passing, we received a cable from Baba's secretary, Adi K. Irani, which follows:

2nd Day, 50th Week, Meher Year 74

This is the true account of Avatar Meher Baba's dropping his body according to the resident mandali.

The three years of intense work in seclusion had an untold effect on his body and a faint reflection of this on us caused a deep depression among us. But beloved Baba warned us that this was disobeying his order to be always cheerful in his presence. And he quoted as he had many times over the years Hafiz's couplet:

"Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what."

On 13 October 1968 Baba told us that he would give his darshan to all his lovers all over the world from 10 April to 10 June 1969. Considering his physical condition we were apprehensive of his body standing such a strain. But he said, "It will be easy for me to give my lovers my darshan so you are not to feel concerned about it. I will give darshan reclining and that will be no strain on my body. It will be different from all previous darshans and will be the last in silence. Although I will be reclining I will be very strong. My physical condition now is because of my work, but by then my work will be complete and my exaltation will be great. A very poor man winning a rich lottery can become so excited over his fortune that he collapses and dies. My fortune will be in my work being finished and in the knowledge of its certain results, but my exaltation will not cause my collapse – it will be my glory."

Despite these assurances, Baba's health became worse. But the symptoms were completely confusing to the doctors we called from Poona and Bombay. His blood urea was so high that the

doctors said usually an ordinary man in such a condition would go into a coma, but there was not even the least sign of mental confusion or the faintest trace of uremic odor. Similarly when muscular spasms were occurring, when a specialist from Bombay examined him, he asked why he had been called because there were no symptoms at all. Baba's condition deteriorated still further and we wanted to take him to Poona so that further tests could be carried out, but he refused to go and warned us that we should not try to take him against his wish. He said, "If you want me to drop my body now, then take me to Poona. My condition has no medical grounds at all; it is due purely to the strain of my work. Do not call the doctors again until I tell you." And so, helpless before his Will, we had to obey his Will.

Over the last days Baba's body manifested severe spasms and he told us, "This is my crucifixion." Two days before he dropped his body he told us to call the doctors. The one from Poona came the next morning and said he could do nothing until further tests were done so that a definite diagnosis could be arrived at, and this could only be done if Baba went to Poona. Baba said to him, "My time has come."

The next day the doctor from Bombay came and also one from Ahmednagar. By the time they arrived a great spasm shook his body, the pulse rate fell to nothing and breathing ceased. This was at 12:15 p.m. At twelve noon he had been joking with us about all the medicines he had been given.

In the evening we brought his body to Meherabad. The sun was setting and the moon was rising as we placed it in the tomb for his lovers to take his darshan, fulfilling beloved Baba's word that he would give his darshan reclining.



TRIP TO INDIA

In due time we received news from Adi that the darshan program would proceed as Baba had planned. Once again Jeanne and I began to prepare for the trip to India. Leatrice decided to go with us. There were several chartered flights scheduled; Elizabeth Patterson asked me to travel on the Meher Spiritual Center chartered flight as one of the group leaders.

We arrived at JFK Airport on April 21 at 7:30 p.m., Jeanne recorded in her diary. As the one hundred fifty Baba lover passengers gathered at the airport, there was much exuberance and many “Jai Babas” when friends greeted each other. For some reason, our flight was delayed until the following morning, and we were put up at the airport Hilton Hotel and treated to a banquet dinner that night and breakfast in the morning, all at Air India’s expense.

Jeanne describes the scene at the banquet dinner that night:

□ *Whilst at the hotel it was really old home week: everybody greeting friends, meeting new friends, all happy, aglow with Baba’s love. Everyone seemed happy to have this banquet and happy time together – felt it was really Baba’s arrangement (all “on the house,” [i.e., paid by the airline]).* □

While at the hotel, we were approached by two magazine reporters from *The New Yorker* who had heard about our trip and wanted to interview us. Several of us talked with them, telling them quite a bit about Baba and the purpose of our pilgrimage to India. They seemed very interested in what we told them and asked us to meet them when we returned and tell them what we experienced. We agreed.

The next morning we were awakened at 5:00 a.m. and ate breakfast

at the hotel, according to Jeanne's notes. She writes, "It was raining when we boarded a bus to Air India from the hotel to board the plane at 8:00 a.m. The plane finally got up by 9:35 a.m."

Jeanne writes about the flight:

On the plane Air India couldn't do enough for each: lavishing small mementos, feeding us so well and serving hot and cold beverages. Each lady received a rose, socks, pen and cologne. We received cake, tea, coffee in mid-day.

Approached London at about close to 3:00 our time. It's getting dark – it's six hours later. Darwin and Fred [Winterfeldt] did very well to give attention to the group and individuals and give information as it developed, etc. Much credit and praise given Winterfeldts for their tremendous task – with the work arranging the charter flight.

We stopped in Rome for three-quarters of an hour – sent cards. Boarded the plane; had a good supper before we settled down to sleep. Short nap, brief spell of quiet – not much sleep.

Had breakfast at 11:30 p.m. our time – Indian time 10:00 a.m. The Air India certainly fed us well and treated all with courtesy.

Arrived in Bombay airport April 23rd. I had Baba's flag out as we approached the building. Arnavaz's sister Rhoda greeted us – also Meherjee and Havovi. Most lovingly welcoming us.

THE GREAT DARSHAN

The programs of the 1969 Darshan were held in Guruprasad, where Baba had stayed and where the East-West Gathering was held,

in Poona. Although Beloved Baba had dropped his physical body, several hundred Westerners who had been deeply touched by his sweet love were irresistibly drawn to this place to have his darshan. We were fulfilling a love commitment to meet our Beloved. None knew how this was to come about; however, in his own way Baba made his presence felt. Our experiences varied greatly. Some who were clairvoyant saw Baba in his spiritual body moving among the people and lovingly touching some of them.

STEPPING INTO BABA

The following is Jeanne's account of the 1969 Darshan.

- *April 24th: Guruprasad, one hundred eighty-six attended. When we arrived we were greeted by the women and men mandali. All gathered in the large room around the "Seat of Baba," which was a chair with a large picture of Baba leaning against the back of the chair.*
- At the stroke of 9:00 a.m., the Program began. Eruch, at the mike, said, "You have kept your appointment with God." Then the Program began.*
- (Before entering the big room, everyone had to leave their shoes outside. A few people sat on chairs, but most of the people sat on the carpet.)*
- Eruch made some announcements. Everyone joined in shouting "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" three times. Baba's photo on the chair was draped with a garland of jasmine flowers.*
- Eruch asked for a volunteer to say the Parvardigar Prayer.*
- *Darwin came forward to recite it and everyone joined in.*

At first, when Eruch asked for someone to lead the group in saying the Master's Prayer, no one came forward. Suddenly, I got the "inner knowing" that I was supposed to do it, so I volunteered. As I approached the microphone, I felt as though I had suddenly walked into Baba! His presence was so palpable that it fairly took my breath away. I was glad that everyone joined me in saying the prayer because at that moment I was having a hard time reciting it. From the moment I stepped into Baba, everything took on a different tone from then on for me.

From Jeanne's diary:

At the foot of Baba's chair there was an afghan with Baba's seven colors, and on the floor beside the chair were Baba's sandals.

Mani spoke a few words on behalf of Mehera. Then the women mandali sang the Gujarati Arti. Eruch gave a short talk and this was followed by Francis Brabazon reciting some of his poems, or ghazals. He told about how he came to write them. Baba asked him to write thirty, and he replied, "I can't even write one, Baba." Baba told him to try. So he wrote thirty by Baba's Grace.

At 10:00 a.m. the Darshan began. Mehera came forward first to bow to Baba's photo. She put her folded hands on the chair, bowed low, then put her head at the foot of the chair and kissed Baba's sandals. Then the pilgrims came forward, one at a time, to do likewise. Some did exactly as Mehera did; a few just bowed or knelt with hands folded. Many were visibly moved, feeling Baba's Presence. After taking Baba's darshan, each one

walked back out of the room and was guided by volunteers to Baba's bedroom (where I was deeply moved by Baba's loving Presence), then to the Mandali's room. This took over an hour.

□ *The Program was to end at 11:00 a.m., but it lasted until noon.*

Interestingly, this was the first time I had seen Mehera's face, because Baba had forbidden us Western men to look at her before.

We were especially attracted to Baba's bedroom. There was a large chair I recognized as one Baba used to sit in a great deal in 1954. It was not roped off – no one seemed to have realized it as one he had used – so I sat in it. The chair radiated so much of Baba's love, I felt I was being loved by that chair!

Jeanne records:

□ *Some went back to their hotels by bus and some by cars.*

□ *In the late afternoon the women were invited to come to Guruprasad again to be with the women mandali for a while.*

PROGRAMS AND TOURS

The next day, April 25, the program started at 9:00 a.m. Many who had arrived early went forward to the chair before the program began. The program began with everyone joining in shouting "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!"

Jeanne's diary provides details of that day:

□ *The Myrtle Beach Group gave two plays which were written by Francis Brabazon. They were "The Stranger" and "The Moon." Francis read some of his poems. Adi gave a talk, and this was followed by the darshan program, during which*

everyone went to the chair with Baba's picture on it to take his darshan. All returned to their hotels at noon.

In the afternoon many went to the Bund Gardens to see the gardens and Babajan's tree. From 4:30 to 7:30 we went on a tour of Baba places in Poona. Some went by bus and some by car to Babajan's Tomb, Baba's house and the small room in the rear of the house where Baba stayed during the time when he was in a super-conscious state for nine months and where the inner agony he experienced was somewhat relieved by banging his head against the stone which is embedded in the floor.

April 26, the program began as it had the first two days. Spiritual songs were sung by some of the young people. Then everyone took darshan.

Jeanne describes the rest of the day:

In the afternoon, all the men went to Guruprasad to spend some time with the men mandali. Eruch talked to them, explaining how Baba used the alphabet board to communicate and how he (Eruch) came to read the board and, later on, Baba's hand gestures. Eruch invited questions and gave answers.

In the evening we all went to the Poona Baba Center and saw the film of the "Seven Days at the Tomb." It was very sad and touching.

MEHER BABA'S ABODE

On Sunday, April 27, we got up at dawn to go to Ahmednagar and to visit Baba's tomb and Meherazad. Some went by bus and some by car. On Meherabad Hill, we went into the tomb, two or three at a time,

to bow down and stay for a while inside to be in tune with Baba.

Jeanne's diary gives marvelous details, as well as reveals her feelings, which were also my own. She writes:

While I was in there, a group of Indian people came in and sang and performed the Arti. It was very moving. I felt peace, although I had expected to be emotionally upset. When the busload of young people came, they formed a queue to await their turn to go into the Tomb. The men sang the English Arti softly, and Henry Kashouty softly played "Begin the Beguine" on the trombone.

There was a platform nearby, which was open except for a roof, where one could sit and get refreshments such as water or Coca-Cola. There was also a table where garlands of sweet-smelling jasmine could be obtained for placing inside the Tomb over the covered crypt. At that time, Baba's body, which had been placed in the crypt, was covered with a wooden cover, and over this, several feet of dirt or earth; and this was covered with a silk cloth. The garlands of flowers were placed on this cloth.

As one entered the Tomb, just in front of the crypt there is a place to kneel, if one wished, and on the rear wall was a beautiful 20- or 24-inch picture of Baba over which a garland had been hung or placed. There were open windows on each side, with wide sills, where one could sit for a while to meditate. Although the day was very hot outside, it was cool in there. There was a strong current there – an atmosphere charged with a feeling of love and peace, a benediction-like vibration – so that one felt at peace and not sad, as one would imagine one might feel there. One wished to tarry there.

Nearby, in the Retreat building, were some articles that

belonged to Baba, also a big painting of Evolution [the Ten Circles chart], which had been painted under Baba's directions by Rano Gayley, one of the women mandali. There were photos of Baba and the old bicycle which he used when as a young man he cycled past Babajan and she beckoned him to approach her and she kissed him on the forehead, bestowing the divine touch which precipitated in him the Realization of God.

Some distance to the left of the Tomb was the area where the tombs of some of Baba's disciples and [his] parents are.

At the bottom of the hill is Lower Meherabad, where the first ashram started and where some disciples reside. There is a large meeting hall, and in one end of it there is a chair where Baba sat while giving discourses or sahavas. Near this building is the place where the mast, Mohammed, is living. Nearby, also, is the boxlike hut where Baba stayed for some time writing the as yet unpublished book.

We went from Meherabad to Meherazad and enjoyed the beauty of Mehera's garden, with Seclusion Hill in the background, and the atmosphere of the house where Baba had lived. One of the girls in our party was overcome with the heat, but recovered well after receiving some medical attention and resting in a shady spot. From Meherazad, we went to the Ahmednagar Baba Center to attend a program there, and visited Adi's office, then drove back to Poona.

All were exhausted by the time they reached their hotels. It had been 110 degrees temperature during the day. It felt good to get back to our air-conditioned room for a good night's rest.



APPOINTMENT WITH REPORTERS

When we arrived at Kennedy Airport on our return trip, we were met there by the two reporters from *The New Yorker* who had talked with us just before we left for India. They interviewed several people of our group, including me, and we gave glowing accounts of our pilgrimage to Baba's home in India. The exceptionally well-written account about Baba and our pilgrimage appeared in the June 21, 1969 issue of *The New Yorker*. We related our experiences of feeling Baba's presence so strongly, especially at Guruprasad, where the programs were held.

I told the reporters that we had kept our appointment with Meher Baba and he kept his appointment with us. I described the feeling of divine sweetness that radiated from the tomb where Baba's body lay, sweetness accompanied by our poignant sense of loss of his beloved physical presence. I spoke of the sense of timelessness that intensified each day we were there and my belief that this experience would remain as an underlying layer of our everyday lives.

During the adjustment process I had undergone when I first learned that Baba had dropped his body, I had quickly realized that as the Infinite Consciousness he really is, now that he was no longer encumbered by a physical body he would continue working at the level of Spirit. I shared this with the reporters along with my belief that Baba's work would now vastly expand.

As Only God Can Love

*M*eher Baba's passing marked the end of one of the most wonderful experiences possible: to have the Divine Beloved in our midst in physical form. Undergoing the transition from being with Baba in his physical form to being with him in the spirit meant realizing that we would no longer have the extraordinary experience of receiving his love-glances and his embraces. To be aware of him in the spirit was not something new for me, however, because I felt that he was with us in spirit right along, but now I had to focus more on being aware of him at inner levels.

HE IS STILL WITH US

A few of those who had the blessing of being with Meher Baba on an intimate basis have tried to describe what he was like, what they experienced in his presence. Many more who met him have wanted to share their experiences, but they cannot find the words to describe the indescribable.

In trying to describe our experiences with Baba, we often tell stories of events that took place in the past, especially so since Baba dropped his physical body. Thus, many listeners are misled into thinking that a personal relationship with Baba, the Divine Beloved, cannot have the same quality of intimacy and revelation now that he is not in the physical body with which we identified him. Many bemoan the fact that they missed seeing him and do not even suspect that a full-force, vital, living relationship with him can and should be a part of their lives right now.

I base my recognition of who Meher Baba is on my personal experiences with him, both at the physical level and at the inner level of the Spirit. During his physical lifetime, Baba repeatedly explained that he was not his physical body, but Infinite Consciousness.

Baba cannot be confined to any limited period of time, nor can he be limited to conditions of having a physical body through which to manifest himself for his Universal Work. It is true that while he was with us, using his physical body as a vehicle to draw us toward him in the Spirit, he was able to reveal so much of himself that we experienced love in extravagant abundance and were astounded. However, that experience did not end, but continues!

When Baba dropped his body, he did not disconnect from this world but continues to remain conscious of us and to draw us to him on the inner journey to the Divine Beloved he always is.

In one of my first meetings with Baba, he said, "Through love you will see me as I really am." And in India in 1954 he said, "After I drop my body you will love me more and more and see me as I really am." Even while he was still in his body, Baba revealed to us some measure of the awesome beauty and sweetness, the unqualified, measureless and timeless nature of his Being of Love.

What is of vital importance for the world to know is that Meher

Baba is still completely and continuously accessible; his sweet love is still available to us. It is like a secret treasure: the most valuable and wonderful treasure in creation.

My own experience now is that he is as real and intimately with me as he was while in the body. In the Master-disciple relationship with him, I am aware of him in the Spirit. Baba himself described this relationship in a cable to me: "Those who are united in love are always in spirit and know no separation."

Since dropping his physical body, he has manifested and continues to manifest his presence and timeless love for us.

THE WAY AND THE GOAL

During his lifetime, Meher Baba revealed many important things about the inner spiritual path that had not been clearly defined before. He explained that the simplest and most direct way to God-consciousness is through love: love of God and love of our fellow humankind, as well as all creation – but more importantly, love for him.

Baba explained that he is "the Way and the Goal." When we love him and inwardly draw close to him, we are already participating in the experience of the Goal. His beautiful physical body corresponds to the Reality and thus becomes for us the inner gateway to the Infinite.

Baba said, "If you love me with all your heart at your level, I will take you to my level." This means that he will reveal himself to the ones who love him in this way. Thus we are effortlessly brought into the realm of the Infinite and Divine Love that Meher Baba really is.

As we become more inwardly intimate with him as our constant companion, we undergo an inner transformation. He works with us to help us turn away from binding impressions and entanglements that repeatedly impel us to reincarnate. We are less and less interested in

allowing random trains of thought to occupy our attention. He awakens us to our true spiritual potential; he helps us willingly die to our limited egoic selves and be born of the Spirit. We are entering into the realm of his Divine Love-Being and finding more and more joy and fulfillment in visualizing the Beloved and allowing the glow of love for him to flow through the cup of our hearts. As Jesus said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

HE IS LOVE

Meher Baba came “like a thief in the night,” as he used to say, to steal our hearts and then disappear from view. Baba did not come to satisfy our intellects with explanations or to satiate our hearts with feelings of love; he came to pierce our hearts with longing for Divine Love, and this longing propels us to seek the goal of creation: Reality, Truth, Abiding Love.

One time, during his last weeks of intense suffering, Baba communicated to Bhau Kalchuri, one of the mandali, serving as Baba’s nightwatchman, “. . . when I release the arrow of my love, it will strike deep and wound the hearts of all. The wounds will make them have my darshan continuously. They will have that longing for me, and that is my real darshan.”¹

Shortly before Meher Baba dropped his physical body, he announced that his Universal Work was completed to his one hundred percent satisfaction. His Universal Work culminated in the releasing of that arrow, and it continues to find its target in the hearts of many.

Meher Baba yearns for us to know that we are eternally his and that we are sustained in the spirit by his constantly flowing Love-Grace. He IS love, and he loves us – as only God can love.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Partial introduction to one of Norina Matchabelli's talks, dictated by her through thought transmission, showing how her thought transmission was different from mediumistic transmission:

When Meher Baba uses His spiritual power to transmit His own individually ordered thought, it is Himself, the living man, who is at present in India, who is acting. This is the difference between the usual thought-transmitted message which is frequently made evident by the so-called spiritually visionary medium. The spiritually visionary medium can receive a message from the ancient world and also very often directly transmitted by some ancient, spiritually active agent of the inner planes. Those messages are rare and are of a definite useful order. Meher Baba Himself explains it as follows, and I quote: "Today, My spiritual message, which is transmitted

through the disciple Norina, is different, in as far as I am the head of the spiritual hierarchy of the East, and I am living in My own spiritual form as a human being in India where I am active at reorganizing the new spiritual life, not only for the Indians, but for the whole of humanity. Therefore, it is different in external importance and as power. The spiritual transmission of the living spiritual Guide of mankind has POWER that the spiritually and objectively thinking agent has not, whether he is working in the inner planes or as the living human being. The difference is not only visible, but it is profoundly impressive in the inner making of the transmutation of the unconscious self-state to the superconscious Self-state.

“Whatever the agent of the inner planes can do is never to be disregarded or criticized. He can help you to discern between your own realizing mental expression and the intuitive thought that has to come to a very pure control over your own consciously thinking intellect in this new age. The agent in the inner planes can, for instance, be the past incarnation through which you yourself have lived, which has left the imprint of its self-attainment. It can also be the impression of the general order of thought or spirit of the time, which means the impression of the Christian era since Jesus left his form, which was so potently marked in all the spiritually alive centers of each and every one living at that time, that throughout the past centuries it has given further reactions. . . . Therefore, this fact of Me speaking and consciously thinking through this disciple has a much greater value, as I apply not only the power of Me, the God-realized Master, but the

dynamic vibration order through the spiritual intuition of each and every individual soul, which makes you react to the absolute standpoint of life.

“In conclusion, I am alive, and My disciple is living, vibrating, selflessly aiming at this pure self-knowledge. The fact that she is selflessly aiming at this knowledge which is absolute makes all the difference in the way My power can be projected through her to you all. The selflessly aiming disciple, Norina, must serve the Divine Light, and cannot do otherwise. Her individual self is today obliterated, self-effaced, when she enters into the sphere of the supermental realm of conscious existence and is the individual soul or undivided Self that is penetrating its all-soul state. The all-soul state is the established spiritual knowledge which I, in this world today, supervise, lead, guide and react.”

The disciple [Norina] is exclusively at the Master’s service. No other influence, whether from a living person or a so-called departed spirit can reach her and make use of her spiritual seer capacity. Meher Baba’s potent light circle creates an invincible barrier as selfless protection about her. I repeat: Norina is not to be taken as the mental medium nor as the astrally intuitive, ordinary psychic. . . .

Appendix B

Sample introduction to one of Norina Matchabelli's thought transmission talks:

Meher Baba's disciple Princess Norina Matchabelli, who, through her wonderful portrayal of the Mother of Christ in the world-famous spiritual play "The Miracle," is familiar to most of you. Naturally, it left a profound impression upon her. As she came to play the part, not as a professional actress, but as one selected because of her spiritual personality and appearance which her Florentine type embodied, each presentation was, for her, a personal spiritual experience. In fact, "The Miracle" was her first great inner experience of the Christ, as the divine personification in the Mother. It marked in her life the time to Self-realize the spiritual Path. The impressions which she left in the hearts of those who saw her in

“The Miracle” are the same inspiring impressions which she continues to give to all of us who are her spiritual companions. Her religious devotion today is to make the Light be the alive, realized Self’s state of devotion for God, Truth and the personification of the Truth, as the man whose name I here repeat with reverence and humility – Meher Baba.

In 1931, Norina Matchabelli met the Master, and has since that time been his disciple, together with several others from the Western part of the world. In 1941, after having spent five years with Meher Baba in India, Norina Matchabelli, Nadine Tolstoy, and Elizabeth C. Patterson returned to the United States of America to make known their experiences to our world. With many of us, they can state with their whole life that they believe that this great Master is a Being like Jesus, and that He has descended into the world to bring about the spiritual awakening, as a prelude to the new civilization. This conviction has come to them, not through mere words and explanations, but through deep inner experience.

The spiritually Perfect Master can make His disciple, who is subjectively and objectively surrendered to Him because of a bond of deep spiritual devotion, become instrumental for His work. The Master, Meher Baba, has given His disciple, Norina, the power to receive His projected spiritual thought, which she is enabled to express directly in the spoken word. In fact, she has been officially appointed by Him as His own mouth-piece in the United States of America for the period before His Final Manifestation, which will occur when He breaks the verbal silence, which He has maintained so far for twenty years.

The disciple is exclusively at the Master’s service. No

other influence, whether from a living person or from a so-called departed spirit can reach her and make use of her spiritual seer capacity. Meher Baba's potent Light Circle creates an invincible barrier as selfless protection about her. I repeat: Norina is not to be taken as the mental medium, nor as the astrally intuitive ordinary psychic type, but as one who is, in the heart, a seer – one who is realized in the spiritual plane, in which she is, and has no more to think other than that which the Pure Spiritual Guide makes her think.

It is the Master's own wish that the disciple give, to the free interpretation of his Pure Wisdom, an alive and often very expressive character, although in her own Self she is superconscious in hearing, but unselfconscious in her own mind, while hearing. Therefore, she is detached from the effect that the Master's discourse has upon the audience. The Master's thought is emitted with absolute literal accuracy, and nothing can be added by the disciple's own self's imagination.

The Masters, who are realized, have the power that the usually thinking man has not. Thought, in itself, is never resurrecting, unless it is transmitted through the Pure Channel, and such a Pure Channel is Meher Baba.

The Millennium is not a mere word. It is the stupendous new revival of the spiritual existence in man. It is to be brought about by one man. That man is here tonight, in His Ether-Presence, and will speak to you, through His disciple, on the subject that is of deep importance to you because it refers to the goal of life of humanity and, as such, every individual. It has to magnify, within your own imaginative faculty, that is, your thought – creative ability to imagine – magnify the pure

reason for your becoming a human being, that can, out of its own self-creative impulse, bring the unimagined happiness into the existence of every other human creature.

Meher Baba, who is the chief of the Hierarchy of fifty-six God-Realized Masters in this new millennium, IS Spiritual Power of Light of the order that is immutable, unchangeable GOOD, and LOVE, as Spiritual Power that can [do] what no man can.

For my part, I have never, for one moment, doubted Meher Baba, and I welcome this opportunity to stand before you and bear witness, out of my own personal experience, of the sublime beauty of His love and the resurrecting power of His Grace. The touch and the glance of the eye of such a man can work wonders to help others to spiritually unfold and react to the Spiritual Light, but the VERB that is uttered by the HUMAN CHRIST TYPE is the one and only strong means to make others spiritually impersonal and perfect, like Himself. For this reason, Avatars usually observe a period of verbal silence lasting for several years, breaking it only when they are ready to manifest the TRUTH to the entire world.

The Self of man is due to personify the God-inherent, but it is not a mental reaction that any man can bring about. This is a GIFT of someone like Jesus, Zoroaster, Krishna, and the Master of the seventh plane of realized conscious existence, who alone can light the FIRE OF CONSCIOUS ORDER in man: the FIRE that can burn all the lesser desire in man and enact the purification of the spiritual individual self. Man is not able to make good unless he is shown how to do it. The Master, Meher Baba, will break His long silence and present the Truth

when the time is ripe, and the time will be ripe when man shall be less individually conceited and less selfishly inclined to make such statements like these, that he is God in himself, and that he does not need to be helped. Life itself is bringing them to greater humility through the catastrophe of the war and the deeper unfinished war that will need to be finished by those who love others as their fellowman in all portions of the world.

The booklet which is offered to you this evening will give you information about the Master's spiritual activities and His personal life, which many of us have witnessed. The three women who have recently returned from India after living five years under the Master's roof – Norina Matchabelli, Nadine Tolstoy, and Elizabeth Patterson – together with myself, are the Master's official workers in the eastern section of the United States. Their names and mine, which is Darwin Shaw, and our respective addresses, are listed on the back of this booklet. We will be glad, at any time, to give you further information and help you to understand this remarkable man.

This booklet also contains a blue slip, informing you that a series of discourses, delivered by the Master through His disciple, Norina, will follow this evening's discourse. If you wish to attend them, please fill in the name and address spaces on this slip and leave it at the door as you go out. A personal invitation will be sent to you.

The five volumes of Meher Baba's Discourses, originally printed in India, are to be reprinted in this country. They will be available to the public later on in this winter season.

It may also be of interest to you to know that among the many activities regarding Meher Baba will be the great

spiritual center to be established in South Carolina, where a vast area of 800 acres has been gifted to the Master. That wonderful piece of land will become the service station towards those who need spiritual enlightenment and who care to become Masters in Servitude to their fellowman. "Mastery in Servitude" is the insignia of Meher Baba's oldest spiritual settlement in India, situated in the district called the Deccan in Bombay Presidency. Those who came there to gain that which can only be brought down from the source of the immutable, unchangeable Light, received the Grace that can never be obtained unless one meets such a man with an open heart.

This present method of thought transmission, antecedent to Meher Baba's Divine Manifestation through the spoken word, uttered through His own mouth, has to bring to those who follow these discourses a real interest for that spiritual thought of the East which is based on Truth and Genuine Divine Experience of the Fundamental Facts that underlie the work of life and the Making of the Superconscious Knowledge within the human self.

And now, it is my great privilege to introduce to you the Master's close disciple, who will deliver His discourse. Our beloved friend, Princess Norina Matchabelli.

Appendix C

BOWERY TALK INTRODUCTION

APRIL 7, 1946. Friends: to those who have been following Meher Baba's Discourses for three seasons now, I wish to say that this evening's occasion is very particular, because it is the Master Himself who has wished to cooperate within those who are yet unconscious of the Holy Presence which is the Divine Guidance. Man, in general, does not know that such a thing exists, and that IT is the cause behind all that is visible and invisible, tangible and merely imaginary and visionary. The coming to the United States of this Great human being, named Meher Baba, has to give them today at least some curiosity about His human importance and what He has in store for everybody. They must understand that the human creature in this world has to be ultimately outstandingly good and

supremely selfless, and has to be great in understanding in order to live up to what is called the ideal of perfection. The human knowledge is now changing to deeper and more visionary, experienced-knowledge [sic] of that which man is when he has attained his highest human expression, of which Meher Baba is the living example.

There is no reason for doubt or hopelessness. Even these destitute and unholily-unhappy [sic] human beings, who loaf the streets without real control over the purpose of their actions, will receive today, through the Presence of this Great Soul, Meher Baba, who is broadcasting through the disciple, Norina, a new and better outlook on their own seemingly poor lives. Let's hope that the few who have come will make an effort to listen attentively to what He says, and try to think it over, and by all means remember His name, Meher Baba, because when He shall come this year to the United States, each of them will be asked to meet Him. This Great Master whose name I repeat with great reverence, Meher Baba, will come to the United States most probably early this fall. Then you shall know what is the example of human perfection, and He will bring about that which no religion, organization or educational institution, nor any social idealism has been able to fulfill, and that is, very simply, this: His great power can enlighten the human heart, and that alone will make men realize that they are equal and that there is no need for social pride, but there is only need of that congenial human feeling that is commonly called brotherhood, to make it possible that these terrible differences between rich and poor be equalized. What man wants is the human understanding for every other

man's wants and needs; and what man must come to is the readiness, spontaneity of the heart to attend and help his fellow brother and sister in the whole of the world: therefore, whoever is here, unhappy, desolate and hopeless, the solution of your lives that will be brought about by this potent Spiritual Master who is coming to each of you individually, will give to your lives the right turn to make you alive, creative, in order to become a cooperative member of society, useful to yourself and to others. Remember, Meher Baba has not come to teach. He is not a missionary, but He is a powerful Master over life and death who through the radiation of the power of the light of His Divine Knowledge and Love can awaken the heart in man; and remember that is all that we need, here, there and everywhere in the world.

Meher Baba is a man on the order of Jesus. His life is selfless service to humanity, and through His influence He makes people live up to the truth which underlies all religion and trains men to what He calls "mastery in servitude."

He has been devoting energy and resources to the alleviation of starving in India. He makes it His practice to visit every famine district. He attends to the dying and eases their transition. He has established free dispensaries for the poverty stricken masses. He has cleansed the lepers personally, as Jesus did centuries ago. Meher Baba also takes great interest in the upliftment of the depressed classes, and in all His institutions no distinction is made between Brahmin or Untouchable, who mingle in common fellowship under the inspiration of the Master. The disciples of His colony in India are of various religions, and among His Hindu disciples, even

their caste distinctions were abolished. Remember that the greatest visible social power among us is still example.

We have with us this evening several followers and disciples of the Master who have met Him and spent some length of time in His company. There are two ladies here this evening who spent five years with the Master in India. They traveled with Him to many remote places where He went to render real service to those who were in need; and in His colony they have seen the Master give His Spiritual Blessing to as many as several thousand in a single day, while His disciples distributed food and clothing to the needy. It is interesting to note that as these thousands of people came to the Master, it was He who stooped to take the dust from their weary feet with His own hand and pressed His forehead to them as a sign or symbol of taking their life's burdens upon Himself.

TO MEET THIS MAN IS TO HAVE FOUND THE WAY, THE LIGHT, AND MORE – LOVE, WHICH IS THE ONLY SOLUTION. LOVE THAT THIS MASTER, THROUGH HIS GRACE, WILL AWAKEN IN OUR HEARTS. IT IS LOVE FOR EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF RELIGION OR SOCIAL STATUS OR NATIONALITY OR RACE. WE NEED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AND THIS LOVE WILL ONLY THEN BE TRUE WHEN WE EXPRESS IT IN SERVICE. MAY THE RICH AND THE POOR REALIZE THIS. WE NEED ONE ANOTHER; WE NEED ONE ANOTHER'S DEVOTIONS AND HELP IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE SPIRITUAL SCOPE OF OUR HUMAN LIFE.

If you long for such a man as MEHER BABA as your friend, be sure that you meet Him when He comes.

After the lecture we wish to break bread with you, and if

you have any questions, at that time a group of friends and disciples will be here to answer them for you.

Meher Baba's disciple Norina will deliver His message at this time.

Appendix D

INTRODUCTION TO STUDIO TALK

JULY 3, 1944. New York. Meher Baba wishes me to let you know that the occasion of this evening's meeting is of great spiritual significance, because it coincides with many important moves, behind which He is the stirring Light. The spiritual working of a Master like Meher Baba is, naturally, not easy to be defined, but you have been taught by Him, during these last two seasons to understand it to a certain extent. Be sure of one thing, all of you tonight: that Meher Baba's spiritual viewpoint is absolute, and cannot be compared with any of your individual viewpoints regarding the spiritual unfoldment of the human type. Life, from a standpoint of cause and effect, and ultimately from the most important point of view that is the same to every man: and that is to understand that the scope of this earth-bound

existence is to make out of every man a perfect human being. None of you today has exactly understood this positive viewpoint, which is the viewpoint of a God-realized Master, who knows what man himself in his limited state as evolutionary type cannot yet know. He wants you to be sure that to continue to come to hear His discourses means definitely to follow His powerful guidance.

Should any one of you be uncertain and still doubt His statements, then make up your mind not to adhere again next fall. He is well aware of the difficulties that some of you have to understand His absolute pure spiritual viewpoint; however, there is no reason for any one of you to still have doubts and be uncertain about His real power and the established knowledge uttered through these discourses. He says, "I hope that there will be no further discussion between any of you and the members of My close family on matters regarding politics, social problems, racial difficulties, the spiritual validity of the different religions and the philosophical movements. You do not need to come to My disciples to ask any questions regarding the world's problems. In My discourses, I am the Universal Mind personified, guiding the thought, the word, directly as Me, Meher Baba. My statements are always righteous and pure. . . ."

Notes

CHAPTER NINE: The Trip to India

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Jeanne Shaw letter, 9/6/54. | 4. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/7/54. |
| 2. Ibid. | 5. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/9/54. |
| 3. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/6/54. | |

CHAPTER TEN: The First “Incredible Week”

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| 1. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/17/54. | 15. <i>Awakener</i> , p. 11. |
| 2. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/13/54. | 16. Notes, 9/14/54. |
| 3. <i>The Awakener</i> 2, no. 3 (1955), p. 5. | 17. Ibid. |
| 4. Notes, 9/13/54. | 18. Cf. <i>Awakener</i> , p. 14: “He exists no longer as an individual. . . .” |
| 5. <i>Awakener</i> , pp. 5-6. | 19. Notes, 9/14/54. |
| 6. Notes, 9/13/54. | 20. Ibid. |
| 7. Ibid. | 21. Ibid. |
| 8. Ibid. | 22. Ibid. |
| 9. Letter, 9/13/54. | 23. Ibid. |
| 10. <i>Awakener</i> , p. 10. | 24. Ibid. |
| 11. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/14/54. | 25. Ibid. |
| 12. Ibid. | 26. Ibid. |
| 13. Ibid. | 27. Ibid. |
| 14. Ibid. | |

28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Darwin Shaw notes, undated.
33. Notes, 9/14/54.
34. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/15/54.
35. Paraphrase of Darwin Shaw letter, 9/15/54.
36. Notes, 9/15/54.
37. Paraphrase of letter, 9/15/54.
38. Letter, 9/15/54.
39. Ibid.
40. Notes, 9/15/54.
41. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/17/54.
42. *Awakener*, p. 16.
43. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/16/54.
44. I am relying on *The Awakener* (pp. 16-20) to refresh my memory for the details about the rest of this day not documented in my letter.
45. *Awakener*, p. 16.
46. Letter, 9/17/54.
47. Ibid.
48. *Awakener*, p. 19.
49. Ibid., p. 20.
50. Ibid.
51. Letter, 9/17/54.
52. *Awakener*, p. 20.
53. Letter, 9/17/54.
54. Ibid.
55. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/17/54. I am omitting remarks Baba made at this time and throughout the day regarding one of the men who left early, as it does not have a bearing on my narrative.
56. Notes, 9/17/54.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. *Awakener*, p. 29.
64. Notes, 9/17/54.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. *Awakener*, p. 31.
68. Notes, 9/17/54.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. *Awakener*, p. 36.
76. Ibid.
77. Notes, 9/17/54.
78. *Awakener*, p. 36.
79. Notes, 9/17/54.
80. Ibid.
81. *Awakener*, p. 36.
82. Notes, 9/17/54.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: The Second "Incredible Week"

1. Darwin Shaw letter, 9/18/54.
2. Ibid.
3. *The Awakener* 2, no. 3 (1955), p. 37.
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32. Notes, 9/19/54. Cf. *Awakener*, p. 41:
“... after seven nights you will see
Baba.”
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p. 41: “... and what they suffered
none of you can guess; but fear
was foreign to them. Do not fear,
love me.”
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CHAPTER TWELVE: The Third "Incredible Week"

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| 17. Notes, 9/24/54. | 37. Darwin Shaw notes, 9/27/54. |
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45. Notes, 9/29/54.	63. <i>Awakener</i> , p. 77.
46. Ibid.	64. <i>The Awakener</i> (p. 77) and Frank Eaton both quote Baba as saying, through Dr. Donkin, "It will happen in a second, at a time when nobody expects it."
47. Ibid.	65. Notes, 9/30/54.
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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: West Meets East

1. Much more detailed accounts can be found in <i>The Awakener</i> , nos. 1 & 2 (1963), and in <i>Lord Meher: The Biography of the Avatar of the Age</i>	<i>Meher Baba</i> , vol. 18, (Myrtle Beach, S. C., Manifestation, Inc., 1988).
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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: As Only God Can Love

1. <i>Lord Meher: The Biography of the Avatar of the Age Meher Baba</i> , vol. 20, (Myrtle Beach, S. C.,	Manifestation, Inc., 1988), p. 6648, emphasis in original.
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