

Glimpses of Guruprasad

Source:

Glimpses of Guruprasad

by Hoshang Bharucha

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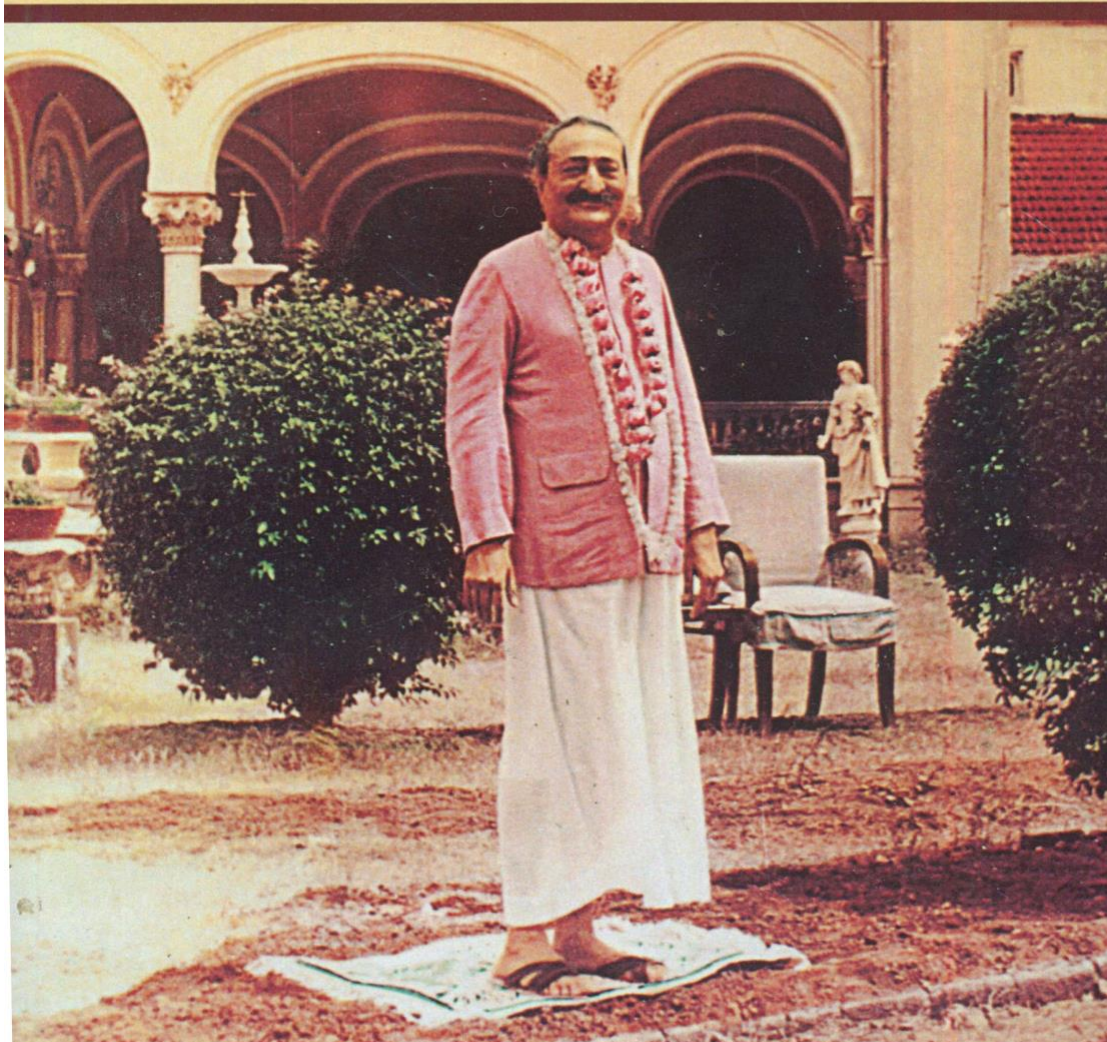
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GLIMPSES OF GURUPRASAD



DR. HOSHANG BHARUCHA

GLIMPSES OF **GURUPRASAD**

DR. HOSHANG BHARUCHA



Notion Press

Old No. 38, New No. 6
McNichols Road, Chetpet
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Foreword\

It gives me immense joy to write a few words for this much awaited book *Glimpses of Guruprasad* by Dr. Hoshang Bharucha. The book that should have seen the light of the day more than two decades ago is now finally published after his passing away by his dear daughter Dilmeher. I am sure Hoshang, now in Baba's love, would be extremely happy to know that his vision of spreading Beloved Meher Baba's name, love and divinity to all has become a reality.

I have known Hoshang, a medical doctor from Navsari, Gujarat, ever since I came into the divine fold of Avatar Meher Baba. He was a devout Baba lover ever ready to please his master Beloved Meher Baba and made it his mission to bring all the people in his contact to Meher Baba.

Beloved Meher Baba showered His boundless love on all those who visited Him in Guruprasad with His darshan and intimate company. This book is a collection of different recordings of Baba lovers all over the world who shared precious, unforgettable and treasured moments with Meher Baba. The book will refresh memories of people who were fortunate to be in Beloved Baba's company in Guruprasad. It will also be a valuable guide for people new to the Baba fold to learn of Meher Baba.

Shridhar Kelkar
Chairman

Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust

Acknowledgements

At the onset, I would like to acknowledge that I am truly grateful to Avatar Meher Baba for finally acceding to bring this much delayed book to the reader's hands. It is with His infinite grace and compassion that despite being a draft copy for many years, this book is finally published. Dr Hoshang Bharucha who maintained numerous and detailed notes on Meher Baba decided to put together all anecdotes and discourses that occurred in Guruprasad and bring forth a publication - Glimpses of Guruprasad.

I thank my father Dr Hoshang Bharucha who wrote this book for posterity to catch a glimpse of the love, the Avatar of the age has showered on all those who visited Guruprasad. He met and corresponded with many Baba lovers that visited Guruprasad to note down their personal experiences and hence a sincere thanks to all Baba lovers who contributed their stories.

This book would not have been possible without the arduous efforts and perseverance of Naosherwan Anzar of Beloved Archives and Kendra Crossen-Burroughs who painstakingly edited the raw notes. It was he along with his team who meticulously went through Dr. Bharucha's manuscript and gave the book its first shape. His efforts and guidance are truly appreciated. The manuscript was also reviewed by Pratap Ahir and Cyrus Khambatta and I thank them for their valuable suggestions in editing.

Heartfelt thanks to the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust for permission to use Baba messages, quotes and articles. To Mr. Sridhar Kelkar, Chairman of the Trust, sincere gratitude for writing the foreword as well as his unstinting and constant support. To David Fenster and Meher Nazar Publications thank you for providing photographs, I am truly indebted. Thank you, Naman Kaushik and Twisha Mistry for the present photograph of Guruprasad.

At a stage when the book and all efforts to publish it were stagnating and had practically come to a point of standstill, arose a saviour in the form of D.V. Balakrishna Meher. A young, enthusiastic, dedicated Baba follower who shared a very close relationship with Dr. Bharucha once again revitalised the project. Balakrishna Meher had a dream mid-2016 that he needed to help me complete the book. He has been instrumental in assisting me to bring the book to its completion.

I will fail if I do not thank Eruch Buhariwala, Dr Ajit Soni, Kantilal Modi and all the Baba lovers of Navsari, who were so dear to my parents, and their endless encouragement to bring the book to publication. The Avatar Meher Baba Centre Navsari has in part contributed financially to the publication of this book. I also thank my mother Maimoona, who not only kept the manuscript, all the diaries and the soft copies intact but tried relentlessly to publish this book and coordinated with various persons to complete the task. To my husband, Hoshedar Bhola for his undeterred and unfailing support and practical guidance to bring forth this book, a big thank you.

Finally, to all the readers who have been fortunate to have Meher Baba in their lives and to those who have picked up this book to read - May Beloved Meher Baba by His grace, lead us to annihilate our gross minds and merge us in His infinite ocean.

Dilmeher Bharucha Bhola

About the Author – Biography

DR. HOSHANG PHEROZE BHARUCHA (DECEMBER, 1927 – OCTOBER, 1995)

Dr. Hoshang P Bharucha's life centred mainly on two tenets - Meher Baba and his dispensary work. As far back as I can remember, my father lived, breathed, worked and talked mainly about Meher Baba. It often seemed that he was bewildered and lost if he spent time away from Baba work or his patients. However, if he were engaged in these two passions of his, he would be animated, enthusiastic and filled with fervour. He was constantly on the move; travelling all over India or overseas at his own expense spreading Meher Baba's name to known and unknown people. In Navsari, Gujarat where he lived since 1953 till he passed on in 1995, he was constantly engaged with the sick and needy or writing and compiling works about Meher Baba. It was normal for him to be working for sixteen to eighteen hours a day and also for patients to ring the doorbell for medicines even at night.

Hoshang or Bharucha or *Doctorsahib* as he was often called, was merely Hosi in his childhood and one of five siblings brought up in Mhow, near Indore, Madhya Pradesh in a Parsee Zoroastrian family. He was born on 4 December to Shirin Gilder and Pheroze Bharucha. The seeds of seeking spiritual knowledge and leading a life of service to others were imbibed from childhood from his father and paternal uncle. Pheroze was a devout Zoroastrian, who then became an ardent devotee of Shri Gondavlekar Maharaj, a Hindu saint and his brother Nusserwan was a devout follower of Upasni Maharaj of Sakori, one of the five spiritual masters of Meher Baba. Pheroze was instrumental in constructing a Ram temple at Mandleshwar near Mhow and how he accumulated money for its construction is a story in itself. At this juncture it will suffice to say that Pheroze and his children repeated the name of Shree Ram regularly.

At the age of seven, Hoshang had decided to become a doctor and at the age of nine he became a vegetarian; although years after, in a meeting with Meher Baba he realised that being a vegetarian only fed his ego and was of no importance to spiritual advancement. Meher Baba's exact words to Hoshang were, "What goes into your mouth is not as important as what comes out of your mouth".

Along with Hoshang's father, his uncle Nusserwan also had a great influence on young Hoshang as he would travel with him in his free time and imbibe spiritual education. As a young man, Hoshang visited many saints, tombs and shrines all over India in search of truth and was drawn to Godavari Mai, who headed Upasni Maharaj's ashram in Sakori after him. He heard the name Meher Baba for the first time in 1949 when he overheard a conversation between two men at the Sakori ashram.

In 1952 in Bombay, a disciple of Godavari Mai requested Hoshang to accompany her to meet Meher Baba residing at Ashiana building. Hoshang had heard that Meher Baba had long hair and his thoughts were drawn to the impending darshan and seeing any person on the streets with long hair would remind him of Baba. As luck would have it, on the appointed day of darshan, they reached Ashiana late and were not permitted to go in. While the lady was pleading with Baba's mandali member at the gate, Hoshang glimpsed Baba crossing from one room to another. On stating that they were from Sakori, they were granted permission to meet Baba for a few minutes.

The first meeting with Meher Baba did not create a dramatic impact on Hoshang of His divinity, but slowly with time and many interesting incidents, Hoshang was drawn to Baba, became His follower completely surrendering to Baba and worked tirelessly for Him. The initial conflict of obeying and following Godavari Mai and Meher Baba also mentioned in this book was resolved by Meher Baba with His infinite humour, patience and grace.

Hoshang was given many orders by Meher Baba from simple to complex and he carried them out to the best of his ability. Baba had told him not to drink tea his entire life and once sent a telegram to Hoshang not to leave Navsari for a particular period of time that had deep consequences on his personal life. Once Hoshang accepted Meher Baba, there was no power on earth that could diminish his love and zeal for Him. He was a true and dedicated Baba lover who encouraged and inspired all whom he met to follow and accept Meher Baba as the Avatar.

Hoshang visited Meher Baba at Ahmadnagar and Guruprasad, Pune at every opportunity he got. He would sit next to Baba and during bhajan programs, Baba would often speak on a topic that Hoshang had been thinking about the night before. Hoshang has been quoted as saying, "Often when I do not understand some passage from Baba's books, He comes in my dreams and explains the matter to me. Often during meditation, He clears my doubts by silently talking in my heart."

Hoshang always carried a diary and took copious notes at all Baba programs. He was extremely particular about dates and accuracy and never shared a story or discourse without verifying its authenticity. Hoshang had two major penchants; the breaking of Baba's silence and finding the yet unpublished book Baba had written in various languages. He would correspond with the mandali residing at Meherazad after Baba dropped His body, and they would listen patiently to his queries and theories.

Returning to Hoshang's life, after completing his medical studies and obtaining his MBBS degree in 1952, Hoshang worked for a year at The B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and later served as medical officer at The Navsari Cotton and Silk Mills in Navsari from 1953 to 1985. One of the numerous orders of Meher Baba to Hoshang was not to leave this employment unless he was asked to and he faithfully complied with this order. Once the company opted for the government's ESIS - Employees State Insurance Scheme (for health) the post was discontinued. At the Mills, along with treatment, he developed various prevention programs for the workers' wives and children and made home visits and endeared himself with them. He was the chief distributor for food commodities that were received from the US for children and streamlined the process of distribution, wrote directly to the US authorities and eliminated the cut backs much to the dismay of the middle men.

Hoshang or *Doctorsahib* worked with leprosy patients and spearheaded the leprosy eradication drive and travelled to villages all over the district in his spare time. He was an active member of the local Indian Medical Association, served as secretary for 3 years and wrote articles in medical journals. He also was a lecturer in medicine for LMP (Licensed Medical Practitioners) students. He would conduct routine medical health checkups in schools and college for students on a voluntary basis at a time when this concept of preventive medicine

was relatively new. Another feather to his cap was his donation of 'O negative blood' for over three decades to patients in need of this rare blood type. Hoshang refused to accept awards all through the years, but was finally given a State Award and citation by the District Collector, Gujarat government in 1995 for donation of blood, few months before he passed away.

In 1966, Hoshang surprised many of his friends and family by marrying Maimoona Katrak, a beautiful Parsee girl many years his junior from Secunderabad, A.P. (now Telangana). Meher Baba blessed this marriage and in 1967 despite Baba's seclusion, a personal interview with the wedded couple was held at Meherazad. This solo meeting with Meher Baba erased all the doubts and suspicions about Meher Baba that Maimoona had. She understood and accepted Hoshang's passion for Baba work and played a pivotal role in balancing and tempering his enthusiasm with a healthy dose of practicality. She was an excellent hostess to innumerable Baba lovers who regularly visited Navsari and looked after their needs and many remember her gentle manner and affection towards them. Maimoona would worry about his physical health and request him to temper his work according to his age.

Hoshang's energy and pace was unparalleled. His day started at 4 A.M. with meditation and correspondence work related to Meher Baba or his medical journals. His dispensary opened at 7.30 A.M. and his day would often end after 8.30 P.M. During the entire day, he would come home to rest for about two hours or so. At the dispensary, there were always queues of people and since Hoshang could not tolerate any noise, he would call the mothers with crying children up front. Every sick child brought to the dispensary would get Baba's Prasad of khadi sakhar - small granules of white sugar - that sent them smiling back home. *Doctorsahib* would often comment on the holy threads around children's necks and wrists and tell mothers - don't believe in this outward show of religion, teach your children to say God's name.

Hoshang's intolerance of noise was dealt by Meher Baba in an amusing incident with Dr. Harry Kenmore an American Baba lover who recited the Master's prayer in his loud booming voice. One day after Hoshang requested him to recite the prayers softly, Harry complied reluctantly. Meher Baba was most displeased and stopped the prayer and enquired and Harry replied, "I do not wish to disturb the auditory apparatus of our new visitors." At that moment Hoshang

felt it would have been better if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. Baba then remarked, "Prayers should be from the heart. It does not matter if they are said loudly or softly. They should be natural."

The time Hoshang spent away from the dispensary was devoted to Baba work. Hoshang travelled extensively in India and overseas giving talks and sharing Meher Baba's messages and stories. He was called by Baba lovers from various centres in India and he kept up his indefatigable pace there too. The hosts would often want to call it a day whereas Hoshang would catch his forty winks and be ready to discuss more about Meher Baba. Hoshang had simple needs, was not fussy, would eat whatever was offered to him and sleep without complaining in the accommodation available.

Along with his wife Maimoona, another major support for Hoshang to go ahead with Meher Baba work was the Navsari Meher Baba Centre. The Navsari Baba lovers comprised of a few devout families who had met Baba and firmly believed in Him and had also dedicated their lives to the service of Meher Baba. Hoshang had published a small booklet 'The Last Sahavas' that recounts the dropping of Meher Baba's physical body. He also had compiled many stories of Baba lovers in a book called, 'The Compassionate Father' and authored many articles and booklets on Baba's life story. He also brought out films and CDs on Meher Baba's artis and Baba's magnum opus, 'God Speaks' and gave many talks on it.

In the 1990s, Hoshang decided to compile a book on Meher Baba's visits to Guruprasad, Pune. Meher Baba visited Guruprasad for many years, met many Baba lovers and had public darshans where many lives were touched and reformed with Baba's radiant smile and grace. Hoshang decided to compile all incidents and Baba discourses that occurred in Guruprasad and call the book Glimpses of Guruprasad. He wrote to many Baba lovers and the mandali and began the process of compilation.

However, in September 1994, Hoshang, diagnosed with brain tumour, underwent surgery and oncology treatment. Hoshang took this in his stride and continued his work on the book. His health deteriorated and he passed away a year later in 1995 and his dream of publishing the book of Guruprasad was kept on hold. After many years, Hoshang's wife Maimoona restarted the effort to publish the book but she also succumbed to cancer in 2012. With the help of

few people who strongly believe that the book needs to be published and with the encouragement of many Baba lovers, I finally took up the project and the book is now in your hands.

The book Glimpses of Guruprasad is written in Hoshang's personal, inimitable style that perhaps may feel out of sync with today's writing. Many stories of Meher Baba may have appeared in various other publications and may seem familiar, but this book is a tribute to my father Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, a man whose whole life was lived with the conviction of Meher Baba's divinity and revolved around spreading His word to whoever he came into contact with. I believe the book will recreate loving memories for Baba lovers and be a source of inspiration for people entering into Meher Baba's fold.

To conclude I bring to you words from Hoshang's notes - "Though I would not obey Baba's orders and even quarreled with Him on this point, His love for me has changed me completely. My life is now one of complete surrenderance to Baba. I live for Baba and will die for Baba, the Avatar of the age."

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai

Dilmeher Bharucha Bhola
June, 2018
Pune

A Note to the Readers

If one visited Pune in the 1960s and 1970s and passed through Bund Garden Road, you would certainly have had a glimpse of the imposing and impressive palace called Guruprasad. The palace belonged to Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda, which was selected by Beloved Meher Baba to use as His summer resting place. Meher Baba gave darshan to thousands thirsting for His warm smile and embrace at this beautiful palace. How the palace came to be selected and used by Baba is an interesting story, covered in the first chapter.

Meher Baba, born of Zoroastrian parents on 25 February 1894, named Merwan Sheriar Irani, came to be known as the Silent Master for He observed silence for over 44 years from 10 July 1925 until He dropped His body on 31 January 1969. He had five spiritual Masters who were Hazrat Babajan of Pune, Upasani Maharaj of Sakori, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon and Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur.

Due to Merwan's compassionate nature, one of the disciples named Him Meher Baba meaning compassionate father. Meher Baba began His spiritual work in 1921 and travelled all over India and the world to give the message of love and truth and propagated that God alone is real and the rest is all an illusion. He did an unparalleled amount of spiritual work, the results of which the present humanity is reaping and the future humanity would continue to reap. He is also known as love incarnate for He gave and received only love. His work had many phases, one of them being His stay at Guruprasad palace.

Meher Baba came to the palace for the first time in 1951 and subsequently spent about three months during the summer every year since 1956 until 1965. Meher Baba would come from Meherazad along with His men and women mandali around April and return to Meherazad by June-July every year.

Guruprasad has been witness to many divine love stories between the Master and His disciples. Some distinguished visitors to Guruprasad who had the good fortune to have Meher Baba's darshan include the celebrated ghazal singer Begum Akhtar, Congress Party leader Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, who later became the President of India, Member of Parliament Amar Singh Saigal, many other politicians, professionals, foreigners, commoners, cricketers, cinema actors, people of all religions and many mahatmas and saints. Meher Baba met all irrespective of their social status or educational qualification. During one darshan programme in Guruprasad, Meher Baba said, "To Me, *maharani* (Queen) and *mehetrani* (sweeper) are the same".

A memorable event that took place in November 1962 at Guruprasad is the East-West Gathering that signified His mission, "I intend bringing together all religions and cults like beads on one string to revitalize them for individual and collective needs. This is My mission to the West. The peace and harmony that I shall talk of and that will settle on the face of this worried world is not far off."

Meher Baba said that a Master always chooses a place for His work based on its past connections. He also confirmed that once the work was complete, He disbands it by giving the simile of scaffolding. Once the construction work of a building is complete, its scaffolding is removed. Similarly, the Guruprasad palace, so majestically used by Baba was sold in 1972. The palace was razed to the ground and a residential property with the same name Guruprasad was constructed. The builder graciously used the same material to build a small replica of Guruprasad. This replica stands strong with a caretaker and every morning and evening Baba prayers and arti are performed. There is a Baba bhajan program in the evening on the first Sunday of every month. The Guruprasad replica is open for visitors daily from 9.30 am to 6.00 pm and is closed on Wednesdays.

Dr. Hoshang Bharucha was an avid diarist and made copious notes often verbatim of all events that occurred around Baba. He realised that Baba's treasures at Guruprasad were described by various authors in different Baba books and journals. He decided to bring together all the events and occurrences at the historic Guruprasad and compile them together. He painstakingly collected experiences of various Baba lovers who were more than willing to share their stories for this book.

The book is thus a collection of love-joy-inspiration tales that transpired between Avatar Meher Baba and His followers in the palace named Guruprasad. These stories and events have been noted personally by Dr. Hoshang Bharucha in his diaries as they occurred and range from 1957 until 1965. To ensure readability, the recorded tales have been divided year-wise into various chapters. Despite a thorough search, no diary or notes by Dr. Bharucha were found pertaining to the year 1964. Hence, no events of 1964 are included in this book. Dr. Bharucha's article 'What Meher Baba's teachings mean to me' was deemed the best choice to sum up his reverence to Meher Baba and is added as the last chapter of the book. Readers may note that the headings that have been highlighted in the book indicate that those portions have been written by Dr. H.P. Bharucha.

Dr. Hoshang Bharucha's demise in 1995 stalled the publication of this book and it is now finally being published in Dr. Bharucha's memory by his daughter Dilmeher. With the passage of time, many books have been published about the events of Guruprasad. However, few Baba followers close to Dr. Bharucha were keen that this book be published. So after a long wait, Glimpses of Guruprasad is in your hands dear reader. Enjoy the essence, savour its unique manner that is a combination of various writing styles and is a blend of warm humane stories as well as relevant spiritual explanations in Meher Baba's own words.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai

How Meher Baba Came to Guruprasad

Ages before Christ walked this earth, spirituality flowered in India through the Avataric manifestations of Ram and Krishna, whose advents left imprints that are clearly traceable to this day in the places of their birth. Poona (now Pune), the city where Meher Baba, the Avatar of our age, was born shall be remembered for ages, just like the Ayodhya of Ram and the Brindaban of Krishna.

At one time in that city, there stood a palatial building called Guruprasad, which literally means "gift from the Master." Whether there is a heaven existing high above the clouds or concealed within as a mental state of infinite joy, the thousands who flocked to Guruprasad don't care, as for them, heaven on earth was this palace where Meher Baba came to dispense the nectar of His love. Toddlers and children, the young and old - all who came to Guruprasad imbibed the love and bliss that emanated from their Beloved. In this place made holy by His presence, tears flowed profusely, and hearts bled with a deep-felt longing that can never be described. Though Meher Baba kept silent for forty-four years of His life, none felt the need for His speech, for His eyes and face silenced the mind and opened the heart to drink from His bountiful love.

The story of Meher Baba's stay in Guruprasad begins in 1951. He was in very strict seclusion in Mahabaleshwar for a hundred days from 13th February 1951. During such seclusion periods, when Baba intensified His universal work, He would not take care of His body. Often He would not eat, subsisting on fluids or nothing at all. During one such seclusion in the early years at Meherabad in 1927, Baba lived on only two cups of coffee a day. And often, He did not even have that, as the boy, Lahu, who was to bring the coffee drank half of it on the way before giving it to Baba.

On 23rd May 1951 Baba emerged from His one hundred days' seclusion looking very worn out; His health shattered to the extent that the mandali (an intimate group of men and women who dedicated their all and lived with Meher Baba) thought that Baba would drop His body. At their request, He agreed to go to Poona for a short change of scene immediately after He emerged from seclusion and before He left for Hyderabad for His Manonash work during His New Life period. Eruch Jessawala, who lived with Baba from 1st August 1938 and who used to read the alphabet board on which Baba would dictate messages by rapidly pointing at letters, had written to his brother, Meherwan in Poona to find a suitable bungalow where Baba could rest for some time.

Meherwan got the letter a few days before Baba's seclusion was due to be over. He was preoccupied at that time studying for his B.Sc. examination, which was to be held within a few days. He immediately informed Adi K. Irani, Baba's secretary at Ahmednagar, who promptly came to Poona to help Meherwan find a bungalow.

Adi and Meherwan went to meet a man named Jamshed, the owner of an ice factory on Sacchapir Street in Poona, whom Adi knew personally. While they were asking Jamshed where they could find a bungalow for Meher Baba, an Irani real estate agent who was sitting near them overheard their conversation and offered a bungalow for Baba's use. His only condition was that it should be vacated within a month, as the owner was due to come and stay in it. When he was asked about the rent he would charge, he replied that he would give it for free in the service of Meher Baba. Adi and Meherwan were overjoyed, but in the back of their minds, they wondered why Baba's work, which usually is full of hurdles and tries one's patience to the limit, seemed as easy as eating chocolate cake in this case.

Adi, Meherwan, and the Irani promptly went to inspect the site, which was situated in a posh locality of Poona in Salisbury Park. A beautiful bungalow, well furnished and ready for use met their eyes. Off they went to a telegraph office to send a telegram to Baba: "Excellent bungalow found. Inform arrival date." Two days later, when Adi and Meherwan went to the Irani gentleman's home to get the key, they received a very rude shock as at that time the Irani's father was engaged in a heated argument with his son. The fact was that the Irani's father for some reason had a grudge against Meher Baba. The son tried to pacify him, but that only seemed to add fuel to the fire. The result was that the father threatened to

leave the house if the key was given to Adi. Ultimately, the Irani gentleman was forced to apologise for his inability to make the house available as promised, and so, both Adi and Meherwan departed with heavy hearts.

Another telegram was sent informing Baba that the bungalow was not available after all. Baba replied promptly that He had definitely fixed His visit and stay in Poona, and that it was Meherwan's job to find a bungalow. Meherwan, who was already tense about his approaching examination, was now under greater pressure to find Baba's bungalow in time. From morn to dusk, he searched the length and breadth of Poona to find a suitable place. To his surprise, he discovered a magnificent bungalow with a beautiful garden near the Bund Garden. His heart thumped against his chest at this discovery. But the gate was locked, and he could see no watchman or gardener.

At the top of his voice he called out, but in vain, as the bungalow was at a considerable distance from the gates. The only recourse for Meherwan was to jump over the wall and walk across the garden to reach the palatial estate. The caretaker now emerged onto the verandah and angrily accused Meherwan of trespassing on property belonging to the Maharani of Baroda. If Meherwan did not leave at once, he was threatened that the police would remove him. Meherwan never got a chance to plead his case, as the caretaker just pushed him out.

With the deadline of Baba's arrival approaching fast, a telegram was sent to Sarosh Irani in Ahmednagar to come and help. He arrived promptly and contacted a friend who had a bungalow in Wanowri, a suburb of Poona. The house was inspected and found to be in ramshackle condition, and so, quick repairs were carried out by Sarosh. However, the snag about this house was that it was near a tannery, and the stench that wafted all around was nauseating.

In the meantime, Ramchandra Gadekar, a Baba lover from Poona, had also been searching for a bungalow. He too found Guruprasad. In his quest for a bungalow for Baba, Gadekar approached the caretaker of Guruprasad and was very politely told that it belonged to Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda. He next approached Sardar Raste in Poona. Gadekar had introduced Meher Baba to Sardar Raste and his wife, Maisaheb Raste, and had drawn them into Baba's fold. Sardar Rasre later donated a piece of land from his property, and on this land now stands the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre.

Sardar Raste knew Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda, the owner of Guruprasad. She had, in turn, bought this palace from the Maharani of Jamkeda in 1951, who had bought it from a Muslim owner. Gadekar told Sardar Raste that Meher Baba wished to come and rest in Poona for some time and that he had found Guruprasad vacant. Gadekar, Sardar Rasre, and Meherwan went to see Guruprasad. Meherwan feared that the caretaker, on seeing him again, would again shout, but since Sardar Rasre was with them, the caretaker courteously bowed and welcomed them. After inspecting the fully furnished palace, they sent a telegram to the Maharani in Baroda:

Shreeman Saubhagyavati Shantadevi Ranee Saheb Baroda.
Kindly grant permission to use Guruprasad from 22nd May 1951
for Meher Baba. Hoping you will avail of this divine opportunity
of service to Avatar Meher Baba.

The Maharani's reply came on the day Baba was to arrive from Mahabaleshwar on the 22nd of May. She gave her permission though she had never heard of Meher Baba. There had been no time to inform Baba about Guruprasad, and so, when He arrived on the 22nd, He was taken to Wanowri. After the Maharani's telegram was shown to Baba, He went to see Guruprasad and agreed to shift His luggage there. Thus, began Meher Baba's first stay at Guruprasad, lasting almost a month.

During this time, He called Ramchandra Gadekar, Meherjee Karkaria, Meherwan Jessawala, and a few others for darshan one day. This was the first darshan programme in Guruprasad for very few lovers. Baba then left for Hyderabad on 21st June 1951 for His Manonash work.

Since Gadekar was instrumental in procuring Guruprasad for Baba's stay, it would not be out of place to say a few words about this great lover and worker of Baba.

Ramchandra Gadekar's Story

Ramchandra Gadekar was born on 16th May 1904 into a destitute family in Ahmednagar. Being very brilliant, he joined the Fergusson College in Poona after his school education. In 1924, he was suffering from pain in his abdomen, and when he came to Ahmednagar during his vacation, someone suggested that he go meet a saint called Meher Baba in Arangaon. When he arrived, Baba was singing in a very melodious voice, and the charm of His personality made Gadekar forget his illness. Baba asked him, "What do you want?" He replied, "Self-Realisation." Baba said with a smile, "Do you know the meaning of Self-Realisation?" Baba then gave a discourse on Self-Realisation. The result was that Gadekar left college and became a teacher in Baba's school at Meherabad. He graduated in 1928 and became a social worker, working for the upliftment of the Harijans.

Once, a social worker named Gunatai came with Gadekar for Meher Baba's darshan. Baba remarked, "She would be a good wife for you." The couple got married in Ahmednagar, and the wedding was attended by Baba and the mandali. For further studies, Gadekar went to Edinburgh, and to his surprise, Baba was in the same ship going to Europe. After returning to India, Gadekar held several posts, one of which was of the Deputy Director of Welfare. His whole life was devoted to social work. He loved Baba so much that he could talk tirelessly about Him to everyone he met. He disseminated Meher Baba's name to the poor and the rich alike, and to all who came in contact with him. He worked in Poona, Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Nasik, and many other places. In 1958, he began suffering from Hodgkin's disease, and Baba kept him at Meherabad for a few months. Baba did not allow anyone to tell Gadekar about his illness.

On 7th March 1959, Mahashivratri (the great night of worship of Lord Shiva), Baba and His mandali visited Gadekar at his home in Poona. Baba said that it was an auspicious day, as Shankar (an epithet of Shiva) Himself had come to meet Gadekar. Baba asked Gadekar to continuously repeat His name. On 12th March, Gadekar breathed his last, very peacefully repeating Baba's name. When Baba was informed about the demise, Baba said, "Gadekar has come to Me forever."

For years, Baba wore the sandals made by Gadekar's father, Khandoba. These hand-stitched sandals were the link through which Baba kept Gadekar and his family close to Himself. These sandals are now preserved in the museum at upper Meherabad, and they are a testimony of Gadekar's love, sacrifice, and selfless service for the poor. He gave to such an extent that there was not a copper penny left for his funeral; Baba paid the expenses. Gadekar's ashes were brought to Meherabad by his wife, Gunatai, on 6th April 1959. Meher Baba came to Meherabad and put the box of ashes in a pit alongside the tombs of His mandali. Baba placed flowers on the box while the mandali repeated Baba's prayers.

1957

A MEETING IS CALLED

After His second automobile accident on 2nd December 1956, Baba stayed in Satara for a week and then left for Poona. On 12th February 1957, He left for Meherazad. He had to come back to Poona for a checkup in April. He stayed with Eruch's cousin, Dadi Kerawala at the Botanical Gardens, Ganeshkind, Poona. In a letter dated 30th April 1957 to "Elinorkit" (Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli, and Kitty Davy - the three Western women), Mani (Baba's sister) writes:

Eruch's cousin has offered us his cottage for as long as Baba wishes to stay in Poona. It's a nice cosy cottage (even if we're somewhat cramped for space) and the grounds are really lovely, with enormous mango and mimosa trees (in pink bloom, also the yellow cassis) where Baba walked along the shady paths every morning, using two sticks, and once getting into the momentum of it, would lift the sticks and walk unaided a few steps. The utter joy of this is marred only by the increased pain it brings on, but we're hoping that it will soon pass as He gets used to this unusual exerting and exercise as Baba keeps walking every now and then. He seems restless and wanted a short change again.

Baba asked K.K. Ramakrishnan - an indefatigable and dedicated Baba worker and also the secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre - to find a bungalow for His stay. Maharani Shantadevi was again informed about Baba's wish to stay in Guruprasad, and she willingly consented. Baba shifted to Guruprasad on the 18th of April 1957. Mani, in her letter to Kitty, continues: "... so we've come to Guruprasad (the Rani of Baroda's palatial house near the Bund Gardens that she's offered with love) for a week."

Guruprasad was a palatial ornamental building situated on the Bund Garden Road. From the big iron gates at the roadside to the bungalow was a big driveway surrounding a central garden which had many marble statues and a fountain. A huge portico in front of the bungalow provided space for Baba's car. As one climbed the marble steps, one came onto a verandah that went around the front and south side of the bungalow. A huge doorway, centrally situated opposite the portico, led to a spacious hall with a sofa for Baba at its far end. The hall divided the women mandali's quarters from the men's quarters. Baba's room was alongside the verandah on the women's side. To the south of the hall were three rooms, one of them a big room in which Baba would sit with His men mandali and others whom He would call before the darshan programme.

In the afternoons, Baba would use this room for playing cards with the mandali and invited lovers. Correspondence from all over the world would be read to Baba in this room. Flanking it was a room with a phone that served as an office and a room where the men mandali stayed. Eruch had improvised an office for himself on the floor at the tail end of the verandah on the south side. He seemed quite comfortable sitting there, replying to letters and telegrams from all over the world. Just next to where Eruch sat was the pantry room where Pendu would store food that came from Edward Hotel for the mandali. This room also served for making tea for the men mandali. The south verandah was flanked by several *chattis* (earthenware pots) for storing drinking water.

All rooms had high ceilings in white and gold, and the central hall looked gorgeous with chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Behind the bungalow was another verandah, on which Baba sat during the darshan programmes of 1962 (the East-West Gathering) and 1965 (the Eastern Sahavas). A vast compound extended from the bungalow to the boundary wall at the back, where five thousand or more lovers sat drinking the nectar of Baba's love during those two epoch-creating functions.

In her letter of 30th April, Mani continues:

The first night here, all night, there were loud chantings, singing and drum beating in a temple nearby, and it is surprising that Baba rested in spite of it. Last night was definitely cooler here. This place has a spacious verandah where Baba walks, and yesterday there was a lovely new

variation in Baba's walking - the mandali got a sort of child's pram-chair, and Baba walked along pushing it (this is a wonderful change from the sticks and gives him more confidence in walking). He looked delighted pushing it along, and the part that tickles Baba and us was Jal (Baba's brother) who was sitting in the pram-chair! (For weight purpose). Baba walked straight and easily, looking for like a daddy wheeling a rather overgrown child along the boulevard.

Instead of a week, Baba's stay was extended at Guruprasad. According to His instruction, a group of Baba lovers and mandali members from Bombay and Poona - about forty-seven in all - assembled in Guruprasad by 8:00 A.M. on 19th May 1957. Baba, with His radiant smile and with a little help from two persons on both sides, walked slowly to the meeting hall. By this time, He was using neither crutches nor sticks.

Baba enquired whether all had slept well the previous night. Those who had not were instructed not to doze during the session. He said, "As for Me, I had no sleep, for I had to do some important spiritual work. From the time of the accident, I have been suffering severe physical pains. Tell Me, from My face, how you find Me now?" Most of the members replied that Beloved Baba's face appeared as smiling and cheerful as ever.

After a pause, Baba continued, "You have been called here, but now it is a question for Me as to why have I called you and what should I convey to you!" There was a ripple of laughter at this remark.

In the first meeting, Baba asked all the Poona workers to stand up and asked about those absent who were not called for the meeting. Then, He instructed that those who were not called should be taken over to Guruprasad at two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. Immediately after an embrace from Baba, they were to leave.

About His injuries, Baba said, "The fractured bone is getting set. In the opinion of the surgeon - who happens to be a Colonel - My progress is unexpectedly rapid. He told me that even a strong young soldier would have required at least six months to recover to this extent!" One of the lovers requested Baba to take care of His body. Baba replied, "I have to come again and again in flesh and blood to bear the sufferings of humanity."

A WARNING TO HIS LOVERS

After this preliminary talk, the work started for which the meeting had been convened. Baba began His talk entitled "Warning from Meher Baba to His Lovers":

I want to tell you one important thing, which each of you must remember well. It is a fact that I am the Lord of the universe. I am omnipresent. Now the time is fast approaching, and I clearly see the "dark cloud" hovering. I see its picture. By this, I am not referring to the recent motor accident that has already come to pass. The "humiliation" that I was referring to for a long time is within sight. During that phase of My life, there is every possibility that I may slip out of your hands.

Now let Me first explain what I mean by "humiliation." Suppose you are loved by someone very dearly for several years and, one day when you happen to meet him, he suddenly begins to abuse you, kick you, and spit in your face; in the context of your previous relations with him your plight becomes an example of humiliation. In the same way, if some persons who have previously adored Me and raised Me up to the skies in adoration for years suddenly turn against Me and express extreme disdain for Me by throwing Me in filth, it will be another example of humiliation.

I will also give you an example of circumstances under which this kind of thing can happen. You have been worshipping Me for so many years. Suppose you suddenly find Me eating rubbish and roaming about naked in the streets, behaving like a mad person; what will your reaction be to this behaviour of Mine? I do not want any one of you to think or say that Baba is going to become mad! On the contrary, I have come to make the whole world mad about God and Truth!

Only the Avatar, whenever He lives amidst mankind, has to undergo humiliation. When there are five Perfect Masters who are God personified and who control and look after the affairs of the universe, what need is there for them to precipitate the Incarnation of God on earth? They bring Him down to shoulder the sufferings of humanity. The five Perfect Masters are not vilified or humiliated as much as the Avatar. I have been made to take this human form by the five Perfect Masters of this age to bear the cross and to undergo humiliation.

You have read in the Gospels wherein Christ said to His Apostles, "You will deny me." This did happen when Peter, the chief apostle, denied Jesus. The thing is that during the phase of humiliation the circumstances will so array themselves that you won't be aware when My *daaman* has slipped out of your hands. At that time, you may even feel justified in leaving Me.

But if you feel that this should not happen, there is one remedy. You should grasp well all that I say, and act upon it with understanding. You should also tell all that you hear today to those who are not present. In short, I clearly see the "dark cloud." I do not wish to make a mere mention of the "dark cloud" without any reason, but this is My loving warning to you so that My *daaman* may not slip from your hands!

Today, I also wish to tell you about some other important points. I will start with the topic of saints. These days, this point is often brought to My notice from the letters I receive from My lovers. Some write, "Baba, You often enter into seclusion for long periods. Very rarely do we get an opportunity to have your *sahavas*. We are not even permitted to have your *darshan* for months together! This often makes us feel inclined to visit saints and be in their company." They also ask Me whether they should follow certain instructions given by the saints.

A few days back a wife of one of My devotees wrote to me that a certain person who called himself a saint told her that he was ordered by Me to guard their house and that he loved Me very much. Apart from the truth of his statement, the point which struck Me is that if such things were to continue, anybody could approach My devotees and may even demand hundreds of rupees in My name, and thus may easily deceive them. To say whether a saint is real or an imitation is My right alone and not yours.

I have been saying all the time, age after age, that when I, the Ancient One, assume this human form, many false prophets claim to be the Avatars instead. For instance, a week ago I received a letter from U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] from a devotee who writes that there are two persons in his town, and each proclaims himself as the Avatar of the age. This created a great deal of confusion in his mind. Also, in one of the towns in northern India, there is one social worker who claims and has a genuine feeling for his claim, that he is the Avatar.

I am telling you all these things in detail, for it *is* My right alone to say so, as all of them are My children. As far as you are concerned, you should neither criticise

nor indulge in backbiting. If you speak ill of a real saint, it will be harmful to you. You will create dreadful [sanskritic] blunders. You should avoid vilifying even the so-called mahatmas who call themselves saints because it is not possible for you to be certain whether they are real or not. The presumptuous saints outwardly act like real saints. You will not be able to differentiate between them, just in the same way as you would not be able to differentiate between the *masts* and mad persons. Yet what a world of difference lies in their inner states!

Coming back to the point of real saints, I would like you to know that to become a saint is not child's play. The very word *saint*, when commonly used or made applicable to anyone, creates a lot of misunderstanding. I will tell you something that will clarify the misconceptions regarding saints.

There are two types of saints: (1) real saints and (2) imitation saints. Just as an ordinary person cannot distinguish between a real and an imitation pearl, you cannot distinguish between a real saint and an imitation saint. I alone, like a jeweler, can make out the difference.

Particularly in India, we find a lot of imitation saints; and this is due to the superficial study of the Vedanta. By studying Vedanta one can say, "I am God." Sadgurus also say, "I am God." Imitation saints also say the same thing, but with the help of Vedanta. Real saints need no such help; they say what they experience. There are also some who, after reading Vedanta, realise that they have no such experience, but they still say, "I am God." This is hypocrisy. Also, there are some imitation saints who, after reading Vedanta, have a genuine feeling and say, "I am God," though in reality, they do not have any conscious experience.

If anyone confers greatness on you and begins to worship you and garlands you, you know yourself that you do not deserve it. At the outset, you are tempted to accept this greatness, which makes you feel happy. But your conscience will constantly be pricking you, and you will always be in a state of anxiety about future developments. You will frequently be in a fix whether to accept or reject the greatness which is thrust upon you.

Once you accept this conferred greatness, it becomes very difficult for you to get out of the situation. After a time, even the pricks of conscience cease to trouble you, for you get used to them. Then it becomes an addiction, and you cannot do without it. You then pose as a real saint. This posing will cause you to take innumerable additional births; so why pose as a saint without inner experience?

As for Myself, I say, "I am the Highest of the High." Had I not been the Ancient One, I would have encouraged you to visit the so-called saints. I would have even praised them, and they would have praised Me in return. Thus, a clique would be formed that would promote mutual praise to dupe the public.

If any one of you meets an imitation saint or an imitation Avatar, what would he say to you? He would say the same thing as I do. If you tell him that Baba is the Avatar, he may even say, "I am the real one, and that Baba is a fraud!" When anyone approaches an imitation saint and is attracted by the outward atmosphere which he creates around him, and if, owing to his faith in the imitation saint, he gets some experience, he is likely to attribute them to that imitation saint. This creates confusion.

Now I will tell you about an incident. During My recent visit to America, a gentleman who has been staying in America for a long time remained by My side during some of My programs and particularly when the films and photographs were taken. This gentleman has studied and intellectually grasped what I have said but misused it. From one of the letters from the USA, I hear that this gentleman has started telling people that he is Baba's representative. Those who know Me for so many years are not affected, but the new lovers, though educated, are very impressed and flock to him. Just see how even the Westerners are misled!

What is the remedy for this? I will tell you now. It will be very useful only if you grasp it thoroughly. If all of you are convinced that Baba is the Avatar, God Incarnate, the question of confusion does not arise at all. In this case, just hold fast to My daaman and close all doors of confusion and conflict to enter your minds. If you are not convinced, leave Me. Seek someone else. But if you try to stick with Me with a wavering mind, without being convinced of My divinity, you will be just like a nut caught in the crusher.

I will also tell you a few instances of those who pay too much attention to *masts*, though they have been connected with Me for so many years. One of them went to the extent of drinking wine whenever offered by a mast! The other used to carry a certain mast on his shoulders to his home and serve him daily. Had I not warned them in time, they would have got themselves involved seriously. When God Himself has descended on earth, and you have the fortune to come in personal contact with Him, why run after His children, the *masts*, and the saints?

In U.P. and Punjab, there are saints of both types, real and imitation. There, men put up a big show of spirituality by performing homa-havan, bhajan-kirtan. yagna-yaga, arti-puja, etc. From external appearances, one cannot make out who is a real saint and who is an imitation. Anyone is easily impressed by the so-called outward spiritual atmosphere. You do not find such things here with Me. On the other hand, you find Me sitting among you, sometimes telling jokes and letting you laugh. The real Path is totally different from the conventional bhajan-kirtan. etc. On the contrary, when one gets entangled in these rituals and ceremonies, one gets off the real Path.

When I tell you these things and ask you not to visit other saints, perhaps some of you may think, "Is Baba feeling jealous of others?" But I, being one without a second, have no rival; I am matchless. Being the One Reality, the question of rivalry does not arise for Me at all. If I am to be jealous at all, I will have to be jealous of My own self.

When a man sees an ant moving on the ground, will he ever feel jealous of it? Both the ant and the man move on a level on the ground, but there is a world of difference in their consciousness. The ant can never understand the intricacies of this machine age. The ant, the ordinary man, and Myself move on the same land, but there is as much difference between the consciousness of an ordinary man and Mine as there is between the consciousness of an ant and that of an ordinary man. Even in the animal kingdom, there is a vast difference between the consciousness of an ant and an elephant. Has the elephant ever purposely walked over the ant, feeling jealous of it?

One of My devotees expressed an ardent desire to see a particular *mast* of Bombay, while a few others appear much concerned about the claim made by one who asserts that he is the Avatar of the age. This makes Me wonder why you, of all the persons who regard Me as the Highest of the High, should run after other personalities?

In this connection, Baba referred to and had read out an excerpt from a letter wherein He had said: "No one is to be blamed. It is no one's fault. It was the Original Whim and the Original Urge of God that has started this Divine Game, which He also can enjoy at His own cost."

Baba continued:

I do not mean that there are no real saints in India. [Here Baba mentioned a few well-known saints of India.] There are also some real saints unknown to the masses. Compared with the known saints, these hidden saints are far more advanced. In this respect, however, I want to tell you with authority that both the hidden and the known saints have not realised the Self. Do not be misled by the use of certain words and phrases. If anyone addresses you as "dear Self," do not be under the impression that he has achieved the goal of Realisation.

The sum and substance of this long talk is that you either hold fast to My daaman only or leave Me altogether. Do not make any compromise. However, you are free to visit and pay homage to the shrines of My five Perfect Masters - Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj. Of My five Perfect Masters, four do not have any representatives. Only Upasni Maharaj has a representative. She is Godavari Mai. She has a very pure heart, and there is no equal to her in this respect. You can go to Sakori and pay your respects to her. She is very dear to Me. She loves Me very much. She is My beloved Yashoda.¹ This does not mean that My five Perfect Masters do not each have a Chargeman and a Circle. Invariably, without any exception, every Perfect Master must necessarily hand over his charge to one whom he makes as perfect as himself. Such a one is called the Chargeman of the Perfect Master.

Do not visit other places or saints, as you cannot distinguish between a real saint and an imitation. I also want you not to criticise or vilify anyone. If you happen to meet saints, real or imitation, by chance, you may pay respect to them, but do not run after them. If you have full faith in Me, stick with Me; otherwise leave Me now altogether.

After this, Baba posed a question: "Who will hold on to My daaman wholeheartedly till the end?" All those present raised their hands to express their wholehearted willingness.

At this juncture, one of the lovers said, "Baba, I tell others that you are the Avatar, but to be honest, I have no such conviction, though I crave it very much."

Beloved Baba asked him, "Have you come across anyone greater than Myself?" "No," replied the lover.

"Then why worry?" responded Baba. "Try to love Me more and more, but remember one thing: Never tell others what you do not feel yourself. Tell others only what you honestly take Me to be. I am anything and everything that one can honestly believe."

The lover further said, "Somehow or other my heart cannot accept the idea of Paramatma becoming and living as man on earth. I believe in Krishna, but only as an *aunsh* [part] of Paramatma. However, if, like Arjuna, I am blessed with *vishwarup darshan*,² I feel I will get the necessary conviction."

Hearing this, Baba smiled and said, "It was nothing short of weakness on My part as Krishna to have convinced Arjuna by exposing My identity as Paramatma through *vishwarup*."

"By itself," Baba continued, "any experience, small or great, ultimately amounts to zero when compared with God-Realisation. Some lovers in the West who regard Me as God incarnate write to Me about their rare experiences, but those too have no real importance. Although it is heartening to have experiences, it is very dangerous to attach too much importance to them and to indulge in them."

Before the members dispersed for tea, Baba remarked, "Have I not said in clear words what I have to say? I am sure that the points in question have been made sufficiently clear to you."

A devotee from Bombay expressed a wish to offer one thousand rupees at Baba's feet. He lovingly placed the amount before Baba. Baba decided to use this money for His work with the poor.

There were also some who spontaneously offered what little they could give. Baba directed that this amount be sent to a newly opened Centre and remarked, "I do not like to give money and expect work for Me in return. This is ridiculous. However, I am giving this money as *prasad*. Do not expect any more from Me for My work."

In the course of the discussion, He humorously remarked, "It is a fact that it is easier for My lovers to give their heads than to give money!" About attendance at Centres, Baba said, "If five hundred attend the meeting, it is well and good. If

you try your utmost and people do not come, do not lose heart. Even if there are five persons present at the meeting, take it that I will be there."

Baba further said, "Recently, I heard that among some of My workers, there has developed a considerable difference of opinion. Better you do not work for Me than develop such an attitude. I will appreciate your competitive spirit only in your surrender to Me and love for Me. To get yourself divided while doing My work shakes the very foundation of that work. That will defeat its very end. It is the height of hypocrisy to say, 'I alone can do Baba's work.'"

Those concerned were given the opportunity to vent their feelings and express their thoughts freely. Baba explained:

When you get divided, I and My work are set aside. You open a Centre to spread brotherhood, but first, see for yourselves how you behave among the group! If you cannot work together with concord, why open new Centres for me? If you want to further My cause, there is no escape but to become like dust in My work. There cannot be any compromise. Each of My lovers must become like dust. Then people of their own accord will flock around him, and his own life will radiate My message of love to others.

I do not object to having Centres. There, lovers of Baba can meet and exchange their ideas and feeling of love for Me. But there should be concord. There must be a spirit of giving in. Today, we must fix something - whether to have Centres or to dissolve them. The only solution is to become like dust in My work.

But what do you understand by becoming like dust? How will you become like dust? If you could do what I ask you to do, what else could you be but like dust? It is extremely difficult for you to do what I ask you to do. It is only possible when your heart is kindled with love for Me. If you cannot love Me as I ought to be loved, at least try to hold fast to My daaman. I will help you. Dust never complains even though we walk over it, trample upon it, or use it in any way we like. If a number of calamities befall you and still you keep a smiling face, this may lead you to become like dust. You can become like dust only if you possess the highest type

of love for Me. Becoming dust-like is the only link that would bring you together.

Referring to the older members of the group, Baba said:

As one grows old, one is possessed by a peculiar spirit of expectation. He feels that youngsters are purposely ignoring him or even hating him. My great expectation about you all, the young and old, is that you should not entertain any expectation at all. Let the Centres newly created by you all be your school. Remember that everyone has his own particular way of expressing his love for Me so try to behave like brothers. Let there be concord among yourselves. Try to accommodate one another. For the present, continue My work at the Centres as best as you can till the forthcoming sahavas congregation to be held in January-February 1958.

In the congregation, I will set definite principles. Those who want to follow Me will have to abide by these principles. For the coming sahavas programme, lovers will be coming from various parts of the world. It will be the most important phase of My incarnation. During the period of the sahavas, I shall work with full force. At that time, I will lay down certain definite principles, and they will be of real and lasting value. I intend to destroy the bindings of all superfluous ceremonies. The times when Jesus and Krishna lived were different; the present time is altogether different. I have to tell the people according to the needs of the time.

In the present atomic age, material progress has nearly reached its zenith, and this is but the shadow of the internal progress in the realm of spirituality.

In the congregation, I will tell you something very original. After this, there will be no more programmes of that kind. Do you know why I assumed this human form? During the sahavas congregation, the purpose of this incarnation will take shape. Even if you are indisposed or have some very important work, do not fail to attend the congregation of January-February 1958.

Baba further stated that He had decided to cancel His forthcoming darshan tour in U.P, Andhra Pradesh, and other places, as published previously. He said, "I do not wish that a mere picnic atmosphere should prevail in the congregation. To make all arrangements to My satisfaction, I need time. The mandali who stay near Me require sufficient time to make the necessary arrangement for all those attending the congregation, including the Westerners. That is not an easy job, so I have to cancel the proposed darshan tour."

In the end, Baba lovingly stressed again the points He had covered earlier. "It is a fact that I am God. I am the Highest of the High. I wish that those who raised their hands should hold fast to My daaman for good. There is no need for My lovers to visit other saints. Stick with Me even during the phase of 'humiliation.' Spread My message of love to all, and become like dust in Baba's work."

"WHY NOT LOVE ME DIRECTLY?"

On 2nd June 1957, another group of lovers from Surat, Navsari, and Bajwa was invited to be with Baba. He had specified in His letter that they should be Baba lovers who loved Baba and would obey Him. They were invited not to Guruprasad, though Baba was staying there, but to the Botanical Gardens at Ganeshkind, Poona. I wrote to Baba that I would not come to the above meeting, as I had accepted Godavari Mai as my Guru and took orders from her only. In reply, Eruch wrote me the following letter on 25th May 1957:

Your letter of the 23rd was read out to Beloved Baba. Baba felt proud of your determination to adhere to your Guru, who is also Baba's Beloved "Yashoda." Baba says that if by this time you are still ignorant of Baba's love for Godavari Mai, then know well now that Baba's love for Mai is too great for any expression and He loves her dearly. Baba has never told you, or anyone for that matter, to leave Godavari Mai and come to Baba.

Baba does not have any pity for your plight but feels amused to watch the workings of your mind and the consequent conflict of feelings in your heart. You must necessarily pass through all this until you become fully aware that Baba is no "Guru" or a "saint," but that He is the Avatar - the Ancient One - God incarnate in human form!

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

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

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

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

Baba says that this creation and its affairs are one big joke and that Baba is the Matchless Joker. Baba wants you not to worry in the least if you cannot come to Baba on 2nd June because He is always with you.

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

If, however, it is impossible for you to be near Baba on 2nd June, then do not brood over it and do not get trapped more and more by the self-created conflict within your mind. Just remember this much, Baba says, "Give to God that which is God's, and give to your Guru that which

is Guru's." Baba also wants you to remember well that Baba is Krishna and Godavari Mai is His beloved Yashoda and that Godavari Mai is matchlessly pure of heart. Baba would feel very happy and proud of you if you can obey Godavari Mai in all respects. How could your obedience to her ever displease Baba? If you could but obey your Guru implicitly in all respects willingly and cheerfully, only then would it be possible for you to know Baba as He really is.

Baba sends His Love to you.

Eruch

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

On receipt of Eruch's letter, I wrote to him on the 28th that I had decided to go to Matheran, where Godavari Mai was staying at that time, and take her permission for me to meet Baba. Eruch immediately replied on the 29th but before I present his letter, I would like to recount something so that Eruch's letter of the 29th will be better understood.

During the 1955 sahavas at Meherabad, Baba had selected a few lovers, of which I was one, to do the following: fast for seven days on a cup of milk per day; repeat Baba's name for twenty-four hours; not to sleep at all for seven days and nights (if sleep should overpower one, one was to sit in the corner of the room, lean against the wall, and doze but not allow the head to touch the floor); not leave the room for seven days; and take a mild purgative each night. I did this fast in Umreth, where Godavari Mai was performing a *yagna* (Hindu sacrificial ceremony). Baba sent word to Navsari that I should leave the fast after five days but continue to stay in the room for seven days. The telegram was redirected to me at Umreth but, as per Godavari Mai's order, I stepped out of the room after the five days' fast and seclusion.

Eruch's letter, dated 29th May 1957:

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

My dear, who am I to satisfy your difficulty and convince you about what and how I feel? Nevertheless, I may mention here that there is a world of difference between God and Guru. And this difference comes into play when we human beings start to play with the differences in the personalities of the Guru and God (Sakaar). Had there not been any difference, Kabir would never have given out the following couplet:

*Guru Govind dono khaday, kakay lagu pau.
Balihari Guru apne, jin Govind deo batai.*

In one breath, Kabir sings all praise for the Guru, who can show the "Govind";³ and in the same breath Kabir, very subtly, points out that all praise is due to that Guru who personally leads his disciple into the very presence of Govind. So, my dear, it now rests with you to draw out any meaning you choose according to your feelings. Personally, I think there is a difference between a Guru and God incarnate in the domain of duality, as long as we are ignorant of the Truth.

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

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

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

So far no one has checked you from following Mai. On the contrary, Beloved Baba wants all her lovers and followers to hold fast to her through thick and thin. But who has the courage to follow the hints frequently given by Baba? Why did you stand up in Meherabad wanting to fast as desired by Baba without first asking Mai's permission? Who forced you to go and ask Mai once you volunteered to undertake the fast? First of all, you ought not to have volunteered to do so, and secondly, when you took upon your shoulders the responsibility of following Baba's instructions, who told you to go to Mai for confirmation or change in the definite instructions given by Baba Himself?

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

Baba also wants you to know well that He loves Mai very much and that she is close to His heart of infinite Love. Baba would feel very happy if you love Mai and obey her wholeheartedly with undivided zeal and adoration. If you could do but this much, you will spiritually come to realise who Baba is. If you do not feel like coming to Baba on 2nd June, you could have frankly written to Baba; and He says He would have appreciated that very much and have even felt proud of your devotion to Mai, who is His beloved Yashoda. There was no need for you to go to Matheran to seek her permission expressly to come to Baba.

Now Baba says, even if you come to Baba directly, which you could have easily done, and had you shown your inability to follow Baba's instructions, if He were to give any to you, and had you conveyed the same directly to Baba, He would have greatly appreciated all this rather than all your childish fuss about things which you yourself do not understand. When you see Mai, Baba wants you to tell her that she is most dear to Baba and that Baba wants her lovers to hold fast to her under any circumstance. Also, convey Baba's love to Mai.

With affectionate regards to you,

Eruch

There may be Baba lovers today who are experiencing the same mental conflict I had at that time. Should one obey one's Guru or Baba, the Avatar of this age? One is in a dilemma about what to do when the order of the Guru contradicts Baba's order. In my case, my Guru asked me to come out of seclusion room though Baba's telegram had said to break the fast but remain in seclusion for seven days. One day, Baba solved my mental conflict. Baba, Eruch, and I were together, and Baba told me, "Imagine Eruch to be Godavari Mai. Now, your love goes to her but ultimately comes to me via Godavari Mai, as I, God, am seated in her also." Baba continued, "So, instead of your love coming to me via Godavari Mai, why not love Me directly?" Immediately, like a flash of lightning, it became crystal-clear that I should love Baba directly instead of Godavari Mai as a medium.

THE PROGRAMME OF SPRING, 1957

As brought out earlier, Baba had invited lovers from Navsari, Surat, and Bajwa to Poona on 2nd June 1957, and the meeting took place at the former residence of Dadi Kerawala at the Botanical Gardens. The warning from Baba that had been explained on the 19th of May to lovers from Bombay and Poona was again read out to them. In the end, Baba asked if all present accepted Baba as God in human form. All affirmed this except one elderly Baba lover from Navsari, who said he could not accept the concept that the infinite God could be bottled up in the form of Meher Baba. He said that he accepted Baba as a part of that infinite God. Baba was happy to hear what the old lover said honestly. Baba then asked him whether he accepted anyone greater than Baba. The old lover firmly said that he accepted Baba as the highest among the spiritually advanced persons. Baba was very happy to hear this.

I returned from Matheran after seeing Godavari Mai and went to Poona to meet Baba on the 9th of June 1957. One of the lovers from the Bombay group had offered Baba one thousand rupees when he visited Baba at Guruprasad on the 19th of May, and Baba had decided to use this money for work with the poor. Accordingly, on the 9th of June, two hundred children below fifteen years of age from poor families were brought to Baba. Baba bowed down to each one of them

and gave each a packet of sweets and a piece of cloth as prasad. Mani, in her Family Letter 9 of 18th June 1957, writes about this programme:

The poor children's programme on the 9th went off very well, and as always on such occasions, Baba looked wonderfully radiant. Though as usual we girls were not present at the actual programme, we could see from early morning the stream of Baba's devotees going by our cottage towards the mandali's quarters, while the line of vehicles outside the driveway kept multiplying. Then came the buses full of children - bright eyes and happy smiles barely showing above the bus windows and their united cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" was music. Baba returned at noon, leaning on the arms of Eruch and Meherjee and followed by a large number of the others, who had come for the occasion from Poona and other parts of India. Visible from a distance was the single flower garland around His neck, and not so visible was the dust of 200 pairs of little feet on His dear forehead. (Baba bowed down to each child).

The Poona Bhajan Mandali (devotional songs singing group) sang for Baba after the children's programme. I sat on the floor next to Baba on His left. For a long time, Baba talked to me about the difference between a Guru and the Avatar while the singing programme was going on. At first, He explained the difference between a Guru and a Sadguru. Anyone from whom you imbibe knowledge is a Guru - a teacher, but a Sadguru is a Perfect Master. He or she is a God-Realised person, unlike a Guru. The five Perfect Masters bring about the Advent of the Avatar at the end of seven hundred or fourteen hundred years. When the five Perfect Masters give their charge to the Avatar, they become nonfunctioning. After a Perfect Master drops his body, his spiritual powers remain around his tomb for about fifty years. Anyone who approaches the tomb of a Perfect Master with love and faith can derive material benefit but not spiritual benefit. Of the five Perfect Masters, one is the head, and he is called the Qutub-e-Irshad. His power to help devotees remains for seventy years after his demise and then gradually lessens. Anyone who approaches the tomb of the Avatar with love and faith derives not only material but spiritual benefit also.

Baba then asked me, "What is the state of mind of a Perfect Master?"

I replied, "A blank mind."

Baba retorted, "A blank mind is an idiot's mind." He went on to explain:

Suppose I keep a radio near Me and tune it to New York, I will hear the programme from New York. The sound waves from New York are here now, but your ears cannot receive them. Now, if you speak into the radio, your voice will not be heard in New York unless the radio is a radio cum transmitter. The radio can receive from only one station at a time. The Avatar has a Universal mind. While I am talking to you, I know what is going on in the mind of everyone seated here. I also know the minds of the people standing outside this room. I am conscious of everything going on in the minds of everyone in the universe. My Universal Mind receives from every being in the world and can transmit a thought to anyone in the world. That is the state of the mind of the Avatar.

OUR TRUE COMPANION: PRATAP AHIR'S STORY

Madhusudan Pund, whom every Baba lover in India knows, was singing. Pratap Ahir would always accompany Madhusudan on the harmonium. But, unfortunately, Pratap was not called for this programme. In his own words, Pratap relates this incident:

Once Baba held a meeting at the Botanical Gardens in Poona. Unfortunately, I was not called. The person who had made a list of invitees, though being a very close friend of mine and schooling with me in the same class, forgot to include my name. I really do not know how he did it, but he forgot to mention my name. When I saw the others going to the meeting, I felt it deeply hurt. I felt so upset that I went near the banks of a river and I had peculiar thoughts in my mind. I felt so sad that I had not been called for that meeting even after such close association with Baba for so many years.

As soon as the meeting began, it seems Baba asked, "Where is Pratap?" Everyone looked around, and they could not find me. They said that I had not come. The list of invitees was checked. My name was not found in it. Baba immediately sent a man to my house to call me. But, being

dismayed, I had left my home and gone to the river, wandering aimlessly. When the man came to my home, I was not to be found. After some time, I came back to my home and heard the news that Baba had called me. I rushed to the Botanical Gardens. Baba asked, "Why did you not come for the meeting?" I replied, "Baba, I was not invited." Baba enquired how this had happened. No one replied. Baba asked, "Who prepared the list of invitees?" Somebody said, "Digambar Gadekar, Baba."

Baba remarked, "Digambar is your best friend. You both studied together. How could he forget your name?" I kept quiet but was on the verge of crying. Baba then said, "Now forget about this. Remember that all your companions in this world will be there for some years only. But, I will be your companion till the end. I am your real companion."

Years have passed since this incident, and I have literally experienced in life that these words of Beloved Baba are very true.

Pratap met Baba for the first time on his birthday at Mahabaleshwar on the 16th of October 1950. Baba had invited the Poona Bhajan Mandali to Mahabaleshwar on the 24th of December 1950. Baba had asked for the photo and details of each one coming for the programme. They sang on the 24th and also on the 25th when Mehera's birthday was celebrated. Baba again called Pratap to Mahabaleshwar a few days later but this time alone. He was just a boy of thirteen then. Baba kissed and embraced Pratap many, many times and showered His love on him. This love has sustained Pratap through the rest of his life, and now he lives and sings for Baba.

Baba's stay in Guruprasad from the 18th of April 1957 came to a close as he returned to Meherazad on the 10th of June. Baba started early in the morning to avoid the mid-day heat and got to Meherazad in good time after a fairly comfortable journey.

SAHAVAS AND DARSHAN OF DECEMBER, 1957

Meher Baba decided to give darshan on 8th December, and so Sardar Raste sent a telegram to Maharani Shantadevi as follows: "Kindly grant permission to use Guruprasad from 9th to 11th December for Avatar Meher Baba. Hoping you will

avail of this divine opportunity of service to Meher Baba." The Maharani gave her permission, but since Sardar Raste had made a mistake in the dates, another telegram was sent asking for the bungalow from 7th to 9th of December. Permission was again granted.

Baba then asked Sardar Raste to inform Maharani Shantadevi that during His stay in Guruprasad, her family or guests should not be permitted to come and stay in Guruprasad. The Maharani very lovingly consented to this request. Even the Maharani herself was not permitted to come for darshan. Only after Baba had stayed in Guruprasad several times was the Maharani permitted to take His darshan. She obeyed Baba's order literally, and even when she was passing through Poona on her way to some other place, she would not come to see Baba. Once she was found standing outside the gates of her own bungalow, waiting for permission from Baba to enter. When Baba was informed about this, He was very pleased with her obedience and then permitted her to come for His darshan whenever she was passing through Poona.

K.K. Ramakrishnan was asked to arrange for the programme on the 8th of December. As requested by Baba in the morning, from eight to twelve noon there would be a sahavas (intimate companionship) between Baba and intimate families. Bhajans would form a part of the programme. From 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. selected persons would be allowed to meet Baba. Baba informed Ramakrishnan that He had no objection if families who had had sahavas in the morning came again in the evening. It was up to the managers to see that these families did not come in the way of the newcomers who were not permitted to come in the morning.

Songs composed by Madhusudan were sent to Baba and were read out to Him. Baba asked Ramakrishnan to inform Madhusudan that he should sing these songs at Guruprasad. Ramakrishnan informed Baba that he had a list of fifty-eight families for the morning programme, which would mean about two hundred and sixty persons including children. For the evening darshan programme, Ramakrishnan said he had a list of one hundred names, and the number of persons would be about six hundred to one thousand. Ramakrishnan was instructed that there should be no publicity for the darshan programme.

The first public programme to be held at Guruprasad was on the 8th of December 1957. The programme was from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., but people

began gathering outside the big gates early in the morning. When the gates were opened, Baba lovers rushed into the garden and then up the steps near the portico into the large hall. All wanted to sit near their Beloved.

When all had sat down on the floor and were anxiously waiting for Baba, He entered among loud cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!" A queue was formed, and each lover would go up to Baba and bow at His feet and then receive an embrace from Him. Madhusudan and his party sat to the left of Baba, and to the accompaniment of harmonium and tabla, they began to regale Baba with heart-touching songs. As each lover met the Beloved of his or her heart, He gave His love in abundance and selflessly. Baba dispensed to each lover His love-filled smile and presence, which they drank in with their tears. When the faucet of His love was turned on full, and He lifted the divine curtain just a wee bit, precious tears began to overflow from His lovers' hearts.

Among the four hundred or more lovers was a blind Bengali girl who came with her parents. Baba gave her special instructions to fast for forty days on milk, tea, coffee, and bananas, and during that period to repeat His name 1,001 times daily. She was told to participate in the February sahavas and to break the fast the day the sahavas started. He made clear to the girl and her parents that He did not perform miracles and they must not get the impression that by carrying out His instructions her sight would be restored. He said, "The eyes of man see things that are not worth seeing, and that which is Real is not seen by physical eyes. My instructions will help her to see inwardly what alone is worth seeing."

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DAY'S SAHAVAS, BY BAL NATU

Avatar Meher Baba graciously consented to give a day's sahavas to the families of Baba lovers in Poona and darshan to those who had recently heard of Him and were keenly interested in His work. The sahavas was arranged on 8th December 1957 from 8:00 A.M. to 12 noon and darshan was given from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. on the same day. The entire programme was arranged at Guruprasad.

Baba lovers assembled in the palatial Guruprasad by 7:30 A.M. A homely atmosphere was the outstanding feature of this gathering. All were happy and cheerful, as the long-awaited moment of Beloved Baba's arrival approached. At the stroke of eight, Baba's car rolled up to the porch of Guruprasad. With a cheerful smile, Baba got down from the car. He wore His favourite pink coat over

a white sadra and yellow silken trousers. The eyes of all were focused on Baba as He flashed a radiant smile. With two sticks in His hands to support Him, Baba ascended the steps and slowly walked over the specially prepared carpet decorated with flowers and petals of roses.

About four hundred persons, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, stood up silently in the big hall of Guruprasad to welcome Baba. Beloved Baba asked all to sit at ease and not to make any haste in placing their offerings before Him. He had previously instructed that the family atmosphere should be maintained throughout the morning programme, and one did indeed feel that the different families formed one big Baba family.

At the beginning of a programme, Baba is always ready with His sparkling wit or humour that makes all smile and forget their worries about the world. On this day, when everyone was seated, Beloved Baba remarked, "I know everyone and everything, but I do not know about those who are now near Me! So let each member of every family be introduced to Me." Thus, Baba indirectly offered the opportunity of personal contact to each one in the gathering, including the babes in arms. One by one all were introduced to Baba, and He spontaneously responded with love to one and all. Baba patted some, embraced a few, and bathed all with His loving glance. All felt blessed.

When one lover was introduced to Him, someone said, "Baba, nowadays, he is suffering from eye trouble. It is hoped that he will be cured of this defect before the ensuing sahavas in February 1958." Baba replied, "All those in this hall have defective sight! For with your eyes you see things that are not worth seeing. With the real sight, you see Me everywhere."

Baba contacted each and every member, the first to the last, with the same warmth of love. Indeed, He is the unbounded and unconditioned Love Divine. At the end, Baba remarked, "Today I am happy, for all of you are introduced to Me." And with a loving smile, He enquired, "But am I introduced to anyone as I should be? Why? I am Infinitely Infinite."

All took their seats and were asked to maintain silence during the recitation of the Parvardigar Prayer. The Marathi version of the prayer, which was originally dictated by Baba in English at Dehra Dun in August 1953, was recited aloud.

When the recitation was over, Beloved Baba with his eloquent gestures, which Eruch interpreted, was pleased to convey the following:

Eternally God is the only One never changing. Everything else changes. It is all a passing show. Yesterday has passed by; today will pass off, but God was, is, and ever will be. Today you are a grown up person; but once you were a child. Some years hence you will become old, drop the body; then you will be born again and will have another body. Many a birth and many a death pass by; God alone remains forever and ever.

The mind persists through birth and through death, in spite of and in and through its changing vicissitudes. If the mind goes away, God reveals Himself; and as long as one is not conscious of God as God, mind persists. When the mind goes, God comes. It can also melt away through My Grace; but in order to be worthy of this Grace, you must have obedience, which consists in acting implicitly according to my wishes.

There are four types of obedience.

1. Obedience of a soldier, or patriotic obedience;
2. Obedience of a servant, or paid obedience;
3. Obedience of a slave, or compulsory obedience;
4. Obedience of a lover, or willing obedience:

In patriotic obedience, the soldier carries out the order of the commander instantaneously. In paid obedience, there is the expectation of monetary return. The more the salary, the quicker and louder is the "Yes, sir." Compulsory obedience is against one's own will. Willing obedience is inspired by wholehearted love and it is expressed in four stages.

Suppose a mother is asked by the Master to cut her son. The first stage of willing obedience is characterised by trial. She tries to obey; she gets up rather reluctantly but collapses on the ground before she performs the will of the Beloved. She again makes an effort and uses her discrimination, giving only a slight and superficial cut on his person. Her discrimination has here modified the original order in her own interest.

The second stage is characterised by literal obedience. Here the mother cuts her son but is unhappy about it. It is like taking a bitter medicine such as castor oil, without relishing it.

In the third stage, the lover seeks the pleasure of the Master. Here the mother cuts her son in order to please the Master and is pleased in doing so.

The fourth, which in a sense is not a stage, consists of absolute obedience. Suppose the Master tells the mother that her son, who is visible to others, is absent; her absolute obedience will convert the presence of the son into the actually experienced absence of the son. She will not see him at all, though he is there in front of her. Very, very few can thus obey the Master with absolute faith.

Beloved Baba concluded this discourse with a smile, saying, "Don't be afraid. Baba is not going to ask anyone to cut anybody! That was just a simile. 'To cut' is to remain detached. Now it is time for refreshments, and there is good news: you will have ladoos [sweet confections] too. But remember, to obey Me is not as easy as eating ladoos." There was a ripple of laughter as the members dispersed from the hall.

While most of the Baba lovers were engaged in doing full justice to the refreshments, Baba called one of his lovers from North India who was permitted to come for Baba's darshan at Poona. He was Professor A. K. Hazra.⁴

By this time most of the Baba lovers had returned to the hall, and Baba asked the Poona Bhajan Mandali to begin their singing programme. This small group entertained Baba with sweet bhajans and meaningful ghazals. Most of the songs were composed on Beloved Baba's Divinity. At the end of a Hindi song referring to the state of a Sadguru, Baba conveyed the following: "Now all of you are happy to hear the sweet notes of the musical instruments and the melodious voice of the singers. As for Me, I am Myself everything - the drum and the harmonium, the notes and the tunes, the singers and the listeners too. I am everything and in everything."

Then, Baba asked one of His lovers sitting beside Him whether he had understood what Baba had explained about His experience. The prompt and frank reply was that he just heard the words and nothing more. At this Baba smiled and continued, "Such is the state of consciousness of One in the Sadguru state.' It is all *sahaj* [effortless, spontaneous]. There is no scope for thought since the Sadguru becomes knowledge itself. However, though I am everything and in everything, the expression of this partial awareness is occasional."

To make it clearer, Baba added, "You know that you exist in all parts of your body, but you are not aware all the time of being in each part of the body. Only sometimes do you say, 'This is my nose; this is my eye.' You are your little finger and are in it. Yet ordinarily you do not become aware of it as yours. But, if the little finger is cut off, you become aware of it as 'mine.' The Sadguru also constantly experiences himself in everything and as everything, and this experience is immediate and spontaneous for him; it is not a product of thought, just in the same way as your experience of being in the little finger. It is *sahaj*."

The bhajan programme continued. Beloved Baba appeared pleased and appreciated the performance of the singers. At about ten minutes to twelve there was Arti, at the end of which, for some moments, there was complete silence in the hall. Such silent moments with the Silent One awaken the heart through wordless communion with the Master. Beloved Baba then left Guruprasad for lunch.

He returned to Guruprasad at about 3:00 P.M. and held a small group meeting of Baba workers in Poona. He expressed His happiness about the work they were doing through the Centre. At the same time, He remarked that the heart is the real Centre. To this group, Baba said, "I love all; but I do not necessarily need the rich, the respectable, and the intelligent for My work. I need the simple, common people irrespective of their weaknesses. Simple-hearted fishermen gathered around Jesus; Krishna was happy in the company of lighthearted *gopals* - the cowherd companions. Was not Pendya, a lame *gopal*, very dear to Krishna? I am happy in your company, for it is only love that matters and not position."

About His lovers in the West, Baba remarked, "They too are equally dear to Me. Their spirit of obedience is admirable. Though prepared to come all the way to India by a chartered plane even for a brief *sahavas*, they have now willingly agreed to cancel their coming in order to meet My wishes. However, in spite of the pain in My hip joint, the *sahavas* programme for My lovers in India will definitely take place in February 1958. Pain or no pain, *sahavas* is definite. Pain has fallen in love with Me. It has become a Baba lover. So Baba cannot ask the pain to leave."

Baba resumed the former discourses. He said, "What do you understand when I say that your heart should become a Baba Centre? In your bhajans, you sing of Me as being the Ancient One. I am the Ancient One. But you have not

finished your part of the bargain merely by singing about Me. You have to live up to what you say or sing; this is the true meaning of your being My Centre. You must be very careful in your everyday life, about your thoughts, words, and deeds. Negligence in this respect will be dishonoring Me."

With a smile on His face, Baba continued, "One good thing that is common to you all is that you love Me, and the second is that you quarrel among yourselves." At this; there was a wave of laughter among those present. One of the workers said, "Baba, now there is an end to our quarrels. We work as a team." Baba appeared pleased to hear this but asked whether others had to say anything in this matter. At this one of the workers stood up and said, "To be frank, Baba, I wish to bring to your notice that there are still some honest differences of opinion, as regards the nature of work that we are doing at the Centre."

"Yes, go on," encouraged Baba.

The worker continued, "Some from our group are of the opinion that You being the Avatar, You alone can do the Avataric work. So they think that there is no need for them to work, in the way it is being done through the Centre."

"But what do you personally think about this?" asked Baba.

The worker replied, "I like to run the Centre and thus spread Your name and message of Love and Truth to the people."

Hearing this, Baba said, "I am pleased with this frank discussion. Be what you are, and do what you feel best in My love. If some of you believe in Me as the Avatar, it is as it should be. But you should honestly feel it with all your heart. Now, if you take Me to be the Avatar, I pervade and become all beings, including you all. Then it naturally follows that those who believe Me to be the Ancient One must work, since I Myself work. For one who really has the irrevocable conviction that I am the Highest of the High, work is no work. It all becomes *sahaj*."

Baba further explained:

Work means to love Baba wholeheartedly; you should get lost in it, so much so that you forget yourself completely. But such a love is a gift rarely received.

If you do not have such love, obey me implicitly. Carry out my orders regardless of any comments from others. And you know what pleases Me.

If this also is not possible, then try, try your very best to remember Me, and thus love Baba. Run Meher Centres, sing bhajans and tell others about Me and My messages. And I repeat, be sincere and honest to act according to what you preach.

I know I am the Highest of the High. So I say unto you: "Love Me, love Me." This is the only thing that matters. The Law says, "Live for others." I, being the One without a second, pervade all, including the others. So it is quite in conformity with the Law when I say, "Love Me." You all are blessed to have come into My personal contact, but make the most of it.

Much can be said and will be left unsaid about "work"; however, for the present, you must be very particular up to 31st March 1958 about observing the following orders mentioned in the recent Life Circular:

1. Be determined to obey Baba.
2. Abstain from lustful actions.
3. Be honest. Do not deceive or give false hopes to anyone.
- 4; Don't hurt the feelings of others.

It was about 4:00 P.M., and one of the mandali told Baba that the people were waiting outside for His darshan. Baba left the room and occupied the decorated seat in front of the hall of Guruprasad. On His right side, the local bhajan party was singing bhajans. Devotees and interested people, both men and women, were alternately led into Beloved Baba's presence. Each one had an opportunity to have a close darshan of Baba. The satisfaction and joy of this contact were clearly visible on the faces of all.

Every precaution was taken to prevent anybody from touching Baba's person. But Baba Himself, in His unbounded mercy and compassion, allowed the devotees to touch His feet. While meeting those love-hungry souls, Baba was lovingly sensitive to the spiritual needs of some and asked them to follow certain instructions.

Avatar Meher Baba's vibrant presence transmitted silent messages of love with the aspiring and deserving souls gathered in Guruprasad. At about 6:00 P.M., Baba lovers of Poona devotionally performed Baba's Arti. Beloved Baba was lifted in a chair and brought near the car. After a few handshakes and the flash of

Baba's loving smile, the car drove off for Pimpalgaon (Meherazad), amidst the loud cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!"

REMINISCENCES, BY K.K. RAMAKRISHNAN

In 1957, I travelled to five different houses of Baba lovers in Poona with Baba. In those days an epidemic of flu was rampant in Poona. While I was in the car with Baba, He asked me to take two APC [aspirin-phenacetin-caffeine] tablets daily for a month to prevent me from getting flu. I was shocked. I was not suffering from flu at the time, but in obedience to His order, I began taking the tablets. After a few days, I felt some sort of uneasiness in my chest, and I was wondering whether it was right for me to take such a pill daily for such a length of time. But I knew it was an order of the God-Man and that I should obey His instructions. So I continued to take the tablets for the period indicated by Baba. I am sure it did me good. We should always be sure to obey whatever instructions we may receive from Baba. We must implicitly carry it out whether the order appeals to us or not.

In Guruprasad when Baba gave darshan, all kinds of people came to Him, rich and poor, high and low, people from various communities, they all came and sat with Baba, and He gave them darshan. At times, some prominent personalities also came to see Baba. If they were in a hurry to return, we as the workers would give them preference, take them early to Baba, and allow them to go instead of standing in the long queue. At times, some people may have come late, and they might not have had a chance to sit near Baba, and so we would have to take them to Baba. This attitude on the part of the workers might have created in the minds of some that Baba gives preferential treatment to prominent people and the rich people.

On one occasion when Baba was sitting on the front porch of Guruprasad bungalow, most of His lovers were sitting around Him and Baba was giving darshan. At that time Baba made a remark: "To Me, *maharani* and *mehetrani* are the same." *Maharani* means a queen, and *mehetrani* means sweeper woman. It is surprising that the day that Baba made this remark, in the afternoon when Baba was giving darshan, I saw that on one side of Baba was seated Maharani Shantadevi and on the other side was a mehetrani. This was not intentionally done. Guruprasad belongs to Maharani Shantadevi, and she used to sit very close

to Baba. She loves Baba very much, and Baba loved her too. But the mehetrani seated on the other side of Baba was accidental.

The scene struck me very much because only in the morning Baba had remarked that Maharani and mehetrani were both same to Him. Probably this remark must have been made in response to some stray thought in the mind of someone in the morning. So in the afternoon, it was demonstrated by Baba sitting in between the Maharani on one side and a mehetrani on the other. It was a very wonderful scene which I very often remember and very often explain to people in our Centre of how Baba loved all equally irrespective of their position in the world.

I remember another incident that happened during Baba's darshan programme at Guruprasad. A prominent personality from Delhi - I think he was a Member of Parliament and even the Governor of a state for some time - loved Baba, and he used to come to Poona and Ahmednagar whenever Baba allowed people to meet Him. Whenever he came to Poona, he used to be accompanied by one of his distant relations, a beautiful woman. He was married and had two children. I knew the family and was a little attracted towards the woman. One day when she was before Baba, He passed a peculiar remark while looking at me. He said, "All that glitters is not gold. All that shines is not silver." Then with a wink in His eye and a peculiar smile, He said, "Rotten tomato."

At that time, I felt that this remark was meant for me and that I must not even mentally be drawn or be attracted towards anyone or anything when I loved Baba. To love God-Baba is to cease loving everything else and everyone else. One has to love God above everything else. This does not mean that we have to hate everyone and everything. It only means that when one loves God, one has to see His presence in everyone and should not allow oneself to be influenced by infatuation and drawn to others by the compulsions of our low desires. We should love everyone and serve each other, seeing His presence in everyone.

One day, a young man from South India came to see Baba. He wished to recite a Sanskrit poem before Baba. He said that he had composed it to express his love and glory for Beloved Baba. Baba allowed him to recite it, as He used to do when somebody wanted to sing a song before Him or to express something before Him. Baba used to permit such things. So this man recited a Sanskrit verse, and

Baba liked it very much. And then, looking at me, Baba asked, "How did you like it?" Probably Baba wanted me to simply admire it, but I knew that the particular verse he had recited was from a book. I had learned that verse, and it was one of the verses I used to sing in praise of God. So when Baba asked me how I liked it, I said, "Baba it is a verse from such and such a book."

At that time Baba made such a gesture as if telling me that I was a fool. Baba then made that symbolic circle with His fingers and highly appreciated the verse the man had recited. That man was a little annoyed and hurt when I said that the verse was not written by him. He even repudiated the statement that I had made. He asserted that he had written it himself. After some time, all the Baba lovers left the place, and I think we were sitting with Baba in the mandali's room. At that time Baba asked me, "What are you thinking?" I told Baba that there was a conflict in my mind between the truth and love. "When You asked me, I said the truth: that the verse was not written by that man but was from a book that I know." Baba replied, "Don't worry now. Forget it."

This incident had a great significance in the sense that we learned how Baba behaved with various kinds of people. I think Baba literally called me a fool at that time. I feel that Baba considered only love and through various ways tried to draw people towards Him. As the Perfect Master, as the all-knowing God-Man, He knew well that that man had not composed that verse, and it was not necessary for me to point out to Baba that he was telling a lie. What Baba probably wanted was that I should simply admire the recitation along with Him and thereby that man would feel very happy and would continue to love Him more and more. At the same time, he would have realised that he had told a lie. I learned from this incident the knack of the God-Man and His way of dealing with various kinds of people. Even when a person tells a lie, He takes it as truth and admires the person and gradually awakens him to the true approach he should have made to God.

One day, some learned scholars from Poona visited Baba to pay their homage to Him. One of them was an M.A. Ph.D. from London. They asked Baba various questions. Beloved Baba in the course of the conversation explained to them many concepts, answering their questions. But the remark Baba made was very fascinating - He said, "Intellectual giants are pygmies before the lovers of

God." People were coming to Baba who thought that they were very wise and knowledgeable and wanted to show off their greatness in His presence instead of silently receiving His love and grace and being benefited when they had the fortune of being with Him physically. But Beloved Baba, through His compassion and love, changed their attitude. He would listen to their questions and very seriously answer them, but at the same time, He would make remarks that went deep in to their hearts.

All our intellectual attainments in this world and all the wisdom of the world we may possess have no place in the path of love. In love, we have to unlearn what we have learned. Self-lost is God found. So long as we are dominated by the importance of our self, we can never have entry into the lane of love.

During Baba's summer stay in Poona, sometimes He used to allow us to be with Him on holidays and Sundays for some time. On some occasions, Beloved Baba used to give a list of the persons to be called. Sometimes He used to tell me to call the workers of the Poona Baba Centre or sometimes Poona Baba lover families. He was very specific about whom He wanted to call. I was allowed to suggest to Him someone I felt was left out. Once Baba gave me a list of persons to be called on a Sunday and be with Him for a few hours in the morning. I informed them accordingly.

All of them came and enjoyed Baba's company and went back home. Then I reminded Baba that if some of the intimate persons who were not called would come to know that others were called, would feel hurt. I, as a Baba worker got into a lot of trouble when some Baba lovers felt that some had been given preference and some not. So when I told Baba that a few people had been left out and that they might feel hurt, Baba said, "All right, call them at two-thirty in the afternoon. I will just see them. I will embrace them and send them back." Accordingly, I informed all of them to be in Guruprasad at two o'clock so that they could be with Baba exactly at two-thirty.

At about one o'clock Baba was feeling not too well, and He told me, "You have called them. They will come. I'm not in a mood to see them. Why not try and cancel the programme? Somehow ask them to go back." I told Baba that that was very difficult to do when they came to Guruprasad. Baba suggested an alternative. He asked me to get some money from Pendu and take the Baba lovers

to the railway station and offer them ice cream and then ask them to return home. I agreed with Baba's suggestion.

Pendu gave me some money, but as I was going out of Guruprasad, most of the invited people were at the gate. Naturally, Baba was compelled to give them darshan. He embraced them. Then I told Baba that I am now going to give them ice cream. Thus they had both, Beloved Baba's embrace and the ice cream. I remember this occasion, how Baba sometimes tried to play hide and seek with His lovers and how the lovers got more of His love in this way.

1958

ERUCH'S LETTER TO GADEKAR

On 5th April 1958, Eruch wrote from Mahabaleshwar the following letter to Gadekar:

Beloved Baba directs me to let you know His wish to spend some days in Poona on and from 30th April prior to His leaving India for the USA sahas. Baba will be in Mahabaleshwar until 29th April. On 30th April, He will leave Mahabaleshwar in the morning to reach Poona, stay there for a fortnight, then go to Bombay on 13th May to fly for the USA on the 15th night. Baba likes to spend His days in Poona Guruprasad bungalow if you can manage to get it easily, conveniently, and without undue pressure on anyone. Try if Sardar Raste Saheb can get Guruprasad for Baba's stay with His group from 30th April to 13th May 1958, both days inclusive. Obviously, Baba would want none to disturb Him during His stay in Guruprasad if the bungalow is made available for His stay by Maharani Saheb.

Baba wants you to do the needful in this respect and do not worry if the bungalow is NOT made available. In which case, Baba and party will stay at Ganeshkind or elsewhere in Poona. But, if Maharani Saheb permits the use of Guruprasad, then it should be on condition, that none else should be permitted to stay in the bungalow except Baba and His group of followers. If Maharani Saheb agrees to this wish of Baba's, then He would feel happy and stay in Guruprasad from 30th April to 13th May 1958 undisturbed.

The permission was granted, and so Baba stayed in Guruprasad from the 30th of April and left on the 13th of May for Bombay (Mumbai). His stay in Guruprasad was undisturbed.

Baba returned from the West to arrive in Bombay on the 8th of June. He stayed for a day at Arnavaz and Nariman Dadachanji's home and then came to Poona for a short stay in Guruprasad. On the first day of His stay, the brother of Maharani Shantadevi came to Guruprasad and wanted a room for his stay. Baba immediately vacated the bungalow and stayed at Ganeshkind cottage in Poona, to return to Meherabad on the 14th of June 1958.

Baba remained in strict seclusion except on the 10th of July, when He called a meeting of some Baba lovers at Meherabad and distributed His Universal Message to the world. Invariably, after a particular period of work or seclusion, Baba would move from the scene of the work, even for just a few days, usually saying it was a change and for rest. And so, after this severe period of seclusion, Baba left for a stay at Guruprasad on or about the 7th of December 1958.

FAMILY LETTER 25 (11th JANUARY 1959), BY MANI S. IRANI ;

We're once again at Guruprasad, the place often graced with the Beloved's presence, and once again offered with love by the Rani for His stay in Poona. It seems odd that we should feel so at home in this palatial house with its spacious rooms, high ceilings in white and gold, its marble statues and fountain - but perhaps that is because of the singularly light and bright atmosphere of this house where we continue to live our simple ashram life with astonishing ease. Once again there was qawwali singing and arti in the big drawing room where a restricted number of Baba lovers gathered at the feet of their Master. Many more who were not allowed to seek His darshan till after 15th January will be able to do so, on the 17th - the day fixed by Baba to give His Poona lovers the longed for opportunity of seeing Him before our leaving for Pimpalgaon on the 19th.

Soon our stay of one month in Poona, for the intended change and rest after His long seclusion, will be over. Though undoubtedly there was the "change," there has been little evidence of the "rest" darling Baba talked of having, with some matter or another constantly cropping up and needing His attention and guidance. As He said the other day, with a tired sigh but not quite without twinkle in His eye, "The poor Avatar can never have a holiday."

The 24th and 25th were celebrated en famille in happy occasion of Mehera's birthday and one of our Beloved's ancient birthdays. All the love that poured in from His Western family through Christmas greetings in the beautiful cards and cables, as well as that which was sent in silence, was received - and Baba sends His eternal love to you each.

A happy BABA-Year to us all, and may we have His grace to love Him more. I remember Baba saying once that it is not so difficult to receive His grace as to recognise it in the form in which it comes disguised. This is a little prayer we read in a book.

"My soul is like a rusty lock,
Oil it with Thy grace.
And rub it, rub it, rub it, Lord
Until I see Thy Face."

May His love teach us to accept the "rub" with the oil.

With much love—
[Signed] Mani

BAL MEETS THE MAHARANI, BY BAL NATU

One day, Baba called me during His 1958 stay at Guruprasad. I thought the purpose of Baba calling me must be about some book or publication. Instead, I was quite surprised when Baba said, "Will you do some work for Me?" I replied, "Of course, Baba." Baba then said, "I want you to go to Baroda and meet Maharani Shantadevi and ask her if she would permit only Me to stay in Guruprasad and not allow any of her relatives to come and stay in Guruprasad while I am here."

This stunned me completely. By nature, I am a very shy person and hardly travel alone. Now, to travel to Baroda alone and to meet the queen was something much beyond my capacity. Yet the words "Yes, Baba" tumbled out of my mouth, but very slowly. I left Poona and reached Bombay railway station. Not knowing when the first train would leave for Baroda, I looked up the timetable at the Central station. To my surprise, I found that there was no such station. I knew Baroda is a huge city wondered why it was not in the railway timetable. On inquiry, I was told that Baroda city is now called Vadodara and that a train was about to leave for Vadodara. I hurried to the train, but it was packed like sardines.

There was no choice left for me but to entrain and sit on the floor on a mat. After some hours, the train steamed into Vadodara station.

After freshening up, picking up courage, I hired a three-wheeler autorickshaw and boldly asked the driver to take me to the Lakshmi Vilas Palace. On reaching the Palace, I was told that Maharani Shantadevi had gone to Bombay. I heaved a sigh of relief, as I was very nervous about meeting her and what I would talk to her about. Lest I forget what Baba had asked me to tell her, I had written it out and had decided to give the paper to her instead of talking to her. I returned to the station and caught the first available train to Bombay. Now I was in a dilemma as to whether I should return to Poona without meeting the Maharani or meet her in Bombay and give her Baba's message.

I got off at Dadar station and, not knowing the Bombay roads, with great difficulty reached Nariman Dadachanji's home. I related the whole episode to Nariman. He suggested that he would phone Eruch at Guruprasad and ask him what should be my line of action now. Eruch's reply was, "Baba says to finish the work given to Bal Natu and then return to Guruprasad."

With difficulty, I found Jai Mahal palace where Maharani Shantadevi was staying. Feeling very nervous, I met her secretary. He directed me to another secretary. I spoke boldly to him, saying I had a message from Avatar Meher Baba for the Maharani and that I would like to meet her. Though I was shivering in my shoes, I managed to talk boldly to the secretary. I was asked to wait while a message was sent to the Maharani, who promptly called me. I was given a red-carpet treatment when I got the Maharani's reply to come and meet her. When I stood before her, she asked me, "What is Meher Baba's message?" I shyly took out the paper on which I had written Baba's message and read it out to her. She agreed to Baba's request and conveyed her love to Baba. I returned to Guruprasad in the evening feeling very happy about my actions.

When I reached Guruprasad, Baba had retired to his room, and so I met Him the next morning. I was very proud of what I had done and told Baba about the whole episode. I expected all praises from Baba for the bravery I had performed in meeting the Maharani and conveying Baba's message to her. But, on the contrary, Baba turned such a cold shoulder to what I had said and did not even comment on my successful mission. Retrospectively, I feel that the reason Baba did not respond to my daring courage in travelling alone and meeting the Maharani was

that I had been very proud of myself. My ego had definitely inflated. If Baba had appreciated what I had done, I am sure it would have added a big feather in my ego cap.

MRS. KHANNA TELLS HER STORY

I came to know about Meher Baba from Prakashvati and Kishen Singh of Dehra Dun. They used to have weekly kirtan (bhajans) at their place, and they invited us, as we were their neighbours. These kirtans inspired me very much, and I developed a love for Baba even though I had not met Him. In 1958, both Kishen Singh and Prakashvati were going to Poona to meet Baba at Guruprasad, and they invited me to go with them. I was not married then, and my father knew that I was in safe hands and so permitted me to go along.

We reached Guruprasad, and when it was my turn to bow down at the feet of Baba, there was the tremendous impact of His love, and momentarily I forgot where I was. As I rose up after bowing down to Him, I felt I had never touched such lovely feet in my life. Since I am fond of tea, I had brought a packet of tea to give to Baba as a token of my love for Him. He accepted the packet and was very pleased with it. The expression of love and gratitude on His face brought tears to my eyes. I had never seen any man from whom love simply flowed like a river in spate, irrespective of the person who received it. That day I could feel the difference between the love of my parents and Baba's love for me. His love was unselfish, pure and divine.

BABA FORGIVES MULOG

Meher Baba's father, Sheriarji, had a toddy shop in Kasba Peth, a neighbourhood of Poona. Toddy is the sap of the palm tree fruit, a cheap drink not of strong alcoholic content. Merwan, when He was returning to normal worldly consciousness from His super-conscious state between 1914 and 1921, worked in His father's toddy shop washing the toddy bottles, sweeping the floor, and serving customers. Merwan used to urge His customers, who were largely the poor of the city, to drink moderately and often urged them to abstain.

Sheriarji, when he was becoming old, could not go to the forest for the auction of the palm trees. To assist him, he kept with him a young Irani boy named Mulog Irani. Mulog would go for the auctions and would help Sheriarji with

his business. After working for some time, he thought he would cheat Sheriarji and take over the flourishing business for himself. He planned out a strategy. He invited Sheriarji to his house for dinner. When Sheriarji was about to leave, Mulog asked Sheriarji to sign a paper over which he had put a blotting paper so that Sheriarji could not read what was written on it. Sheriarji, trusting Mulog, signed the paper without reading its contents. He thought it was an authority given to Mulog to go for the auction of the palm trees on his behalf. On the next day, Sheriarji was surprised to learn that Mulog was now the sole owner of the toddy shop and everything that was in it.

Sheriarji, who constantly repeated "Yezdan," one of the names of God, went home and told his wife, Shireen, about what Mulog had done. Shireen was very angry and told Sheriarji that they should go to court. A lawyer was engaged by them. In court, Sheriarji talked so very highly of Mulog and his sincerity that it shocked the others. Sheriarji later said that Mulog would have to suffer a lot in the future and that is why he treated him lovingly.

One day when Mani came back from school, she found the house unusually silent. Shireen told her that they had lost the case. Hearing this, Sheriarji said, "We have won long ago and not lost anything." A few days later, Sheriarji wrote a letter to Mulog: "I am old, while you are young. I forgive you, but now you ask God to forgive you." He did not get a reply. Mulog flourished in his business, and not only bought another horse carriage but even added an extra floor to his house.

In 1958, long after Sheriarji and Shireen had passed away, Baba was giving darshan on the verandah of Guruprasad. The women mandali were not on the verandah with Baba, but they would peep through the clear part of huge glass windows, which were embossed with beautiful patterns. Mani says that she saw an Irani woman come up the steps but could not recognise her. The woman came and stood in front of Baba but with no expression on her face. She stared at Baba for a few moments and then fell on His knees, sobbing. Baba very lovingly pressed her head on His lap. After she got up and was herself again, she said to Baba, "You will have to forgive him. He says he cannot leave his body before God forgives him."

Baba looked far away for a while. He then raised His hand to forgive. She now stood up, looked at Baba, and left without bowing to Baba. The mandali later heard that her husband, Mulog, died a few hours after Baba had forgiven

him, Mulog had remembered Sheriarji's words, "I forgive you, but now you ask God to forgive you." On his deathbed, he intuitively felt Meher Baba was God and so had sent his wife to Baba to ask for forgiveness. Like an enormous wave of the ocean that strikes the shore and, when it recedes, leaves no trace in the sand, for it carries away everything in its vastness, Baba, in His unbounded mercy, forgave Mulog and left him a clean slate.

DUST AT HIS FEET, BY K. K. RAMAKRISHNAN

Beloved Baba used to often quote Hafiz to impress on us the clear picture of the life of surrender of a lover of God. "Become dust at the feet of the Perfect Master." What does this mean? It means humility in its naked form. One who surrenders to the God-Man obeys the Master implicitly without questioning. He never thinks. His mind never functions in his love for God. His thought has ceased to operate. Dust does not question when we stamp over it, when we spit on it or do whatever we may with it. In a life of obedience to a Perfect Master or the Avatar, one has to live such a life of self-effacing humility that one's thoughts, words, and deeds are at all times in tune to His will and wish and thus unconscious of one's own self.

We were sitting in a sort of a semicircle in front of Baba. All of a sudden He asked me, "Have you surrendered to Me?" "Yes, Baba" was the spontaneous answer that came from my mouth. Beloved Baba made a gesture of utmost surprise, making that symbolical circle with His thumb and forefinger as if it were the strangest news He'd ever heard. Then, in a thoughtful mood, He began asking the mandali the same question one after another. "No, Baba!" was the invariable answer from each one.

I was stupefied. Strange, I thought. These people who have been with Him for many years, who live in obedience to His orders all the time and serve Him ceaselessly, those who have left everything and followed Him - if they have not surrendered to Him, who else could? I wondered whether they were making fun of me. Fun in the presence of God? Such thoughts began moving fast within my mind. When all had said no to His question, Baba turned to us and said, "I am happy, at least one has surrendered to Me." I did not say anything. But what I had said in answer to His question seemed to me to be true then. It might have been a desire within, and I was unconscious of its implications. In any case, for the

mandali to say that they had not surrendered to Him appeared to be unbelievable, and it has remained an enigma to me since then.

PLAYING DEAD FOR BABA, BY DR. G.S.N. MOORTY

Meher Baba rightly called Dr. G.S.N. Moorthy "the talkative disciple of the Silent Master." Having travelled to every nook and corner of India, Dr. Moorthy talked both to individuals and to the masses, and his speeches left his listeners spellbound, not because of the speaker's intellectual glibness on spiritual subjects or familiarity with the great scriptures, but because Baba's love poured out through his talks. The narrative now continues in G.S.N. Moorthy's words.

On 11th December 1958, in the morning at about 8:00 A.M., Baba called a small group of lovers who were readily available at Guruprasad and said: "I am too tired. The burden of the whole universe weighs heavily upon My shoulders. I want to feel refreshed and relaxed. I wish those of you who are present here now to make Me laugh and lighten My burden by performing a short, humorous drama in the afternoon." Pukar, Baboo Ram Prasad, Heera, Yadav, Dr. Bharucha, Gajwani, Kishan Singh, and Dhake Phalkar, who were present on occasion, immediately went into the next room and started preparing for the drama. The entire drama script was required to be written on the spot, rehearsed, and then enacted before Baba in the afternoon, in the Central Hall of Guruprasad.

Invitations were also sent to lovers who were putting up in different lodges, as well as lovers from the Poona Centre, to gather at 2:00 P.M. the same day to witness the drama.

The theme of the drama was promptly selected and the script made ready within half an hour. I was offered the role of hero, which I rejected because I could not memorise long dialogues within such a short time. However, I suggested that the role of a "dead body" be specially created for my sake, as it required no memorising at all. It was the easiest role to play, as I had only to lie down like a corpse. My proposal was agreed to. So Pukar was now made the hero, and Baboo Ram Prasad the heroine. Heera was asked to entertain by dancing. Gajwani, Bharucha, Kishan Singh, and Dhake Phalkar were allotted the roles of carrying the "corpse."

The gist of the story was as follows: A Baba lover from West Bengal dies out of utter frustration because Baba did not visit his place in spite of repeated

prayers. The dead body of this Baba lover is placed on a funeral pyre made of bamboo sticks. Then the corpse is covered with a coffin and properly tied on all sides with a strong rope. Even the face is wrapped up. Then starts the dialogue between the hero and the heroine who stand at either end of the funeral pyre. Finally, they implore the mercy of Meher Baba to touch the dead body with His hand and grant the poor departing soul its last desire - that Baba should visit places which were not previously visited by Him and thereby give public darshan to one and all.

Precisely at 2:00 P.M., several hundred lovers gathered at Guruprasad in the main hall to witness the drama. They did not even know the name of the drama. The hall was fully packed with Baba lovers. Baba came and sat on His usual sofa, and Eruch gave a signal to begin the drama. The corpse was carried and placed before Baba, at a little distance from His chair. The hero and heroine commenced their dialogues. While the drama was thus going on in utter suspense, the voice of Eruch was heard saying, "Baba wants that the funeral pyre should be brought nearer to Him and the same be placed close to His feet."

As I could clearly hear the above words of Eruch from underneath the coffin (since I was not truly dead), I felt fortunate that my "body" was placed almost touching the sacred feet of the Avatar. The four who brought the "corpse" before Baba sat around the body, as is the usual custom. When Pukar, the hero, requested Baba several times to touch the "corpse" according to the last wish of the dead Baba lover, Baba laughed but did not touch the body with His hand. Baba was touching my body with His toe on my waist and tickling me. As a result, my body was shaking with silent laughter. Pukar was clever and understood the situation. The hero frantically cried aloud, requesting Baba to touch the body soon with His hand, for if He delayed, the corpse would get decomposed.

Just at this very moment, I felt Baba tickling my body with His toe so forcefully that I could no longer lie down dead, but got up with a jerk, breaking the ropes around me, and stood straight in front of Baba with folded hands. The whole drama came to a sudden halt. Baba Himself burst into silent laughter which was so contagious that the entire crowd of Baba lovers resounded with the waves of loud laughter. We were happy, as the original purpose of the drama was successful in making Baba laugh.

When the drama was over, Baba called me close to Him and said, "What made you select such a funny role of a corpse?" I replied that it was the easiest role since it required no memorisation of the dialogue. Ultimately, embracing me, Baba quickly gestured, saying, "See how impossible it is even to act as a dead body in a drama, whereas you have to become truly dead to the world in My love." Thereafter, on the same occasion, Baba confirmed the name given to me previously, "Murdal Moorty," which means "Dead Moorty." With this new name given to me as Murdal Moorty, I began issuing "Death Circulars."

My death was silently inaugurated and personally announced by Beloved Baba, the Ancient One. This strange inauguration had set fire to the entire system of my thinking on Life and Love, but most luckily, from out of the dust my "dead body" was lifted up by the living Avatar of the Age, who embraced me thrice. Baba's three embraces given to me in December 1958 have created a "new life" in my "dead body," followed by a great psychic stir in all the three states of my being - physical, mental, and subtle, simultaneously causing a triple movement in my consciousness. Perhaps this was my spiritual "rebirth." ... :

DARSHAN IN SECLUSION

Mani, talking once about the unpredictability of Baba's actions, told us a story about a time when Baba was in strict seclusion in Satara. Some Baba lovers came to Satara for their own work and, knowing that Baba was there, wrote asking Him to kindly grant them darshan. He replied that He was in strict seclusion and so their request could not be granted. During this strict seclusion, on one day, Baba went for a walk outside His bungalow. A sweeper woman was sweeping the road. She suddenly saw Baba and, immediately dropping her broom, came up and took darshan by putting her head on His feet. Baba did not object to it; on the contrary, He raised the hem of His sadra so that she might take darshan to her heart's content. He then moved on and did not seem disturbed in His seclusion. ¹

A similar incident occurred when Baba was in very strict seclusion in Guruprasad. He was sitting on the verandah on a chair lovingly offered to him by Kary and Joseph Harb. (This chair is now in the Study Hall at Meherabad.) Suddenly a middle-aged Parsi lady who was a social worker from Bombay came up the central stairs of the bungalow and headed straight for Baba without even glancing at the women mandali sitting around. She got on her knees and held

Baba's hand with such adoration, then bowed and left with a heart full of love and joy. Mani was surprised that not a word was spoken and Baba did not object to her coming, though He was in strict seclusion.

Once when Baba was sitting in His room at Guruprasad in strict seclusion, immersed in His universal work, a man wearing the ochre garb of a sadhu entered the gate. Fearing the man would disturb Baba and the pin-drop silence in Guruprasad, Eruch ran up to him and asked him the reason for his coming. "I want Meher Baba's darshan," was his reply. Eruch tried to explain to him that Baba was in strict seclusion and was not meeting anyone from the public or His lovers. The man argued that he had come from a long distance and was insistent upon taking Baba's darshan. Eruch in his masterly way somehow convinced the man that Baba would not give darshan. As a last resort, he requested Eruch to allow him to sit in the garden and meditate for some time. Eruch agreed, provided that it would be only for a short while.

The man agreed and sat down, closed his eyes, and soon seemed lost to the world. Eruch was getting jittery as time passed by. If Baba were to come onto the verandah from His room and see this intruder in the garden, Baba would not be too pleased with Eruch. After some time, Eruch, finding that the man had no intentions of getting up, called others from the mandali, and they picked up the man bodily, took him through the gate and placed him on the sidewalk. The man arose from his trance and went away, not too happy with Eruch's behaviour.

HOW CAN I SWIM?

One day there was a large gathering of children at Guruprasad, and they were enjoying Baba's darshan and company. Baba asked them if they knew swimming. Some replied that they did know swimming, while others replied in the negative. I was sitting there and remembered an incident when Eruch had once saved Baba from drowning when they were crossing a very muddy stretch of water on a sort of raft at Vengurla in 1949. Baba was telling the children that swimming was a very good exercise for the body. I asked Baba whether He knew how to swim. Turning to me, Baba immediately replied, "I am the Ocean - how can I swim?"

1959

Meher Baba had come for a stay at Guruprasad early in December of 1958. He was to give darshan on the 17th of January 1959. Murshida Ivy O. Duce, who had been an intimate disciple of Avatar Meher Baba since 1948, came to meet Baba on the 18th of January. Meher Baba had appointed her Murshida (teacher) of an authentic Sufi Order in America, which He later renamed Sufism Reoriented. Coincidentally, she was born on 25th February 1895, precisely a year after the birth of Meher Baba. In the early 1940's she had been accepted by Rabia Martin, the Murshida of the Sufi Order established in the West in 1910 by a great Sufi master from India, Hazrat Inayat Khan. Sufism, as reoriented by Meher Baba, stresses love, longing for God and selfless service.

REMINISCENCES, BY MURSHIDA IVY O. DUCE

When I discovered that, Terry [Duce] and I were leaving for Arabia and other Middle East countries on 19th December 1958, I wrote to Adi that it would mean so much if only I might have a glimpse of Baba. Arriving in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on 5th January, a letter from Eruch Jessawala awaited me, to the effect that Baba wished to remain in Poona undisturbed until 15th January and that He was returning to Pimpalgaon on the 19th after meeting Poona devotees on the 17th; that I might have the glimpse if I could reach there before the 19th.

The letter continued: "Baba wants you to know that although you asked only for a glimpse, He will grant you five minutes to be with Him and five more minutes to be with the girls. Then you should leave Poona and go directly to your destination, i.e., leave India by the first available plane or ship. Therefore, you should arrange your itinerary accordingly ... Baba wants you to bear in mind that the five minutes are meant to be taken literally by you and that the purpose

of your coming to India is just to be with Baba for five minutes. This means that if you decide to make the trip to India, then you are NOT to plan any other program of sightseeing or other visits to places in India."

Bearing in mind my training that "one moment in the presence of a Master is worth crores of lifetimes," but more than that, being very anxious about our Beloved, I set up the complex machinery of passports, exit and re-entry visas, plane schedules, etc. ... Luck was with me for TWA had a passage at just the correct time, and Baba said I got there at a most auspicious time because He rewarded my eagerness to visit for only five minutes by permitting me to sit for four hours with Him during the Poona darshan, although it wasn't really a "darshan" per se.

... Arrived in Bombay at two in the afternoon on Thursday the 15th of January 1959... Early Friday morning Nariman Dadachanji and his brother-in-law escorted me on the train to Poona. On arrival, Meherjee Karkaria drove us over to the mansion of the Maharani of Baroda, which she had turned over for Baba's one month of rest. Mehera, Manija, Goher, Rano, and Khorshed greeted me, Meheru being in Bombay for medical care where I had seen her. Five minutes rushed by and I was taken to Baba.

He was sitting with a large group of men mandali - men who had been close to Him for many, many years, all of whom were introduced; and it was a great pleasure to see in person people like Pendu, Vishnu, and Baidul (who used to arrange all the mast trips) etc., about whom all of us have heard. Baba looked radiant, eyes sparkling, and I felt relieved that He was so much improved after His month in Poona, although I was not sure but what He had, as He can so easily do, turned on His special incandescence for the occasion. Mani later said she thought He had because He really has suffered so much during the seclusion ... ⁵

... I inwardly grudged the time taken for the introductions. I was rather eager to tell Him of the progress I had just witnessed in Saudi Arabia, thinking that He would be happy to hear of the advancements in education, even to girls, made by the king through his oil royalties. It seems to me that this would bring satisfaction to Him harking back to His days there as Muhammad. Instead, He commented, "Why all of this talk about kings - you are now here with the real thing." Then Baba asked, "When are you going home?" I replied, "When I get back to Arabia we have to make a trip over to Egypt, and then we will be going to Beirut, and

from there" Baba interrupted, "You are telling me the story of your life. I asked when you are going home!"

It was quite obvious that I did not know the exact date, and I felt very rebuffed.

It puzzled me that my hard-won five minutes should be used in this way, but I later surmised that He was at his usual tricks, i.e., He was needling my ego, and He was probably showing His mandali that He handled His Western lovers with the same uncompromising authority that He handled them.

The five minutes fled by but He consoled me by stating that I could watch Him for four hours the next morning while He gave darshan to local people.⁶

Shortly after 8 AM. Saturday morning the 17th, Meherjee drove me over to where Baba stays. Baba gave me some instructions for about three or four minutes, I had a quick chat with the girls, and was taken out into the marble piazza to sit near to the Master while He received Poona devotees. He had instructed that about 100 people be advised He would see them before He left for Pimpalgaon, but I guess they all called up or went to see everyone they knew, for hordes of people arrived and stood in long patient lines in the sunny driveways. A comfortable chair was placed for Baba right in front of the doors which lead off the piazza into the house. The only other chair was mine because my feet injuries prevent my getting onto the floor for any length of time.

The piazzas rapidly filled with bhajan singers, women of all walks of life, mandali, etc. A white snowy carpet, about the width of our stair carpets, was spread from the side of the house where Baba meets with His mandali, around the corner to the front and up to His chair. It was lovingly sprinkled with rose petals and the petals of tuberose and freesias. Overhead long strands of patiently braided flowers waved. Two cushions covered with flower petals were placed for Baba's feet.

An air of suppressed excitement filled the grounds. I was told some eight Maharanis arrived from different states, people from Calcutta, and one Dutch lady married to an Indian editor came from South Africa. Sandals were cast off, and people pattered around the cold floors in their bare feet unmindful of anything except that they were to see Baba. Most of the women seemed to be bearing a tiny baby and had one or two youngsters hanging onto their skirts. They behaved like little angels - uttering nothing, no crying, tiny hands clasped in the namaskar waiting for their turn.

Baba in His pink coat and white sadra walked the length of the petalled patio supported by Eruch's arm and sat down in His low chair. Although there seemed to be no organisation or system people filed by Him. It was a never-ending source of wonder to me how quickly they could get down on their knees in one movement or prostrate themselves with their heads on His feet. Most of them brought an offering - a bunch of bananas, one banana, a single posy, five or six sugar balls wrapped carefully in a paper clutched in a hot hand, a coconut. They managed most deftly, despite their awed excitement to hand over the offering and put their heads on His feet in what seemed a split second, and Baba as deftly managed to accept their offerings, caressing the children's faces, patting this one, smiling at that one. The babies seemed not in the least disturbed to be pulled off mother's hip and in one gliding motion find their small faces pushed against the Master's feet. Some mothers in their haste literally threw their babies onto Baba's feet so that I was afraid He would be even more crippled.

Eruch was busy removing the garlands from Baba's neck when they piled up to his chin, and occasionally getting a chance to mop Baba's brow with a handkerchief. Adi pointed out a few people to me, such as Dr. Ghani's widow and son. The pressing crowds made the air suffocating, and Baba finally had to go inside for a moment and exchange his drenched sadra for a fresh, dry one. I also was called in to have a chappati and a cup of tea with the girls, but before it was half consumed Baba summoned me to come out again. Bhajans filled the air, and finally, the arti was performed. This time I noticed, there were seven wicks, and a lovely girl in white circled it just in front of Baba while everyone sang this hymn of worship.

At five minutes before noon Baba announced that He could only be with them five more minutes, and as suddenly, all sense of order or propriety ceased. The only simile I can think of is bargain day at Macy's basement - the crowd swarmed, jostling and perspiring in a mad effort to gain their most coveted possession - a chance to kneel at the Master's feet and adore Him. There was no prasad, they did not want anything; a warm current of love poured out of them; they expected nothing - no healings, or solving of problems. One thing and one thing only was uppermost in their minds: to adore the Master - to look upon His beloved face.

Baba had one short conversation with the Dutch lady. He knew that she had been travelling all around and asked her, "Which place do you like best?"

"The Himalayas," she replied. "I love the Himalayas."

"And what about that other place, the one in your heart, where God dwells? Don't you love that?" asked Baba. "You should go within you and focus on that place. All that you see in the Himalayas - other parts of India - right here in front of you (waving his hand at the grounds and crowds), they are all Maya - look inside of you for what is real and lasting."

Nariman had told me another Baba gem: someone asked Baba about renunciation and Baba's reply as nearly as I can remember it was: "It is silly to give up the world. As long as you live in it with love, honesty, and service (He especially stressed honesty), that is all that matters. These three things are internal - the world is outside of you, so why try to give up what is already external! Live where God puts you, rich or poor, and do your best."

Humbled by what I had seen of the very pure love we all aspire to and filled with its contagious quality, I was drawn indoors with Baba. The crowd was barely restrained from rushing in, and a young boy of perhaps twelve or so made such a racket that Baba allowed him to run in and present his garland which probably cost more than the family could afford and which he was determined to see arrive at its destination - the neck of the Beloved. Beaming, he exited, and I could see Baba was very fatigued. "Baba, I thought they would smother you or maim you!" "Oh, this is nothing," Baba smiled and gestured. "You should see a real darshan such as the Andhra one you have witnessed on film. The mandali are always afraid for my life, the thousands of people press so hard to get near me." In the afternoon Baba was to receive some more close disciples from Poona (how close, I thought, from Madras (Chennai) or Ceylon (Sri Lanka) this time?), but it was time to take my tearful leave, and amidst a round of embraces and admonitions from Baba to give all His devotees in America His dearest love, I rushed off to get my things at the hotel. ...⁷

Like myself, Philippe Dupuis of Paris had requested a sight of Baba and had been granted leave for a visit, but he arrived a day late on February 9 and Adi had to drive him straight to Meherabad as Baba was leaving for there that morning. Without having asked permission, he brought Vilayat Khan, eldest son of Hazrat Inayat Khan, with him. Baba embraced them, and in reply to Baba's inquiry,

Vilayat said he was en route to Ajmer to visit Moinuddin Chisti's tomb, but his Murshid had prompted him to meditate on Baba in his physical presence. This struck the mandali as hilarious - why meditate when in the actual presence of God himself? However, they were their usual polite, gracious and restrained selves Baba gave Vilayat superb spiritual advice, including "Don't become a master of disciples till you have mastered your own self."⁸

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DARSHAN:

Life Circular No. 42 (1st February 1959)

To those who love Me and obey Me and to those who would do so:

1. In the Meherabad Gathering of 10th July 1958, I had expressed My wish that henceforth none should expect or seek from Me any discourse, interview, darshan or sahavas unless I wish to give, personally, the same to any individual, family or group.
2. In spite of this, almost all letters from some of My lovers addressed to Me after 15th January 1959 have expressed an ardent desire to have My darshan.
3. Some of My lovers, overpowered by their devotion, still continue to expect and seek My darshan.
4. To save them the struggle between their devotion and obedience, I want all My lovers and others concerned to know that henceforth anyone who wishes to come to see Me and contact Me may do so any day between 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 noon. The person concerned must make his or her own arrangements as regards conveyance, stay, food and other personal comforts. These arrangements must be seen to by the person concerned without seeking the least aid from the resident Mandali, Adi or his office.
5. This freedom to see Me between 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 noon will not necessarily mean that the visitor will be granted permission to remain in My presence or in the vicinity of My room for the entire duration of the visiting hours.
6. The freedom to see Me will not permit anyone to be with Me for more than a couple of minutes, which is all that is necessary to meet and greet Me with love and receive my embrace of all-embracing love. Nor will it permit anyone to linger on, even on the premises, more than is absolutely necessary.

7. This freedom to see Me will not permit anyone to seek the least opportunity to ask Me for spiritual or material guidance, gain or aid.
8. This freedom to see Me does not entitle anyone to ask Me travelling fares or journey expenses, even if I do not see or meet the person concerned.
9. This freedom to see Me is not an invitation to anyone to see Me. As such, none should expect My preferential treatment.
10. This freedom to see Me is granted by Me; as such, I remain equally free not to see anyone on any particular day, even during the fixed visiting hours of the morning or, if I do wish, I may not see anyone at all for a number of days together.
11. This freedom to see Me permits anyone to meet Me, if I am available, in any city or town, wherever I may be, during the visiting hours between 9:00 A.M and 12:00 noon (local time of the place).
12. This freedom to see Me will not bind Me to remain in one place, merely to be available to visitors during the visiting hours. I might frequently be changing My place of residence to and fro between Bombay, Poona, and Ahmednagar, particularly during the next six months.
13. Therefore, whoever may want to take advantage of the freedom to see Me, should venture to come to Me fully prepared to face and risk consequent inconveniences and the possibility of not seeing Me at all for a number of days at any particular place.
14. The resident Mandali, Adi or his office will not be responsible, nor bound to inform anyone about My movements from place to place.
15. As I do not accept gifts of any kind or of cash, no one visiting Me should bring any kind of offerings other than the real offering of love.
16. When, for My work, I specially invite any of My lovers to see Me at any place, the aforementioned points, other than the point in Paragraph 15, do not apply to the invitee.
17. Besides telegrams, all other communications addressed to Me will not necessarily be attended to by Me. Therefore, no one should expect to receive replies from Me.

Meher Baba

[Signed] Adi K. Irani, disciple and
Secretary to Avatar Meher Baba

Note carefully:

1. Baba is expected to be in Ahmednagar from 1st February to 6th March, in Bombay from 7th March to 14th March, in Poona from 15th March to 15th June.
2. Necessary telegraphic communications addressed to Baba, the resident Mandali or to me, must be accompanied by a reply-paid telegraphic form, adequately paid for in advance, if a reply is expected by the sender. In the absence of the above-mentioned pre-paid arrangement, no reply should be expected.
3. Please also note that the telegraphic address is just "Meher Baba Ahmednagar." When the telegram is addressed to any of the resident Mandali, it is sufficient to give the name plus "care Meher Baba Ahmednagar."

In effect for the two months of April and May 1959.

In continuations of Life Circular No. 42 issued on 1.2.1959, which should be re-read and if not received an additional copy called for, Avatar Meher Baba wants me to inform you that during the above two months, it will only be possible for anyone to see him at Guruprasad bungalow, 24 Bund Garden Road, Poona, between 9:00 A.M and 12:00 mid-day on every Sunday instead of every day.

Barring this change, the rest of the points and conditions as enumerated in Life Circular No. 42 stand good.

[Signed] Adi K. Irani

ERUCH'S LETTER TO K.K. RAMAKRISHNAN

Eruch wrote on 12th March 1959 the following letter from Ashiana, Bombay, to K.K. Ramakrishnan, secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Centre Poona:

Beloved Baba wants me to inform His *intimate* lovers of Poona through you that He will leave Bombay on 15th March instead of 14th and that He will reach Guruprasad on 15th evening, late evening. Baba, therefore, does not want to be disturbed by His own lovers in Poona on the 15th evening or on 16th (whole day). Baba wants complete rest on the 16th, **WHOLE DAY** for **REST**. On and from 17th between 9:00 A.M. and 11:30 A.M. anyone who loves to see Baba is free to do so. This does

NOT mean that Baba will give public darshan, because, since 10th July 1958, Baba has stopped giving darshan. These daily meetings will be in the form of Baba giving physical love to those who love to meet Baba. Baba sends His love to you and to all His dear ones.

[Signed] Eruch

Baba returned to Guruprasad from Bombay on the 15th of March. Mani, in her Family Letter of 9th April, wrote:

... Again Guruprasad has been rejuvenated with the life-giving waters of Beloved's presence which the fortunate ones come to drink of at this given opportunity for the East. Our Poona stay began with the same daily rush of darshan seekers - including not only the Baba lovers and the many "new" ones of Poona, but groups of up to 70 from different parts of India and often from distances of 3 to 4 days' journey by train. The Calcutta party was headed by a High Court Judge and his family who had not met Baba before and who are forming a Baba Centre there. Their parting message said, "Though we are going away from Poona, we are leaving the best part of ourselves at Your feet."

Sundays are more of a Sahavas, gathered around Beloved listening to the haunting rendering by His devoted young bhajan group - Baba looking like the Sun in His pink coat, with no trace of tiredness that we know He must feel after the unbroken program of the morning which sometimes stretches into the afternoons as well But so it is, and so it shall always be. Playing the part of "human" with the perfection He personifies, this very human aspect is an eternal revelation of the One He is, of His unbounded love for mankind, of His Mastery in Servitude

In accordance with the new Circular, since 1st April (for 2 months) Baba's darshan is available on Sundays only. However, a unique and delightful exception was made on the 2nd, when Baba received the Team of Indian Cricketers who were leaving to tour England for the coming Test Match. Since school days, cricket has been Baba's outstandingly favourite sport, and during an exceptionally hard and busy morning we have heard Baba

remark, "The poor Avatar has all this to do when He would much rather be watching a game of good cricket."

Baba embraced each player, and Eruch read out his special message for them - this was reproduced in the sports column by a number of newspapers, English and vernacular, local and national (some also giving pictures of Baba with the team and of Baba alone), with headings of "A Silver Lining," "Team Blessed by Meher Baba," etc At parting, Baba embraced each one again, gave a copy of His message and said, "Take My love with you, and you will shine well." It was an unusual morning, and heartening to see the hopeful confidence and loving reverence that shone on the cricketers' faces as they left Guruprasad.

The Cricketers' Visit: From a letter by Mehera J. Irani

Beloved was very happy the day the cricketers came (April 2, 1959). He told them of His love for this game and that He was particularly very good behind the wickets. He was a member of the junior cricket team of the St. Vincent's High School, but He was selected as a wicketkeeper even in the senior team. Baba said that from His childhood days, He was always chosen as a leader by schoolmates and whenever there was a quarrel or fight among the students, Baba invariably was chosen to arbitrate between the quarrelling parties. Baba said, "When I was a child, children got attracted to Me; and when I grew up, God was attracted to Me; and when I became One with God, people all over the world became attracted to Me."

Baba said He loves children. When He meets children, He becomes like a child. He loves to play marbles with them, fly kites, and play cricket. Often when He is driving in a car, and if time permits and He finds small children playing cricket with a plank as a bat and a rubber ball, Baba would ask the car to be stopped and watch the game with interest. Baba has many a time explained that His visits to witness cricket matches and sitting among crowds intently watching the game has a great spiritual purpose behind it.

While describing His childhood days and love of the games, Baba told the pressmen, "I am one with God; and when you give reports of this meeting to your

papers, you should also include that, as One with everything and everybody on all levels of consciousness, I live the respective roles at the same time."

One of the cricketers asked Baba to bless the team so they could put up a good show in England. Baba then told one of the Mandali to give the players a tip - that they should embrace Him with all their hearts and love, and they would be sure to take His love with them to England. Baba blessed them all and said, "Do not be nervous because of your show with the West Indies lately. If you play with one heart, My love will help you win at least one test, and on the whole, you will put up a better show than you did with the West Indies. But all will depend on your love for Me."

Baba's message to the All-India Cricket Team – Guruprasad, Poona, April 2, 1959

"In going to England to represent India in the field of sport, you also have the unique opportunity of yourselves practising, and of conveying to the people there the great spiritual lessons of concentration and love. When you take the field, if you play as eleven men with one heart - each enjoying the excellence of performance in another player as he would in himself, whether that player is on your side or on the side of the opposing team, and so eliminating feelings of jealousy, anger and pride which so often mar sport - you will not only be entertaining the spectators but also demonstrating the real spirit of sportsmanship. True sportsmanship is concentrated ability enlivened with the appreciation of the performance of others. And when this is manifested, everyone, both players, and spectators receives spiritual upliftment as well as good entertainment.

Some of you are "all-rounders." I am the greatest spiritual "all-rounder" of all times because I feel equally at home with saints, yogis, philosophers, and cricketers, as well as with so-called sinners and scoundrels. I give you My blessing that in all your actions you show forth the spirit of love."

KESHAV NIGAM IS CALLED TO GURUPRASAD

In the early 1940's, Keshav Narayan Nigam of Hamirpur, practised law, and also was a popular political leader. He worshipped Lord Krishna as the only Beloved of his soul. In January 1943, he was jailed as security prisoner under the Defence of India Rules. In prison, he met Shripati Sahai Rawat, another political leader, who

had been eluding capture. Shripati had taken Meher Baba's darshan in Meherabad and then surrendered to the authorities on Baba's instructions. Shripati would speak to Keshav of his firm belief in Meher Baba as God incarnate, but Keshav was unable to recognise that Meher Baba and his Lord Krishna were one and the same Divinity. Keshav's name was sent to Baba's Ahmednagar office by one Babadas, and so he would receive circulars from Adi K. Irani. Baba sent him Jean Adriel's book, *Avatar*. Keshav found that reading *Avatar* punctured his hard ego, and he began to see Meher Baba as the be-all and end-all of his life. He translated the book into Hindi after getting Baba's permission.

He met Baba for the first time in Meherabad on 30th August 1949. Using His alphabet board, Baba said, "People call Me the Lord of the Universe, but I am the servant of the Universe ... you are all very fortunate to be here at this moment when I am about to enter My New Life." This first darshan kindled within Keshav's heart the flame of Baba's love. Keshav met Baba for the second time on 16th October 1950 at Mahabaleshwar, where Baba had invited His Old Life companions also.

From 13th to 27th November 1952, Baba visited many villages in Hamirpur district, lighting the flame of His love in the hearts of these poor, simple villagers. At Meherastana, Keshav read to Baba for the first time the lines of *Meher Chalisa* - forty verses in praise of Baba that he had composed himself. Baba told him, "I feel touched by them; they have touched My heart deeply." Keshav would be asked by Baba to recite the verses of *Meher Chalisa* at many functions, and those who heard them felt Baba's love deeply. Keshav's heart overflowed with love for Baba, and he devoted his whole life to Meher Baba's service, with the sole aim of living for Baba.

Baba visited the Hamirpur district for the second time on 3rd February 1954. On 9th February, Baba reached Keshav's birthplace, the village of Mehewa, where Baba lovers had built the hut Meherasthana on His last visit in 1952. From 9:00 P.M. to 4:30 A.M. Baba held an all-night gathering in which His mandali and all Baba lovers from the district took part. Bhajans and qawwalis were sung for Baba the whole night.

After midnight, on the 10th of February 1954, Baba called Keshav and told him, "You do not know what luck is being granted to you at this moment." Keshav says that Baba was in an extremely happy mood. Baba then spelled out

on His board, "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai," and simultaneously raised His right hand. In this extremely happy mood, Baba told those gathered that it was the first time in this incarnation He had declared Himself to be the Avatar. Baba said that after dropping this body of His, He would come back after seven hundred years. According to the Parsi calendar, this night was also Baba's sixtieth birthday. All the lovers sang songs in praise of Meher Baba's birth and danced before Him with great joy. Baba embraced each one before the end of the programme.

Keshav had started a Baba magazine, *Meher Pukar*, which gave news about Baba and also beautiful articles about Baba's messages and work done in His cause in Hamirpur district. Yet Keshav's life for Baba was not a constant round of chocolates, and flowers. True love such as his can best be recognised by the fact that it thrives under arduous circumstances and his life was saturated with difficulties both worldly and physical. In his later years, he suffered from Parkinson's disease, but this did not deter him from doing Baba's work.

In 1959 Keshav experienced an invaluable lesson with far-reaching importance for him. In March of that year, he was invited by a "Yogiraj,"⁹ Dharma Dhruva Gaur. Keshav met this man for the first time in 1950 and had been quite impressed with him. He had an attractive personality and presented himself as the president of the World Spiritual Peace Mission. He remained in contact with Keshav until 1952, staying at his home for several days and then sending his blessings and good wishes in letters. This created a deep place for Dharma Dhruva in Keshav's heart.

On his unexpected arrival after seven years, Keshav greeted him warmly and took him into his home for about a week. But now the man made quite a show of himself, which he had not done before - for example, he murmured as if he were in communion with unknown realms. Remembering that Baba teaches us to eliminate all show from our lives, Keshav doubted the spiritual state of this Yogiraj. Dharma Druva proposed to have money collected for a *havan yagna*¹⁰ to be held there. The Yogiraj would have Meher Baba's messages printed in large numbers for distribution among the huge gathering he anticipated. He said he wanted to perform the *yagna* only to spread Meher Baba's message. He told Keshav that out of the amount available after the *yagna*, he would give a substantial sum for the maintenance of Keshav's family. Keshav thought perhaps this was offered as bait to win him to the plan, but it did not attract him since his finances were totally in the hands of Baba, the Lord of the Universe. He was, however, attracted to doing

Baba's work on a large scale, but he could not decide if the proposed *havan yagna* was the proper means for the intended divine work.

The Yogiraj had Keshav call selected Baba lovers to speak with them privately and propose the *havan yagna* to them as well. The Hamirpur Baba lovers looked to Keshav for a final decision, and all agreed with him when he told Dharma Druva that he could proceed further only after obtaining Baba's approval. He heard later that the Yogiraj did not like this idea of referring the matter to Baba, but he told Keshav as he left Hamirpur that he would be visiting other places and Keshav should notify him of Baba's reply and that if Baba did not approve, Dharma Druva would try to organise the *yagna* elsewhere.

Keshav wrote Meher Baba in full detail about the proposal. Baba at this time was staying with His mandali at Guruprasad. Before Baba's reply reached Keshav, he received a wire asking him to immediately present himself at Guruprasad. Keshav did not know why Baba had called him specially, but on his arrival, Baba met him very lovingly and asked after his family's welfare. During the conversation, Baba referred to Yogiraj Dharma Druva, asking Keshav's opinion of the man. Keshav replied that he could find nothing against him, but that his making a great show of himself appeared very ugly. Baba smiled and told Keshav he had been duped.

Baba had asked Keshav to stay with Him for two days but later extended this to about ten days. During this time, Baba gave Keshav material for the journal, *Meher Pukar*, asking him to correct it and set it beautifully, apparently so that Keshav would assume that this was the reason he had been called to Guruprasad.

Meanwhile, Baba had a telegram sent to Hamirpur, inquiring about the Yogiraj, and Baba had learned that the man had returned to the district in Keshav's absence and was again duping the Baba lovers there. A reply cable was sent by Baba in Keshav's name, asking that they should read the letter of 18th March 1959 sent by Eruch to Keshav. Also, all concerned should be cautioned to totally stop associating with yogis and *yagnas*. Keshav had to read this letter from Eruch's files since he had arrived at Guruprasad before the letter reached his home.

Eruch wrote that Keshav's letter to Baba concerning Yogiraj Dharma Druva Gaur was forwarded to Baba at Guruprasad and read to Him there. About Druva, Baba remarked, "I know all about him. He is dear to Me; he has a corner in My heart."

Baba then had Eruch re-read part of Keshav's letter where he mentioned: "The main thing that strikes me is the performance of the havan yagna which is sought to be the means of work by Yogiraj, and if this means is not thought to be objectionable or improper from the spiritual point of view." To that Baba remarked, "What have havan yagna and other yagnas to do with spirituality? How can such yagnas help to establish Meher Baba's Avatarhood? If such yagnas had any potential to establish Avatarhood, there would have been a crop of Avatars fully established and enthroned - verified as Avatars by the Seal of Yagnas."

Baba added, "The Ancient One has once again repeated His advent this time to put His seal to end all yagnas, rites, rituals, and ceremonies. His very being in human form surpasses all the existing rites, rituals, and ceremonies; His very presence on the earth is the seal, sealing everything that is of the external, and at the same time unlocking the gate leading to the very core of one's being."

Eruch continued:

Baba then deliberated on His very dear Keshav's deep and great love for his Beloved; and this gave rise to an occasion where Baba reminded all of us here about Keshav's love song - *Meher Chalisa*. Baba also touched our hearts bringing home to us your sacrifice, your very life dedicated to the sacred cause and your efficiency in discharging the duty as the Group Head in Hamirpur district. Baba then made us feel the love of all His Hamirpur district lovers. Within a very short amount of time, Baba surveyed the field work done in the district and neighbouring districts by His very dear Hamirpur-walas. Baba touched the spirit of sacrifice, the Labour of Love, the faith and trust in Baba - all that prevailed in the district of Hamirpur.

In much less time than the time taken to pen these words, Beloved Baba brought home to us the fact that His dear ones in Hamirpur district need no tutoring to make them feel established in their love and faith for their Beloved Baba. And, even if the proposed yagna were to be permitted by Baba, which Baba would never want to do so, such a yagna would be tantamount to tampering with innocent hearts of Baba lovers, the hearts wherein Beloved Baba has been firmly established and enthroned. The

Yogiraj's yagna might, in some cases, even cause the sacrifice of Baba Himself from the precincts of the lovers' hearts. Your friend Yogiraj genuinely wants to serve the cause of Truth, and Baba is very happy about all that he has been doing in his own way to help mankind to see the Truth; but Baba does NOT want His dear ones of Hamirpur to see this Truth at the risk and cost of their very sight; the sight that still cherishes all that was witnessed of the physical presence of Beloved Baba.

Baba wants me to state here that Baba had and still has a high degree of confidence in your intellectual capabilities and in your love for and faith in Baba. Nevertheless, your friend Yogiraj, who stayed as your guest for six long days, seems to have apparently fogged your ability as the Group Head of Baba lovers, and led you into temptation to utilise this means of yagna as a tool, which Baba has always taught us to discard, for it is an obsolete weapon to propagate His message of Love and to establish His Avatarhood. Except for love, all things and means become obsolete when the Avatar of the Age lives as God-Man amidst His own creation. In fact, when all things and means begin to become obsolete, the Advent of the Avatar brings a fresh dispensation.

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

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

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

Baba wants me to add here that you should NOT misconstrue the theme of this letter and feel that Baba denounces outright the yogis and yogic practices. Baba wants that the yogis should not tamper with the hearts filled with Baba's Love. These yogis can do what they wish and want at their respective places, but NOT in the House of Baba

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

Yours lovingly,

Eruch

Keshav tells us that after a refreshing ten days' stay, Baba permitted him to return home to resume work in the light of His instructions and advice. He reached Hamirpur to find that Yogiraj had left town the previous day. In Keshav's absence, the Yogiraj had tried to undermine the unity and good sense of Baba's lovers and their unflinching faith in Baba. But Baba's dear lovers were watchful and united to drive away the man from Hamirpur. By now, this man, whom Keshav had once held so dear, was expelled entirely from his heart. Keshav realised that Baba, in saving him from a serious situation, had totally emptied his heart of others so that Baba alone might reside there.

P.K. Sarkar Meets Baba by Justice P.K. Sarkar of Calcutta

At the beginning of February 1957, a friend of mine telephoned one morning, enquiring whether I would be able to preside over a meeting to be held on the 25th of February, to celebrate the birthday of Meher Baba. He said that the devotees

of Meher Baba wanted a High Court Judge to preside over the function. I agreed, but as I did not know anything about Meher Baba at the time, I wanted some literature about Him. After the talk with that friend, I remembered that I had, some years ago, seen a picture of Meher Baba in the *Times of India* and *Illustrated Weekly* and had been struck by the loving face. Some devotees of Baba then came to me and presented a copy of Purdom's book *The Perfect Master*.

As I went through the book to prepare my address, I was thrilled and fascinated by the life story of Meher Baba as well as by His loving and comforting messages to the people who came to interview Him in England. After I had delivered the address, the typewritten notes were taken from me to be sent to Baba for His perusal, and a few days later a beautiful letter came from brother Adi K. Irani informing me that my address had been read over to Baba, who had liked it immensely and had directed His love and blessings to be conveyed to me.

This unusual letter surprised me and affected me deeply. I could feel that it was not a mere expression of courtesy but a manifestation of genuine love and blessings of a great Master. After that, the local devotees of Baba supplied me with more books and literature about Him, and as I studied them, I became more and more interested in Baba.

In February 1958, Baba held a sahavas programme, but I politely declined the offer to attend it. On the 22nd of March, Baba's birthday celebrations were held in Calcutta, and I was again invited to preside over the same. My written address was again read over to Baba, and I, afterward, received a very striking letter from brother Eruch conveying not only Baba's love and blessings but something more which I take the liberty of quoting here:

"He (Baba) also said that you ought not to have missed the last sahavas at Meherabad, Ahmednagar. Baba would have been very happy to see you and you would have been fortunate to come in His contact physically. Baba added - As it is, you are in His contact, and where there is love, there Baba is undoubtedly."

In February 1959, I retired from the High Court, and a contingent of Baba lovers left Calcutta in March to have His darshan at Poona. I joined them. The diffidence and misgivings I had felt before in being a stranger were all dispelled by

the above letter, and I was elated by the feeling that Baba had accepted me and I was already in His contact.

My family and I spent three days with Baba at Poona, and these days were an unending feast of love, sweetness and exaltation and an unforgettable memory. We could not resist our tears when we received His holy touch and loving embrace, and these were tears of joy and happiness. Instinctively we felt that we were in the presence of Love Personified and could appreciate why Baba has been preaching the message of love as the religion of the age.

Baba has said that He has come not to teach but to awaken. I had long pondered over this saying, but the truth and significance of it dawned on me when I found myself in the presence of Baba and looked at His face. He has come to awaken us to love, and He does it by His very presence and by His being in our midst. His looks, His benign smiles, His loving gestures, His holy embrace, and everything about Him bespeaks love, and the holy sparks of love which He scatters around Him go to awaken His visitors to a feeling which they had never experienced before. In the presence of Baba, one cannot but feel that He is an embodiment of divine love and that He loves us more than we can ever hope to love Him.

Baba appeals to the heart, where the divine love is to be kindled, and words are more effective in appealing to the intellect than to the heart. Lovers commune in silence, and if the depths of the heart are to be stirred to evoke divine love, this can only be done in silent communion. Since Baba radiates divine love from everything about Him, He need not speak. It is sufficient to be in His presence to feel His love and to be stirred in the inmost heart and soul by Him.

DR. DESHMUKH'S APRIL FOOL'S DAY GIFT

Baba's sense of humour was very great. Before I describe an incident that happened at Guruprasad between Baba and Dr. C.D. Deshmukh on 1st April 1959 (April Fool's Day), let me give you a little introduction to the doctor. Baba was in London in December 1932. At that time, C.D. Deshmukh, aged twenty-four, was studying for his doctorate in philosophy in London. Deshmukh came to know of Meher Baba's presence in the city through the accounts in the *Daily Herald*. Baba had actually contacted him inwardly four months earlier, as Deshmukh dreamed he saw Baba standing before him. In the dream, Baba spoke

to him: "You are closely connected with Me. You are a good man." Seeing him hesitating to accept this, Baba asked, "Are you not?" Deshmukh replied, "Good or bad, please take me up into You." Baba's response was an immediate wave of love and light. "It was like bathing in cool, clear moonlight," Deshmukh recalled.

When later he saw a photograph of Baba in the newspaper, he recognised Him as the One who had already won his heart. Baba's picture further attracted him to the Lord, and he was longing to have Baba's darshan. Deshmukh later recollected: "As I looked at the photograph, I found in His eyes an assurance of divine guidance which I had been looking for. The expression in His eyes brought to me the tidings of Truth from that far off land unseen, where there is the final Realization of the Eternal and Infinite Source and Goal of life."

Deshmukh came to meet Baba at the Knightsbridge Hotel on 8th December. During their meeting, Baba asked young Deshmukh, "What do you do?" Deshmukh explained that he was studying philosophy. "And what is the meaning of philosophy?" Baba inquired teasingly. Deshmukh answered, "It is a science which reveals the hidden reality." Smilingly, Baba replied, "To Me, philosophy is that which makes a simple thing difficult!"

Meeting Meher Baba face to face had a profound effect on Dr. Deshmukh, for this darshan taught him the true meaning of philosophy. From then on, he became an ardent disciple and proved to be helpful in preparing Baba's writings for publication.

Dr. Deshmukh now describes his visit to Baba at Guruprasad on 1st April 1959:

On the 1st of April 1959, at Guruprasad, Beloved Baba gave me the special privilege of making me an April Fool, presenting to me a gift wrapped up in seven coloured papers. As I unveiled the gift by taking away the wrappings, one after the other, I discovered at the core an ordinary stone, which I have preserved at our Vihar Meher, in memory of the tickling sense of intimate companionship created by the Avatar.

I will refrain from mystic aspects of Avataric gifts or prasads since they are unfathomable. I will content myself with a bare reference to a few other rypes of prasad gifts from Beloved Baba to me, e.g. (1) His own wooden sandals or (2) His own *kafni* (used robe) sent to me by Him

soon after I returned from the 1958 Meherabad sahas of Beloved Baba, which I was privileged to attend, (3) Pappa's cycle cap, used by Beloved Baba Himself for a while before giving it to me in 1960 (Pappa is Eruch's father), (4) Baba's bronze bust, a smaller replica of a life-size Baba bust to which beloved Baba had, on my entreaty, given some precious moments of sitting and which was made in Guruprasad.

Baba, being the slave of His lovers' love, had agreed to these sittings in one of the rooms behind Guruprasad's main bungalow. I remember Dr. Deshmukh's pleading to Baba to give a few minutes' sittings when the sculptor came to Guruprasad. With difficulty, Baba would walk to the room behind the bungalow and sit there while the sculptor did his job. Dr. Deshmukh would profusely thank Baba for the trouble given to Him.

By nature, Dr. Deshmukh was a slightly tight-fisted man. Once when Dr. Deshmukh took Baba's darshan, Baba seemed to be in a pleased mood. He asked Dr. Deshmukh whether he wanted God-Realisation. Dr. Deshmukh readily agreed to the generous offer. Baba then told him, "But you will have to pay the price for it!" Dr. Deshmukh wondered what austerities he would have to undergo to get God-Realisation. Finally, he accepted the challenge. Baba said, "Pay me one thousand rupees, and I will give you God-Realisation right now!"

Everyone fell silent and waited anxiously for the doctor's reply, knowing how difficult it was for him to shell out even a few rupees. Pondering the offer, he replied, "I would have to ask my wife about it!" Peals of laughter rang out through the crowd upon hearing this reply. Baba too laughed silently, but the doctor seemed unconcerned about everyone's enjoying a laugh at his expense.

Dr. Deshmukh was a strict vegetarian. The mandali, mostly Parsis, rarely got a chance to eat nonvegetarian food. Once, Baba asked Dr. Deshmukh whether he wanted God-Realisation. "Yes, Baba," was his prompt reply. Baba teasingly said, "If you eat fish, I will give you God-Realisation!" "I will think about it, Baba," was the reply.

BABA OFFERS GOD-REALISATION

One day, while I was sitting near Baba and a singing programme was in full swing, Baba suddenly turned to me and asked, "Do you want God-Realisation?"

Overjoyed at this unexpected offer from the Highest of the High, I quickly replied, "Yes Baba." Baba pondered for a minute and then said, "Yes, you will get it." My joy and surprise knew no bounds. Baba continued, "Yes, you will get it if you repeat My name for twelve years without a moment's break!" Foolish as I was, probably God-Realisation was not in my destiny. I replied, "It is impossible for me to do that Baba." Later on, I repented for giving Baba this reply. If I had only said, "I will try, Baba," my destiny would have changed. With Baba, over the years, we learned that one should reply, "I will try," even if the order given was an impossible one.

BABA VISITS A SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

On 11th April 1959, Baba was invited by the superintendent, Kale, to visit The Institution for the Blind, Koregaon Park, Poona. He went to the school at 9:00 AM. Baba embraced all the blind students (about one hundred and fifty) and a dozen teachers. Boys sang songs in Baba's presence, and one of the boys welcomed Baba, the Avatar of the Age, to their institution. The welcome song was composed by Madhusudan and taught to the blind boy by Subhadra. Baba gave the following message to the assembly:

"People generally think that the blind are unfortunate. You may also sometimes think so. But it is people with the sight of eyes who are really unfortunate. They think that all the things they see are real. But they never see God, who alone is real.

"All those who do not see God are blind. The only thing worth seeing is God. So even those who have physical sight may be blinder than those who are physically blind and love God within.

"Today I embrace you with My love so that someday you may have real sight and see Me everywhere."

During this programme, one of the students, a very young boy, sat on Baba's lap and clung to Him in such a way that he had to be forcibly removed by others when Baba left. On return to Guruprasad, Baba said that He liked that boy very much and remarked, "I know why he is blind." He added that His visit to the institute that day was intended particularly for that boy. Baba

asked Ramakrishnan to go and find the boy and bring him to Baba. On the next Sunday, he was brought to Guruprasad. Baba caressed the child again and kept him in Guruprasad till 12:00 noon.

SOAKED IN LOVE

As I have already mentioned, from 1st April 1959, Baba's darshan was available on Sundays only. On 12th April there was a gathering of the Baba family from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. Baba lovers of Poona swarmed Guruprasad and one felt it would burst at its seams. The joy of seeing and meeting Baba is indescribable. It seemed as if a river of love were losing itself in a boundless Ocean of Love. Each one who approached Baba felt His love pouring into him or her, and one did not want to take away one's arms from His loving embrace. The world and its worries did not exist in this joy of being with Baba. No one cared to even ask mundane things, for their minds were soaked in His love. His beautiful face, His embrace, His love for one and all, old or young, was so unselfish.

One lover said to Baba, "If I keep my heart, I lose You; but I have kept You and lose all else with joy." In the joy and ecstasy of the embrace, another lover told Baba, "We are bad, but we are Yours - every bit of us; we sin on the strength of Your love and compassion." Baba gave and gave His love unstintingly. Sitting in front of Him, one felt how foolish must those seem who ask Him merely for material benefits when He could give such an untold treasure of His love. With Baba among us, we felt that for once the heavens had really touched the earth and become one with it.

MEHER BABA'S DISCOURSES ON KNOWLEDGE

During the summer months of 1959, Baba would at times give discourses, such as the following, during the darshan programmes —

There are two ways of imparting Indirect Knowledge and Direct Knowledge. I shall explain this with the help of a simile.

You live in Poona. Let Poona life represent ordinary human consciousness and New York life, God-consciousness. In between, there are six stages - states of consciousness. If you reach New York and remain merged in that atmosphere, you will not be of help to those in Poona. If you make a return journey, you have God-consciousness plus human consciousness. Now you can be of help to all

Poonaites. You give a very lucid and vivid picture of New York life to those who approach you. Some feel keenly interested and are drawn to you. You continue describing New York, and the interest is sustained. Receiving information in a mere verbal manner is one way of imparting Indirect Knowledge.

As time passes by, mere verbal information is not enough to maintain enthusiasm. So what do you do? You promise some glimpses of New York life; to stretch the simile, you bring a magic lantern or a film projector and show a few slides on the screen, pertaining to what is said verbally. This creates interest among those who attend the show. This is another way of giving Indirect Knowledge. This too, in the end, does not suffice and has to be replaced by Direct Knowledge.

The experience of Direct Knowledge can be had in two ways. In the first method, you make a Poonaita experience New York life by actually sending him to New York. In his journey, he experiences the six stages and in the end, New York life, with all the glory and beauty infinitely magnified as compared to the glimpses on the screen. This is journeying with open eyes. This takes a longer time to pass through the "wonderlands" and is equally risky.

In the second method, you do not give a verbal description of New York life or take recourse to the film show. Love and faith guide the way. You only ask a Poonaita to put full trust in you and not to leave you under any circumstances. By this method, you can take anyone to New York much more quickly, but in a sense blindfolded. This is the shortest and safest route to reaching New York.

Direct Knowledge needs no verbal expression. It can be had only through the grace of a Perfect Master. To know Reality is to become it. In fact, it is nearest to you. It is you. But Maya, the principle of ignorance, makes it appear at an infinite distance. When one sees a fan revolving at full speed, it appears to be stationary. Is it not sheer ignorance to call it so? Ignorance distorts the Truth. Owing to ignorance, God, who is infinite and nearest, appears to be the farthest. Only when My grace removes the curtain of Ignorance, you become You, the innermost Reality that you ever are, were and will be.

MEHER BABA DISCOURSES ON LOVE AND SACRIFICE

On another day, Baba gave the following discourse:

When lust goes, love appears, and out of love, longing appears.

In love, there can never be any satisfaction. There is continual longing and agony, till Union with the Beloved is attained.

Love is a continual sacrifice. Nothing save Union with God can and will ever satisfy the lover.

Gradually there comes a time when the lover says, "O Beloved, May I be united with You or not, but let Thy will be done." In this phase of love, the will of the Beloved has supreme importance, and there is very little thought of "self" This is love enlivened by obedience.

Love goes on witnessing the glory of the Beloved's will, and it further carries the lover to the extent where he does not even think of union. There is no thought about the "self" He willingly surrenders his entire being, without reservation, to the Beloved. This is the phase of love illumined by surrenderance.

Out of millions, one can love God as He should be loved. Out of such millions of lovers of God (Mardan-e-Khuda), one succeeds in obeying and subsequently surrendering his entire being to God the Beloved.

I am God Personified. All of you who get a chance to be in My presence are fortunate and are blessed. Being in My living presence, you share the fortune of the real lovers of God (Mardan-e-Khuda). So love Me more and more and make the most of the opportunity you have.

"WHAT A FOOL YOU ARE!"

After long hours of darshan one day, Baba said:

Now I feel so tired that I feel like going to sleep for seven hundred years. What do you understand when I say that I am tired? It is beyond human understanding.

How tiresome would it be for the wisest of all to be the most foolish of all (this may give you some idea of how tired I feel)? There is no wiser being in the whole world and in all the worlds than Myself, and the act I personally perform, no fool would ever do.

What's that foolish act? The creation.

When I see you gems and pearls (My lovers and devotees), I simultaneously see the world and the planes. I tell Myself, 'What a fool You are!'

BABA WALKS WITHOUT CRUTCHES

On 1st May 1959, to the surprise of all, Baba walked on the porch freely and without crutches. Specialists in Bombay, after the most careful examination and study of Baba's X-rays, had formed the opinion that Baba would not walk without the aid of crutches. The chief specialist advised Baba's personal doctor to request Baba not to walk around in the bungalow even with the help of crutches. He was of the opinion that Baba should use His joints most sparingly.

Dr. Goher told us that according to her knowledge of medical science she definitely felt that Baba would never walk without crutches again in His lifetime.

Baba said:

I alone know how I manage to walk. The severe pain in the hip joint is still there. The socket is loose, and the joint is not well fitted. I hear the click-clock as I walk. It is not possible for any human being to walk in such a condition.

Believe Me, it is pure Divine Power that makes Me walk. Formerly, I too did not expect Myself to walk without crutches, but now I am bent upon walking before I drop the body. In the coming three months you will see Me walking freely - of course, not in the way I used to walk, but I will be moving about without crutches.

Undoubtedly, I am the Ancient One, and the Avatar who sustains the whole universe must not walk with the support of crutches before He drops His body..

HE NEVER PUNISHES BY S.L. LOKHANDE

In 1959, I got a letter from Guruprasad asking me to come down with my family to Poona for a stay of ten to twelve days. My salary in those days was a meagre sum of Rs. 120 per month. To make ends meet, I ate only once a day, while my wife

gave our children two small meals every day. When our neighbours heard that we were planning to go to Poona for Baba's darshan, they ridiculed us, knowing our financial status. They argued, "Why do you go to Meher Baba when He is not helping you to get even two square meals every day?" We were determined to go, and with the little money that I had, I left for Poona with my family, unmindful of the criticism of our neighbours.

A very close friend of mine, Gupta, wanted to go with us to Poona. When I told him that Baba had called only my family, he replied that his family and mine were so close that we could call it just one family. Though I felt guilty for breaking Baba's order, the Gupta family came with us to Poona.

At Poona, we were received by Bhavsar, a very sincere Baba worker, and were taken to the free Gadge Maharaj Dharamshala in Somwar Peth. In the evening he came with a message from Baba that my family alone should go to see Him at Guruprasad the next morning. When I asked him whether I could take the Gupta family with me, he replied that it would be better if I phoned Guruprasad and took the necessary permission. It now dawned on me that I had broken Baba's order by bringing the Gupta family with me. At night I could not sleep, as I repented for disobeying Baba's order.

The next morning, all of us went to Guruprasad. We were waiting on the verandah to be called inside to meet Baba. When my turn came, I asked the Gupta family to come inside also. On seeing them, Baba asked me about the Gupta family and why they had come uninvited. I tried to explain to Baba that the Guptas and our family were very close and as such could be called one family. Baba smiled, and all took His darshan. The next day the Guptas did not feel like coming for Baba's darshan and delayed us so that we could not go to Guruprasad. I was told the next day that our name had been announced, but we had not gone to Guruprasad because of the delay by the Gupta family.

On the third day, we did not wait for the Guptas but came to Guruprasad on time. Baba lovingly asked us why we had not come the day before. I pleaded that the Guptas delayed us and finally they decided not to come to Guruprasad, and thus we could not come also. Baba very lovingly told me that this sahavas was for selected persons only. When I went to Him for darshan, He held my ear to drive home to me that I had disobeyed His order. Baba, like a very loving father, was not angry with me for breaking His order but had forgiven me for my mistake in

His compassion and had touched my heart so much with His love that I resolved never to displease Him. We very happily came every day for His darshan. After seven days, when our hearts were saturated with His love, He asked us to return home. Baba, who is the embodiment of love and compassion, would never punish His lovers for disobeying His order but awakens one's heart so subtly that one would never ever want to displease Him.

HE IS RAMA, KRISHNA, CHRIST, AND BUDDHA BY A.V. RAGHAVULU OF VIJAYAWADA

In the summer of 1959, Avatar Meher Baba gave darshan to His lovers in Guruprasad, Poona. One day, after having His darshan, Dr. G.S.N. Moorthy and I came out of Guruprasad and went to a nearby restaurant to have a cup of tea before returning to Guruprasad for the second session.

On the way, we both were talking, of course, only about Beloved Baba's glory and divinity. During our talk, I happened to say that Beloved Meher Baba is not only the Avatar of this Age but, being the Ancient One, He was also Rama, Krishna, Christ, and Buddha. Dr. Moorthy agreed that Baba is the Avatar but insisted that Baba had never claimed to be Rama, Krishna or Christ. He added that in all of his extensive reading of Baba literature, he had never come across such a claim. I repeated my position and he repeated his, and we were still caught up in this discussion when we arrived back at Guruprasad. But to our surprise, the darshan had ended early, and everyone was walking towards the gate. The day's darshan programme was over.

At this point, brother Eruch came out from Meher Baba's room and announced that Meher Baba wanted everyone to come back and assemble near the porch of Guruprasad. When we heard this, we, along with the others, rushed forward and stood anxiously waiting. Beloved Meher Baba came out and gave a message to the effect that He was Rama, He was Krishna, He was Christ, and now He was Meher Baba, Avatar of the Age. As soon as this message was given, Baba told us all to disperse.

Dr. Moorthy and I were amazed. Although the message had been for one and all, it was especially significant to the two of us. It brought home to us that Meher Baba is not only the Ancient One, but He is indeed the All-knowing and All-pervading One.

"I WAS THIS AND I WAS THAT"

A similar declaration is found in a letter that Baba asked Eruch to write to Jashan, personal secretary of Sadhu T.L. Vaswani on 28th August. Sadhu Vaswani was a great scholar who, in his love for God, had renounced his position as principal of a college to serve the Lord. In 1933, he founded the Mira Movement, which was based on the premise that education is a thing of the spirit and that the end of all knowledge is service of the poor, the lowly, the sick and the afflicted. He established a school in Poona named after the legendary Indian saint Mira. The message sent to Sadhu Vaswani, dearly called Dada, is as follows:

Give my love to my dear Dada and to ... All dear ones of the saint Mira, who remember Me and love Me. I was Rama, I was Krishna, I was this, and I was that, now I am Meher Baba - the very same Ancient One, in flesh and blood - I am the very same One, eternally worshipped and neglected, always remembered and forgotten. I am the Eternal One, whose past is worshipped and remembered; whose present is neglected and forgotten; whose future is always much desired and longed for.

Raghavulu comments, "This message suggests that more important than knowing that Baba was Krishna is to understand that He, even when not in a physical form, is the eternally All-knowing, All-pervading Ancient One. We have only to open our hearts to Him to receive His love."

LOVE OVERFLOWING: DARSHAN OF 10th MAY 1959

On the 10th of May was the last big darshan day at Guruprasad during Baba's stay this year. Long before the darshan time, crowds of enthusiastic Baba lovers, mainly from Poona, gathered on the road outside the huge gates of Guruprasad. Everyone was well dressed and in the best of spirits, talking about their Beloved, whom they would shortly be seeing. Unmindful of the traffic on the road, not caring about their difficulties in life, they stood there eagerly awaiting the opening of the gates. Every moment of waiting seemed like hours in eternity. Finally, the gates were flung open, and Baba lovers ran to find a place near Baba. The portly ones hobbled along to the bungalow while the youngsters raced by them.

Baba was sitting in the main hall of Guruprasad at the far end, looking as beautiful as a thousand roses that had just bloomed. The joy of seeing Baba was so great that the mind was silenced, and no thoughts of mundane worries had a chance to even enter the mind. Each one tried to sit as near Baba as possible, the ladies to Baba's right and the men to His left. A passage was kept in between for lovers to go up to Baba and take darshan. The chandeliers in the room were all lit, but who bothered to see and appreciate their beauty when the embodiment of beauty sat in front of them with His bewitching smile! Baba's eyes would rove over those sitting around Him, and He would very lovingly point to this one or that one as if in recognition of his or her connection with Him.

The Poona bhajan group sat on the floor to the left of Baba and began their heart-touching songs. Many tears were shed in that atmosphere of love where only the lover and the Beloved existed, and all else had vanished like mist before the rising sun. All eyes were glued to Baba, watching His eloquent expressions, His lovely fingers pointing to this one or then to another. No words were necessary, as our hearts were united with His universal heart.

The truth of Baba's words, "I have come not to teach but to awaken," could be felt by one and all. No words were spoken, and yet every heart echoed thunderously with His love. There was no place for any asking, as the world did not exist for us who were drowned in His love sitting near Him. Each one felt there was no need for words; just His presence was enough to drown us in His love. Eruch would stand to the left of Baba and interpret Baba's gestures.

The priceless love of Baba had been the *Kohinoor*¹¹ that each of us wore in our hearts. The lotus of Baba's love bloomed, and the human bees hovered over it from all castes and creeds. We were all one with Baba, with no differentiation between man or woman, high or low, rich or poor, intelligent or illiterate; our egos were consumed in the fire of His love. Oh, we could have sat there for the rest of our lives just drinking the deluge of His love.

One after another, each one went up to Baba, embraced Him, and then put his or her head on Baba's feet. This world did not exist at that moment, for one was lost in His ocean of love. As one walked away after His darshan, tears rolled down the cheeks, and when one sat down, everything appeared to be drab, sapless and dull. The world had lost its flavour and purpose. Baba was the sun that sheds joy, the alchemy that assuages suffering, the power that instils a

cheerful and robust self-confidence and courage. Intense happiness oozed out of the atmosphere and touched the chords of our hearts and minds. Baba gave, gave and gave His bountiful love.

During every darshan in Guruprasad, I would stand a little in front and to the left of Baba near the wall under a clock. I never sat in front of Him, out of respect for Him, the Highest of the High. What right did I, a sinful creature, have to sit in front of Him who was the ocean of purity? All my love for Him seemed to be so base, so calculating, so temporal, and so crude in comparison to His pure, unselfish love. He was always at the giving end, and all He wanted to receive was our love and obedience - and that too, not to gratify Himself, but to help us become nobler, better, and greater in our love for Him. I always kept a diary and a pen to jot down any and everything that Baba said.

In this joyous atmosphere where the world had vanished, and everything seemed to have come to a standstill, the clock on the wall over my head would chime the hour, and Baba would look up to me and point at the clock to remind me that the time to depart was coming close. Each hour seemed to have rolled by within the span of a few minutes. For me, there was no enemy in this world but that clock, which did not stop its incessant ticking, though our hearts had ceased beating, drowned in His love.

Alas, it was time to depart. Everyone had had Baba's darshan and was brimfull with His love. For everyone, this love overflowed its limits and down came showers of tears as Baba asked us to leave the hall. For a true lover, there can never be anything as painful as to leave Baba and go away into the world. Yet we walked out of the big hall of Guruprasad onto the verandah while Baba walked slowly to His room supported by two persons. He had given His love bountifully and unstintingly. It rested with us to accept it and retain it in our hearts.

"WANT WHAT I WANT"

On 14th May 1959, during the darshan programme, Baba said:

Instead of wanting what I want, you want Me to want what you want. And when you succeed in getting Me to agree with what you want, you even tell others that it is what I want. For example, someone has a daughter, and comes to Me and asks Me, do I think such and such young man would make a good husband

for the girl? I reply, "No, he is not suitable." He answers, "Bur, Baba, he is very suitable." So I say, "Yes, let the march be made."

What does he do then? He has not only made Me agree with what he has already made up his mind about, but goes and tells others, "Baba wants so-and-so and my daughter to marry."

It is impossible for you to want what I want as it is impossible for you to love as I ought to be loved. But at least do not always want to make Me want what you want. Hold on to Me and try to obey Me implicitly and fully is all I ask.

BABA'S VISIT TO SARDAR RASTE'S HOUSE

Baba paid a visit to the house of Sardar Raste on 16th May 1959 and was given a grand welcome by him and his wife, Maisaheb. Both of them wept with joy when Baba sat down on a decorated chair they had prepared. Sardar Raste had been instrumental in contacting Maharani Shantadevi to grant permission for Baba to use her bungalow, Guruprasad.

MANI'S LETTER TO THE WEST (18th MAY 1959)

Ever dear Elikit,

Yesterday was another darshan Sunday, and Baba seemed so tired to begin with that we marvelled at how He went through the full programme looking radiant as He did. Usually many come from faraway places, also a number from Bombay. And yesterday was an added surprise - our dear Meherabad Hill group (Mansari, Jerbai, and daughters) were allowed and came down just for the morning. They never get down the hill except too rarely, for some such occasion. Katie comes down every Saturday evening and stays with us, leaving Sunday evening for the office the next day. Arnavaz is with us for over a month's stay, and Khorshed stays too while we're in Poona. And there seems to be some programme or outing or something or the other often - quite a "social" time in contrast to Pimpalgaon (Meherazad) and so very little time to get any correspondence or sewing done!

STORY OF A TRAIN DERAILMENT BY PREM NARAYAN SHRIVASTAVA OF JHANSI

I went to Poona with my children and relatives. At Guruprasad, feeling that my little daughter would disturb the darshan programme, I left her on the verandah

to play. We entered the hall for Baba's darshan. Being overwhelmed with Baba's love, I did not even think of my daughter, whom I had left on the verandah. Suddenly, Baba, pointing to me, asked where my daughter was. I told him that she was on the verandah, playing about. Baba asked me to bring her. He very lovingly made her sit on His lap and played with her for a few moments. Putting His hand on her head, He blessed her and then gave her back to me. We left after the darshan programme was over, but Baba's omniscience and love touched my heart very deeply.

At another time, I wanted to go to Poona for Baba's darshan, but as I was not on good terms with my boss, my leave was not sanctioned. Other Baba lovers, headed by Keshav Narayan Nigam, received their reservations for the train. On the day of departure, giving some excuses, I boarded the same train but in an unreserved carriage. At night I was suddenly awakened by a loud screeching sound. Our train had derailed! I felt death was imminent and so began to remember Baba. Miraculously, though three carriages had got off the tracks and I was in one of them, none of the passengers were injured. I managed to leave the train and went to Poona via Kalyan station on another train.

The rest of the Baba lovers were delayed because their carriage was to reach Poona via Daund station. When I reached Guruprasad, Adi, Baba's secretary, asked me about the rest of the group. I explained about the train accident, and he, in turn, informed Baba. When I met Baba, I told Him that by His grace we had been saved from the clutches of death. Baba very lovingly smiled and embraced me and then said, "You will remember Me in your dying moments."

"GIVE MY LOVE TO YOU ALL"¹² BY MARVIN CAMPEN

"Give My Love to all." These were Baba's words as we parted at Poona on May 24, 1959.

But how to convey the love of Baba? Words are paltry bearers of such love. As Adi put it, "We don't need to read about Baba. We have Him." Nevertheless, I'll try to share with you my being with Baba.

My particular plane was behind schedule; consequently, I only talked with Nariman [Dadachanji] by telephone upon arrival at the hotel in Bombay Thursday night, May 21. Friday morning, we met and made our plans for going to Poona that afternoon. Nariman's brother-in-law, Jim [Mistry], met us in the coach about

5:00 P.M. Our train to Poona was. an express. Talk of Baba, sandwiches and cold drinks and views of the countryside made it seem soon that Meherjee met us at the Poona station. Meherjee whisked me to the Napier Hotel and departed with, "Be ready to go to Baba in the morning at 8:15 [on Saturday, May 23] ."

From the time Meherjee picked me up on Friday, memories of events bounce like ping-pong balls, defying logical description. First, we went to Guruprasad, the lovely "bungalow" loaned Baba by Her Highness the Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda.

About 8:30 A.M. Meherjee ushered me to Baba. He was seated in a large chair against the wall of a pleasant room opening off the side porch. In His pink coat and white sadra, He was as radiant as at Myrtle Beach last year. But His face looked more tired. After welcoming me warmly, Baba called attention to the others in the room. Adi was at Baba's right. Several ladies were on the floor at His left. Seated all around were about fifteen other mandali and devotees known to many in the West - Eruch, Nariman, Vishnu, Pendu, Ramjoo. Baba introduced Dr. Deshmukh. Francis Brabazon was beside me. He read some fine concluding sections from his newest book, *Stay with God*.

Several exceptional visitors were allowed to see Baba that glorious morning. The Maharani came in and sat near Baba's feet with glowing adoration. A woman from Madras (Chennai), who was in charge of a large girls' school there brought her niece in to meet Baba. There was a man from Bengal and his friends. All brought garlands, or similar tokens of love for Baba, as did several other admirers who joined the group as the morning quickly passed.

Baba greeted all with dynamic and vibrant love. He particularly noted the visitors and gave them a feeling of belonging. He emphasised that He was not accepting gifts other than small tokens or remembrances. "You must stop wanting," Baba reminded us. When He remarked that Westerners did not ask Him for as many things as Easterners, one could not help but think that a reason might be the greater abundance of material possessions in the West. And even Westerners realise that Baba's love is present without asking.

About 11 A.M. Baba dismissed the group and Meherjee took me to the hotel. A few minutes before 8 A.M. on Sunday [May 24], Meherjee, his daughters, and Eruch's brother came from the hotel. We drove straight to Guruprasad, where throngs had already gathered. Going into the side room, we found Baba as the

day before. He asked what I had seen and how I had slept; then arranged my return to the airport that afternoon. With all the activity and so many things to be done, I regretted taking Baba's time for such affairs. Baba talked briefly about the Westerners who loved Him and asked if I remembered the play at Myrtle Beach at which He had laughed so much. (I think Baba had just received Mike's "Remember Alligator Day" card.) Then Baba told a story about a winking man, the moral of which was don't wink at people. The sweetest words to me were when Baba told the group, "Marvin loves Me."

By now it was nearly 9:00 o'clock and time for the darshan to start. Baba dismissed the group and walked through a door into the central room where the main event of the day was to take place.

Except for an aisle down the Centre, the room was packed with people sitting on the floor. Outside and on the front porch, hundreds were standing awaiting their turn to greet the Master. Baba was seated in the Centre of a large couch facing the crowd. Behind Baba was Eruch; also Meherjee, Adi, and other mandali stood there to help. I was permitted to sit on the floor at the left end of Baba's couch. A hushed and expectant air prevailed as the musicians started their first Arti. Darshan was about to begin.

Baba stopped the music and signaled the women and children to come to Him. In bright saris, single file, they took their happy turns. Each knelt, prostrated, or bowed to Baba, offered their tokens, and embraced Him. All had a garland, fruit, nut, message, or some other token. The children clamoured gleefully around Baba's legs and lap. About every fifteen minutes, Baba would stop the line, have the devotees sit down, and direct the musicians to play for ten to fifteen minutes. Baba seemed enraptured in the music, which He directed like a symphony with His lightning, hummingbird-like finger motions. The voices of the singers rose in ecstatic songs. But the happiest person in the room was the person first in the stopped line. She or he had an extra dividend of a period to sit at the feet of the Master!

After the Arti, Baba usually translated the message. Obedience to Baba, love, service, honesty were the main themes. The line of devotees would arise and proceed past Baba. At frequent intervals, Eruch had to remove the pile of garlands from around Baba's neck to save Him from being smothered in flowers. Also, he wiped the perspiration from Baba's brow. (The flowers and other gifts were passed through a curtain to other mandali.)

At nearly 11:00 o'clock the approximately five hundred devotees had paid their respects to Baba. They left the room with fond last looks at the Avatar. Some small groups had the privilege of one more moment with Baba.

My last moment was also special. With Adi and Meherjee beside Him, Baba looked full into my eyes and told me to take His love to all. I said farewell to as many as possible and returned to the hotel.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR BABA

Balagopala Bhaskara Raju of Tadepallegudem, Andhra Pradesh, had come to Poona with his troupe. They spread Baba's name through a narrative song called Burra Katha.¹³ Four men would come on the stage to the accompaniment of a tabla and harmonium; one would narrate Baba's life story, and the other three, representing a Muslim, a Christian, and a Hindu, interrogated him regarding Baba's being called the Avatar of the Age. They would go to different villages and perform this Burra Katha. The performance was excellent, and the audience would sit spellbound. The whole drama, which took about two hours, was very entertaining and cleared the doubts of people from the three main religions of India - Hindus, Muslims, and Christians.

The singer would answer questions normally asked about Baba and why He claimed to be the Avatar of this Age. They performed in Poona at the Gokhale Hall for the public on Sunday, 17th May 1959. They asked Baba if they could perform at Guruprasad and were given permission. They did perform for a short while, but very few there could understand their language, Telugu. Beloved Baba was delighted with the performance and embraced the members of the troupe as a reward for their labour of love for Him.

Shri Ambula Vishwanadhan and his party of twenty persons gave a performance of the life of Krishna, called *Hari Katha Ka Lakshapam*, during April at Guruprasad. Shri Ambula had won many medals for his performances all over India. Baba appreciated the play and gave them all big embraces at the end of it.

BABA CRUSHES MY EGO

On 27th May 1959, a Baba film was to be screened at Guruprasad. The film was about Baba's visit to the United States in 1958 and His sahavas at Myrtle Beach. Baba's mandali and a selected few Baba lovers of Poona were invited to see the

film after sunset in the main hall of Guruprasad. Luckily, I was also asked to come and see the film. After sunset, all those invited and the mandali sat on the floor while Baba's chair was put near the entrance door of the Guruprasad hall. I sat near Baba's feet while the rest of the men were in front of me.

Baba said that Mehera and the women mandali were also going to see the film, and they would come and stand behind His chair once the lights were switched off. As Mehera had orders not to see the face of any man, Baba had instructed that none of the men should turn their heads to look at the back once the film started, because Mehera would be standing behind His chair. When the projector was ready and switched on, the hall lights were switched off, I guess Mehera and the women mandali must have come and stood behind Baba. A few minutes later, Baba caught my ear and pulled it; subsequently, He put His hand on my head. Since I did not turn around, according to His order, He began to tickle me by poking His finger in my side and later in my tummy. In short, during the film, He tried his best to make me look towards the back, but I did not.

After the film was over, the women mandali walked away and then the room lights were switched on. Before everyone could get up and leave the hall, Baba said, "A small order has the same significance as a big order." Everyone wondered what this statement had to do with the film. Baba continued, "I gave Hoshang a small order not to turn and look behind. I tried to make him look behind by tickling him and pulling his ear, but he did not look back." I felt mighty pleased but was sure Baba was up to some ego-crushing tactics.

A few days later, while I was sitting near Baba in the afternoon, a Baba lover phoned from the Hotel Mobos that his son had severe abdominal pain and needed medical care. Baba asked me to go immediately and see the boy. Although I was not happy to leave Baba, I took a scooter and went full speed to the hotel. After examining the boy, I prescribed some anti-colic and vermifuge medicine. I rushed back to Guruprasad and reported to Baba what I had done. He seemed pleased with my quick action.

The next day, the boy and his father came to Guruprasad, and Baba very lovingly asked the father about the boy's pain. He replied, "After Dr. Bharucha prescribed the medicine and I gave it to my son, within a short time his pain disappeared, and he is now fine." Baba looked at me and, raising His hand and making His favourite sign of touching thumb to index finger, said that I was a

very clever doctor. I felt happy with the praise but did not dream of what was in store for me.

A few minutes later, Baba went to the main hall of Guruprasad, which was packed like sardines with His lovers. Baba sat down in His chair, and the darshan began. As usual, I was standing under the clock near the wall on Baba's left. An hour or so passed by, and all were enjoying Baba's company and darshan. Suddenly, looking at me, Baba gestured while Eruch interpreted: "Who made you a doctor?" Then, running His index finger on His cheek and chin, He said, "You are a barber."

I am sure everyone in the hall must have wondered at this sudden remark made for no apparent rhyme or reason. Baba's finger moved along His cheek, making the sign of a barber who shaves with a cutthroat razor. When Baba repeated, "You are a barber," I told Him, "I would be thrilled to be Your barber, Baba." Staying with Baba, it was my experience that in one breath He would send your ego soaring to the skies and in the next bring it crashing down.

PAPPA JESSAWALA GOES TO BABA

During this period, Rano Gayley, one of the women mandali, was staying at Bindra House in Poona with Eruch's family, as she had been taken very ill after eating a mango. Dr. Goher and another doctor were treating her for diarrhoea and vomiting. Baba visited Bindra House on 29th May 1959, apparently to see Rano. Eruch's father, affectionately called Pappa, was at Bindra House and, though he had suffered a heart attack sometime back, was now up and moving about. Baba told Rano that she would be all right and there was no cause for worry. Pappa and all the members of the household met Baba before He left Bindra House.

He asked them to call Guruprasad at 10:00 P.M. the same day and give news about Rano's health. A few minutes before 10:00 P.M., Pappa felt uncomfortable and went to the toilet. From there he called out, and all rushed to see what was wrong. Pappa had had another heart attack, and while saying Baba's name, he died at 10:00 P.M. As per Baba's order, they phoned Guruprasad and gave the news about Pappa passing away. Baba said, "Pappa has come to Me forever."

Pappa's funeral was the next morning. Baba asked Eruch whether he would like to attend the funeral. Eruch left it to Baba's choice and so did not go. On some pretext, Baba asked Eruch to drive Him out of Guruprasad, and Eruch was

surprised when he saw his father's funeral going along the road to the Parsi Tower of Silence. Baba told Eruch, "The body is the excreta of the soul. When one passes a stool, one feels very relieved. Similarly, when the body is dropped, the soul feels very relieved."

Rano was not informed about Pappa's death, but she was aware of a certain amount of activity in the house. When Naja came into Rano's room the next morning after Pappa's death, Rano asked her, "Naja, who are all these people milling around outside?" Naja replied, "Oh, it's nothing." When Baba came to Bindra House on the 30th after Pappa's funeral ceremony was over, he told Rano, "You know, last night was a toss-up between you and Pappa." Not realising what Baba meant, Rano just laughed. Baba said, "Didn't you know that Pappa died last night?" "No, no one told me," she replied.

Naja had been afraid she'd upset Rano, and so no one had told her about Pappa. Besides, Pappa had not been seriously ill. Pappa had told his friends how worried he was about the Western lady (Rano) who was ill in his house. When his friends heard there was a death at Bindra House, they thought it was Rano who had died, and very few people came for Pappa's funeral.

HAMIRPUR LOVERS DRINK FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF HIS LOVE

On 31st May 1959, a large group of Baba lovers headed by Keshav Narayan Nigam came from Hamirpur district to Guruprasad for Baba's darshan. These lovers, though very poor materially, were very rich in their love for Baba. Baba had visited the Hamirpur district in 1952 and 1954, and that had ignited a fire of love in the hearts of these poor villagers. The sacrifices they made to come for Baba's darshan are hair-raising. Some even sold their bulls, their only source of income, to come to Baba. They could not afford hotels or restaurants. They were given shelter in free boardinghouses called dharamshalas, where they would cook their own food in the early hours of the morning before they went to Guruprasad for Baba's darshan. They brought wheat flour and onions with them. The women would make thick chapattis to be eaten with cut pieces of onion. They enjoyed these simple meals, for their minds were on Baba and not engrossed in the luxuries of life.

Baba would always pour His love on these lovers till they could not contain it, while they expressed their love for Baba with tears rolling down their cheeks. Baba would send me to their halting places twice a day to check the sick. I saw that

many were suffering from tuberculosis because of their poverty, but they endured the strain of their long journey to Poona only because of their love for Baba. Tears would come to my eyes at the sight of these emaciated, malnourished, sick lovers.

Their only wish was to take Baba's darshan and drink from the fountain of His love. Baba gave His love in abundance to them, for He knew that only His love sustained them through the vicissitudes of life. Baba would ask Keshav Narayan Nigam to recite his *Meher Chalisa*. He would recite these verses with such love and feel that not only he but also all present would shed tears. Baba's heart was deeply touched by the verses and the love of His Hamirpur lovers.

THE BURDEN OF HIS UNIVERSAL WORK

On 1st June 1959, Baba said:

"I appear to you as cheerful, radiant, and in fine health - but My health is far from good. My personal doctor asks Me to take complete rest, not to walk fast, and to discontinue the darshan programmes, as they are a great strain on My health - and the doctor is right. When I retire, I feel as though My body had been wrung out. Yet you see Me busy from morning till late in the evening, attending to the minutest details regarding work of varied nature. Now look at the contradictions. On the one hand My general health is getting worse; on the other hand, I am becoming much more active. But let it be clear to you that it is not for reasons of health that I stop giving darshan. It is for My Universal Work, which weighs on Me tremendously, and of which you can have no idea. The time I have been hinting at has come. The universe has come out of Me and has to come unto Me. This is no idle talk. I say it with the authority of My experience of being the Ancient One."

A FAMILY TRAGEDY

Meher Baba is the embodiment of love and compassion. His compassion at times may seem, on the surface, to be cruel, a crude punishment for our sins, but ultimately it is good for the person concerned. The human mind can never fathom the Infinite Mercy behind His actions. The following incident in my family goes to prove the above.

Meher Baba had infused so much love in the hearts of Baba lovers in my town, Navsari that we thought of sharing this love with others who knew little or nothing about Baba. Each Sunday, armed with a harmonium, a 16-mm film projector, a loudspeaker, and Baba literature in the form of short pamphlets, we would visit a village near Navsari. Advance notice would be given to the village folk about our programme, which would consist of songs sung by Bachoobhai Soni, a Baba lover from Navsari, followed by my talk in the local language about Meher Baba's life and messages and the experiences of Baba lovers. Every Sunday evening, we would arrange these programmes.

On the 9th of June 1959, when I was with Baba at Guruprasad, He gave me a straightforward order - at least on its face value it seemed to be very simple - that I should not leave the town of Navsari for the next three months.

My sister Tehmie, fondly called Bubli, was a brilliant, beautiful, and loving girl. She had acquired part of her education abroad and had a string of academic qualifications. She married a man who would never allow her to indulge in spiritual matters for fear that she would renounce the world - and her husband along with it. Bubli nevertheless showed interest in saints and also in Meher Baba. After a few years of married life, there started to be misunderstandings with her husband, Jal. Petty quarrels resulted in her leaving her husband's home, and she went to stay in a hotel in Bombay. Her husband sent me a telegram on the 6th of July 1959 that Bubli had left his home. Just before the telegram arrived, my sister Mehru and I were reading the section on suicide in Baba's book *Listen, Humanity*. On receipt of the telegram, my mother asked me to go to Bombay and bring Bubli to my home in Navsari. But Baba had given me the order that I should not leave Navsari for three months so I could not go to Bombay to bring Bubli.

My mother and my sister Mehru left immediately for Bombay. I waited on the 7th and the 8th for news from them, in vain. On the 9th of July, exactly a month after Baba had given me that simple order, a phone call message from Mehru announced, "Bubli is dead. She committed suicide. Her funeral is tomorrow morning." The news was like a bolt from the blue. Baba's simple order that I should not leave Navsari for three months now seemed to have turned into a dilemma. I resigned myself to Baba's will and decided not to go to the funeral. Late in the evening, the same day, I got a telegram from Guruprasad, where Baba was staying, that I should go to Bombay to attend the funeral of my sister and

then come to meet with Baba for two minutes in Poona. My sister Mehru had informed Baba about Bubli's death.

I went to Bombay to find my mother and sister in a state that is unforgettable. There was my dead sister, white as snow, looking peaceful but leaving behind a very sorrowful husband and a heart-broken mother and sister. Jal asked me what would happen to her after her death. It suddenly came to my mind what I had read in *Listen, Humanity* a couple of days back. I told him that Bubli would not get another human body for a very long time and that she would have to suffer in the hell state. He was very upset and asked me what he should do. I told him that Baba was the only one who could tell him where and how Bubli was. He asked me whether he could see Baba. Jal had never desired to talk or hear about Baba until then. Whenever his wife had wanted to go for Baba's darshan, he had flatly refused. Now Jal himself was prepared to go to Baba.

After the funeral, Jal and I left for Poona. He was driving at breakneck speed. All along the journey, I talked to Jal about Baba. He listened carefully. I warned him that Baba might not see him, as he had not been called. When we reached Guruprasad, I went in alone and told Baba that Jal had also come. Baba lovingly asked me to call him. Jal was born and bred in a very affluent family and found it difficult to sit on the floor. Baba very lovingly told him that if he could not sit cross-legged, he could stretch out his legs. He did so with his feet pointing towards Baba.¹⁴

Baba then inquired about everything that had happened between Bubli and him. He confessed that it was his fault that Bubli had left his home. Jal finally asked Baba what would happen to Bubli now that she had committed suicide. Baba replied, "Because Hoshang loves me and because I was informed within three days of her death, I have saved her. She will not suffer in the hell state but will be born into a family of Baba lovers and will come to Me." Baba then told Jal that he should keep his little son with him and not give him to our family. Baba continued, "Do you go to the movies?"

"Yes, Baba," Jal replied.

"All that you see on the screen of the theater is contained in the film in the projection room," Baba said. "Only that which is already on the film is projected on the screen." Baba paused while Jal shook his head in agreement. Baba continued, "All that I have set in the film of this universe you see on the

world screen. It is not possible for any other thing to get into this film. In short, all that you see happening in the world is preordained by Me." Baba then told Jal that he had already preordained Bubli's death in the Original Whim that brought about this creation. As such, Jal should not take the blame for Bubli's death, as it was ordained by Baba.

When we returned to Bombay, I told my sobbing mother and sister about what had transpired in Poona. My mother had very little faith in Baba, and when she heard what Baba had said, apparently in favour of Jal's family and against our family, she was very angry and showered Baba with abuse! I left her and returned to Navsari. For a year after this, my mother did not write to me.

A year later, I was in Guruprasad. My mother and sister came to meet Baba because He had asked me to send them a telegram. In the course of discourse, Baba said, "Perfect Masters have the power to bring back to life a person who may have died three hundred years ago." When my sister and mother went up to Baba, they wept bitterly. My sister said, "If Perfect Masters can bring back to life a person who is dead three hundred years back, you are the Avatar - bring back my sister." Baba told them, "I shall tell you in a dream what has happened to Bubli."

The next year, when my sister and mother met Baba in Poona, they asked Baba the same question. Baba smilingly replied, "Bubli has been reborn into the family of a Baba lover. She has been brought to Me here in Guruprasad and has played on My lap."

The Compassionate Father, Baba, had apparently caused a painful happening in our family, yet, in reality, what He did was for our best. Jal would never have come to Baba nor allowed Bubli to meet Baba. Now, not only had Jal come to Baba, but Bubli's cherished desire to meet Baba had been fulfilled by her being brought to Baba and playing on His lap.

THIS IS MEHER BABA'S CRUCIFIXION

On 14th June 1959 Baba said:

These days Maya, the principle of ignorance is in full play and tries to oppose My work. So, particularly those who live near Me must remain very watchful. Knowing My love for you, Maya awaits the opportunity to use your weaknesses. The moment you neglect My instructions Maya's

purpose is served. I have to put up a fight with Maya - not to destroy it, but to make you aware of its nothingness. The moment you fail to obey Me implicitly, it tightens its grip on you, and you fail to carry out the duties as assigned to you. This adds to My suffering.

In God there is no such thing as confusion - God is Infinite Bliss and Honesty. In illusion, there is misery, confusion, chaos. As the eternal redeemer of humanity, I am at the junction of Reality and illusion, simultaneously experiencing the infinite Bliss of Reality and the suffering of illusion. With Reality on the one hand and illusion on the other, I constantly experience, as it were, a pull on either side. This is My crucifixion. I do not ever let go My hold on Reality. Imagine for instance that the pull of illusion becomes too great, what would happen? My "arm" would be pulled out of its socket, but I remain what I am.

BABA DISCOURSES

These are a few short discourses that Baba occasionally gave during the darshan programmes that were noted by me.

"I am happy to see you all. Your love and faith in me have drawn you here from hundreds of miles to be in My company for a few hours. You knew that no one is to ask questions; however, I know that a few questions are just waiting for an opportunity to be asked. It is the nature of the intellect to go on questioning. Love asks no questions. Love seeks nothing, save the will of the Beloved.

It is [the intellect of] the mind which wants to know that which is beyond the mind. To know that which is beyond the mind, the mind has to go. It has to disappear without leaving any vestige. The fun is that the finite mind wants to retain itself and yet understand the Truth, which is infinite. This is the problem as regards to the intellectual approach towards Truth. Few understand this and the rest grope and grapple in vain.

Every one of you wants to be happy. You seek it in your own way, but mostly to your dissatisfaction. In reality, you are Bliss itself, but what a joke, what a game this illusion presents before you to make you aware of this!

One of My lovers complained, "Baba, I led a pure life yet I had to suffer much." Perhaps you, too, have a similar complaint. You say so because you have no idea of the purpose behind it. I do not mean "invite suffering." I mean, "Do not fear to suffer nor blame anyone for the same."

According to the law that governs the universe, all suffering is your labour of love to unveil your Real Self. In comparison to the Infinite Bliss you experience in the "I am God" state, all the suffering you undergo means practically nothing.

I am the source of Infinite Bliss. To draw you to Me and to make you Bliss itself, I come amidst you and suffer infinite agony. I am the Ancient One. When I say, "I am God," I have not to think of this. I know. It will be blasphemous on My part if I say, "I am not God."

When you say, "I am man," have you to think over this? No. It is not a matter of doubt, belief, or guesswork. No corroborations are needed. Contradictions do not affect. It is a matter of supreme certainty for you. Suppose you can descend to the level of animal-consciousness, simultaneously retaining human consciousness; what will you convey to the animals? "I am man, I am man and one day you too shall become man."

Similarly, I have come down to your level, simultaneously retaining infinite consciousness, and hence repeatedly tell you, "I am God. I am God, and everyone and everything is nothing but God."

How will you realise this? Only love holds the key. In this world the greatest sin is hypocrisy. He is the greatest hypocrite who, being himself a hypocrite, asks others not to be hypocritical. I want you all to be honest. You should not put up a show of being what you are not.

Someone just now said, "Baba, I am doing my duty honestly, but still I am not happy. Who is to be blamed for this? Do You – God - take advantage of my weakness?"

I am happy with your frankness. It is good that you opened your heart to Me. But you have no idea of My love and compassion that sustains your

very being. With all sincerity, you will have to be more and more honest, and you will find that you cannot put the blame on anyone. What you want to be, you become. And if at all you want to blame anyone, I am the only One in the whole universe to be blamed, for everything has come out of Me.

God is Infinite Mercy, and whatever happens, is tempered by His law of compassion. You don't understand this unless you go beyond the mind.

Why should you be unhappy? Why this binding? All binding is mostly self-created. It can be overcome only if you really want to become free. You are your own curtain. So the easiest thing is made most difficult. Mere wishful thinking about freedom is not enough. Is it so very easy to leave all that you claim as yours? The mind is very elusive. It has innumerable excuses, and you get caught up. Then you say, "I cannot live for God alone. I have my duty towards the family, society, nation, or the world," and you are pulled more towards illusion than Truth. Truth is simple, but illusion has made it infinitely intricate. A rare one possesses an insatiable longing for Truth, and the rest allow the illusory bindings to bind them on, more and more.

What is a weakness but a degree of strength? In My inalienable aspect of Infinite Life, I experience Myself as everyone and everything. Hence there does not arise the question of taking advantage of anyone's weakness, for I am you. I enjoy and suffer through you to make you aware that you are Infinite Power.

It is easy to ask questions, but it needs previous preparedness for unveiling of the intuition - to understand what I explain. Those who have authority to ask and capacity to understand do not ask any questions. Why? Because they understand that God is all-knowing.

When your life presents an honest and sincere picture of your mind and heart, just an embrace from a Perfect Master (Sadguru) is enough to quicken the Spirit. The embrace works in two ways:

1. The entire structure of impressions shatters. The noble emotions are stirred. A soothing feeling accompanied by tears awakening joy is experienced, and calmness prevails.
2. The mind works fast. All the accumulated impressions crowd to get spent up.

When I, the Ancient One, embrace you, I awaken something which gradually grows within you. It is the seed of love I sow. It will take its own time to flower and fructify. There is much distance to cross and a long period to pass, though, in fact, it is neither far nor near, for there is no distance to cross or time to count. In eternity it is all here and now.

I am Infinite Knowledge, Power, and Bliss. I can make anyone realise God. You may ask, "Why not make me realize God now?" I will reply, "Why only you and not a man on the street, a bird, tree, or stone, who are Me in different forms? I am in all and love all equally. The more you love Me, the sooner you will realize you are God."

God alone is real, and all the rest that you think or feel is really nothing but a theme of zeros (ciphers). Your original state is the sound sleep state. In sound sleep, you unconsciously merge in God, the Truth. But the moment you awake, all the paraphernalia of impressions gathers on you. So what has to happen? You must be wide awake in your sound sleep. This is possible if you want to experience it. It is not what you say that matters, but what you sincerely feel within. If you want God, you must want God alone. And at what cost? At the cost of your own separate existence. When you surrender entire falseness, you inherit the Truth that you are.

Truth is beyond the reach of the mind. It is a matter of experience. Not by asking questions but by merging in silence are you convinced of this Divine Game - the universe - of concealed nothing."

THE DIVINE RESPONSE

On another occasion, Baba said:

The moment you try to understand God rather than try to feel Him, you begin to nourish the ego and misunderstand God. God is Infinite, and the Divine Will that brought forth this Infinite Illusion manifests its purity through Me.

Do not try to understand the significance of My actions in the limited context. You see and understand things on your level and differentiate them in terms of "values." I, being unlimited, know all the levels of consciousness, and as such in responding, I differentiate in terms of the states of consciousness - whether most rudimentary or most involved. These states appear like the passing ripples on Infinite Consciousness.

Every moment I respond to the whole creation. Every action of Mine gets spontaneously reflected in infinite ways as per necessity on all planes of consciousness. So by its very nature and magnanimity, sometimes My responses appear enigmatic. To understand them is to understand the limitations of your understanding. But if on the other hand, they create confusion instead, it is because of your lukewarm faith, which is not as it should be.

When I see you confused, out of My love and compassion, I give certain explanations. Thus sometimes you see Me "defending" My actions through explanations, giving certain reasons. This depicts My unlimited strength and your weakness. But remember, even though I go on explaining, which forms part and parcel of My Divine Game, the significance will ever remain beyond your limited understanding. The utter simplicity of My Game appears to be most intricate as you try to understand it only through intellect.

The more you get My sahavas (intimacy) and receive My love with an open heart you begin to understand Me more and more. It is also true that as you see Baba more and more, you may feel that you understand Me less and less. For with the height of understanding, vast horizons are revealed and you feel helpless in understanding My Game.

So leave all doubts and remember well that whatever I do is for the best. It is the Divine Response filled with Love Divine.

THE DIVINE GAME OF INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS

On 23rd June 1959, Baba gave this discourse:

"The Infinite alone exists and is Real; the finite is passing and is false. The Original Whim in the Beyond caused the apparent descent of the Infinite in the realm of the seeming finite. This is the Divine Mystery and Divine Game, in which Infinite Consciousness forever plays with and on all levels of finite consciousness.

I am Infinite Consciousness, interpenetrating and transcending all states of limited consciousness. The most primal or the most final category of consciousness - say, stone or saint - is equidistant from Me. So I am equally approachable to all. I am the Way. Unflinching loyalty to the Way is the real remedy for impressioned consciousness to become free. Some of My lovers, owing to fluctuating faith, fail to understand this and run hither and thither for freedom. So at times, I seem to take a special interest in them. It becomes a retrieving game, born of life-giving Love.

Seeing this, a thought may arise in the minds of some: "Why is Baba so keen on them?" A simple simile of a child playing with its so many inanimate toys will help you understand this. A child plays with its toys. Out of the many toys, it has some favourite toys, too; and yet, among the favourite ones, one is so dear to it that it won't part with it, even during sleeping hours. In the case of a child, all this seems natural.

In the Divine Game, I am the only Live Child. I play with the universe. The so-called beings and things are to Me as toys. Like a child - for it is all a reflection of My Game - at times, I appear to show more interest in some; of course, not without reason or rhyme, though all is Me and I equally reside in all eternally.

CRUCIAL MONTHS OF HIS WORK

On 10th July 1959, Baba went to the old Poona Baba Centre where a hundred poor people had gathered. Baba bowed and gave ten rupees as prasad to each one. Among those present, in addition to the local Baba lovers who helped in bringing these poor to Baba were Maharani Shantadevi, Manohar Sakhre and his wife, Sardar Raste and Maisaheb Patwardhan,

On the 26th of July, by special permission, Professor Rajerkar performed kirtan at Guruprasad. Baba appreciated his efforts very much. The professor had gone all over India performing these kirtans.

Baba's stay in Guruprasad came to an end on the 8th of August. Mani, in her Family Letter 29 of 24th August, describes the last darshan at Bund Garden:

"We left Poona on 8th [August] morning - but as our cars wended out of Guruprasad, it was not yet goodbye for the group of heavy-hearted Baba lovers, who had gratefully drunk of their Beloved's presence at every given opportunity during the long stay in Poona and now would not see Him again till that inevitably remote 'next time.' They were gathered for the farewell in the grounds of the Bund Gardens (a slingshot distance, as it were, from Guruprasad) [it is by the embankment of the river where Baba used to boat as a college boy], where Baba had promised them He would stop on the way. The Beloved kept His date, under the huge mango tree by the river - the same tree beneath which Babajan often used to sit with devotees and followers."

On the 7th of August, one day before leaving Guruprasad, Baba informed the mandali present at Guruprasad that August, September, and October are the most crucial months of His work when He will be infinitely burdened with His universal work. He will be most tired physically and mentally due to the pressure of the work. He says this period will be the period of helplessness, hopelessness, and humiliation. If His physical body remains intact, there will be His glorification. Baba then said, "I want My lovers to help Me in this cause." Baba then asked how they could help Him in this cause. He Himself then told the following for the mandali who stay outside Pimpalgaon (Meherazad).

1. They should not go to Pimpalgaon during these three months unless they are called by Baba.
2. They should not disturb Him in the least on any account.
3. They should not write to Baba during this period of three months.
4. Whatever great difficulties they may undergo, they should not try to send any news to Baba or should not come to see Baba personally at Pimpalgaon.
5. It is better to die than to disturb Baba, for even the slightest disturbance from anyone will disturb Him utmost.

Furthermore, Baba asked the mandali who will be near Baba at Pimpalgaon to note the following points carefully:

1. No one should go out of Pimpalgaon during these three months.
2. No one should bring any bad news to Baba.
3. To keep Baba happy and try utmost to please Baba.

4. No one should argue or involve Baba in any discussion.
5. Baba will not be coming to the Mandali Hall very often during this period.
6. Try to obey Baba implicitly.

Instructions given to Adi:

He can come to Pimpalgaon if he has work with Goher or Eruch, but he should not try to see Baba unless Baba wishes so. If Baba wants him to see Him, he should keep in mind the following:

1. To keep Baba's mood.
2. No arguments.
3. Not to give disturbing news.

Lastly, Baba added, "I will give special instructions to Kaikobad, Francis, and Eruch in Pimpalgaon to help Me in this work."

WARNING AGAINST DELUSION: A LETTER FROM ERUCH

In reply to a family whose son was suffering from the delusion of having reached the fifth plane of consciousness, Baba's message was conveyed through a letter by Eruch

Guruprasad, 29th March 1959

Your long letter of the 25th and your telegram were received and read out to Baba. By now you must have received a telegram sent to you from Poona asking you not to worry about not coming to Baba with your son on March 25th. Baba knows all about your difficulties.

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

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

Complications and distractions invariably arise when one reflects love as one's own. It is necessary to make a mention here that your wife and son were genuinely

overwhelmed by Baba's Love, and your small son was obviously found to lose body-consciousness for a short while. This is a case when your dear ones proved worthy receptacles to receive Baba's Love and were affected by it.

Soon after this, your son regained consciousness, and his reactions were obviously in tune with Baba's Love. Thus everything he saw, animate and inanimate, reflected Baba's face. It was Baba's Love that made him see Baba in all. This is a case when your dear son reflected Baba's Love - not as his own, but as Baba's. Thus far he proved a worthy recipient and reflector of Baba's Love. The subsequent details as you narrated in your letter are a sad tale of a deceptive mind that played its game through your son, tempting him to reflect love as his own rather than of Baba.

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

There is a world of difference between actual experience and mental delusion. The one leads towards the Goal, whereas the other leads one astray. When love is reflected as Baba's, it leads one to Baba; but when reflected as one's own, it leads one away from Baba and drags others into dangerous pits. Baba wants me to draw your attention to the fact that Baba is already within one and all; and as such, Baba never enters into anyone at any time. It is utterly misleading to think that Baba entered the body of your son.

Baba is touched by your deep love and devotion for Him and sends His Love-Blessings to you all. Devote more time to loving Baba more and more without any strings attached to love for and faith in Baba.

[Signed] Eruch.

A MESSAGE TO KRIPAL SINGH ABOUT MAJZOOPS

Lovers and devotees suffering from hallucinations and delusions are quite common. But even so-called saints, who abound in India, sail in the same boat. As per Baba's instructions, Eruch wrote a letter from Guruprasad on 2nd April 1959 to Kishan Singh, a very sincere Baba lover from Dehra Dun to convey Baba's message to Kripal Singh on the subject of Majzoobs:

....It was very amusing to note in your letter that Sant Kripal Singh¹⁵ referred to Baba as the head of the majzoobs. When I read out the said portion of your letter to Baba, He directed me to write to you that you should see Kripal Singh immediately if he is in Dehra Dun or immediately on his arrival there, and tell him from Baba word-for-word as follows:

Baba says, "A majzoob on the lower plane is a mast - intoxicated with Divine Love to the extent of being oblivious to the surroundings.

"A majzoob of the 7th plane, merged in his own Ocean of Divinity, is completely dead to the world.

"Meher Baba sees people, meets people, holds sahas and darshan programs, goes on world tours so many times, gives discourses, dictates *God Speaks* (the only spiritual book of its kind, according to many scholars). To call this Baba - who in fact is the king of Saliks - the head of majzoobs (which He also is) shows complete bankruptcy of Spiritual Knowledge."

MY VISITS TO GURUPRASAD BY S. SURYANARAYANA

On 17th January, 1959 my wife, a friend of mine named Moorty, his four-year-old son, and I went to Guruprasad. We did not know that it was a public darshan. When we reached the palatial building, thousands were standing in serpentine queues for Baba's darshan. We bypassed the long queue, went into the hall, and squeezed ourselves in the queue very close to Baba. When I prostrated at Baba's feet, Baba stopped the queue and asked Adi K. Irani and Eruch whether they knew me. Both replied in the negative. Baba then said, "I know him." Baba raised me up, embraced me, and asked me to sit near His right foot. After taking darshan, my friend was asked by Baba to sit near His left foot. Baba very lovingly caressed the four-year-old son of my friend on His lap.

Surprisingly, Baba lovers in the long queue finished taking darshan by 12:30 P.M. Baba told us that families were permitted to come for His darshan in the

afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. and so asked us to come again in the afternoon. We were overjoyed by this unexpected darshan. When we came in the afternoon, volunteers at the gate did not permit us to enter, as all those who had been invited had been given tokens. Without the tokens, no one was permitted to enter. I argued that Baba had called us, but our entreaties fell on deaf ears. Suddenly, to our joy, Ramakrishnan, secretary of the Poona Baba Centre, came to the gate and shouted for the Calcutta Baba lovers who were being called by Baba immediately. We rushed past the volunteers and walked towards the bungalow. Ramakrishnan said, "Hurry up, Baba is waiting for you." Our fast walk now turned into a sprint, and we were very soon with Baba, who was sitting on the verandah.

Baba lovingly asked us to sit down, but within two minutes He got up, gave us a packet of sweets as prasad, and said, "Give this prasad to My children in Calcutta." He entered the big hall, where bhajans were being sung. After the programme, Baba asked us when we planned to leave Poona. "Tomorrow morning, Baba," I said. Baba gestured, "Take Baba with you." Baba did not remonstrate our breaking the queue and getting into it in the morning but silently awakened us to the fact that what we had done was not right. Hasn't Baba often said, "I have come not to teach but to awaken"

In May 1959, with one hundred Baba lovers from Calcutta, I went for Baba's darshan at Guruprasad. Baba used to go for visits to Baba lovers' houses in the mornings. Tea was served to all, including Baba. Baba sipped a little and then passed it on to us as prasad. After one week of daily darshans, we were to leave on Monday morning for Calcutta. Since the Poona Baba lovers have their Centre meeting on Mondays, 6:00 to 8:00 P.M., we decided to attend it and then leave. On Monday morning Dr. G.S.N. Moorty informed me that the Vijayawada Baba lovers were arriving at 11:00 A.M. and that they had been permitted to take darshan after their arrival. Dr. Moorty suggested that we could take advantage of this special darshan programme.

I phoned Eruch at Guruprasad and told him to ask Baba whether our Calcutta group could also attend the darshan programme with the Vijayawada lovers, as we were leaving Poona at night. Since I did not get a reply after half an hour, I again phoned Eruch. After several phone calls, I heard from him that Baba had agreed to give us darshan. I informed my group to quickly have lunch, as it was nearly

11:00 A.M. While a few who got seats were eating, Meherdas came with a message from Baba that we should immediately leave for Guruprasad.

Without having lunch, we rushed to Guruprasad in whatever conveyance we found. The Vijayawada group had already arrived. We were called in by Baba and asked to sit. Soon after, Baba asked me, "Why did you ask for darshan today when the darshan programme ended yesterday?" I replied, "What is the use of staying in Poona for the whole day and not having Your darshan, Baba?" Baba replied, "What is the earthly use of disobeying Me?" Now it dawned on me that I had disobeyed Baba, and I began to shed tears of repentance. I asked Baba to forgive me. Baba, the Compassionate Father, said, "I understand that out of your love for Me you asked for My darshan. Come, take My darshan without touching Me." We took Baba's darshan, and Baba gave me chocolate as prasad. We departed, but we had learned a lesson in discipline and obedience, which went deep into our hearts.

BABA'S HOUSE VISITS

Though the general darshan programs were only once a week, yet a few selected lovers (me included) used to come to Guruprasad at 7:00 A.M. daily. Baba would come to the side room of Guruprasad, where he met the men mandali. He would sit on His chair, whilst all of us would sit on the carpeted floor. Baba would ask about our health and whether we had slept well. He would attend to some important matters like correspondence or meet some people who had been called by him. The atmosphere would be very homely.

At 9:00 A.M., six to eight cars would line up. Baba, wearing his usual pink coat, would sit in his DeSoto car next to Eruch, who was driving. To some of the lucky ones, Baba would gesture to sit in the rear seat of His car. As soon as the car moved, the rest of us ran and climbed into the other cars which followed Baba's car. A list would have been prepared previously of the houses of Baba lovers that Baba was to visit on that day. As soon as the car reached a house, the residents would all come out with big smiles and joy in their hearts to welcome Baba. He would walk into the house and sit on a chair kept ready for Him. The hosts took Baba's darshan, bowing down to Him. This was followed by arti, and prasad was then served on plates to all. Usually, a cup of tea or sherbet followed.

Baba's twin nephews, Rustom and Sohrab and I anxiously awaited the last part of the programme - the prasad. Baba had told us, "Eat well!" and we were never going to disobey this order! After the first helping was over, we waited for seconds, but they rarely came. Baba would sip a little tea and then give His cup to some lucky person as prasad.

Since I am on the subject of tea, let me tell the story of how I gave up drinking tea. One day, I was sitting near Baba with the mandali when Aloha rang the bell for tea at 3:00 P.M. The mandali, to my surprise, without a sign from Baba, just walked out for tea. I kept sitting. Baba asked me, "Don't you drink tea?" I said that I was never very fond of it and that I would prefer to sit near Him than go for a cup of tea. Just then, Dr. Goher came in with a cup of tea for Baba. Baba sipped a little and then gave it to me saying, "Drink it because I am giving it to you. But don't drink tea again in this lifetime!"

I was very happy to drink Baba's tea as prasad. Again, a year later, when Baba's tea arrived at tea time, Baba drank a little and gave the rest to me as prasad. He said, "Drink it because I am giving it to you, but do not drink it again." Again, a year later, when Baba's tea arrived, He gave me His tea for the third time and repeated the above order. That was my last cup of tea in this lifetime.

Coming back to our house visits, after all had eaten their prasad, the household Baba lovers would embrace and bow down to Baba, and then Baba would depart to the next house according to schedule, leaving the hosts in tears. The joy of having Baba in their home, of singing His arti and offering Him tea and food was so great to the hosts that, for the time being at least, the world did not exist for them.

As soon as Baba's car took the lead, we would run and get into the other vehicles, and a cavalcade would move to the next Baba lover's house. The whole procedure of welcoming Baba, bowing down to Him, embracing Him, singing His arti, and finally giving tea and receiving prasad would be followed in its correct sequence at each home. Rustom, Sohrab, and I would tuck in as much prasad as was given - and sometimes we also ate our friends' prasad if it was too much for their mini-stomachs! By the time we had finished six to eight house visits, we felt we had had a good breakfast.

LOST AND FOUND

One day when we went with Baba for visits to the homes of Baba lovers, Baba's car stopped in the main street of Poona, and Baba got off, walked through a very tiny lane, and reached the house of a Baba lover consisting of only one room. Though his house was minuscule, the love in his heart was overflowing. Baba alone entered the tiny room while the rest of us stood on the footpath. During the singing of arti, I suddenly realised that my wallet had been pilfered. I wondered how I would return home to Navsari without any money.

Soon prasad was served, and then we began walking back to the cars through the narrow lane. When I reached the car in which I had come, to my surprise, I saw my wallet lying on the public footpath. I grabbed it and found that no money was missing. The cars soon moved on to the house of the next Baba lover. I could not reconcile the fact that I had found my wallet with its contents intact, despite numerous people who must have walked over that path during the time we visited the house of the Baba lover in the lane.

AGONY OF THE BELOVED

Once, Baba was in agony due to the pain in His hip joint. Baba had previously informed the organisers that during His house visits to Baba lovers, on that day He would go only to those houses that were on the ground floor, as He would not be able to climb steps. We visited several houses, and Baba walked to each one, giving His love in abundance and not caring about His hip joint pain. We reached the last house on that day's schedule. I got out of my car and rushed to Baba's car, which was parked just in front of mine, and opened the door for Him to step out. I could see Baba's expression of pain, but being the slave of His lovers' love, He was determined to go on these house visits. The host Baba lover came running to receive Baba with a big smile on His face.

Baba asked him, "Where is your house?" He pointed to a room on the first floor of a building. Baba questioningly asked him, "On the first floor?" With folded hands, he pleaded with Baba to come up. As soon as I saw the steep staircase in that old building, I knew it would mean disaster for Baba if He climbed up. Being the slave of His lovers' love, He agreed to climb the steps. I think that each step in that old building must have been a foot in height.

Baba, with help, slowly ascended the staircase and entered the room of the Baba lover. Baba was all smiles, with not a vestige of pain showing on His face. The programme over, Baba slowly climbed down the steps and got into His car. With His thumb and index finger, He made the typical sign of severe pain in His hip joint. The Baba lover did not understand, but I knew the agony Baba was undergoing.

When we reached Guruprasad, and I jumped out of my car and ran to open the door for Baba to step out of His car, I saw agony writ on His face; His thumb and index finger were continuously making the sign of intense pain. We got a chair from Guruprasad and placed it just outside Baba's car door. With help, He got down and sat on the chair. Rustom, Sohrab, another Baba lover, and I lifted Baba's chair and placed it near His sofa chair in the side room.

With help, He shifted to His comfortable chair, but His index finger kept making the typical sign of severe pain. As a doctor I was helpless. My heart cried to see my Beloved in such agony. We watched Baba suffer and yet could do nothing to alleviate His pain. After some time, Dr. Goher came with a wheelchair and Baba was taken in it to the women mandali's side.

After lunch, Baba came back in His wheelchair and we helped Him into His sofa chair. As soon as He sat down, He turned to me and said, "When I was suffering here before lunch, Mehera was in her room, and she felt that I was suffering and so shot up a temperature." This sentence broke my heart. Always I had wondered how my love for Baba differed from Mehera's love for Him. Today I realised that although Mehera had not been informed about Baba's suffering, yet her oneness with Baba was so great that she took over a part of His suffering and started running a fever. How true are Baba's words, "Mehera loves Me as I should be loved." On two other occasions, Baba revealed to me how Mehera's love for Him was so different from my love for Him.

PLAYING CARDS WITH THE PERFECT ONE

Lunch would be served by Pendu as soon as we got back to Guruprasad. For lunch, Baba would go to the women mandali's side, while we, armed with aluminium plates and spoons, stood in a queue at the pantry room to get our lunch from Pendu and we never displeased him. We definitely made Pendu happy with our pathological appetites. We ate till we could not tuck in anymore.

After lunch, the three of us would sleep for a while under a fan in the side room. Having finished His lunch, Baba would come to the men rmandali's side. As soon as the door that connected the side room to the hall made the slightest sound, the three of us would sit up immediately. Baba would come and sit on His chair, while we sat on the floor in front of Him. Only the privileged few would be permitted to stay on in the afternoon.

Baba would then gesture to bring a deck of cards or at times two decks, depending on the number of players. The game was called La Risque. All the players would sit in a circle, and after the cards were shuffled, usually two cards were given to Baba and to each of the players. Every other person in the circle was Baba's party man. The rest formed the second party. As soon as the cards were dealt, before anyone could realise what was happening, Baba's party had won! Each of the players on Baba's side would throw down his cards and catch the neck of the person sitting next to him, belonging to the losers' side, and would push his head down and make him rub his nose on the floor. Loud shouts and cheers from the winning party, invariably Baba's party, would echo through the room.

The first time I played the game, I did not even know what game was being played. I was never good at cards, and no one bothered to even explain how this game with twenty to forty players was to be played. When the winning party rubbed the noses of the losing party on the floor, everyone laughed and cheered, while Baba became red in the face with silent laughter.

The cards were again collected, reshuffled, and dealt out to Baba and all the players. If Baba did not have an ace or king, He would look into the cards of His neighbours, then very swiftly pick up a good card and replace it with His card. Putting it with the other card that He had in His hand, He would declare He had won! Since Baba is the Perfect Being, He was more than perfect in this card game. With electric speed He would look at the cards of those sitting near Him, and before anyone realised what was happening, his king or queen or jack got replaced by a lower card from Baba. Baba would then raise His hand and show His cards, and the game was over. With loud shouts from the winning party, the noses of the losing party were rubbed on the floor.

These games were the greatest fun. Seeing Baba so happy and smiling at those who had lost was itself the joy in the game. I wish someone had filmed those games, with Baba laughing silently and the bewildered looks of the losing

party as their noses were rubbed on the floor. The clamour, the joy, Baba's happy expressions, can never be described adequately in words.

One day, just a few of us were playing La Risque with Baba - only six or eight players, if I recall correctly. I was in Baba's party. When the cards were shuffled and dealt out to the players, my neighbour peeped into my cards. Baba immediately turned serious and asked him why he had cheated by looking into my cards. At first, he denied it, saying he had casually turned his head and had seen my cards but had never meant to cheat, Baba became red in the face and said, "I saw you cheating. Don't tell lies." Baba flung down His cards and was very angry. The man apologised, and Baba cooled off as instantly as He had become angry.

Baba then explained, "I am God, and so I am above all sin, including cheating in cards! But you, who are still in this world and cannot see the unity of life, should be honest and not cheat." To see Baba so happy and silently laughing and in an instant to see Him red and fuming made me feel that He is beyond both joy and anger.

THE GAME OF LA RISQUE BY MANI S. IRANI

Once Baba explained to a lover, a judge, who was participating in the game for the first time, "My reason for playing this game of cards is threefold: (1) the burden of My Universal Work gets lightened; (2) the minds of the players are focused on Me in a most natural manner; (3) those who lose have to rub their nose on the carpet before Me, the Highest of the High. This is a privilege filled with significance, and thus the loser becomes the winner." Baba then quoted the Urdu lines which mean, "It is a game in which the winner feels ashamed, and the loser rejoices."

Meher Baba is the Divine Sportsman, playing His role to perfection in the universal game of creation. His playing is the play of love on the playing field of the earth where He allows us to participate actively in His love with all our shortcomings, attachments, and inability to follow Him completely.

Just as with sports and its required repetition and practice leading towards excellence, Baba gives us this life discipline, to think of Him constantly and love Him wholeheartedly, which helps to break old habits and desires that get in the way of our loving Him and pleasing Him. We then make a change to grow in love, and life begins to change for the better. He allows us to make an effort to

go against our nature and desires, and as He manifests, we feel His love, which transforms our life through His grace.

The achievements of excellence in sports are an expression of one's discipline and dedication. When the basis of this dedication is centred in Baba, then all we do in life, whether work or play, is given hundred percent to Him, and we find the real goal of all our achievements, to think of Him more and more and to make Him our constant companion.

PLAYING CARDS WITH BABA¹⁶ BY ERUCH JESSAWALA

When we were with Baba, sometimes Baba would get the whim to play cards. Baba always liked a lively atmosphere around Him, and it was certainly lively when we used to play cards. In addition to the usual sort of banter that goes on when playing, we would accuse each other of cheating, and there would be protests and accusations, and a lot of argument and debate - in short, we acted completely natural with Baba. So much so, that sometimes Baba would suddenly stop and remind us, "Don't forget, I am God." And we would nod our heads, yes, and the game would continue.

We used to play at Meherazad, in Mandali Hall, and we would play in Guruprasad. And when we travelled on mast trips with Baba, sometimes we would play cards on the train with Him. Of course, then there was no question of the loser rubbing his nose on the ground because that would attract attention to Baba, and that was the one thing He didn't want when He was out on a mast expedition. Sometimes when we were travelling by train, Baba and I used to travel second class, and the rest of the mandali with us would travel servant class. But they would come into our compartment, and we would play cards. If the conductor ever came in, I would just tell him that these others were our servants and so they would be allowed to stay with us. Especially around meal time, it was no problem having them join us because servants would naturally be needed then to serve the food.

There were many who would not have understood Baba playing cards. Their concept of God was quite different. So when such lovers came, Baba would always act very serious and solemn, in short, He would act up to their concept of how God was expected to behave. Once we were playing cards, I remember when suddenly a car drove up and some of these lovers arrived to see Baba. "Quick,"

Baba gestured, "sit on the cards." So we all slipped the cards underneath us and sat very straight looking at Baba most attentively.

The lovers came in, and Baba greeted them and then engaged them in some sort of spiritual discourse for a while. I don't remember what Baba said, but it was on some lofty spiritual theme which conformed to their preconceptions about what sort of subjects were suitable to discuss with the God-Man, and after a few minutes they paid their respects and left. "Are they gone?" Baba asked. I checked and made sure the car had driven away. "Yes, Baba," I said, "they have gone." Baba smiled and gestured like this with His hand, "Get out the cards." And we resumed our game.

A WEDDING AT GURUPRASAD

Every Baba lover in India knows the name of Madhusudan Pund. He is a very good singer from Poona who has composed hundreds of Baba bhajans. Baba always enjoyed his singing. I would like to tell the story of Madhusudan's marriage performed by Baba in Guruprasad.

Madhusudan had a fiery temperament and communist leanings. His neighbour once took him to a bhajan programme where a singer named Subhadra was performing. He was greatly impressed by her charm, beauty, and singing. He wondered why this young girl of eighteen who was beautiful and educated should spend her time singing bhajans, as to his thinking, spirituality was meant for only older people. Madhusudan started attending Subhadra's programmes, which were, in fact, Meher Baba meetings. He was not interested in the talks given about Meher Baba.

On Baba's fifty-fourth birthday, 25th February 1948, a Baba programme had been arranged at the residence of R. Gadekar, who was instrumental in finding Guruprasad. Madhusudan was asked to sing. He sang a bhajan of Saint Kabir, which was greatly appreciated by everyone. Madhusudan thus got inducted into the Poona bhajan group. On 20th August 1948, Madhusudan attended a Baba bhajan programme. The next day, Baba lovers were going to Ahmednagar to meet Meher Baba. Madhusudan agreed to go with them for a Sunday outing, though not with the intention of meeting Meher Baba.

The night before leaving for Ahmadnagar, Madhusudan had a very vivid dream. He saw an enormous white temple where bhajans were being sung. In

one section of the temple, there were only ladies. An elderly lady approached and asked Madhusudan, "Have you seen God?" "No," he replied. "Do you want to see God in flesh and blood?" the lady asked. He said, 'Yes'. The lady warned him that if he went, he would not be able to return, and so he should go home and ask permission of his elders.

In his dream, he ran back and asked his mother whether he could go. She lamented, "O fool, why did you come to ask? Does everyone get such an opportunity?" He returned to the elderly lady and told her that he was ready to see God. He ran in the direction to which she pointed and came upon Meher Baba standing before him. Baba looked immensely tall and stood in the posture of Lord Vishnu with four hands. This pose was the one Lord Krishna had shown Arjuna, except that what Arjuna had seen was scary, whereas this one was pleasant and beautiful.

Baba smiled and asked, "Where are you going?"

"I was coming to meet You," he replied.

Baba said, "Does one find God so easily?"

Madhusudan reached out to touch Baba, but the image disappeared, and only the aura remained, which said, "Follow me." He followed, and they came to a river. Madhusudan jumped in after the aura, and the waters parted as they had for Moses. The aura then came back and circled a statue of Lord Krishna in the white temple. Madhusudan was then asked to sing. Just as he started singing the bhairavi¹⁷ tune, his brother woke him up from the dream.

On 21st August 1948, with the other boys, they went to Ahmednagar and met Adi, Baba's secretary. Madhusudan was amused, for he could not reconcile that even sadhus have secretaries. Adi asked them who they were and who had sent them as Baba was in seclusion and not meeting anyone. Adi's mother, Gulmai, a very sweet and kind lady, took pity on the youngsters and pleaded with Adi to allow them to see Baba. Adi informed them that Baba had gone to Meherabad and would return to Meherazad. The boys could have a fleeting glimpse of Baba when He passed by in His car, but Adi could not say for certain what time this would occur.

The boys agreed and waited from 1:00 to 7:00 P.M. The last bus for Poona was at 7:30 P.M. Madhusudan thought that he must return by the last bus, as he had to go to work the next day. At 7:15 he stood up disappointed, walked to

the middle of the road, and folded his hands to bow. Just then the headlights of Baba's car appeared. As the car passed by, Baba's eyes met his and Baba smiled. Madhusudan fainted and fell on the road. The other boys did not notice this but ran along Baba's car to have a glimpse of Him. Baba stopped the car, pointed at Madhusudan lying on the road, and asked the others to fetch him. The group carried him to Baba, who put His hand on Madhusudan's head and said, "I know you. I love you." Love had flowed from Baba to Madhusudan like a waterfall. The latent love for Baba in Madhusudan's heart had been kindled. He now felt he should devote his life to Baba and die for Baba.

Many years passed by and Baba the divine fisherman had spread His net and had drawn Madhusudan close to His divine heart. It was now May 1959. Baba had ordered that whenever Baba was in Guruprasad, Madhusudan should visit Him, eat and drink with Baba, go to his job and then come back to Guruprasad, and at nights return to his home to rest and sleep. If he did not come to Guruprasad for a day, explanations for his absence had to be submitted to Baba.

One day, either at the end of April or early May 1959, Baba called Madhusudan into the side room of Guruprasad where the men mandali sat with Baba. Baba asked Madhusudan whether he would marry Subhadra. He replied in the negative. He was thirty-two years old, and other marriage proposals had come for him, but he had declined them. Madhusudan told Baba that there were many differences between Subhadra and himself. She was rich, educated and had a very serene temperament, while he was poor, barely educated, and worst of all had a fiery temperament. But, he added, the major difference was that of caste. He belonged to the upper Brahmin caste, while she belonged to the scheduled caste. Baba then said, "If I tell you to marry her, will you do it?" Madhusudan agreed to it.

On another day, Baba called Subhadra and asked if she would marry Madhusudan. At first, she too declined, but later she agreed. Baba asked Madhusudan and Subhadra to bring their parents. Madhusudan brought his elder brother, while she brought her father. Baba called Bhuasaheb, Madhusudan's brother, and said, "I have decided that Madhusudan and Subhadra should marry. Do you agree?" Bhuasaheb replied, "Madhusudan is Your son, You may do whatever You wish with him." When both parties agreed, the date and time for the wedding were fixed by Baba. Baba gave Sadashiv Patel (a lover from the early

days with Baba) the responsibility of looking after all the arrangements. The date for the wedding was fixed for 14th May 1959 at 9:00 AM. at Guruprasad.

On the eve of the marriage day, Madhusudan was slightly depressed thinking about the consequences of this intercaste marriage, which was vehemently opposed by his sisters. Besides, Madhusudan had received a letter from the renowned Shankaracharya¹⁸ of Nasik that Madhusudan had defiled the Hindu religion and what he had decided to do was disastrous to the Brahmins of India. His wedding received immense publicity and was in the headlines of many of the nation's newspapers. Madhusudan shared that he had to face a lot of hardships after the marriage as no landlord would rent him a house and as a result, he had to change houses ten to twelve times.

Madhusudan spent the night before the wedding at Yeravada at a friend's house. At midnight, he composed a bhajan: *Prabhu me charanan chod na jaoo*, "Lord, may I never leave Your sacred feet." *Mata pita Guru sakha tumhi ho*, "You are my mother, father, Guru, and friend. Madhusudan felt that there was no one in the world except Baba whom he could call his own.

On the wedding day, 14th May, Madhusudan's brother, his relative from Yeravada, and his prospective brother-in-law were the only family members present. He came to Guruprasad on a motorcycle with his relative. He was stopped at the gate, and Baba sent Nariman Dadachanji's car to bring him to Guruprasad.

At his marriage ceremony, Baba lovers from all over the world were represented: Francis Brabazon from Australia, others from England, USA, and India. The wedding was a straightforward affair. Madhusudan garlanded Subhadra and she garlanded him in front of Baba. It is customary to have witnesses from both parties to the marriage. Sadashiv Patel represented Madhusudan's father, while Shinde represented Subhadra's father. Baba acted as the priest. He put Madhusudan's and Subhadra's hands together and then placed His own hand on top of their clasped hands. Baba asked Madhusudan, "Do you accept Subhadra as your wife?" "Yes I do," he replied. He then asked Subhadra, "Do you accept Madhusudan as your husband?" "Yes, I do," she replied. Baba then solemnly said to Madhusudan, "I am handing over Subhadra to you and I will be with both of you always."

Instead of the usual Hindu custom of going around a sacred fire seven times before the marriage is complete, Madhusudan and Subhadra took seven rounds

around Baba. They then bowed to Baba and embraced Him. The marriage was thus performed without any rituals and ceremonies.

After the wedding, Madhusudan was asked to sing a bhajan. That a bridegroom should sing on his wedding day was an unprecedented event. He sang the song he had composed at midnight. It brought tears to many eyes. Soon after followed lunch, catered by the Edward Hotel and all enjoyed the meal. Baba permitted the couple to leave Guruprasad in His car in the evening, and Madhusudan was asked to compose another song for the next day.

On the next day, when they came to Guruprasad, Baba asked Adi to drive them to Mahabaleshwar for their honeymoon. This honeymoon was also unprecedented, as Baba sent twenty other Baba lovers, mainly singers in different cars to Mahabaleshwar with them. During the journey Madhusudan's mind was running at breakneck speed. He complained that he was neither prepared for the marriage nor for the changes in his life that would follow. Adi, who had been silently listening as the bridegroom gave vent to his feelings, observed: "Following Baba is like putting a wooden laddoo [sweet ball] in your mouth - you can neither swallow it nor spit it out."

At Mahabaleshwar, they stayed at the Rippon Hotel, which belonged to a Baba lover, Kohiyar Satarawala. A bhajan programme was held at the Kashmiri store, whose proprietor, Habibullah, had met Baba in Kashmir and had taken Him around. After the programme, the couple returned to Poona. Baba had said a long time back that when He was Krishna, He had performed the marriage of His sister. He had predicted that in this Avataric advent He would perform one marriage. These words came true when he married Madhusudan to Subhadra.

"By this marriage, it is established that all are one; all are equal, and everybody has the same and equal right to go to God," Baba observed. Madhusudan and Subhadra are the minstrels of the Avatar of the modern age.

THE CANDY GARLAND BY MADHUSUDAN PUND

Soon after my marriage, it was Gudipadva Day, the Maharashtrian New Year, when garlands of sugar candy are offered to the Gudi, literally meaning a doll; the Gudi representing God. The candy is of variegated colours, and children enjoy eating them. My mother told me that when Baba, God in human form, is present, one should not garland a Gudi, but instead, the garland should be given to Baba.

With much love and ingenuity, she made one garland of sugar candy and asked me to give it to Baba when I went to Guruprasad. I, however, was not keen on this idea and felt embarrassed at garlanding Baba with this garland of sugar candy. I felt that I would be laughed at by the other Baba lovers if I gave the garland to Baba. However, out of respect for my mother and her love for Baba, I brought the garland to Guruprasad.

I did not dare to give it to Baba but hung it with the other garlands that Baba had worn which were hanging on a peg on the verandah. I felt that hanging the sugar candy garland with the other garlands would be tantamount to Baba's having worn it. When I went into the side room of Guruprasad, Baba was playing cards - His favourite game of La Risque - with other Baba lovers.

After some time, Baba complained of an odour in the room. Everyone looked around for its source, but none could be traced. Baba then asked His brother Jal to investigate the source of the odour on the verandah. Jal came in with my mother's garland of sugar candy and told Baba that it was the source of the odour. Baba asked us who had brought it. I sat with my head bowed down and felt ashamed to acknowledge that I had brought it. Baba then asked me if I had brought it.

When I explained that my mother had given it for Him, He admonished me as to why I had not garlanded Him with it, and why had I left it on a peg on the verandah. I told Baba that I feared all would ridicule and laugh at my childish behaviour, and thus I did not garland Baba with it.

He called me near Him and twisted both my ears for not garlanding Him with it when my mother had sent it with so much love. Baba asked me to garland Him with it. He wore the candy garland and then looked around. Baba then playfully said that no one should look at Him to see how much He ate of the candy. Otherwise, He may get a stomach ache for not sharing it with the others. He then ate a piece and distributed the rest to each one sitting there. Children, when they eat this candy, enjoy it - and here, too, all were children of Baba, who had given it so lovingly.

After the distribution was over, only the thread remained with which the candy had been threaded into a garland. Baba gave this to me and asked me to give it to my mother, thanking her for the lovely candy and telling her that her love for God had been rewarded by God, as Baba had eaten a piece. When I took back the thread and gave it to my mother, she shed tears of joy, for Baba

had accepted her small gift. The words of the American arti rang in my ears at that time: "What in the world can I offer as mine? Even my gift of love would be naught in Your Sight, but veiled reflections of Your love divine."

In my younger days, I was communist-minded. I was unemployed and not at all devotional. When I came to Baba and began to love Him, it was because of His beauty and loving nature. I was struck by Baba's equal approach to all people - rich or poor, young or old. This attracted me to Baba and not any miracles, which I never saw until a day before my marriage.

Baba took us to see an English movie - *Harry and the Black Tiger* - at the West End Theatre. During the movie, Baba was seated in the row exactly behind me. The film was about a forest ranger's family whose son walked into the forest where there was a man-eater tiger. One evening, when the boy did not return home, his mother rushed into the woods, unarmed despite the danger of the tiger.

The mother eventually found her son safe, and their meeting and embracing was so loving and touching that I wondered whether such attachment and love could really be possible between two human beings. Just then Baba, who was sitting behind me, tweaked my ear and said, "It is possible." Till then I had accepted Baba as my master, but now I was convinced that He was God in human form.

In 1959, when Mrs. Ivy O. Duce came for Baba's darshan, she was to visit the Poona Baba Centre. Ramakrishnan, the secretary, requested me to organise a children's programme when she came to the Centre. Where I stayed, there were lots of children in the neighbourhood, the majority being girls. After their studies were over, they would sing popular film songs and disturb me. I thought I could utilise their energies, and so I composed Baba songs to the tunes of the film songs. I taught them Baba bhajans with tunes of films, and they were happy to learn them.

When Mrs. Duce visited the Poona Baba Centre, these children sang and the programme was a grand hit. Baba heard about this programme and remarked that He was not called for the programme. After that, I arranged many such programmes at Guruprasad with the children singing and performing small skits. Parsi Baba families would provide costumes, while Baba's sister, Mani, did the makeup for them. When the children sang for Baba the song "Hamto Karte Hai Meher se Pyaar" (We Are Loving Meher Baba) and other songs, Baba was

extremely pleased, and as a reward, each child received an embrace and a kiss from Baba. These children have now grown up and not only they but their families have all become Baba lovers.

AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST IS FORMED

In 1959 at Guruprasad, Meher Baba summoned some of his disciples and expressed His wish to form a trust with the sole property which remained in His name at that time. This property consists of an area of land on Meherabad Hill in Ahmednagar district, with all its buildings, including Baba's Tomb. Incorporating Baba's specific instructions, the deed of Avatar Meher Baba Trust was drawn up. As the "Settlor" of the Trust, Baba named ten of His disciples as trustees, and He signed the Trust Deed on Meherabad Hill on 6th April 1959 in the presence of the Sub-Registrar from Ahmednagar.

Baba said, "Although the universe is Mine, I own nothing in the worldly sense. I am the King of kings, and also the Faqir of faqirs. Even the Tomb, where I have directed My body to be placed when I drop it, does not belong to Me." He entrusted the Tomb and other Meherabad properties to the care and administration of the ten trustees, enjoining them to carry out His wishes as specified by Him in the Trust Deed.

The primary purpose of the Trust, though of a temporary nature, was to provide for those of Baba's disciples who were dependent on Baba, named in the deed as "beneficiaries." Its long-range purpose was to maintain the existing Trust properties, particularly Baba's Tomb, and to develop and expand them for the time when Meherabad becomes a centre of world pilgrimage.

Although Baba was particular that the trustees should hold meetings to consider matters relating to the functioning of the Trust, it remained practically dormant from 1959 to 1969. Trust meetings were held intermittently at Guruprasad and at Meherabad from 1959 until Baba dropped His body in January 1969.

Eruch narrated a very touching story about the selection of the forty-one beneficiaries. While Baba was naming the beneficiaries, He named a person whom no one seemed to know. The mandali looked up at Baba questioningly and then at each other. When Baba was asked about the identity of this person, He reminded Eruch of an incident that had happened during one of His darshan tours.

At one village, Baba's stay at night had been arranged at a rest house on the outskirts of the village. At 4:00 AM., Baba asked Eruch to fetch a bucket of hot water for His bath. Eruch was at his wit's end, as he did not have a vessel in which to heat water, nor did he have a stove. He said, "Yes, Baba," and left the house. The only container he had was a mug (*lota*). He took a match, lit a newspaper, and held the mug full of water over it! He knew fully well that Baba could not possibly have a bath with that little quantity of water. But, over the years with Baba, we have learned that one must try to obey Baba even though it may seem impossible.

While Eruch was doing this impossible task of heating water for Baba's bath in a mug, he sighted a man coming towards the rest house. Since it was Baba's order that no one should come to the rest house at night, Eruch called out to the man, "Who is there? Why have you come?" As the man neared, Eruch saw that he was carrying a pot on his head. Replying to Eruch, he said, "I have brought this pot of hot water for Baba's bath!" Eruch wondered what had prompted this man to bring hot water for Baba at that early hour. Eruch told the man to leave the pot and go back. When the man left, he took the hot water to Baba, who, without a question, had His bath.

Years passed by, and this incident had been completely wiped out of Eruch's memory. When the mandali asked about the identity of the beneficiary He had named, Baba said that the person He was referring to was the person who had brought hot water for His bath many years ago. This illiterate villager, whose heart was in unison with his Beloved, must have had a divine link forged through many lives with Baba, a deeper connection with Baba than the darshan he had had at his village on the previous day. The mandali realised the love Baba had for this villager. His small sacrifice had not been forgotten by Baba after so many years.

FIRST DARSHAN ALMOST MISSED, BY L.D. BAJPAI

Say "Guruprasad," and you remember dear Baba in a flash. To me, Guruprasad is like Mecca. Dear Baba's presence could be felt almost in every corner of that big palatial building. I felt this very deeply on my first visit, which I recall with great awe and reverence. That visit was a great event for my family, which consisted of my wife and two young children. My wife did not want to go to Poona to visit

some Baba! She told me firmly that she had no faith in any Baba and it would be better if they went to Puri, a place close to our town where the great temple of Lord Jagannath stands. But I was desperate to meet Baba. I had been waiting to have His darshan for more than a year. Though I could have participated in the big sahavas of 1958, I was not prepared, as my urge to meet Baba then was very lukewarm.

During the summer of 1957, I was reading the book *Listen, Humanity*. When I read Baba's discourse on death, I was shaken up. I felt, here is a man who seems to know more about death than Death itself! Death was my favourite subject, and I had been reading a lot about it. Never before had I come across such an excellent exposition on this topic. I put the book down and immediately wrote a letter to Baba, begging for His darshan. I got His reply quickly, but to my dismay, I was asked to wait until the next darshan programme. Now I had waited till 1959 when Baba was to give darshan at Guruprasad during the summer, and I could not wait any longer. I persuaded my wife to come with me to Poona. We reached Poona and stayed in a dharamshala just opposite the station.

I decided to go and find out where Guruprasad was. I entered the premises very eager, very hopeful, and, I think, feeling very pious also. Eruch saw me from the verandah. I told him my name and that my family had come from Kharsia for Baba's darshan. Eruch told me that the darshan programme was closed and I had arrived very late. This was like an earth shattering blow for me and I felt as if the earth had sunk beneath me. He also told me that a telegram had been sent to me conveying this information. I had not received the telegram. I was dumbfounded. Never before had I gone to any saint except to my own master, whom I could meet at any time without any restrictions and even with my shoes on! This reply from Eruch was most unexpected, and my ego was hurt deeply.

I entreated Eruch to somehow arrange the darshan, as I had come from a faraway place for the sole purpose of taking Baba's darshan with no strings attached. He again told me very politely that as a Baba lover, I should obey Baba's orders. I asked him whether I could just get a glimpse of Him while He was crossing from one room to another. That was quite an idiotic suggestion, as I recalled much later. Perhaps this annoyed Eruch, who finally and curtly told me that I was wasting my time and his too.

Crestfallen, I was returning from Guruprasad when I met brother Adi and Francis. On hearing my request for Baba's darshan, Adi replied that with Baba, obedience was the first word in spirituality. I thought, forget spirituality and forget obedience, I wanted to see the man who knew more about death than anyone else. In response to my further pleadings, Adi said that he was helpless in the matter, and it would be better to wait until the next darshan programme. As we were walking out of the compound, Francis said something to Adi. Perhaps it was some suggestion that might be helpful to me. Adi then told me to go to Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, the renowned philosopher of Nagpur University, who was now staying in the same dharamshala where I had taken a room. He said that Dr. Deshmukh could plead before Baba on my behalf and that he was my last refuge.

I was filled with some hope, and so I hastened back to the dharamshala. By then, another fear had gripped me - what was I going to tell my wife about Baba not giving darshan? Reaching the dharamshala, I asked the manager and was relieved to be told that Dr. Deshmukh was staying there too. He gave me his room number, and I ran to it, only to be told that he had gone out and nobody knew when he would return.

That was the last straw on the camel's back. I realised that now darshan was not possible and needed to go and tell my wife about it and then face the music. However, she took the news very calmly. To console her, I suggested a change in our itinerary. We would go to Bombay the next day by an early morning train and stay there for two days, and then we would proceed to Shirdi for my elder son's *mundan sanskar* (first haircut). Fortunately, this pleased her, and she immediately began to pack.

I came out and stood on the balcony. In my heart of hearts, I really wanted to have Baba's darshan, but there was no way to get it now. I felt very despondent. Suddenly, I saw brother Adi entering the dharamshala and going into the manager's office. I felt this was my last chance and so rushed down the stairs. Saint Peter was showing the way to Heaven, I felt. On seeing me, Adi was delighted. He told me that he had been searching for me and that Baba had allowed me to have His darshan on the morrow. Great God, what was I hearing? But it was true! The manna had fallen from the heavens. Overjoyed, I rushed back to my wife with the happy tidings. The wine shop had opened and the Saqi-ul-Irshad had Himself invited me! I now knew that love was to strike my heart and my ego to be effaced. That night I slept like a log.

Next morning, we got ready to be in time for Baba's darshan. We purchased two garlands for Baba. On the way, I wondered how this sudden change of heart on His part had occurred. On reaching Guruprasad, we were given a very warm welcome by sister Mani, who came out to greet us. She even took my younger son on her lap, and finally, we were ushered inside to where Baba was sitting with several persons.

Baba was on a chair, while the rest were on the floor. A glance at Baba and my heart almost stopped beating. So dazzling, so radiant a personality, I had never seen in my lifetime. Everyone else in the room disappeared for me - no wife, no children, no mandali. I wondered whether anybody could be so handsome, so majestic, and yet so near to us. To me, Baba seemed all sweetness. I felt Lord Shiva Himself was sitting before me. I sat there like a dumb and deaf person, just drinking the nectar of His presence. Saqi Himself was the wine, and I felt intoxicated. I had never felt so humble and small as I felt sitting before Him.

My reverie was broken when I heard Eruch saying something to me. He was relating what had happened after I left Guruprasad the day before. It seems Baba called Eruch and asked him about the day-to-day affairs. Eruch told Baba about the letters received and other things, but he forgot to mention my visit. Baba, the all-knowing, infinitely knowing, pointedly asked Eruch whether anybody had come for His darshan. Only then did Eruch remember me and told Baba that a family had come for darshan from Kharsia. Baba told him to find my whereabouts and ask me to come for darshan the next morning. Eruch must have told Adi to pass on this message to me, as Adi knew my address. While this talk was going on, my attention was focused on Baba - the infinite in His finite form. It was all ethereal to me - His personality, His beauty, and most of all His compassion had overpowered me.

Soon I saw Him beckoning me to go to Him. I did not know how to approach Him. Like an automaton, I went to Him. He clasped me in an embrace, and I don't know for how long, but I kissed Him on His cheeks. My wife also went up to Baba and embraced Him hesitatingly, as Hindu women do not embrace anyone but their husbands. She did not know that Baba was not a "Par Purush" (not her husband), but "Param-Purush" - the Ancient One, the only Purusha that pervades the universe. We then remembered the two garlands we had brought for Baba. We fumbled, as the two garlands had got intertwined and we could not

separate them. Somebody asked us to put the garlands round Baba's neck without trying to separate them.

That was the end of our first darshan. In the late forties, I was working as a sub-editor on the Hindi monthly magazine *Sarita*. I had begun writing a story, "Insan Ki Khoj mein" (In Search of Man). Though the book was never completed, yet now I felt, while returning from Guruprasad, that the search was over. I had found my Man, the complete Man - the God-Man, the Avatar. We walked out in a dazed state. I remembered my first visit to the Taj Mahal at Agra. The first sight of it had just stunned me. Could the beauty of any monument startle you? Ah! Could a Taj in human flesh make your heart stop beating? That Taj in human form was my Baba - my father, my mother, my all in all.

I am told that Guruprasad, my Jerusalem, was torn down and does not exist anymore. But I do know that Guruprasad shall always exist in the heart of every Baba lover forever and ever.

JUDGE NOT OTHERS LEST YE BE JUDGED,¹⁹ BY BAL NATU



Beginning in 1959, Avatar Meher Baba, along with His close disciples, would visit Pune during the summer months and stay at Guruprasad. In 1959, He also permitted His Indian lovers scattered across the country to visit Him on certain specified weekends. That year, I was permitted to stay with Baba under the same roof throughout my summer vacation of six weeks.

Guruprasad was a large, palatial building. Each morning, Baba would walk down the spacious hall to the men mandali's room. Here, He would sit in His armchair and attend to the day's mail. First, Eruch read out the correspondence in English, and my job was to read to myself that which was written in Hindi or Marathi and convey the gist of each letter to Beloved Baba. Only if Baba wished it, I would read out the entire letter. Once Eruch had read out a certain number of letters, Baba would turn to me, meaning that it was my time to read. I rarely reached the bottom of my pile of mail before Baba would gesture that I should stop.

I was given the freedom to use my discretion in deciding what letters were of importance and should be read out first. One day, I found a letter in my pile written to Meher Baba by a photographer, Shri Rege from Pune. My reaction to its contents was not favourable. In it, the man expressed his wish to photograph Baba, saying that Baba should pose for him and that the photographer himself should be allowed to have his picture taken with Baba. The man also mentioned a list of dignitaries whom he had previously photographed. To me, it did not appear to be a letter of request, but more of a demand on Baba. I judged for myself that the attitude of the photographer was not right because I felt it was not fitting to place expectations on the Highest of the High in this way. So I put this letter in the bottom of my mail pile, thinking that I would not have to read it to Baba for days since He generally listened to only four or five letters before asking me to stop.

To my surprise, on that particular day, Baba allotted Eruch less time than usual. He then pointed to me, indicating it was my turn. I was sure that He would tell me to stop reading after a few letters, but, to my further surprise, He did not. After each letter, I thought, "Now He will surely tell me to stop." He continued to listen, and as I continued reading, I wondered if I would have to read out the photographer's letter. Baba still did not stop me, and, in time, I reached the bottom of the pile, and the only letter left was the one I had so carefully avoided.

I told Baba the gist of the letter, and even expressed my resentment and my opinion that its writer did not make his request to Baba in the way he should have. I felt confident that Baba would agree with my views. Instead, He beamed a smile and gestured that from the credentials, it seemed that the photographer must be a good one. He then asked me to read out the letter in its entirety, which I did with some reluctance. After I finished, Baba instructed me to write to the man and ask him to visit the following Sunday. As if this was not irony enough, I was told I would be the one to receive him and attend to his needs. Of course, I obeyed Baba and replied to the letter, telling the photographer that his request to Baba would be granted in full, and giving him the specific time and date when he could come.

The man replied to me directly confirming the date and requesting Baba's permission to arrive a day early to set up the shot. Baba agreed.

The following Saturday I was on the verandah, ready to receive the man, inwardly feeling how nice it would be if he didn't come. However, he arrived on time, had a look around and left.

The next day, he came armed with a large camera and other accessories necessary in those years - cables, plugs, and special lights intended for the photography session. After greeting him, I showed him the location of the electrical outlets, and as soon as the wires and spotlights were arranged, Baba entered the room. The photographer offered his salutations; Baba smiled in return and inquired about the arrangements, then sat down in His cushioned armchair.

Before the photos were taken, Baba asked the photographer what direction He should face, and if His hands were in the right position or not. To my amazement, the photographer did suggest some changes and continued to do so before every new pose. He even touched Baba's hands once to demonstrate the way in which he thought they should be placed. As Baba agreed to each suggestion, He would give me a look which seemed to be a silent lesson that I should not judge others. In all, the photographer took photos of Baba in four different poses, then stood alongside him for a fifth one. Once the session was complete, I felt relieved.

A week later, the photographer revisited Guruprasad, bringing copies of the photos, all of which were very good. He gave Baba a large colour photograph of the pose in which Baba had allowed him to reposition His hands. This picture is now kept at Meherazad in the Blue Bus on Baba's hospital bed.

Over the years, one of the full length photographs of Baba taken by this Pune photographer came to be appreciated so much by Baba lovers that many display it in their respective Centres. In it, Baba truly looks like an emperor, blessing His dear ones with a benevolent, yet authoritative smile. Because of this, it has come to be known as the "darbar pose," for in it, Baba is the emperor appearing before His darbar, or royal court.

In the 1970s, when I began staying at Meherazad, I noticed the coloured photograph of Baba in the Blue Bus, and the entire story behind it returned to me. It was then, in a very natural way that the words from the Holy Bible came to me: "Judge not others lest ye be judged." Now I visit the bus every day, reminding myself that Beloved Baba is the only real Judge and that I should not argue with or comment on what others express in their love for the Avatar, the Emperor of all hearts.

Baba's methods of bringing a profound message home to His dear ones are unique. Are His ways not matchless?

1960

Meher Baba came to Guruprasad on 21st March 1960 and left for Meherazad on 22nd June. Thousands availed of the darshan programmes, which continued until 10th June. Baba, the divine fisherman, once again spread His net and vigorously pulled in His catch. Every kind of fish that found itself in the net was willing and had no reason to struggle, for unlike the rest of its kind, it had found its home. The lover of God felt the tremendous impact of Baba's love, while the philosopher, the professor, and the scientist were filled with admiration for Baba's wisdom and the scientist, the psychologist, the doctor, could not help loving Baba once they found themselves in His august presence. All realised their limitations when faced with the Unlimited One, and all felt the force of love that radiated from the Infinite Ocean of Love.

GLIMPSES OF AVATAR MEHER BABA, BY DR. C.D. DESHMUKH

Baba and party arrived at Guruprasad at 11:15 A.M. on 20th March 1960. At 1:30 P.M. He admitted in His presence Barrister Das from Calcutta and Harry Dodolcha, both of whom had been waiting for Him at Poona. To Harry, Baba said: "Do not fear Me, the Ocean. Purities, as well as impurities, should equally be surrendered into this Ocean, without any hesitation. All creation is imagination, like the mental image of a ten-headed elephant, which you may sustain for a while and then wipe out at will."

On the 17th morning, He explained to Ranisaheb Shantadevi of Baroda how the Universal Mind works.

The Avatar has a universal mind, universal energy, and universal body, just as each individual soul has an individual mind, individual energy, and individual body. The universal mind of the Avatar is in tune with the mind of each and every

one, and so, like a radio tuned to a particular wavelength, the universal mind at once effortlessly receives the thoughts of all.

Attending the mahadarshan [great darshan] that followed was Dastur Bodh of New York Agyari.

On the 18th of April, Baba developed a new topic, since Shantadevi had been regularly coming and sitting at His feet to receive from Him light on many subjects. Baba said, "God pervades and envelops everything and is indivisible, and yet we experience separateness due to ignorance. Whether we look up or down, actually that which exists is without divisions; it is one complete whole; and God is the shoreless Ocean of existence, though the mind cannot conceive of any such thing. We cannot have an idea of that which is beyond time, but one flash of experience is enough to give you the realization of that indivisible being. However, such experience comes to one out of millions."

On 19th April, Beloved Baba explained to one seeker who had been experiencing flights in dreams that no one should attach too much importance to such experiences. "Many people who love Me experience miracles, like My being on the bed of sick persons. But real *anubhava*, or experience of reality, is different from all such things. Even saints can get stuck in the minor experiences on the path. You must scrupulously avoid all hypocrisy and get lost in God if you want to have that experience by which you become what you really are. This experience, being beyond the mind, cannot be explained. Still, I often try to describe it for you using charts and similes, so that you may have some idea about it.

In the North, there are quite a good number of persons who, without being genuine saints and without having realised God, allow others to bow down to them. And they naturally develop around them an obnoxious atmosphere, and those who see through it naturally lose faith in God and Masters and begin to talk against both. The fake saints get addicted to many things, which are harmful, and their followers invent all sorts of explanations and theories to justify their objectionable actions. Love and honesty, self-denial and surrenderance to God, are absolutely necessary to solve the knotty problems of life; and the outer show does not take anyone an inch further on the path.

Hafiz says, 'O Hafiz! Go and worship the Perfect Master. Leave all and catch hold of his daaman.' I draw the blessed ones through My love. Many yogas take the soul towards the goal; but of them all, the Sahaj Yoga, or the path of

effortless adjustments to everything that comes, is in many ways the best. It means cheerfully accepting what life brings to us. Such a person will resign himself to his lot, even if he loses his wife or catches leprosy. The Sahaj Yoga is not easy; it is almost impossible." Baba then explained how He knows everything. "It is the mind which sees Me, you, or, say Homi. Actually, they do not exist, being parts of a dream."

On 20th April, Vibhuti brought a contingent of lovers from Aurangabad, simple men and women singing the glory of the Lord in a simple, attractive manner that went to the very heart. Beloved Baba explained, "Like diverse fish in the ocean, there are diverse types of souls; but all these differences are in imagination only." Dr. Mohbe from Nagpur sought a private interview, but Beloved Baba said He knew everything and an interview was not necessary. Baba asked him not to worry about anything. Then He explained: "The physical body has no importance; what matters is the mind and the heart."

On the 22nd, a newly married couple from Hamirpur sought Baba's blessings. On 23rd April He saw the Bengal group, with Suryanarayana of Santragachi Meher Mandir. An orphan child, Gopal, had been brought by this group to have the privilege of being near Baba. His love was deep, and when he sang in Bengali to Beloved Baba, streams of tears flowed from his eyes. He also took the initiative of the "Jai" ovations, showing at such a young age so deep an appreciation of what Beloved Baba means to the forlorn ones.

On 24th the Jabalpur group came with Rajnikant, the composer of exquisite Hindi poems on Beloved Baba, and Amiya Kumar Hazra and his mother, bringing with them a variety of sweets which excelled all others, even in the infinite variety which is daily given to the mandali as prasad by Beloved Baba.

If anyone had caught a cold or influenza, Beloved Baba in a vein of humour asked him to hold a handkerchief over his mouth so that he should not spread that infection to others. On 25th one Urvadatta J.P. Joshi, who is in charge of Shankarji's avataric mandir at Badrinath, was among those who came for the darshan of Bhagwan Meher.

On the 26th April, Agarwal from Nagpur pressed Beloved to give him His real darshan. I was by his side and commented that even Arjuna after he had the darshan of Virat Swarupa, got frightened and requested Krishna to resume His

lovely familiar form. Beloved Baba said: "What Arjuna saw is the universal body. In the real truth of Baba, there is no room for any fear."

Among others who were admitted into Baba's presence was Bhunekar, a statesman, who reminded Beloved Baba that He had said that Maharashtra would become a separate and independent province and that the bilingual province would break up. To him, Beloved Baba explained: "All creation and its sustenance are based upon ignorance, which is ever at war with knowledge. Really great people are simple, like Tilak²⁰ and Gandhiji Gandhiji wanted Me to break My silence; I assured him I would soon do so, but it still continues."

Beloved Baba was in a mood to explain many things. He narrated a story of a sweetmeat seller in Persia. This sweets seller used to exhibit his niceties in a showcase with a net, and at night he would just cover them with a cloth and lock up the showcase. Among the niceties, there was a milk-syrup, which attracted the desire of two or three ruffians, who invented a novel method of relieving the shopkeeper of this nicety.

They made a small hole in the net and inserted a long pipe through it, into the container, and sucked up the contents every night, relishing it with gusto and causing much surprise and dismay to the owner the next morning. The owner then thought over this, and sensing the manner in which the milk-syrup used to disappear every night, he tried a device to prevent the recurrence of this burglary. He filled the same container this time, not with the exquisitely delicious milk-syrup, but with filth, covering it as usual with the cloth at night.

The three gangsters came as usual; and when the first of them sucked up the contents and discovered the odious taste of the filth, he not only refrained from disclosing the change, for fear that his companions would laugh at him but actually praised the contents as usual. The same thing was done by his successor, all the three being duped and also disillusioned by the trick of the shopkeeper - who, however, had the satisfaction of finding that his milk-syrup after that remained safe from the gang.

Beloved Baba concluded: "If you often feel delighted by a particular set of things, and if sometimes the same set leads to an unpalatable experience, you should be able to meet it with equanimity - even as, when the last member of the gang began to complain of the bitter taste, the other two asked him to recall how he enjoyed the syrup previously."

Beloved Baba further explained the illusion of creation: since it does not exist, the question of its preservation and destruction automatically lapses into insignificance. Baba says: "I have the Highest Knowledge, and at the same time, I appear not to know what exists at My feet. Knowledge includes ignorance, though ignorance cannot include knowledge. The moment of the junction between waking and deep sleep is of great instructive value. If there is a vacuum in mind, it immediately gets it filled with the consciousness of the Self. In sleep also there is a vacuum, but there is no consciousness, so there is no realisation of the Self. To have consciousness and yet to have a vacuum is the problem of problems; it occurs while piercing the inner layers of reality.

On the Path, there are different types of souls: those who have only one layer, others who have two, and still others who have three. In advanced persons these layers of gross, subtle, and mental bodies are all there; but some or all of them sit very loosely upon their consciousness, like loose coats; and hence their consciousness does not get restricted by the layers."

The 1st of May was a Sunday reserved for Baba lovers of Maharashtra, in which not only the out-station lovers but also the local lovers from Poona and Bombay were permitted in the presence of Beloved Meher; though they had to stand patiently for hours in long queues. Eruch saved Baba from the uncontrolled gestures of a worked-up lover. Beloved Baba unfailingly gave His personal touch of divine blessings to each one who approached Him, giving chocolates as prasad while diverse types of music were played in the background as a full-hearted expression of the depths of love from the inspired ones.

Among the darshan seekers was Premnath, a famous screen actor along with his eldest son Premkishen. This also happened to be the day when the new state of Maharashtra was ushered into existence after the breakup of the previous bilingual state of Bombay Presidency.

On 3rd May, Pukar received a wire that his child, who had just a fortnight ago enjoyed the privilege of being in the vicinity of Beloved Baba in Guruprasad, had passed away at Hamirpur. Beloved Baba gave Pukar sufficient fortitude to face the calamity and did not allow him to lapse into depression over the illusory loss. This day's out-station lovers were mainly from Cochin, Kurudwadi, Kolhapur, Amraoti, and Lucknow.

On the morning of 5th May, Beloved Baba gave a brief discourse, mainly addressed to Neurgaonkar, city engineer of Pune Municipal Corporation: "The body is based upon energy and energy upon the mind. In the same way, power is based upon bliss and bliss upon knowledge. The limited ego, which veils the Bliss-Truth, may take the form of egotism, as when one proudly affirms, 'I have done this or that'; or it may be more subtle and innocent-seeming, as when one just is conscious that 'I have slept today ...'"

On 7th May, Ranisaheb Shantadevi was deeply and perceptibly moved when she had to take leave of Beloved Baba, to go to Europe. Shortly afterward, she left Baba with tears in her eyes. The editor of *Mauli* presented to Baba the issue containing a photo of Beloved Baba.

On the 9th, the visit of Shri Kajrolkar, Member of Parliament and Bombay corporator, became the occasion for Beloved Baba to emphasise that simplicity and greatness always go together. . ,

On the 10th a worker from the Aurobindo Society of Bombay sought Beloved Baba's blessing. Baba said: "Blessings are easy to get because all want them; love is tough, because most are encased in their own walls of ignorance; and grace is extremely rare because few have prepared themselves for receiving it."

On the 11th, Baba paid a visit to the home of Maisaheb of Kurundwad where He was received by a specially composed poem of Maisaheb for the orphanage and magazine. On the 12th, Father Anthony sought directives for his orphanage, and Baba told him: "The work of looking after the abandoned orphans which you have undertaken is God's work. The cross of Christ is an emblem of abandonment, and Christ was abandoned even by His own disciples. To serve the abandoned ones is to serve Christ. I am the Christ. This little girl, Gouri, though an abandoned orphan, looks like a princess because she is so decently clothed and looked after by Mrs. Raste. Service of such forlorn ones is service of God."

On the 13th, Baba asked Sanjeevani Deshmukh to read *Stay with God* and understand the deep explanations of the Original Sound, so that she might explain these things to others. At 3:00 P.M. Baba Himself went to Saraswati Vidyalaya, where two hundred lovers from Hamirpur had arrived for the pleasure of meeting the Beloved.

On May 14th in the morning, P.N. Limkar, the headmaster from Sholapur, read out an English poem that he had composed, "Jai Meher":

Oh! The Highest of the High!
 Why did You leave the sky?
 You came from the Beyond-Beyond stage
 To purify the mortals of this age!
 Loving Love, You living Love!
 Love You impart that makes us love!
 Love God and be a god! Love for God and die for God!
 Baba Meher, You travel from spaceless Space!
 Magnanimous Magnet!
 None but Baba is great!
 Gate of Godhood! Godhood incarnate!
 Discourses You gave that surpassed all courses!
 All philosophers, poets, playwrights stop their forces!
 Your Force of course none can imagine.
 Such a Poet-Philosopher who can imagine?
 Baba made me mad. Such gladness lies in this Madness.
 So glad in being mad. The mighty madness alone can impart
 supreme, sublime gladness.
 The dust of the feet of Meher forgets all and holds Thy daaman;
 Let it not slip, and pray your grip, and let me have a sip,
 And no slip between the cup and the lip.

The Hamirpur group accompanying Keshav Nigam was interspersed
 with Andhra lovers. Sunday the 15th was a mahadarshan day when
 local lovers and those from Bombay were permitted to come. At 7:00
 P.M., Dr. V.M. Nawale (Shri Ananda Swami) of many sensational
 types of research got Captain Rajgopal to inaugurate

the Avatar Meher Baba Vachanalaya (Reading Room) in his hall at Deena Bandhu Press, Rasta Peth, Poona, and the present narrator addressed the audience about Baba's mission.

The son of Babu Ramprasad was recently married; and on the 16th, this became the occasion for sumptuous donations to Nauranga Meher Mandir and Hamirpur Meher Centre from parties directly interested in the couple's well-being. Beloved Baba does not accept anything for Himself; however, He commented, "After I drop My body, My lovers will become immortal because of their love for Me." He also added, "I will be in seclusion from 1st July to the end of December 1960. I will entertain no correspondence during this period. Circumstances will arise that will make it difficult for you to hold on to My daaman, but you should stick firmly all the same."

On 17th May, some Andhra lovers took Beloved Baba's leave by embracing Him, after receiving sumptuous prasad that would make a full meal. On this occasion Shri Pandurang Shastri Goswami, the great research director of Deccan College, wrote a letter in Sanskrit to be delivered to a Sanskrit scholar in Andhra.

"Self-offering to Shri Hari; I have had the darshan of Shri Baba of great glory; before that, only His name had come to my ears. I had not known anything of His life story or His literature. Even then, there arose in my mind an undefined and inexpressible joy when I came face to face with the most worshipful Baba of great ascendancy. The kind of peace which, according to scriptures like *Shri Shrimad Bhagavata*, is known to have enlivened the forms of Nara and Narayana,²¹ etc—exactly that peace is experienced here.

The Lord is not separate from all, nor all separate from the Lord; even so, Shri Baba of great ascendancy is one with all things and is, in essence, abiding joy. This is my firm faith. Baba is particularly gracious to the Hamirpur group of lovers and gives on the occasion of their departure to each one sumptuous prasad of *shira* and *puri*, enough to make a meal on the long and strenuous journey ahead of them.

On the 18th May, beloved Baba gives a discourse mainly addressed to Shri Pandurang Shastri Goswami: "It is the ego which separates us from the Truth. This ego is utterly different from the Real Ego, to which they refer when exclaiming, 'Aham Brahmaasmi.'²² For lives, the ego gets attached to false things and becomes very strong. It is tickled very easily. If I say that someone is very intelligent, he feels very happy and says, 'Baba, it is all your Grace.'"

On the 23rd May, the sculptor N.M. Dhondphale brought to Guruprasad a statue of Beloved Baba ready for its finishing touches. On the 24th Lud Dimpfl, who had been transferred from the United States to Abadan, Iran, came to Guruprasad, and Beloved Baba showed him the statue. In the afternoon, Beloved Baba paid a visit to Siganporia, who had a severe toothache. Baba's morning discourse was: "Through hypocrisy, man deceives himself, others, and God, at one and the same time. Tukaram has even authorized the punishment of those fake saints who are hypocritical. Hafiz, in one verse, even goes further and wants them to be whipped. Love is much higher than the intellect."

On the 26th, 27th and 28th May, Lud and Principal Niranjan Singh accompanied Beloved Baba on His house visits to Thade, Ramakrishnan, Bhavasar, Subramanyam, Soman, and Joshi families. The local lovers received Him with warm affection, giving a treat to all accompanying Baba, singing bhajans and artis, and having their photographs taken with Baba. On the 28th, Indumati Deshmukh sang her newly composed Marathi arti.

On Sunday, the 29th, darshan was given to families assembled in Guruprasad after Baba paid house visits to Kamble and Sardar Raste. Early in the morning a couple desiring to get engaged received Beloved Baba's blessings; and in the afternoon, Chhagan gave Baba lovers a feast in commemoration of the marriage of his daughter.

The 26th, 28th, 30th and 31st May were days of discourses by Beloved Baba:

"In Persia, one aspirant lived without food and water for forty days, in search of God-Realisation, but in vain. His Murshid gave him grape wine which was two years old; he drank it and got God-Realised instantaneously. The wine given by the Master is Divine Love. You can never get ready-made Realisation. You also have to do something for it: you have to become dust. If you become dust, without any wants or claims, you get initiated into the highest bliss, of which the greatest worldly joy is only the seventh shadow.

The world is the imagination of the infinite. The imagination of the infinite is itself boundless and therefore unending. Just as you may for a while create the image of a ten-headed elephant, sustain it for a while, and then dissolve it, so the Infinite in its imagination goes on

creating, sustaining, and dissolving universes endlessly. Though in itself space does not exist, once the mind gets ridden by the imagination of space, it experiences space as endless, having room for numberless suns and moons, known and unknown, in the ever-expanding space; and yet the culmination of everything is on our earth. There is in one sense no end to universes, and in a sense, there is an end also, as when in sleep the entire panorama dissolves itself, reappearing again as creation when consciousness returns to waking.

Like space, time also is infinite. If we go back in the past or in the future in imagination we get billions and trillions of years of past and future, both becoming endless. Yet eternity lies in this *present moment*, containing the past, the present, and the future and revealing itself in a flash. Whenever anything was or will be experienced as the pulsating real, it is experienced as in the Now. Life has always been pulsating in the Now, and this present moment is experienced in unbroken continuity; and is Eternity itself. The present is not to be regarded as a broken fragment; it is a part of Eternity, which can be experienced directly in the immediate Now because it is there, just as it has been in every moment of the past, and will be in every moment of the future.

If you get enticed with circles, lights, colours, tunes experienced on the Path, much time is wasted; for, howsoever alluring they might be, they are after all a passing show and not Reality. You always have to analyse and find out the Truth. Therefore, the safest path is that of love.

A man first gets into knee-deep waters of the ocean and then advances further into the interior to get at the depths of the ocean. But he can get the precious pearl on the floor of the ocean only if he takes a courageous dive. Some keep enjoying the possession of the pearl on the floor of the ocean, without caring to come to the surface, while a few bring it to the surface for the benefit of others. These become Qutubs, whose power is as boundless as the Avatar's; but whereas the Qutub has limited function, the function of the Avatar is limitless.

The ego is difficult to eradicate. Even on the path, it persists, getting transferred to acts like loving the Master. The old habit persists.

The entrancing sounds and sights on the path are themselves a superdream, disappearing into deep sleep. When, in Realisation, you are conscious of infinity, then hell, heaven and all planes are seen to be within yourself. That which is to be seen is not to be seen but felt like your own being; you are yourself the Way. It is all so effortless and yet so very difficult to be just your own Self."

At Guruprasad, some darshan seekers were from the very highest ranks of society, like Union Minister Jagjeewan Ram; Chaturbhuj Sharma, President of the Provincial Congress of U.P; Thirumalrao; Yogi Shudhananda; Members of Parliament like Amarsingh Saighal; scholars like Principal Niranjana Singh; Professors like Jogendra Singh, Gangasahai, and P. Wanchinathan; and editors like Abdul Kadir of Paisa Akhabar, Hyderabad.

The 5th June - mahadarshan day - started vigorously at 7:00 A.M., with the result that by 8:00 A.M. it was impossible for anyone to be admitted into the presence of the Master excepting by standing patiently for hours, in a long-drawn slowly moving queue. Rajas' and Ranis', eminent lawyers, judges, statesmen, and *sardars* [leaders] took their station in the queues along with the humblest and the lowliest in order to get into the hall of Guruprasad, to catch Beloved Baba's radiant smile or deeply significant glance, or get closer to Him and touch His holy feet and receive His pat, embrace, or prasad.

Master Krishna rendered an exquisite bhajan as background to the dynamic silence of the Lord of the Universe, holding the cosmopolitan audience spellbound by his melody. Avatar Meher's gesture-words and messages stirred the very depths of the soul, being signals releasing the profound wisdom stored in His fathomless silence, the breaking of which will no doubt be as unique as His silence!

On 9th and 10th June, feasts were given to Beloved Baba by the author of this narration and Shri Palival of Hamirpur. One air force officer sought an interview with God. On the 9th June, in the morning, Beloved Baba was received with enthusiasm and love at the Hindu Women's Rescue Home Society of Poona, and after arti was performed, Baba's message was read out to the many inmates and the management.

From the 10th all darshans were stopped, though on the 12th Baba graciously granted a sitting for His bust, prepared by N.M. Dhondphale, the sculptor of Rastapeth, Poona, at the instance of the author of this narration. Leaving Poona

on the 20th, Baba remained in seclusion at Meherazad from 1st July 1960 to 1st January 1961, allowing no correspondence or darshan to anyone.

Family Letter 34 (April-May 1960) by Mani S. Irani

29th April 1960

Greetings to you from Guruprasad, which has reawakened to throbbing life after its winter sleep of Baba's absence. Above the motley of household sounds familiar in the pantry where I'm typing ... the strains of a song in Hindi can be heard. Tracing it to the hall in the east wing of the house where Baba sits with the mandali each day, I discover it is one of the Baba lovers from the North who has come from over a thousand miles to sit once again at Baba's feet, expressing his love in a song he has composed for the Beloved.

The hours from 9 to 11 each morning are devoted to the devoted ones coming from "outstations," i.e., from places other than Poona and Bombay. And so, it is a daily familiar sight to see groups of men, women, and children sitting by the gate, having arrived impatiently early but happy to patiently wait for the signal to come in to Baba. These Baba pilgrims wend their way from all parts and distances, their focus being their beloved Guru at Guruprasad.

Now it is a batch from Calcutta (Bengal), about fifty strong including toddlers and babes in arms; and a group from Jubbulpore (Central India) and from Hamirpur in the North where Baba's name is a perennial prayer in many a heart and home. It includes a bride and groom to whom the reality of His darshan had been a cherished dream, and who have used their hard-earned savings to come to Baba for the honeymoon stay. Baba told us He was touched by the simplicity of their hearts filled with His Love. He asked them how long they intended to stay in Poona, and they replied simply, "As long as our last penny lasts."

At times one can make a long journey without knowing the actual goal one is destined for. This is what happened in the case of a pundit of Badrinarayan Temple in the Himalayas, who came with his wife and son to Bombay to obtain the best medical treatment for his boy who has polio. Stopping at the dharamshala (inn) by the Poona station, he met some Baba lovers from Hamirpur who were putting up at the inn during their stay in Poona. Hearing Baba's Name, he felt drawn and asked them who He was. "The Avatar of the Age," they told him.

He wanted to hear more and more about Him and begged to accompany them during "Guruprasad time" next morning.

When he took Baba's darshan, Baba said, "I am in everyone and in everything. I am everywhere and everything. For years you have worshipped Me in the Badrinarayan Temple - worshipping the image of stone. Today you are blessed to have the opportunity of My darshan in this physical form." The pundit seemed deeply touched and left with Baba in his heart and a number of Baba books and photos in his trunk. Incidentally, later while out in the crowded area of the city, his wad of currency notes (his entire travelling store of money) was stolen by a pickpocket, leaving him desperately stranded. Baba lovers helped him through his embarrassing predicament, financially and otherwise.

The "locals" (i.e., those from Poona and Bombay) have their day too. Every other Sunday, the majestic capacity of Guruprasad is tested and found wanting in accommodating the thousands that file in to place their heads on Baba's feet and receive His blessings of Love and prasad. As usual the children were seldom deprived of this opportunity, and it never failed to fascinate us to see a babe-in-arms placed at (or even on) His feet for its share of the darshan - sometimes a mother placing the baby on Baba's lap so she could untangle the skein in her garland of fresh flowers to be placed around His neck and receive His embrace unencumbered by her fair burden.

Baba, the universal Father, and Mother, seemed to enjoy thus finding Himself baby-sitter of the moment, and His smile would pour great tenderness on these tiny darshaners. Sunday the 17th was indeed a full morning's program that went off surprisingly well despite the surge of darshan seekers. As our dear Maharani (of Baroda), who sat throughout the program with unflickering attention, summed it up, "It was lovely and love-full." One of the happy newcomers of the morning was Dr. Bodh, Zoroastrian high priest, whose interest in Baba developed during his stay in the USA and who took this opportunity of meeting Him. He left expressing his genuine desire to revisit Baba, and Baba too seemed very happy to see him.

As usual at these strenuous occasions, Baba was looking beautifully radiant. I don't think we will ever get used to the wonder of seeing Him give so abundantly of Himself, whatever the state of His health, whatever the consequent strain. But then of course He has come to "give," and perhaps someday we will learn to take

what He has come to give, instead of eternally asking of Him that which we think we need and want - and which, sadly, He often gives us until at long last we may be ready to receive the only thing that matters, from the only One who can give.

The next D-day [Darshan Day] is on the 1st of May - it is also an exceptional day for millions of Indians celebrating the birth of Maharashtra, a unilingual state the Maharashtrians have aspired and struggled for through the years. The symbol and inspiration of this achievement is Shivaji, the great Maratha warrior and leader of over three centuries ago, whose birthday this year heralds the birth of the state.

During our Poona stay this summer, there were also two other important anniversaries, of special significance to us at Guruprasad: The First Birthday of two baby Baba lovers at Bindra House, the home of Eruch's deeply devoted family. The part best enjoyed by each birthday-child was the sweet drink and savoury that they sucked from the end of Baba's proffered finger, and Baba was hugely delighted at their puckered-up faces when they felt the prick of His moustache on their cheeks where He had implanted a firm kiss.

2nd May 1960

The darshan yesterday was as great as the last such D-day, except that despite its being a "working Sunday" (when offices, banks, etc., were declared open half-day to "actively" inaugurate the birth of Maharashtra), the darshan attendance was bigger than ever. Baba sat through till long after the announced closing hour so that all who attended could have their turn.

Among today's visiting group was a fair number from Andhra, including the Baba lover who has had a life-size statue of Baba made in bronze, having inaugurated on 25th February the foundation of the "temple" that will hold it. One of the party was a happy bearded little fellow who always wears a pink coat and has his boys do the same because it is Baba's favourite colour. Wedged firmly on his head is a solar topee which he never seems to remove (was never seen without it during his week's stay at Meherabad sahavas), the topee having once been worn by Baba during a visit to Andhra.

One of his small sons, accompanying him to Poona, looks a delightful replica of Daddy, with his pink bush-shirt and little solar topee which his father had Baba bless with His touch during an earlier visit. He (I mean the father), full of

simple-hearted devotion and unconscious wit, contributed more than once to the lighter moments of the morning and surpassed himself at a conversation piece that had Baba and the entire assembly just about doubled up with laughter. At the end of it, Baba remarked, "In five minutes he has lessened the weight of My universal burden."

At times during these morning conclaves, when Baba is in the mood for it, a trivial remark or incident will lead to a beautiful discourse from Him. At other times, as at all times, His presence alone is all-sufficing. To one of the groups around Him, hoping for a special word from Baba regarding a personal matter concerning her peace of mind, Baba said, "Shut the trap of your mind and end all your worries. Open the trap of your heart and release Love."

This morning's schedule also included Baba's visit to the homes of some of His Poona group, having to climb a flight of steep steps at one of the places; and also to a hospital to visit the wife of one of them, who was unable to be at her home to welcome Him.

Tomorrow afternoon there will be qawwali singing, which is the type of singing Baba truly and most enjoys, being couplets of great Sufi poets and lovers of God rendered in song. There have been other musical afternoons too, when well-known artists have offered their time and talents in loving homage to Baba, either in singing recital or playing Indian instruments. Their reward? Apart from the privilege of Baba enjoying their music, it is usually one of His used handkerchiefs given with His own hands.

There is now also another newly-wed couple come to spend their honeymoon in Poona after having Baba's darshan. They are from Nagpur, and the boy's mother, on meeting us, said, "We can never know how fortunate we are, for we can never know the extent of Baba's love and compassion, which are truly infinite!"

Baba has said that he who takes His Name when breathing his last comes to Him regardless of everything. And therefore one should keep taking His Name at all times so that it comes naturally also at the last moment. It is obviously natural to one young Baba lover of Poona who recently emerged unscathed from what might have been a nasty accident.

Riding home on his Lambretta from the aerodrome where he works, he went over a pothole, which caused the sudden jamming of brakes, and he found himself flung to the far side of the road with his machine flung in the opposite direction.

He cried out Baba's Name at the time; and when next afternoon he recounted to Baba the incident of his miraculous escape, saying it was He who had saved him, Baba said, "Do not attribute the miracle to Me; the miracle was of My name."

Family Letter 35 (10th July 1960) by Mani S. Irani

Though Baba left Poona on the 20th of June for Meherazad, Mani, in her family letter of 10th July describes Baba's stay in Poona:

"Drown all sound in My SILENCE to hearken MY WORD of words." Baba gave this message in response to Baba lovers in Calcutta asking for some words from Him for a little booklet they were printing for the occasion of His Birthday. And what more appropriate than that I should begin this day's letter with this same timeless message from Baba, to mark the 35th anniversary of His Silence.

I remember Baba once saying, years ago when someone asked Him why He did not speak, that the question should have rather been, why He did not remain silent, for in reality, He spoke continually - it was just that we had not yet tuned our heart's ears to be able to hear Him. Only when we still the ceaseless babbling of our mind can we hear Him in the silence of our heart.

Just as one fully realises the extent of noise only after it has suddenly stopped, the return to secluded Meherazad in the sudden wake of the intensively active months in Poona made us more fully realise the extent to which Baba had unsparingly given of Himself during the stay in Guruprasad this summer. 5th June was the "meridian" for the feasters of His darshan, when altogether (as the local newspaper reported) over 10,000 people availed themselves of the opportunity - including of course the usual sprinkling of those who had come out of plain curiosity.

On that concluding Darshan Day, there were gathered at the feet of the Beloved not less than 800 lovers of Baba from "outstations" alone (i.e., apart from those in Poona and Bombay), having started from different points on the Indian map, as well as some places outside of India, to converge at the common goal of their journey of love. That day, Guruprasad seemed just ready to burst at the seams.

Baba gave them His beloved company without stint, day after the following day, throughout the morning and afternoons. He saw them entrance, in groups, at

times individually. He sat through the tiring programs, showering the radiance of His Love on these His children whose prayer was that they should have His grace to love Him as He should be loved. Among the group of women from Hamirpur were many who sold their silver and gold bracelets and other ornaments in order to make this journey possible.

The lovers from Hamirpur, coming as they did in large numbers, made accommodation for their stay in school buildings that were vacant during the summer holidays; while many coming in equally large numbers from Andhra travelled in special railway carriages they had reserved for some days, and in which they camped during their stay in Poona. As Eruch wrote in one of his letters, it was a sight to see these carriages stabled at the Poona railway station, with boards of "Jai Avatar Meher Baba" and pictures of Baba outside and inside the carriages.

There were also more visits to the homes of His group in Poona, and during some of these one of the Guruprasadians accompanying Baba was a near and dear Baba lover from California, Lud Dimpfl, who was permitted a four days' stay with Him en route (or rather off-route, to be more correct) to Iran where he was transferred by his company. He was immediately merged in Baba's sahavas - seeing Baba at work and in relaxation, Baba with the multitude and with the intimate few, sharing the different endearing facets reflected by Baba's mood of the moment. In short, being just one of the mandali, except that he carried around an "I must surely be dreaming" look on his happy face. Baba seemed just as happy to have Lud with Him.

An equally lucky one was dear Irwin Luck - an American boy who had never met Baba before, but who was compelled by the urge of his love and longing to make the trip after obtaining permission. He did not wish to return home, but in obedience to Baba's wish did so after a few days with Him. The cable Irwin sent home to his dad after meeting Baba said "Baba is all and more than what I said He was. Love to you and Mom."

We had not ceased wondering how Baba's body kept up under the infinite strain of those long busy days; though we know Baba could do it, being BABA. This last remark makes me want to tell you about a delightful incident that occurred one afternoon.

A devotee (who is also a tailor) came to one of the darshans and very much wanted to make for Him a pink coat - which he did, and sent to Baba. Baba tried

it on and found it was much too big, to say the least - the sleeves were down to His fingertips, shoulders halfway to the elbows, and the back draping like a cape. Baba came out to show it to the Mandali with a delighted smile and an "I can't believe it" look in His twinkling God-eyes. Later I told Francis that perhaps it was as the tailor really saw Baba - for I had heard of a number of people who at first sight had the impression that Baba is much bigger than He is. I meant of course in physique. However, Francis quipped, "But that's exactly it, Baba IS much bigger than He is!"

I mustn't fail to mention Baba's two "Poor Programs" in June - on the 19th in Poona while we were at Guruprasad, and on the 26th in Ahmednagar after our return; and as we had witnessed the former, I will try to describe it. At this Poona program, 160 poor people, both men, and women, each received Rs. 5 from Baba's hand, after He had placed His head on the feet of each one.

They had been selected in advance (from among the poor working class) by Baba's men and given an admittance card that he or she had to present before being allowed to approach Baba for a tangible blessing of money and the intangible blessing of Love. Baba sat in a chair at an old table, with improvised steps that served as a "platform." Each one climbed onto this and stood before Baba for Him to bow down, while the recipient was strictly instructed not to express thanks or reverence by word or gesture. To have seen Baba place His forehead on these unshod, dusty (and often gnarled and horny) pairs of feet is not only a profoundly moving emotion of the moment but a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

And in conclusion, I must not fail to include some of Baba's messages given during this stay at Guruprasad.

When a Zoroastrian child is still under twelve or so, he is confirmed (as is similarly done in the Christian religion). This ceremony is called navjote and is performed by the priest, who puts on the child the traditional white garment called *sadra* and affixes the sacred thread called *kasti* round its waist.

As the ardent wish of the parents, the three adorable and adoring young sons of Jimmy and Roda Mistry, devoted Baba lovers of Bombay, were "confirmed" in Baba's love, simply by Baba giving them with His own hands the *sadra* and *kasti* for them to wear. This was done on the morning of 16th May, in the hall of Guruprasad thronged with Baba groups from Poona and Bombay, after which Eruch read out the message of the day given by Baba for the occasion:

"May Ahuramazd, Zoroaster, Meher Baba, free you from the superficial binding of Shariyat (rites and rituals) and help you to lead a life of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, and bestow on you the grace of loving Baba. I have given you this emblem of superficial binding to make you free from this binding, and give you the real binding of Love."

The following was Baba's message given on His visit to the Hindu Women's Rescue Home, at the invitation of the head of the Society, in Poona:

"Love and understanding never condemn, but seek to help and encourage. Men and women have departed from the custom and laws of Truth and goodness, but God never condemns us or turns us from His door; so we should not condemn even those who condemn us. I bless you to try to understand and love those who are trying to help you to take your place in God's Work through serving His humanity."

To Father Anthony, principal of St. Catherine of Siena School in Bombay, who has dedicated his service to the cause of destitute and abandoned children, Baba said:

"By serving the abandoned, you are serving Jesus the Christ because He too was abandoned by all, even by His own apostles. The emblem of abandonment is the Cross. Hence, to serve the abandoned is to serve the Christ-and I am He, undoubtedly."

As the Father beamingly expressed his intention of printing in his magazine this spontaneously given message from Baba, Baba made him repeat the message. This the Father did except for the last line-at which Baba reminded him that he had left out the most significant part, and Baba repeated, "I am He, undoubtedly."

Another message of the day, given by Baba on 6th June, said:

"It is better to deny God than to defy God."

"Sometimes our weakness is considered as a strength and we take delight in this borrowed greatness."

"To profess to be a lover of God, and then to be dishonest to God, to the world and to himself, is unparalleled hypocrisy."

"Difficulties give us the opportunity to prove our greatness by overcoming them."

"A child's trust in its mother is complete, because it leaves all its worries to her. She has to take care of it. So if we trust God and let Him worry for us, we live contented and happy."

"When the leader of a nation puts complete trust in God, God makes him the instrument to guide the nation rightly."

"We should think well of those who think ill of us."

*A copy of this entire message was given to Sanjeeva Reddy (President of the All-India Congress Committee), who had come to see Baba on that day and received His embrace of love.

Family Letter 36 (15th September 1960) by Mani S. Irani

Although, Baba left Poona on the 20th of June 1960 for Meherazad, Mani, in her letter of 15th September, continued to describe His stay in Poona:

... The silence of Seclusion will afford space for those tidbits that couldn't manage to elbow their way into previous letters, and which were tucked away in memory's attic for future use.

I'd like to begin with a discourse that Baba gave to a renowned Indian film director who came for Baba's darshan at Guruprasad this year, along with an equally well-known playwright. The man expressed his love for spirituality and how it had always inspired him in his work and aspirations. Baba said:

"You are convinced of God's existence. God exists; therefore, God is to be sought, seen, realised. Do not search for God outside of you. God can only be found within you, for His only abode is the heart. But you have filled the abode with millions of strangers, and He cannot enter, for God is shy of strangers. So unless you strip your abode of the millions of strangers you have filled it with, you cannot find God.

"What are these strangers? They are your age-old desires - your millions of wants. These are strangers to God, for incompleteness in the form of wanting is fundamentally foreign to God who is All-Sufficient and wanting in nothing - His omniscience and omnipotence will not brook it. Honesty in your dealings will clean your heart of strangers. So push the tenants out of your abode that is His, and you will see Him, find Him and realize Him."

The next item to be dusted and unwrapped from the treasure chest in the attic is a couple of telegraphic messages from the Beloved. One was sent to a Baba lover in Andhra who, undergoing an operation, wired "condition serious." Baba replied:

"Nothing can ever be serious except lack of love for Me, and that you have in abundance."

In reply to a telegram from the wife of a Baba lover in Calcutta whose husband had septicaemia, saying that in the agony of his physical pain he was abusing Baba for not relieving him of it, Baba said:

"Abuse from My lovers is sweeter than praise from My hypocritical admirers." Someone who wanted Baba's blessing for a job reminded Him, "Baba, You say You are the Slave of Your lovers. Well, then, You must give me Your blessings that I get this job." Baba smilingly retorted, "I am not *your* Slave. I am the Slave of your LOVE. Remember that."

We have an instance of this in a report received from Hamirpur It speaks of the horrible experience of a Baba lover in that district, and the call of her heart that the Beloved answered. "Baburam Vyas, a schoolmaster and resident of the small village of Muskara (in North India) is a Baba lover and worker. His 55-year-old mother, Jagranidevi, also loves Baba devotedly. Early in the morning of 4th May (1960), Jagranidevi went out to cut and fetch grass for her goats and cattle. While returning with a massive bundle of it on her head, she encountered a man of about 30, with a stout stick in his hand, who approached her and asked her if she knew him. She replied, 'No, son, I don't know you.' Where upon he bent down and catching hold of her ankles, yanked her off her feet.

The woman fell on her face and broke two of her teeth. She sat up and berated him for his cowardly attack. He commanded her to remove and give him the gold and silver ornaments from her person. She said she would not give him one grain of her gold or silver from her person. At which he caught her by the legs and dragged her towards a nullah (dry river bed) a short distance away. Realising her life to be in danger, she cried out, 'Baba! Beloved Baba! Meher Baba, save me! If my love is sincere, and you are verily God Incarnate, save me!' The man laughed, 'You cry in vain. There is no 'Baba' here, or anyone else to help you. I shall kill you and remove your ornaments and leave you in the nullah, and no one will know.'

When they reached the nullah - she still shouting 'BABA' at the top of her lungs and from the bottom of her heart - he raised his stick for the onslaught when, at that exact moment, three cows, seemingly from nowhere, appeared on the scene at a quick trot; and the russet-coloured one, bellowing fiercely, rushed at the man and attacked him with her horns, throwing him to the ground. He got up and defending himself, lashed cruelly at the animal. Jagrani took this opportunity to rise and run, but her assailant caught up with her and dragged her back to the nullah. Again the cow charged at the man, and however much he lashed out at it, the animal kept dodging and attacking with great energy and fury, bellowing loudly all the while.

In the meantime, the two white cows stood on either side of the nullah as guards, protecting the woman and helping their 'red' companion by butting in at the right moment. The woman was by this time too exhausted and frightened to do anything except keep repeating Baba's name. The fight was at its height when a bullock cart was heard rumbling towards them, on the path to the village. At this, the thug gave up and fled for his life. Help was given promptly, and the people of the village took Jagrani home, the three cows accompanying the group for about two furlongs. Next day the villagers went in search of the thug, helped in the right direction by the marks of his footprints; he was finally caught and given into custody.

Baba has said that we should not attribute such miracles to Him; that it is one's own love and faith that performs the miracle. Baba's comment on hearing the above was, "God is omnipresent, and the one who calls out sincerely to Him never fails to be heard and to receive His help."

A STATUE OF BABA, BY MANI S. IRANI

Mani, in one of her letters, further writes:

During Meher Baba's stay at Guruprasad in Poona in 1960, a number of His lovers from the district of Hamirpur, U.P., expressed a long-felt desire to have a life-size statue made of Him during His lifetime and house it in a mandir built for it in the village of Nauranga, so that His appearance should be preserved in a permanent material for succeeding generations.

Being the slave He is of the love of His lovers, Baba acceded to His lovers' wish, but at the same time warned them against making His statue a focus of empty ceremonial worship, and not to call the building which housed it a mandir (temple) but a dham (house or abode); reminding them of what He had often said regarding temples and ceremonies, that the real House of God is the heart, and the real worship is that service done in love to one's fellow-beings.

The dham was built, but the installation of the statue was deferred until the Annual Mela [of 1961], Nov. 25-27, when Baba sent word to them that over the entrance of the Meher Dham should be written in large letters:

"I belong to no religion. My religion is love. Every heart is My temple. Although it is in love that you have built this house of stone, I am only in it when your heart brings Me here."

And inside the building should be written:

"Always remember that ceremonies cover Me, but pure worship reveals Me."

He also sent two messages to be read out to all who gathered for the occasion:

"On this particular Occasion, I will be among you as one of My own lovers.

"All those who surrender themselves in love to Me will see and adore and realize the Reality of My Form."

GURUPRASAD TIDBITS

Two postgraduate students from an ashram came to see Baba. In the course of conversation with them, Baba observed:

"The only obstacle on the Path is the ego. Volumes have been written on the nature of the ego. But book knowledge helps very little, and by one's own efforts the ego remains insurmountable.

Whether you fast or feast, whether you become aggressive or humble, the ego goes on nourishing itself. Even the natural tendency of the ego, such

as, "I see," "I sleep," create bindings. So night and day, in the very act of expending old sanskaras, you create new sanskara and get bound.

When you wear long hair or put on sadhu clothes, indirectly you court respect. A false sense of advancement in spirituality is liable to be created when you try to lead a life in some other ways than that of the ordinary people. Others begin to look upon you with respect, and you begin to accept homage submissively, outwardly in the name of God; but deep within there is nothing but self-gratification. As time passes by, the superiority complex is nourished, and the ego craves for greater honours. This is a dangerous pitfall!

In a God-Realised Master, the Real ego is established. He "sees" himself in everyone and everything. The Master in his divinity is so complete that he becomes the object of meditation and worship for all. So he has the authority to accept homage. All his actions are non-actions and hence are non-binding."

To become completely free from the sanskaric bindings, the intercession of the Master is necessary. The awakening of love is the remedy. Then one rare being gets released from all the sanskaric bindings, through the grace of the Perfect Master."

Baba had asked a lecturer in a college to come on a certain date, which he missed. He came to see Baba after a few weeks. Baba asked him if he had read His books. The visitor replied, "Yes, Baba, they are really a blessing to the whole world."

Baba said, "What about you? Had you read the books as they should have been read, you would have left the work on hand to keep up the appointment. It was for your good. My love is impersonal and unconditional too. In spite of your failure to come, I love you."

The visitor asked, "Baba, are you coming to Poona next May?"

Baba said, "For Me, there is no tomorrow, and you talk about next May!

Even so, I know what is to happen at any time in the seemingly endless future, including next May! I live in the Present Moment, which has Eternity within it. Time is not there. Past and future exist for you."

"Retaining the timelessness of the Present Moment, I am simultaneously conscious of all planes, including *annabhumika* (gross plane). From the gross plane today I say this much that I will leave Poona on 20th June for Meherazad and will stay there in seclusion for six months beginning from 1st July 1960."

A small group of lovers permitted to visit Him was sitting in front of Him. Baba asked one of His lovers, "Have you read *Stay with God*?" The lover had an excuse of "no time." Baba said, "Is it really so? Are you honest with your answer? Hypocrisy is the worst thing; in every walk of life it consciously or unconsciously persists."

The lover put forth another excuse for "pending work." Baba continued: "It is good to be frank and honest in all matters, whether most ordinary or important. Let not hypocrisy persist, and try this with every breath."

And there was one more excuse: "I have no interest in philosophy." Baba said, "There is no philosophy in the book. A simple thing made difficult is philosophy. The book contains food for the brain and a feast for the heart."

Someone interrupted, saying: "Expounding of a certain principle is philosophy." Baba said, "Statement of facts and philosophy are not the same. Can you call the *Gita* a philosophy?" The reply was, "It can be called so!"

Baba continued, "Then there is My philosophy: I am in everything. I am everything. To know Me as I am, you must lose your all in Me. I am the Ancient One. Also remember well that this is not mere philosophy but a statement of fact based on experience."

MEHER BABA GIVES ME A WHITE ROSE BY SHRI A. K. DAS, BARRISTER AT LAW FROM CALCUTTA

When I had Avatar Meher Baba's darshan on 31st March 1960, Baba gazed in silence upon a rose, a glistening white rose. He smiled and gave me the rose. That rose is before my eyes even now. That smile is before my eyes even now. That silence is before my eyes even now. I ever think of the Silence of Peace. The rose is the symbol of the Silence of Peace and Perfection. It is perfection which brings peace. And peace brings mastery of one's self.

The rose is the expounder of the Law that all real growth is in silence, and Meher Baba constantly reminds us that the awakening of the soul is in silence. Its unfoldment is in silence. Its growth is in silence. And silence unto silence is

the destiny of things mortal. Can we avoid silence? And if we have to be our own selves, then there is only one road for it; a second road does not exist. It is to be silent, and any school we come across teaches us to be silent. But it must begin with our own selves and be passed on to others. All of us have to be schooled in that school of Silence.

But the problem is: Have we found that School?

A PERFECT KNOWER OF THE ESOTERIC PATHS

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was in Poona in June 1960 and availed himself of the opportunity to meet Baba. He sent a friend to Meher Baba to ascertain whether Baba would give him darshan. That was a Sunday, and Kaviraj used to observe silence on Monday and Thursday of each week. Meher Baba told the messenger that Kaviraj could call on Him on Monday at 8:00 A.M. The messenger explained that because Monday was Kaviraj's silence day, it would be better if he could be allowed to see Meher Baba on Tuesday, but Baba replied that He was continuously silent. So Kaviraj met Baba on Monday, but no special talk could be held. Baba wanted Kaviraj to meet Him again on the next day, Tuesday, to have a heart-to-heart talk.

When Kaviraj came the next day, Baba embraced him and kissed him on his forehead. Baba took him to a separate room and bolted the room from within. No one except Baba's interpreter was present. The conversation went on for some time on topics like the future of the world, His life's purpose (mission), and the duties of a man, on which Baba gave His ideas and it became evident to Kaviraj that Meher Baba was omniscient. Kaviraj wanted to know from Baba about himself and Baba replied that He had nothing to say about Kaviraj except that Kaviraj should continue to do whatever "*sadhana* [spiritual practice] he was doing at midnight daily."

On hearing this from Baba, Kaviraj was wonderstruck as to how Baba came to know of the *sadhana* that Kaviraj was observing every midnight, as Kaviraj alone knew about it and no one else. Not only this, but Baba gave Kaviraj some details about his esoteric venture which confirmed his belief in Baba's knowing of one's inner self

When Kaviraj took his leave, Baba gave him a copy of *God Speaks* with the two charts relating to the evolution of Creation and told him, "I have an inner connection and association with you, which will dawn upon you by and by."

HOW I MET BABA BY IRWIN LUCK

The following spontaneous talk was tape-recorded on Irwin's return from his trip to meet Baba, before the "deadline" of His seclusion, June 10, 1960.²³

I left Miami with my brother Edward. We went to New York, and from there we were to go on to Bombay to see Baba. We didn't tell our father we were leaving because he would have been all excited. You see, he doesn't quite understand the nature of Baba, so he would have tried to put all sorts of obstacles in our way, and we wanted to leave with as few problems as possible. My father began to wonder where his two sons were, and finally called up the police in New York to help him solve the problem he had created in his mind - "Where are my two boys?" The police solved the problem by spotting us at Idlewild Airport ready to leave for Paris. From Paris, we were to go on to Bombay to see Baba.

Well, this was the only bad part of the entire trip, because my brother wanted to see Baba very badly but wasn't able to. Being still a minor, he needed his parents' consent (he had only two months to go before turning twenty-one). You can't really blame my father, he doesn't quite understand this thing, and what a person doesn't understand, they try to fight. He made my brother stay back but gave his consent for me to go.

Well, I wanted to go back to Miami and follow Baba's instructions that we two come to Him together. But my brother very nobly said, "Let's one of us get over there, and I'll follow you later." I told this to Baba when I was in India, and Baba said that he, Edward, shouldn't worry, and it was just as if Edward were right there, as far as any spiritual benefit he could derive was concerned. So I cabled this to my brother.

When I arrived in Bombay at 10:00 A.M., I was two hours early.

Finally, we had arrived in Poona. My hotel had already been taken care of, and they told me Baba had given orders that I get a good night's sleep and that I was to see Baba the next morning at 7:30. With all the excitement, I didn't think I could sleep, but I did. The following day I went up to see Him.

Ordinarily, I'm not the nervous kind, but as I went up to the door to see Him, I started to get a little shaky. I peeked in and He spotted me, called me in and embraced me. He's very affectionate with all His people. The way He received me left an impression I won't forget. He reminds me of someone with a puppy dog. He makes you feel very good. It's that way with all the people there ... you don't realise it at the time, but it's like one big family. Everyone is very close to one

another, and that struck me because this is the way I always felt people should be. Over there I saw it for the first time.

Baba told me that He wanted me to be there every morning at 7:30 and stay there all day with Him until 5:00 (except for lunch). This continued for about eleven days, right up till the time I left. In fact, I saw Baba only yesterday morning. He wants me to tell everyone that He is sending His love to them. This is to Adele [Wolkin] and Filis [Frederick] and the entire group.

There are so many things that happened that it's hard to pick them out and express them. One of the unusual things about Baba is that whenever I had an important question to ask Him, I never had to ask it because before I did, He started to answer it. This is something He did very often with me. It's not so much that I wanted to ask Him theological questions, but Baba says He wants to give His love to people and they have to be ready to receive it. Well, I felt this is the important thing and I wanted to know how I could make myself able to receive it. This is through His grace, as He so often says, and well, I just wanted Him to start giving a little grace, you know!

He explained everything to me, not so much in the way of words, but in the way of feelings, because that is the real explanation. Nobody has to tell you when you're feeling; just like when you're hearing, you know that you're hearing. Well, it's the same thing with feelings - and Baba is constantly giving. He has the kind of smile that's very contagious. He smiles, and everybody in the place beams. If He stops smiling, everybody is sort of let down. He gives His Love very much.

While I was there, He gave quite a few darshans. One Sunday He gave darshan to ten thousand people, maybe more. They were waiting in line all the way up to the gate. All the time He was giving darshan, there was music being played; it was very melodic. I used to think that Indian music didn't have any melody, but this was very beautiful and had a sad quality. The music helped the people express their feelings towards Baba when they came to Him and received His blessing. He embraced each one at times, but at the end of the day there wasn't enough time, and the people would just file past Him. He usually broke His own rule with children and would embrace them or give them a kiss. One time I was in tears watching the people pour out their feelings to Him. It made me realise how fortunate I was to be sitting next to His couch, especially when some of these

people had to wait hours in the hot sun to see Him just for a few seconds. I felt kind of guilty at times.

Another thing that impressed me was the children there with Him. You never saw such obedience. Americans would be amazed if their children obeyed them the way these children obey Baba. They obey out of pure love, not because they are made to do anything; they'd do anything for Baba. There are twins there whom I liked very much [Baba's nephews Rustom and Sohrab], and I asked them if Baba gave them any special instructions. They said, "Oh, yes. Baba gives us a complete schedule from the time we get up in the morning until we go to sleep." They also said that little boys like themselves (they are about fourteen years old) shouldn't be running around late and getting into trouble, that they should be home studying, and when Baba tells them to do something, well, they just have to do it! I've never heard anything like it from any other children. That's the way children obey Him. The love and respect they have for Him is something you'd just have to see.

Not only the children but the grown-ups too! After all, grown-ups are children too, only they're grown up! They too have great obedience. They do whatever He says. If He says go jump off a cliff, they will do it because they're not worried; they feel everything's still going to be all right. You can understand by the way Baba treats them why they'll do all this for Him. In fact, I can't say I'd be any different, now. You have to get a personal contact with Him. I mean, He *is* the Avatar, there's no question about it. I felt pretty sure before I met Him that He was. But I felt I had to get my own contact with Him before I could really make up my mind 100 percent.

No one manipulates people the way He does, like a child does his dolls. He is absolutely the greatest psychologist you could ever find. When you're with Him, you not only can see how He manipulates the people but also how He manipulates the circumstances around them. Situations will evolve around a person to bring to pass what He has previously said He wants to happen. I've seen it evolve about myself the same way. It's something with which I have direct experience.

This is something I think everyone would like to know. Baba says that in December He is going to break His Silence. So, let's see. In fact, He said He is *definitely* going to break His Silence.

Afterwards, I spoke to Eruch and asked him what he thought, since Baba has said before that He would break His Silence, and Eruch said, "Let's just wait and see, time will tell." Personally, I think one reason He doesn't break His Silence when He promises is because there is a certain anticipation which He brings up in people which He uses for His work. That's one thing I've noticed, He uses people's feelings. He would create very happy moments, very sad moments, and you could see in the meantime that He was half in another world. He would manipulate His fingers as if reacting to things He was doing - just as a person speaks and uses his hands, and isn't even aware of using his hands. I have the same impression with Baba - that the way He uses His fingers, and the facial expressions He gets sometimes, are reactions to things that He is doing in dealing with the mind.

He'll bring about emotional times with people and use them. Even with the twins. He has a little ball that He throws at them. It's unusual to see a person work in such a manner, but when you begin to understand Baba, you can grasp what's going on, even though you don't know quite what it is. He would kid around with the twins and say, "Who's the strongest?" And both would say, "I am!" Sometimes He would have them help lift Him out of the chair, and He would pull them down instead. Don't kid yourself, He's very strong! Then He'd take the twins (they're both chubby and have kind of big stomachs), turn them towards each other, and then while they were staring each other in the eye, He would push them together, and they would bounce! The twins got a big kick out of it.

Eruch was the most obedient person to Baba I ever met. He even doesn't eat all day long until he gets home at night. He takes care of much of Baba's correspondence as well as interpreting for Baba. All the disciples say that no one interprets like Eruch.

This is an incident related to me by a devotee that happened about two or three years ago. Another close follower of Baba's was promised something by Baba which would occur on a certain date. About three months before the date, the follower felt that something should be happening to him. He began to get angry with Baba (mind you, he loved Baba; it didn't have anything to do with his love). But he got angry because he felt Baba wasn't keeping His promise. He started blurting out to the other disciples and to whomever he came near, that Baba was acting like a stinking father. It didn't take long before Baba got wind of this. So Baba called him in and said, "Is something on your mind, is something troubling

you that you want to tell me?" The follower blurted out to Baba that He was acting like a stinking father and that Baba was not keeping His promise. He was really asking for it!

So Baba said, "Who's acting like the stinking one, the father or the son? After all, the time had not come yet when what I promised you is to take place, and you can't wait. After that time, if I don't fulfill the promise, then you can complain." Of course, these are not the exact words ... but Baba knocked him down a few pegs and made him realise how wrong he was.

There are always interesting things going on around Baba, and people are constantly coming for His darshan. Some stop by just out of curiosity. Some don't even know who Baba is. Many who know who He is come from all over India, travelling hundreds of miles. It just so happened that at the time I was there some government officials were having a big convention and quite a few came to Baba for His blessing before they started the meeting. Then, too, there was a very famous singer who came to Baba to sing for God. He was really terrific, and Baba said afterwards that he really sang for Baba's love. The man himself said that he felt that he'd never sung as well as he did that day.

You know, I consider myself a pretty good card player because I can pick up card games quickly. But Baba plays a game which He must have invented and which I just could not grasp. It looked like the simplest game in the world ... because everyone just sat around in a circle; Baba would give each player two or three cards, and everyone would call out a certain name together. I was trying to figure out when I should call it out ... everyone would tell me that I had to go in turn after each game, but they never did it that way, and they'd call it out together.

Sometimes I would be sitting next to Baba, and I'd look up at Him and say, "I just can't figure this game out!" He'd pat me on the head and say with His expression, "It's O.K. whether you figure it out or not." Sometimes Francis Brabazon would try to explain it to me, but the way he explained it, I only got more confused! The game lasts only a minute. The cards are given out, they call out the name, everyone throws their cards on the floor, and somebody wins. Whoever loses must rub his nose on the carpet! Every other person loses, so the alternate people who've won watch all the others rub their noses on the carpet! A very confusing game ... I'm still trying to figure it out!

While I was there, we went to visit an orphanage because Baba wanted to give His darshan to the orphans. They were all little girls. First, the teachers and the principal bowed down to Baba, then the orphans came by. Some embraced Baba, and some just walked past Him. Maybe they had been told who He was, but since they were kind of young, maybe they didn't understand. In the end, Baba said it was a short visit and a sweet visit. I said to Him as we were driving away, "A lot of ¹ good must come to these orphans when You're there."

He said, "A tremendous amount of good is being done to them." Of course, there are all things that cannot be seen outwardly ... because you can't see how He manipulates these little children's patterns. For everyone follows a certain pattern. He just pulls strings in the right places so that things turn out a little better for them.

He said one time, when the government officials were there for His darshan, that it is better to deny God than to defy God. Sometimes when people are told something like this, they are a little offended. But not over there, because everything is said just at the right time. It always has its element of truth that people recognise because of the time that He'd say it. As somebody told me, there is a personal message for everyone in every message He gives. The same thing may be said seemingly to everyone, but it affects everybody differently. And I know because I thought these little sayings were directed personally at me ... and I say again, *personally!*

They told me afterwards that everyone gets that feeling. It's part of the kind of person Baba is. When they say that He is the ultimate, these are the little ways in which it comes out. He does things in a very subtle manner. You think it's part of your everyday life. At the time, it's so subtle that you don't even realise that something is being done and that He's manipulating a person just through ordinary events. But put them together, and you can see the pattern that emerges.

Sometimes, Baba makes special trips to the followers' homes, and I went on two of these trips while I was there. All the people in the neighbourhood would be crowded outside. Sometimes a photographer would be there because the family wanted to have a picture taken with Baba. He was always so gracious about everything and tried to make everyone happy. As a matter of fact, that's what He says: "Be happy - that will make Me happy." And He encouraged it. It isn't like.

someone who says, be happy, and then does things to make you unhappy. He does just the things that make people happy, and as a result, they *are* so glad when in His presence. For example, the people would crowd around and serve fruit. Baba would eat very little. He'd eat just enough to be gracious.

While I was in Poona with Baba, someone told me that Baba takes care of a person's material, spiritual, and psychological needs. I had a firsthand experience of it because this is just the way He was taking care of me. Everything material was taken care of from the first moment I arrived at the airport. Someone met me at the airport. Hotel reservations, transportation, everything was taken care of before I got there (naturally I paid my own bill at the hotel); and I had instructions from Baba as to what I was to do the whole day, every day. Every day when I was through seeing Baba, Meherjee was instructed to take me round to see Poona. I visited Eruch's home and Meherjee's home and went on my first elephant ride with the twins. Meherjee even had a photographer there to take pictures. I wanted to pay for them, but he wouldn't let me because I was a guest. Actually, the word "guest" never arose because I was made to feel like a member of the family.

My spiritual needs were taken care of by the fact that I saw Baba and He gave me personal instructions. Of course, I wasn't the only one He did this for; He does it for everyone that comes to Him and everyone who lives there. It's just a wonder how He can do it for each individual - how He can find the time. Not only does He do it for each one that comes to Him, but He takes care of all the masses of people who come, too. So when it's said that Baba is the ultimate, don't kid yourself into not believing it, because there are so many things, so many things; you just have to watch Him.

Many of the people that I was there with, I felt as if I'd known before even from the very first day. I liked them very much, and I didn't know why. Baba too. As I mentioned, at my very first meeting with Baba, I was very nervous. But Baba has His ways of making a person calm once more. So how did He do it with me? He appeared more nervous than I! He was looking at me as if He were all nervous! I was thinking to myself, "I'm the one that's supposed to feel nervous, not He! What's He got to be nervous about?" After a while, I began to calm down, and He began to calm down, and everything was O.K.

WHEN YOUR HEART TRULY YEARNs, BY FRENY R. DADACHANJI

In the early 1960s, Beloved Meher Baba used to spend the summers (mid-March to June) at Guruprasad in Poona. It was at Guruprasad that, in my case, Beloved Meher Baba's compassion allowed "the improbable to become possible."

Two blocks away from Guruprasad is Mobos hotel. During the early '60s, when Baba used to give darshan, the Dadachanji and Mistry families used to rent rooms at Mobos for the time Baba would be in Poona. On some mornings Baba would go for a drive, or would visit one of His lovers, and we used to stand at the gates of the hotel (which were on the road itself) just in case Beloved Baba drove by. When He did, in His love, He would stop the car and give us a smile or a hand to kiss. After some days, Baba asked that we remain on the terrace of the hotel and simply wave to Him as His car slowed down and then drove on.

After this extra and special glimpse of the Beloved, we would quickly get ready to go to Guruprasad to await Beloved Baba's return. We would all stand to line the sides of the grand curved portico, waiting for Baba's car to slowly roll in and stop at the wide flight of stairs. Baba's door would open and one of the mandali or sometimes, a strong Baba lover who was visiting, would put out his arm for Baba. Baba would take the support and climb the few steps and then enter the hall of Guruprasad, where He would seat Himself on the sofa. We would gather around, enjoying Beloved Baba's sahavas. Sometimes there would be a singing programme, but it made little difference to us; we just used to gaze in adoration at Beloved Baba until He lovingly dismissed us.

As the days went by, my heart started yearning, thinking, "How wonderful it would be if I could, once, help Beloved Baba up the steps. What joy it would be to touch Him!" My heart knew how improbable, in fact impossible, this dream, this longing was! With so many physically strong lovers around, and with Baba needing a really strong support, how could I even be noticed?

One fine morning, as we lined up, Beloved Baba's car rolled in, stopped, the door opened, and Baba looked straight at me and beckoned. But I did not respond, thinking Baba wanted someone standing behind me. In my wildest imagination, the thought did not come that Baba was fulfilling my heart's desire. He beckoned again, and this time I turned around to see whom Baba wanted. But I saw no one and with a question on my face, I looked at Baba. The third time

Baba beckoned, and I dared to mouth, "Baba, I?" He nodded, and I ran down the steps thinking, "Baba wants to tell me something."

When Baba gestured, "Take Me up the steps," glorious joy filled my heart. I extended my arm and tensed, knowing I must not falter in taking His weight. Baba placed His lovely hand on my arm, and I braced myself as Baba stepped out of the car. I took a step and to my surprise, we seemed to glide up the steps light as a feather.

Throughout those precious moments, my experience and feeling were, "How soft like a baby, a cotton puff, and the clouds, all rolled into one is Beloved Baba!" Baba sat down on the sofa and gave my arm a distinct "Thank you" squeeze. Baba's love - His caring and giving - is beyond words. His silence is so eloquent: one hears Him distinctly in one's heart. His so loving, tender, and knowing eyes smiled at me, and I returned to sit with the other Baba lovers - in my heart a glorious, treasured glow which even today burns brightly.

A YOUNG MAST BY S.L. LOKHANDE

Baba's letter came inviting us to Poona from 3rd to 13th June 1960. My family and I arrived on 2nd June. We went to Guruprasad on the 3rd morning. Each of us had a garland for Baba. When called inside, we went and bowed on Baba's feet, garlanded Him, and then embraced Him. My son, Chandra Shekar, was three feet away from Baba when he suddenly threw away his garland, mumbled something, and, without bowing to Baba, went and sat down at a distance. I felt very sorry because he had come three or four times before and had garlanded Baba. My family sat in front of Baba while I stood.

Baba asked me why he had behaved in this fashion. I replied, "I don't know, Baba." Baba asked, "Does he do this at home?" I told Baba that he does behave like a mad person at times, tears clothes, throws utensils out of the house, hits people, and at times does not eat for three to four days. If asked why he does not eat, he would reply, "Food is expensive." At times he would eat all the food cooked in the house. Sometimes he would become violent and would not let the family enter the house. But on seeing me, he would quiet down.

Baba asked me, "For how many years have you had contact with Me?" I replied, "Since 1953, Baba." Baba asked me why I had not told Him before about the behaviour of my son. I replied, "I know You are God and You know

everything, so there is no need to tell You about him." That day was a Thursday, and Baba asked me to remind Him about the boy on Sunday.

The next day we were going to Guruprasad in the morning. On the way, when we passed by a florist my son on his own asked for a garland. He kept it. When we reached Guruprasad, we stood in the queue, but my son ran first and garlanded Baba. We were surprised at his attitude. We bowed down and sat near Baba. Baba smiled at the boy. On Sunday we came to Guruprasad, and after we had bowed down to Baba, I reminded Baba about my son. Baba replied, "I have already done on Friday what I had to do today." Baba then asked me to do the following for my son: do not make him study; allow him to live as he wants to; do not worry about him, as he is a *mast*; do not let him mix with people, and do not let him go near gatherings.

In the afternoons, only I was called to Guruprasad. Baba took me one day to see Bund Garden and then to Deccan College. We would play Baba's famous game of cards in the afternoons. One day, in the afternoon, Baba changed my position in the hall at Guruprasad, and we began to play the game. There were two parties, one, Baba's party, and I was in the other. I had an ace of trumps with me, but my party lost because Baba took my trump card and replaced it with another. As soon as we lost the game, Baba would clap and His party would hold our ears; at the second clap they would make us rub our noses on the floor; and on the third clap, our heads would be raised. I asked Baba why He had taken my ace. Baba said, "I am the Lord of the Universe, and so I must always win. This is a part of My universal work, of which I make you a partner." Baba told those who rub their noses in front of Him, "You are very fortunate."

A CHANCE TO SING FOR BABA BY T.R. SHAMBHULINGAM, SECRETARY, AVATAR MEHER BABA BHOPAL CENTRE

A large crowd of Baba lovers had collected outside the gates of Guruprasad and were shouting "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai." All were anxious to see Baba. Just then, Baba came out from the side passage of the porch of Guruprasad, wearing a white sadra and a pink coat. With one arm on Eruch's shoulder and the other arm on Francis's, He walked towards the gate of Guruprasad. Baba was repeatedly accepting the greetings of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" from His lovers by raising His hand. He walked up to the gate and then returned to the bungalow into the darshan hall.

Every particle of dust that had touched His feet was very fortunate. After a short while, the gates were flung open. I ran and sat as close to Baba as possible in the main hall. The hall was packed with His lovers. Lovers from different Baba Centres began to regale Baba with their melodious songs, bhajans, and ghazals.

I requested brother Eruch to permit the Bhopal Centre to sing a song. Baba asked, "Who wants to sing?" I knelt before Baba and said that we would like to sing. Eruch asked me, "Baba wants to know if your voice is melodious." I replied, "Not so sweet, Baba." Baba turned down my request to sing. Instead, another lover, from A.P., was called to sing. He sang a Telugu song, but his voice was coarse and unappealing to the ear. Yet Baba was very much pleased to hear the Telugu song and kept beating his thigh in rhythm to the song. While the song was being sung, Baba kept looking at me a number of times. I felt that I could sing far better than the A.P. lover, as I knew some basic principles of singing and had taken part in musical programmes of the All-India Radio.

I prayed to Baba silently to give me a chance to sing. As soon as the A.P. lover finished his song, Baba asked Eruch for the Bhopal Centre to sing a song. I sat in front of Baba with other Baba lovers from Bhopal to sing a song. Baba was very much pleased and praised the presentation repeatedly. Baba called us, embraced us, and touched our cheeks with His hands very lovingly. In my life, I have realised that there is no good or bad voice for Baba. Baba only hears the voice of the heart.

On another occasion, Baba lovers were taking photographs of Beloved Baba. We requested Baba to pose for a photo. Baba said, "Instead of taking photographs, keep Me in your hearts." In spite of saying this, He consented to pose for a photo.

MY STORY BY MERWAN DUBASH

I am the son of Adi and Roda Dubash of Karachi, Pakistan. When Baba was informed about my birth in 1947, He sent a cable by return, naming me Merwan.

In May and June 1960, I spent the first of my three long stays with Baba. We were in Poona about five to six weeks and went to Baba every day at Guruprasad. First, my mother and I went only in the mornings and my father alone went back after lunch in the afternoons.

I was only thirteen and started to get bored after a week or so of this and was agitating to go to Panchgani. At the right opportunity, my parents asked Baba if it

was OK for me to go to Panchgani. In His usual fashion, Baba asked, "Why does he want to go? Doesn't he like it here?" And because Baba asked, my parents, said that I was getting restless and a little bored. Baba said, in that case, they should let me come with Adi (my father) in the afternoons to Guruprasad. You notice He didn't say no to my going to Panchgani. So I started going to Guruprasad with my dad in the afternoons as well, thinking that I was now going to be doubly bored. Of course, what I didn't know was that the afternoons were more fun.

This was also the first time I met the twins, Rustom and Sohrab, and Merwan Mistry. In the afternoons the four of us would amuse ourselves before Baba came back from the women mandali. We must have been making quite a racket doing this because Baba got word that we were disturbing Pendu, who would take a nap every afternoon before Baba returned to the men's side. Others told us to keep the noise down, and I guess we didn't because one day Baba told us that we were making too much noise and disturbing Pendu's sleep. Therefore, between 12:00 and 2:00 all four of us were told to keep silence in Guruprasad, which I did for the rest of my stay. Of course in the afternoons Baba also played His famous card game of La Risque. Initially, I did not play but picked up the cards and dealt them after each game, and after a while Baba let me graduate to the player level.

In the afternoons we also had Aloba's famous tea. Also, very often Baba would receive baskets of mangoes from His lovers as a gift, and there were so many that he would regularly distribute them to us to eat. Baba would sit on a stool on the side verandah or kitchen and give the mangoes individually to each one. Then there were also the house visits when Baba would visit lovers' houses in Poona at their invitation. Obviously, He got quite a few invitations, and when Baba went on these visits, He not only took the men mandali but took two or three carloads of people with Him.

In typical fashion, Baba would make sure everyone got a chance to go. He would take an interest in making the selections as to who was going on which visit and in which car. House visits were great fun to go on, and we tucked in heartily in the goodies that were laid out for Baba. Baba Himself would only have a cup of tea and very little to eat, but His entourage did justice to the rest! Of course, all this was great fun for a boy of thirteen, and now that I was spending all day with Baba, the desire to go to Panchgani was no longer there.

However, there were still, let's say, a few moments that were less fun. For example, every Sunday Baba would allow the local people from Poona and Bombay to have His darshan. Inevitably these lovers would sing songs for Baba. Quite a few of them sang classical Indian songs and played classical music, and not being a fan of Indian music, I was not particularly enthralled. I would survive the morning session, but halfway through the afternoon session, it would be a struggle to stay awake! With hindsight, it is fascinating to note how Baba kept me there. There was no coercion at all; He merely came down to my level and kept me interested in activities around Him - truly a demonstration of His humanness.

There is also a message in this story for youngsters, which is that if you feel bored when you are at Meherazad or Meherabad, don't worry, don't feel guilty or think that something is wrong; it happens to most kids, but Baba eventually takes care of that.

In 1960 during this stay at Guruprasad, I experienced one of my major incidents with Baba. We had started using rented bicycles for transportation to Guruprasad every day. Each day we would cycle there in the morning, back home for lunch, and then back to Guruprasad. One morning as we entered Guruprasad I was told by someone that the mandali ladies had noticed that I cycled very fast and I should slow down, as Baba would not like it. I was warned but soon forgot about it.

One day in the afternoon on the way to Guruprasad after lunch, as my father and I were bicycling through one of the crowded side streets of Poona, a car appeared from nowhere at some speed with horn blaring. In a hurry to move over to one side, I lost my presence of mind, and instead of pulling over to the left (which is the side to drive on in India) I pulled over to the right, across the path of the oncoming car. Apparently, the car missed me by a whisker. After I had composed myself, we cycled over to Guruprasad, parked our bikes, and noticed that Baba was already in the side Mandali Hall.

As soon as we put our foot into the room, Baba looked over at my father and asked, "How well does Merwan ride a bicycle?" Of course, my dad just needed an excuse, and he quickly blurted out what had happened that afternoon. Baba became quite serious (not angry), and after my father's complaints had finished, He looked at me and said, "Don't I have anything better to do than to keep My nazar on you? From now on your bicycle riding stops." I was instructed by Baba

that I should return the rented bike that evening and from then on was not to ride a bicycle. Being only thirteen, I asked if this meant no cycling when I went back to Karachi, and Baba said, "No cycling when you are in India. You can cycle in Karachi." That was the end of this incident with Baba.

However, we found out afterwards that for some days before the incident Baba had regularly been asking Aloba, "How does Merwan ride his bicycle?" Of course, Aloba was the one on gate duty, so he used to see me riding into Guruprasad and told Baba that like most kids of my age, I rode a little fast and showed off a bit. Apparently, Baba asked this same question regularly for some days before the incident.

There is a sequel to this story. In 1962 I finished school and went to university. The only convenient transportation to get me to university and back was a bicycle. When I asked my parents to buy me one, they hesitated. Even though Baba had said I could bicycle in Karachi, they were reluctant to buy one for me without Baba's permission. So in 1963, when we were with Baba again in Guruprasad, at the opportune time Baba was asked whether I could use a bicycle in Karachi to go back and forth to university. Baba, after some discussion, said it was OK for me to have a bicycle of my own in Karachi, but I was still not to ride a bike in India. So even today, although I can ride a bicycle anywhere in the world, and have one in Toronto, I do not ride one in India.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY LOST BY MRS. PADMA DEEWAN

In 1960 my husband [Kanwar Sen Deewan] and I were in Bombay, where my brother was producing a movie and had promised to show us how shooting is done, but only after two days. Since we had two days, on my mother's advice, we went to Poona for Meher Baba's darshan for the first time. When we reached Guruprasad, Baba asked us, "Where are you coming from?" I replied, "Dehra Dun, Baba." Baba replied, "No, you are not coming directly from Dehra Dun but are touring many cities before coming to Poona."

We were surprised that Baba knew this about us, but still, we did not have faith in Baba. Baba then asked us to come the next day, but an hour earlier so that we could have some talk with Him. We said yes to Baba, but as soon as we came out of the bungalow, we said to each other that we would return to Bombay the next day so that we could see how a film is made.

As we were talking about our return to Bombay, Baba sent a man running towards us with this message: "Both of you go wherever you want to go and don't come to see me tomorrow." The messenger also told us that before going back to Bombay, we should meet a lady named Mrs. Bahri, who had come from Dehra Dun and was now staying in Poona. We knew Mrs. Bahri and so went to meet her. When we talked to her, she started crying. She pitied us for planning to go to Bombay when Baba Himself wanted to meet us the next morning. She told us that we were unlucky and had missed a golden opportunity. She told us that she had been waiting many days to meet Baba but had not got the chance.

Before leaving Guruprasad, we had asked Baba if we could have our photographs taken with Him. He had agreed and had said that He would come out in the open and then we could take the photographs. We had no idea what obedience to Baba means, and so we told Baba that we would take photographs in the house and that He need not come out in the garden. We took Baba's photos in Guruprasad against His will, with the result that when the photos were developed, none of the prints were clear.

"I AM THAT THIEF!" BY SHRI S. SURYANARAYANA

In May 1960, with forty to fifty Baba lovers from Calcutta, I left for Poona for Baba's darshan. It was a Friday, and I used to observe silence on Fridays. In our coach a Brahmin from Benares with his wife and son, aged ten years, were also travelling. The boy's leg had been operated on six months back, and he was going to Bombay for a checkup. Since I talked to the others by gestures, the Brahmin thought that I was dumb, but it was clarified to him that I was observing silence on that day. I told him that we were going to Poona for Meher Baba's darshan. The Brahmin may have felt that his son might be cured by Meher Baba and so decided to come with us to Poona. From Kalyan, we changed trains and went to Poona, where we put up in a *choultry* [resthouse] opposite the railway station.

The next day we were at Guruprasad, where Baba was giving darshan. It was not known to us that Baba had asked the Brahmin to leave for Bombay in the afternoon. Instead, the Brahmin stayed in Poona and went sightseeing there. At about 4:00 P.M. the Brahmin went to a shoe shop and after trying on many shoes, he went to pay for the pair he had chosen. To his horror, he found that he had

been pickpocketed and had lost seven hundred rupees. He had no money left and so walked back to the *choultry*, crying for help.

On inquiry, I learned that he had been pickpocketed and so gave him ten rupees to enable him to send a telegram to his home for financial help. The telegram was sent the next morning by him while his wife and child accompanied us to Guruprasad. When he arrived at Guruprasad, Baba asked him why he had not left Poona for Bombay the day before in the afternoon as instructed. I told Baba what had happened.

Thereupon, Baba said, "I am that thief." Baba asked Pendu to give one hundred rupees to the Brahmin. Baba asked him whether he had any change, to which the Brahmin replied in the negative. Baba asked Pendu to give the Brahmin another ten rupees. I told the Brahmin, "Baba has given this amount to you as a gift." Baba replied, "I am a naked fakir. Tell him that Baba told one of His lovers to give this money to him." The Brahmin asked Baba how he should return this money, to which Baba said, "Tell him this is Baba's prasad."

Just then, the Maharani of Baroda came for darshan and gave Baba a bottle of honey. Baba gave it to the Brahmin with the instructions that he should give a spoonful of it to his son daily in the morning and evening, repeating Baba's name. Baba also presented to the Brahmin a framed photo of Himself and asked him to pray before it twice daily. Baba then asked the Brahmin to return home.

CARAVAN OF LOVE FROM HAMIRPUR

On 13th May 1960, a caravan of about two hundred men, women, and children from Hamirpur district reached Poona for Beloved Baba's darshan. These two hundred had travelled in a 96-seat conveyance, and when they reached the high school where they were to stay, Baba arrived there with His mandali to greet them! During darshan, Baba told the Hamirpur group that He was delighted with their love for Him and with the way in which they did His work. He expressed great happiness at the three nonstop *japas* and expressed even greater happiness at the programme held at the home of Bhagwandas. Baba assured them of His nazar and warned them to hold fast to His daaman. On the afternoon of 17th May, the caravan of Hamirpur lovers left for home.

Keshav arranged for another caravan of one hundred and forty-eight people and arrived with them at Poona on 3rd June, shouting, "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" This group took darshan at Guruprasad for four days. During these darshan programmes, Baba had asked Keshav to again recite for Him his *Meher Chalisa*, with which He closed the programme.

A POEM FOR BABA BY CH. SUBBA RAO

The following verse was composed by Changanti Subba Rao and read in Guruprasad on 4th June 1960 by Beloved Baba's order.

Life presents a new aspect:

Renunciation - a new prospect

Baba keeps me always buoyant

Both in body and mind.

Reality in illusion

And illusion in Reality

Are envisaged by every Meher-lover

But despondency NEVER.

When I go out in the hot Sun

Baba's face is wet with sweat

When I enjoy a good dinner

Baba feels very happy.

When I lie down, Baba lies

From one cup we drink *chaa*

He never forsakes me;

His face Is not different from mine.

I bear only half my weight

The other half Baba bears;
 In His realms, I fly my kite
 Half the burden He shares.

MEETING A SIXTH-PLANE MAST

During Baba's stay at Guruprasad in 1960, one day I arrived early in the morning. Since I had gone before time, I stood at the gate talking to the gatekeeper, Meherdas, also one of the mandali. He told me, "You should have come yesterday, as Baba had taken us to see Nilkanth Mast." I knew that he was on the sixth-plane, and for some time I did feel sorry for not coming a day earlier. I had given lectures on *God Speaks* and explained about the planes of consciousness but had never seen a sixth-plane *mast*. When Meherdas told me about the mandali's visit to see Nilkanthwala Mast a day prior to my arrival, I really felt sorry that Baba had not called me a day earlier; otherwise, I would have seen a man on the sixth-plane.

Soon I was called inside Guruprasad to be with Baba. The joy of being with Baba can never be expressed. As usual, Baba would be with us till 11:00 A.M., after which He would go to the women's side for lunch. He would return at about 1:00 P.M. In the meantime, I would have lunch with the mandali and then have a short snooze in the side room of Guruprasad till Baba returned.

That afternoon, Baba did not come to the mandali room as usual. Instead, one of the mandali came running and woke me up, saying, "Baba wants you in His car immediately." I ran to the portico to find Eruch in the driver's seat, and Baba seated next to him. Baba gestured to me to sit behind Him in the rear seat. Eruch started the car, and we were soon on the road speeding away. I was so happy to be in the same car as Baba, a privilege I got only sometimes.

Suddenly, Baba gestured to Eruch, who said to me, "Baba wants to know where we are going." I replied, "I do not know." Baba then gestured to Eruch to tell me where we were going. Eruch said, "We are going to see Nilkanth Mast!" These words struck me like a thunderbolt. I felt so sorry and repented very much for having wished to see a sixth-plane *mast* when I had met Baba, God in human form, the Avatar.

I did not cry, but sitting behind Baba, I repented very much. As the car drove towards its destination, my remorse grew. Why did I wish to see a sixth-plane man when I had met God in human form? By the time the car reached its destination, my repentance had reached such a peak that I did not have the slightest wish to see Nilkanth Mast.

We got down from the car, and Baidul immediately came near Baba. Baba asked him to take me to see the *mast* on the sixth-plane. Baidul took me to a room, and I entered alone. Lying on a low couch was a stark-naked man with a beard. His eyes were open and staring towards the ceiling of the room. There was not the slightest movement of his eyeballs. He had no expression on his face. As a medical doctor, I could tell only from his slow and shallow respiration that he was alive. I kept gazing at him in wonderment. If Baba had not told me that Nilkanth Mast was on the sixth-plane, I would have put him down as one who had drunk a lot of alcohol.

I do not know how much time I was with the *mast*, but when I heard Baba clap, I knew it was a signal for me to come out of the room. I did so, and Baba asked me, "Now, have you seen a sixth-plane *mast*?" I replied, "Yes, Baba." From that day, there has never been the slightest wish in my heart to see or meet a man on the planes or even a Sadguru, for I know that Meher Baba is the Avatar; He is mine, and so I do not have to run after *masts*, saints, or people on the planes.

LIFE CIRCULAR* NO. 47 (30th JUNE 1960)

This is to all of you who love Me and obey Me, and as well as to all those who would do so. Most particularly, it is to all of you who have replied in the affirmative (YES), stating your resolution to obey Me and hold fast to My daaman under all circumstances, and irrespective of whatever may or may not happen, to stick to Me to the very end.

I want all My lovers to take this period of My seclusion as most important from all angles.

I want you to help Me by helping one another through practising greater tolerance towards all, even towards those who cause you provocation. I want you to do this through love and not through compulsion.

* Meher Baba issued Life Circulars as information and instructions to His lovers from time to time. This Circular is one of them.

I want you to live in accord and to maintain cordial relations with all especially during these six months of My Seclusion, which will test to the utmost your forbearance, thus making you aware of the extent of your love for Me.

I want you to know that I will definitely break My Silence; and I want you to cling to My *daaman* till the very end, irrespective of whether I speak or not. I am the Highest of the High and want you to love Me, not for any spiritual or material gain, nor for the impending breaking of My silence and my manifestation, but I want you to love Me for myself as being God in human form.

I want you to remain undisturbed and unshaken by the force of life's currents, for whatever the circumstances they too will be of My own creation.

I want you to remain absorbed as much as possible in thinking of Me during My Seclusion of six months when circumstances will be so created during this period that they will try to drift you away from Me. This is the reason why I have repeatedly stressed, while at Guruprasad, that the time has come when I want you all to cling to My *daaman* with both hands - in case the grip of one hand is lost, your other hand will serve in good stead.

And lastly, I want you all to remember NOT to disturb Me in any way during My seclusion, not even by writing to me to acknowledge this or to reaffirm your love for Me.

My Love to you each.

Meher Baba

[Signed] Adi K. Irani

1961

THE BELOVED IN SECLUSION

Baba lovers the world over were planning to visit Baba at Guruprasad during the summer months of 1961 - But, like a bolt from the blue, Adi K. Irani's circular letter, dated 15th February 1961, brought their hopes crashing down. The circular said:

Avatar Meher Baba will be in Poona for some months from about the 15th of March 1961.

Baba wants all His lovers to know and to bear in mind that none should come to see Him for any purpose, much less for His darshan or for private visits to Guruprasad, at any time during His stay in Poona.

For reasons of His very strict seclusion and very bad health, Baba expressly wants all His lovers to help keep Him absolutely undisturbed throughout His stay in Poona, until Baba, on His own, asks anyone to see Him for His work at Meherazad or Poona.

In short, please note that the Beloved will continue to remain in strict seclusion irrespective of where He may be residing at Meherazad-Ahrnednagar or at Poona or at any other place.

FAMILY LETTER 39 (9th MARCH 1961) BY MANI S. IRANI

... However, our happiness will be solely for Baba, as it cannot include that of the hundreds eagerly waiting to be able to see Baba again at Guruprasad, the thousands hoping or expecting to have His darshan this summer. But the Beloved

is genuinely compassionate, and gives His lovers an opportunity to express their love which is not in seeking to have His darshan but in seeking to do His Will. To give us His darshan is the expression of His Love, to be happily resigned to His Will is the expression of our love; and blessed are we that He helps us by showing us how we may give shape to our love through unquestioning obedience.

And so it seems that the "complete" seclusion that Baba has been wanting for His work is at last in view. But the restrictions He has imposed on His lovers is infinitesimal compared to the suffering imposed on Himself. Despite the best care and medical treatment, the pace of improvement in His health is that of the proverbial snail, and it is only on looking back that we realise progress has been made. To see that He takes sufficient nourishment to help Him rapidly regain strength is one of the stiffest jobs of those around Him, for He has always been a lamentably light eater.

FAMILY LETTER 40 (APRIL-MAY 1961) BY MANI S. IRANI

30th April 1961

This April hello is sent to you softly from the silence of His seclusion that has been carried over from Meherazad to Poona with the care of a fragile fragrance, and bottled in Guruprasad palace - a worthy container, offered with so much love by our dear Rani. A few days before our coming, the place was swarming with people - but these were workers putting a rejuvenating coat of make up onto the stately mansion, overhauling the lighting system, adding a practical item here and an item there for the greater comfort of the Beloved's stay - and above all we marvel at the intuition that prompted the Maharani to make so timely an addition to its privacy by having a dainty trellis girdle the entire verandah.

Happily, the drive from Meherazad to Poona on 21st morning was considerably less trying and tiring than we had cause to expect; and as we glided through the familiar gates, Guruprasad looked as if it were all dressed up to go out but had planned a quiet evening at home. And the month of April has indeed been a "quiet evening" at home, with no ringing or knocking at the portals of Baba's Seclusion. In fact, all concerned have helped most earnestly to preserve it, difficult though this has been, particularly for those in Poona for whom Baba is so tantalizingly near and yet so far out of reach. To give a little instance, those Baba lovers whose

work takes them along the road that runs past Guruprasad have either abandoned the route altogether or risk a stiff neck as they cycle past looking dead ahead in case a glance at Guruprasad tantamounts to disturbing His Seclusion!

Nearly forty dates have been plucked from the calendar since our arrival here, but in the absence of Poona's usual summer diet of Darshan-feasts, it somehow has seemed a shorter time. However, this April silence of activities is not like a fasting but is as though Guruprasad is "chewing the cud" of past fills while ruminating on the possibility of more to come, with the confidence of one who has had experience of His Compassion.

Apart from His inner working that we are not afforded a peep into, physically it has been for Baba a phase of "convalescence," each day punctuated by a schedule of various "do's" and "musts" - like someone that must sit down to his daily monotonous practising on the piano scales. One note introduced in this routine has been some outings in the car, sometimes with the mandali and sometimes with us - outings to nowhere in particular. Another prominent item has been indoor games as a contribution to His physical exercise, including an old favourite of His: table tennis or ping-pong, as we call it. The tic-toc of the balls is a familiar sound, and it is delightful to see Baba get His mandali partner in a sweat trying to cope with His expert shots - this despite His below-par health and restricted scope of movement! (Playing while perched on a high stool, as standing any length of time is tiring due to old hip injury).

Evenings we look forward to when we sit with Baba on the front portion of the verandah from where one can see the road that is at just the right distance and angle to the house so that it is entertaining without being a nuisance.

And so the Seclusion continues in Guruprasad, and in the hearts of His lovers wherein He is securely closeted while remaining physically hidden from their gaze. But as Baba once said, He is eternally in Seclusion, for His True Divine Self remains hidden from us. At someone asking why He did not reveal Himself, Baba said: "It is so easy for Me to do that. It is the concealing that is difficult." He then gave a delightful simile of wind in the stomach, saying, "How easy it is to release it! It is holding it in until the right time that is not only difficult and uncomfortable but can be painful."

14th May 1961

Having bound His lovers with the invisible cord of His wish that He might be left completely undisturbed, the first week of May found Baba in the mood to decide to open the door of His Seclusion just the merest slit to allow a glimpse of Himself again. The one to be chosen for the privilege of paving the way by being the first to enter was none other than our lovely "hostess," the Rani. Next in line to enter this kingdom of heaven were the children of God. Wishing to begin in a "little" way, Baba had us arrange to have only the "little ones" come visiting – i.e., the children of Baba lovers in Poona. Once this idea began to be put into shape, it became increasingly obvious that the children would amount to more than the trickle of a few dozens that we had at first imagined, and indeed the final number swelled to a wave of over 300 that threatened to rush open the door and submerge the Seclusion!

It was a lovely program, and above all, it was a unique one when Baba was surrounded by His little ones ranging in age from 1 month to 12 years. And to them went the thanks of a hundred mothers or aunts that were allowed to accompany their charges. The Twins (Baba's nephews), who are about 15 years old, made themselves indisputably eligible for the visit by one of them dressing up as a babe-in-arms and the other as a mother dressed up in sari carrying the hefty hollering infant into Baba's presence amidst a burst of delight from the assembly! It was good to see Baba shaking with His warm, silent laughter as of yore.

To each child, Baba gave a prasad of sweets, and there was the kind that was not only shaped like a whistle but sounded like one - and Baba blew it for many a tot to show how it was done. No garlanding or bowing down was allowed, but at the end of the program when some 300 young throats lustily shouted "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" it was music to our hearts that sent up a prayer of thanks for the change in His health and mood that brought about this Children's Day.

The sober silence of His Seclusion was drowned by the incessant young chatter and noise. There was the boy who recited a Sanskrit verse composed in praise of Baba's Silence; there was two-year-old Mehera, who adores Him and insisted that Baba should give her the sweet that one of the mandali had in his hand; and there was Baba's first grand niece, of a few months old, who played on His lap for the first time. Behind the scenes, there was the toddler who cried for a biscuit, and

when given a little cake hollered all the more because it wasn't a biscuit. But when one of us told him that the biscuit had turned into a cake because he was in Baba's home, his crying stopped like magic, and he couldn't take his awed gaze off the cake for a long time. And then there was the little girl that kept pulling at her mother's skirt and pointing at Baba with an ecstatic look, saying "Ba-ba! Ba-ba!"

After each had approached Baba for the individual caress and a sweet, they trooped down the steps with Him and up again from the front side of the verandah. Surrounded by this crowd of youngsters, little of Baba could be seen - so that our Highest of the High looked the Smallest of the small! The 7th of May was indeed the children's day, with Him who is their Father in the truest sense of the word.

The children's day heralded the adults' visit, and all concerned were notified of Baba's wish through a circular issued on 5th May that said:

"Avatar Meher Baba is happy with the way His lovers are doing their best to help Him remain absolutely undisturbed in His strict seclusion. He says that His seclusion will continue to remain as such and He will want His loved ones also to continue to help Him remain undisturbed whether He is in Seclusion in Poona or Ahmednagar or elsewhere.

"Baba will be in Poona at Guruprasad bungalow, until the end of July 1961. "In response to the silent yearning in His lovers' hearts to see Him, Baba has lovingly agreed to allow them to visit Him once in His Seclusion during TWO WEEKS ONLY from the 15th through 31st May 1961, between 4:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. only, on any one day at Guruprasad, providing each lover strictly abides by His following wishes:

"Baba wishes the visitors to see Him only ONCE *on any one day* during the specified fortnight, anytime between 4:30 and 5:30 in the evening. Baba will NOT see anyone individually.

"Baba says He would not wish His lovers who live at very distant places from Poona to undertake the long and strenuous journey incurring the heavy expense to see Him only ONCE for such a short time. Baba says that those unable to see Him this time should not feel worried, for later on, He might give them a better opportunity in His own way.

"Baba wants His lovers visiting Guruprasad to fully help keep His seclusion undisturbed by:

"NOT bringing any offering to Him; NOT seeking to garland Him; NOT bowing down to Him; NOT seeking to have an interview with Him; NOT seeking His advice on personal problems of oneself or others; NOT putting questions to Him, spiritual or otherwise, nor expecting any spiritual discourse; NOT seeking permission to put up at Guruprasad, nor to repeat the visit.

"Baba says that by observing all these points His lovers will help Him keep intact His Seclusion, and those deciding to visit must come fully determined to please Baba by observing His wishes."

Lastly, it was made clear that this visit is only for those close in Baba's love, and not for the general public.

Hence in significance and in fact, the seclusion will remain unshaken and intact, with just the outer surface rippled by the splash of a fortnight's program, beginning from tomorrow. And so once again we have started moving the furniture around, just as we did so often last year, to adjust the dining room and sitting room which combined turns into a magnificent hall accommodating hundreds at His feet.

And we think of those hundreds who live for Baba but must do so at great distances from Him physically. We know from letters already received that a number of them, despite Baba's gentle injunction, are planning to come for just that one hour. But many cannot, either from lack of leave or money; and they will await the next opportunity, with Baba keeping the vigil along with them in their hearts. Once Baba had said to a devoted couple who were dismayed that they could not see Him more frequently, that better than their being with Him was His being with them; and that this was always done by their remembering Him and taking His Name. Baba said:

"I am in everybody's heart, but I am sleeping there. It is my old, old habit. In order to awaken me, you should always call out to me and say, "Baba-Baba-Baba ... " continuously. Then I, who might be asleep in your heart, will not find any pleasure in remaining asleep. Let alone sleep, I

shall not find time even to doze! I shall slowly be awakened in your heart by hearing your constant call - your taking My name constantly. "Once I am awake in your heart, you too would awake and remain awake for all time.

"Therefore repeat My name constantly and awaken Me in your hearts so that you become awake for all time."

Very lovingly, [signed] Mani

PS. Although today is the 14th it looks as though it is the 15th according to Baba-time, as those who have already come to Poona for that ONE glimpse are being sent for by Baba to come to Guruprasad this evening. Howsoever overjoyed, they will perhaps not be surprised at this surprise visit granted by their Compassionate One.

Family Letter 41 (11th July 1961) by Mani S. Irani

Seclusion Door Creaks Open:

"Unless you become as dust you cannot realize God. But first, you have to become stone, for you cannot become dust right away. What is needed is to retain human consciousness and become like stone and then wear yourself to dust at the feet of the Perfect Master."

Baba was saying this or rather Eruch was saying it as he read out Baba's gestures. It was the evening of 14th May, and over a hundred of His lovers were squatting before Baba, for the sound of the Seclusion door creaking open had reached those already in Poona in readiness for their visit next day. Among them was lucky Diana Snow, a Baba worker from Australia who had been touring Europe and whose two-day halt in India was timed by fate to coincide with the beginning of the Fortnight Feast. However, the very first visitor was from the heavenly regions, in the shape of a thunderstorm - and more than once some remark from Baba or someone's reply to Baba's query was aptly emphasised by a terrific crash of celestial cymbals, followed by a deluge of rain rushing down as though the sky also had decided to open its door on that day.

Baba was not giving a discourse - He had made it quite clear that during these "visit hours" there would be no discourses. But when He, whose first Whim brought forth the Creation, got the mood or whim in response to some comment or moment, we would receive from His Silence some added feast of words. For instance, when Professor Deshmukh chimed out his favourite little marching song of "Beat the drums, beat the drums, sing Meher, sing Meher," it prompted Baba to explain how one must be "empty" as the drum for divine music to emerge. Baba said:

"Only when the heart is cleaned out, and the mind completely emptied can they become instruments, hollow as the flute or drum, to give forth divine music."

Beginning with the 14th of May and ending with the 31st, the "fortnight" turned out to be more than fifteen days at both ends. Similarly, the "one hour" by Baba-time was happily stretched to two hours and more according to the Swiss clock in the corner to which Baba would point as witness and reminder that it was long past time for all to leave. Only lovers of Baba were entitled to be the "visitors," and whereas on the first day they could be surmised as numbering a hundred, the number kept rapidly expanding like a gay balloon, so that the last day's assembly consisted of no less than 3000! As they walked past in an unending file to receive from Baba's hand a sweet as prasad, Harry Kenmore was heard remarking to a neighbour, "They seem to be coming out of the woodwork!" And indeed, as they poured in over the window-sills and through the doors, it did seem so. But to rewind to the beginning

On 15th evening, the aid of portable gas lamps was sought to replace the crystal chandelier and wall lights, as an explosion at the electric power-house had plunged the whole of Poona in darkness, for a number of days and nights as it turned out. It made little difference to the hundreds of Baba lovers assembled at His feet in Guruprasad, and their faces reflected the light of His Love that reached out to them. Nevertheless, it also meant that the ceiling fans kept working all day to give Baba some relief from the summer's heat, stopped working.

But it may be true that whatever occurs turns out to be an answer to somebody's prayer - and certainly the fan episode answered the longing of some of the young Baba lovers to "do" something for Baba. They promptly ranged themselves about Him and, fitted with palm-leaf fans, kept wielding them with perhaps more vigour than rhythm, throughout evenings and even mornings. As

the electricity of Poona behaved temperamentally even after days of black-out, this Baba-Boys brigade had more hours of the Beloved's sahavas than any of their elders.

The time selected by Baba in which to set the precious fortnight was a holiday season with schools closed for the summer. Attached to this advantage was the disadvantage of travelling at that time, as Indian trains are much too overcrowded any day and at such times overflow with holiday seekers packed like sardines with the difference that they have not the tinned sardines' incapacity to care for anything! However, the "lucky fish" bound for Guruprasad were too happy to mind such inconveniences. And, when I asked one woman of a group from the North who had travelled by train for two days and a night along with children ranging from one year upwards, she said, "It did not bother us, we were kept so busy singing Baba bhajans."

There were quite a number of "new" ones too from different parts of India but particularly from the state of Andhra, who had not seen Baba before but who were "not new in Baba's Love," as the beaming group head explained when Baba appeared to show surprise and concern at their coming, and moreover from all this distance for just one hour. Baba ended by saying with a smile, "I am happy you came; it was I who drew you to Me." However, two new ones (of the dear Dadachanji family) from Bombay who made their debut before the Lord of Love were not even aware they came; but their proud mothers will tell them as soon as they are old enough to know, how Baba held them on His lap when they were not yet two weeks old! And how He repeatedly reminded the mothers to wrap them well on the journey and to send Him a telegram on reaching Bombay! Another baby receiving Baba's special love and care was the first-born of the famous cricketer Nari Contractor - a bonny boy of two months old whom the young father nervously carried and beamingly place on Baba's lap.

Lovely Ann Conlon, a journalist from the USA, was a new one too in not having met Baba, but her longing to see her beloved "Awakener" was "old" enough to make her grab the first opportunity and plane on reading the Family Letter. Another was Edward Luck, a boy from Florida whose brother Irwin visited Baba last year, and they just made it on the last hour of the last evening. Baba said to them, "Your love will reward you some day."

Among the "old" ones was Baba's faithful Fred Winterfeldt from New York, and touching on his devoted wife's longing to be with Baba, Baba said to Fred, "You are here with Me, but I am there with Ella." Then there were the dear Goldneys - Francis and Olla - who had the privilege of staying with Baba at Meherazad some years ago, and whose halt in India on the way back from an international conference in Japan could not have coincided more happily. But the biggest surprise was Dr. Harry Kenmore from New York, who dropped in to see his "Pop" at Gurnprasad one evening and walked towards Him through the packed hall. Although he could not perceive the infinitely tender expression on Baba's face as Baba embraced him, I am sure he felt it. And whereas Baba had put the prasad into the hand of each lover, He now unwrapped one and placed it in Harry's mouth.

I would like to add here that although the coming of so many from distant parts of India was unexpected, the USA sequel to my report in the Family Letter was quite unimagined - and I am sorry now that I did not time it to reach all concerned more promptly. However, there are still very many even in the East who were not able to be present physically, and it seems apt to quote here what the Beloved once said to the gathering:

"Your being with me is immaterial. It is My being with you that matters. So keep Me with you always."

Because of the queue of NO's attached to the visits, including NO darshan, NO garlanding, NO discourse, part of the time Baba began to allow those who wished, to express their love by singing to Him or by performing a skit or anything that might be touching enough or amusing enough. It all began with some of the Centre's little tots who "with rings on their fingers and bells on their toes" sang and danced to Baba on the first day, and their performance was so delightful He made them repeat it on two more evenings.

Then came the opportunity for the grown-ups, so that apart from an occasional qawwali singer regaling Baba and His assembly of lovers with mystical songs, there were the amateurish efforts from some among the Baba lovers who could sing, and some who seemed firmly convinced that they could! As the evening mounted, more individuals and groups mustered up ideas - a playlette, a verse in Baba's praise, a piece of Indian classical dance by some of the girls who were eager to perform before Baba, "just as Mira danced for Lord Krishna."

Often the items were indeed good, but sometimes it was obvious that sincerity and enthusiasm far exceeded talent. However, we gained more from such moments, for they afforded us a further glimpse of Baba's compassion and patience and spoke volumes of His silent Love that sees through all matter into the heart.

The Hamirpur party, led by dear old Pukar, planned to make this opportunity serve two purposes, and wrapped up in each form of their entertainment was their petition to Baba to revisit their land. As Eruch explained to the non-Hindi-speaking lovers at the end of the drama, "They have made a life-size marble statue of Baba, and they want to house it in Nauranga. It is to be the shrine of their united love, and they want Baba's presence there. Therefore, through this drama, they are praying, pleading, cajoling, arguing so that Baba visits Hamirpur district." This lighted up many faces, and there were hopeful murmurs: would Baba visit Nagpur en route? - and of course Calcutta? - and what about the state of Andhra, where a life-size statue of Baba in bronze is all ready to be installed in a house being built for it?

Bab~ seemed to look most concerned and puzzled, and then said with a smile, "It is such a big problem for Me to visit all these places where I already am! If I were not present there, I would surely pay the visit!" Then Eruch turned to Pukar and quipped: "So it would seem that first you must oust Him from your district for Him to pay that visit to Nauranga!" Before the laughter could die down, someone remarked, "Then why shouldn't BABA go everywhere to see BABA?" And the Beloved said, "That is a wonderful idea, but how can I pay a visit to myself when I am never absent?"

The performance that stole our hearts was a drama the bhajan party of Poona Centre got together, a drama depicting seven Avatars - Zoroaster, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Meher Baba - and the predominant expression of their message to humanity. The actors were young Baba lovers, boys, and girls from five to fifteen years old, and if the insufficient rehearsing time caused some faux pas in their appearance or acting, it added all the more colour. Undoubtedly it was the first show of its kind performed anywhere at any time, for its unique audience and spectator was the self same.

One depicted in all seven Avatars. Baba's twin nephews walked in on the final scene as Baba and Eruch, Baba leaning on Eruch's arm - and seeing the Twins go through the familiar scene of "Baba" giving darshan and prasad, while

BABA was right before them, brought forth an uproar of delighted clapping and laughter from the onlookers. As for Baba, seeing Himself thus before Him, [He] laughed so deeply He had to wipe the tears from His eyes! And at the end when "Baba" gestured (and "Eruch" relayed over the mike in five languages), "I Am The Ancient One," there rang out a chain of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" from the spectators that shook Guruprasad to its gilded ceiling.

After one qawwali programme, Baba explained the meaning of a song: "My glory is from here. to there, which has no end, and each one can perceive My glory to one's own capacity. So let Me see to what extent you can see My glory!"

Baba then added: "Ocean contains everything - water, dirt, nectar; and everything dissolves in the ocean. Nobody is debarred from coming to me and helping himself to the endless expanse of Love, but how much of the Ocean you can take with you depends on the receptacle you bring. If it is a cup, you can only take a cupful; if a pail, only a pailful. But once in a long while comes the true hero, the giant in Love that can gulp the Ocean Itself!"

The 1st of June found Guruprasad like the Arab that has folded up his tent - and with the veil of Seclusion pulled once more over His Face, the infinite Beloved seemed, what He had at times declared, infinitely tired. Consequently, we found setbacks showing more often in the pace of improvement of His health. However, the threads of routine were gradually picked up and woven into the pre-fortnight pattern, and Baba's short car-outings with the mandali resumed, while half an hour of qawwali music on the gramophone has become a happy addition. Although no more stiff-necks were risked by Baba lovers going past Guruprasad, all lovers joined willing hands to continue to preserve the Seclusion wholeheartedly respecting His wish of "no visits," and other instructions,

But nobody had told the elephant of Peshwa Park about it! To the musical clang of a big bell around her neck, Mrs. Jumbo gives rides to children (and grown-ups) around the park - which is a combination of garden, zoo, and picnic grounds. Her mahout knows Baba and makes her salute Him whenever He has been there. One recent morning, when Baba drove to Peshwa Park with the mandali, the elephant ambled forward to deliver her salute, and (quite contrary to the Seclusion rules) received from Baba the prasad of a whole loaf and a bunch of bananas, and moreover she took His darshan by touching His toe with her trunk! But I guess elephants can get away with anything, and at least this one can be classed among the cats that are supposed to have all the luck.

Ever lovingly, [signed] Mani

P.S. The above news, dated 11th July, could not be posted sooner, because of the disaster that befell Poona on the next day, in unprecedented floods that hit the business and residential heart of the city! On the 12th nearly half of Poona was under six feet and more of water (often covering the second stories of houses) as the swollen Mutha River thoroughly washed away a dam 25 miles from here, and made a 100-foot breach in the Khadakvasla Dam, which is the source of Poona's water supply

None might have achieved a thing with such hairbreadth timing as Jal inadvertently did when he took some film shots of the Beloved at the Bund Gardens (which is nearby Guruprasad). On the 12th morning, as some unexpected sun streamed through the heavy clouds, Baba was persuaded to drive to the gardens, and Jal used up his remaining rolls on scenes of Baba under the mango tree beneath which Babajan used to often sit, and of the river, etc. A couple of hours later the railing against which Baba had stood, watching the river flowing below, was utterly submerged; and there were boats on the spot where Baba had stood under Babajan's tree in the garden many feet above the river! ...

FAMILY LETTER 42 (14th SEPTEMBER 1961) BY MANI S. IRANI

... When we left Guruprasad on 7th [August] morning, Baba once again halted at the Bund Gardens to allow a farewell glimpse to the hundreds thronged by the river since dawn awaiting His coming. Seated once again underneath the shady tree (beneath which Babajan used to sit when she visited the garden), the beloved Saki dispensed to each His love-filled smile and presence that they drank with their tears. He permitted them to sing the Arri; and when He got into the car, each went by and kissed His hand. A cool, soft morning for a tryst with God underneath a mango tree, and one can hear Hafiz saying: "Love knows no difference between monastery and drinking-booth, for the light of the Friend's face irradiates all!"

A RUSE TO REMEMBER HIM BY M. R. DHAKEPHALKAR

Once I met with Baba when I was on my way to Mahabaleshwar. He cautioned me about the cold climate there. "Take with you woollen clothing and a blanket," I assured Baba that I would take care of my health and pass a happy time there.

"Can you do one thing for Me? I like Mahabaleshwar *jambul* (fruit) very much. Send Me one kilo of *jambul* every day," said Baba. "With pleasure, Baba; I shall do it quite willingly," I promised.

I went to Mahabaleshwar, and the next morning immediately after I woke up, I rushed to the market in search of the fruit. I purchased a kilo and packed it to send to Baba at Guruprasad. I returned to the bus stop to find out someone who would take the parcel to Guruprasad. I could somehow spot out a conductor who knew Baba, and he willingly undertook that job. I gave him some money to meet the incidental expenses. It took me four hours to go through all this, and every day I had to spend so much time at Mahabaleshwar for Baba's *jambul*.

I think Baba never liked *jambul*; They were actually distributed among His disciples the moment the parcel reached Guruprasad. It was quite obvious that He employed the *jambul* as a ruse that I might remember Him during my stay at Mahabaleshwar, and in truth, this had occurred to me even then.

Letter to the West²⁴ Mehera J. Irani

Guruprasad, 8th June 1961

Dear Ella Winterfeldt and all dear Baba gopies,

I am writing this letter while the news is still fresh. You must have all received firsthand news of the darshan from dear Ann [Conlon] and Fred [Winterfeldt], Harry [Kenmore] and the Luck brothers [Irwin and Edward]. We were pleased to meet Ann, who was seeing Beloved for the first time.

On the last day of darshan, the hall was cram-packed with Baba lovers with others pressing from all the doorways and verandah straining their necks to gaze at Beloved. He looked beautiful in His white sadra as He radiated His Love to all around. The programme ended befittingly by Harry saying the Parvardigar Prayer in a fine resounding voice and then the Prayer of Repentance in a softer, expressive tone. Baba then embraced and gave prasad to all present.

Though the circular emphasised that people should not come from distant places, many came from Andhra, Hamirpur, Calcutta and Dehra Dun, and of course, you who came from the USA.

One lover from Andhra, who had brought a new group with him, was asked whether or not he had read the circular in which was specified that only close lovers should come here. He had come this distance not alone with just his wife

but with all these new people. The lover replied that though they had not seen Baba before, their love for Him was not new. He had brought not them; they had insisted on coming. Beloved smiled at this answer.

One poor peasant woman told us how she was able to come from Hamirpur. She lives near the temple Meher Mandir at Nauranga and has taken upon herself to look after the place. She had been longing to see Beloved but wondered how she could manage it, having to look after a small son and not being able to leave her cattle unattended. Her son, knowing of her desire, told her she should not worry at all but go to Baba. He said he would look after the cattle, and Baba would look after him. We were touched to hear of this, knowing how she must have scraped and saved to have enough money for the train fare.

I would like to tell the story of the pretty daughter of the Rani of Saharanpur who dearly loved Baba. She is married to the Sardar of Patiala and has often come to see Baba in company with her mother and aunt. This time she felt she should come to Baba in her own right by her husband's side. Her in-laws were against this happening, as they have a Guru of their own and wish their son to follow him. When Baba came to hear of the girl's difficulty, He had a telegram sent to her, telling her not to be unhappy if she was unable to come, as He (Baba) would not be giving any private talks or interviews. This telegram made her husband immediately decide on setting out for Poona to be in time for the last two days of darshan. She told us that though her husband had known of her desire to bring him to Baba, she had never tried to persuade him into doing anything against his parents' wishes. It was the telegram that had done the trick. She is so happy now that her husband loves Baba.

The Baba lovers of Hamirpur petitioned Baba through poetry and song and dance to come to Nauranga for the opening of the statue of Himself in the Meher Mandir. In reply to their oft-repeated pleas, Baba said this was doubtful His being Omnipresent. "If I were not there already present, surely I would go there now." They said they believed Him to be God, yet wished His physical presence there. "It has now become a problem," Baba said, "that though I am there already, I am still being told to go there! And as you know I am still in seclusion." They replied, Baba in seclusion gives darshan, surely He could as Baba be in seclusion and at the same time come to Nauranga. Baba said, "As Baba is Baba, Baba sees Baba from here in Nauranga."

On further persuasion, Baba said if He agreed to come to Nauranga, others would insist on His coming to their respective towns. "Yes," said Dr. Deshmukh. "You must come to Nagpur," others called out "Calcutta," "Delhi," "Andhra," etc. "There you are," Baba pointed out to the voices, "I will agree to come to Nauranga and every other place if Deshmukh alone bears all the expenses of Myself and a group of a hundred coming with me." Many said they would help. "No, Deshmukh alone must do it," knowing well Deshmukh would not be able to do so. Everyone laughed and left it at that.

The children of the Poona Baba Centre did a very good tableau of the Avatars of the ages under the direction of Madhusudan, its producer.

Well, dear Gopies, the darshan is over, Baba gave so much of Himself to anyone to take with them. He once explained that He is the ocean and can only give that which you have the capacity of holding. Some can only hold a handful, others perhaps a pailful - only very, very rarely is there one who can receive the whole Ocean.

Beloved has felt much the strain of the darshan. He has often said in the past, "I feel infinitely tired of being infinitely tired." We hope that now during the remaining months He will relax in the pleasant atmosphere of Guruprasad before we start our journey homeward bound to Meherazad.

Beloved's Love to all His dear ones. My love to you each dear gopies. Lovingly, Mehera

SAHAVAS IN SECLUSION: 15th-31st MAY 1961²⁵ BY BAL NATU

Beloved Baba was delighted with the way His lovers were doing their very best to help Him remain entirely undisturbed in His strict seclusion. Later, in summer 1961, Baba went to Poona from Meherazad to stay in Guruprasad, and in response to the silent yearning in His lovers' hearts to see Him, Baba lovingly agreed of His own to allow His lovers to visit Him only once during the period of His seclusion from 15th through 31st May 1961, between 4:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. This happy news was conveyed through a special circular letter. Of course, there were some injunctions and instructions to be strictly observed during that one hour. That was an unexpected gift from the heavens to Baba lovers. They wished to have just a glimpse of Baba, but they were offered one full hour! They happily decided to take long overnight journeys by railways and buses.

Last year I had stayed at Guruprasad with Beloved Baba for all the six weeks of summer vacation, witnessing the incredible darshan days; but even then I could not wish to forgo this chance of "one hour," and that too in the first day. So I was at Guruprasad ten minutes prior to 4:30 P.M. on 15th May 1961. I found that a big group of Baba lovers from Hamirpur and U.P. had already arrived on 14th May. Their love for Baba is indeed unique.

Baba was sitting on a sofa in Guruprasad with that loving smile and radiant face, so dear to Baba lovers. Eruch was by His side to interpret His gestures. After the familiar inquiries about travel and health, Baba said, "You have come here to see Me; I am here to see who dares to 'see' Me." Baba here quoted one of His favourite couplets in Urdu wherein a Perfect Master is addressing his devotees. The couplet is:

"The Master says, 'My glory is from here to there, which has no end. Let Me see how far can My lovers perceive it [My glory].'"

Baba quoted this couplet also on other days and further explained, "Each one can perceive My glory according to his own capacity - little or more. My glory is boundless. I am the shoreless ocean of Love, unmindful of filth or nectar. Anybody can come to Me, but how much love one can receive depends on the receptacle he brings." And the receptacle that Baba hinted at was of the pure heart and emptied mind; because on some other day He remarked: "Only when the heart is clean and the mind completely empty can one be as hollow as the flute to give forth Divine music."

Except the resident mandali, only the volunteers were permitted to visit Guruprasad the next day. I wished to ask Ramakrishnan, the secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre if I could be one; but somehow I did not. On the next day at 4:30 P.M., I came and sat by the gate of Guruprasad. I dared not go inside. Pukar and Dr. Deshmukh were also there. All the visitors went inside the hall. We didn't. If I remember well, Dr. Deshmukh said to me, "It is good we are sitting here outside the gate. Baba wants us to learn a lesson - to feel His presence in His physical absence." Yes, I did learn a lesson, but it was of a different kind. All three of us had an opportunity to stay with Baba for months, but even then the possibility of one hour's sahavas served as temptation. Baba's physical presence holds such an irresistible appeal.

When we were talking like this, someone brought a message that we were wanted inside by Baba. Dr. Deshmukh was the first to pick up his bag and umbrella, and we followed him. As the three "musketeers" stood in the hall facing Baba's disarming smile, Baba enquired whether our squatting outside was in conformity with the circular issued by Adi Sr. I forgot what replies Dr. Deshmukh gave on our behalf, but the result was, we were allowed to visit Guntprasad every day in the afternoon. But somehow I felt a prick of consciousness somewhere in my heart.

A day or two later there was some reference to the recent circular. Baba looked at us and gestured, "It is better that three are pleased instead of one." Those in the hall did not understand definitely what Baba was referring to, but we did. However, I could not make out whether Baba was joking or reprimanding me. It was because of the self-created confusion, the result of not observing His instructions literally. I noticed that Baba could be seen pleased and displeased by His different lovers at one and the same time. I went near Him and said, "Permit me not to come from tomorrow." Baba gestured why, and continued, "If you commit a theft even once, you are a thief; if you commit it ten times you are just the same 'thief.' So continue to come." I wished to say something, but Baba turned His face aside and closed the subject.

This opened a new phase of contrite spirit in me. To be frank, since this incident, as far as I remember, I never tried to "play a trick" with Baba's instructions. Baba has His own way of bringing home the lesson. Dr. Ghani in one of his couplets has said, "This [Master's company] is an unparalleled school. The lesson you learn here once is never forgotten."

When the heart was cleansed with an honest confession within, a day later, Baba looked at me very lovingly and said, "Don't worry. Keep coming every day - not as a volunteer or under any other pretext but because I want you to come here." I felt greatly relieved, as the mischief of being a "thief" was pardoned. It was from this moment that I could really enjoy and participate in the programmes in Guruprasad. And here are a few more reminiscences based on notes scribbled on the spot.

In one of the groups, there were some highly educated people. To one of them, Beloved Baba advised, "Read *God Speaks*. It will test your intelligence and also open the heart. It will provide food for the mind and be a feeder to the

heart too." I gathered Baba meant that by reading *God Speaks*, the mind becomes "strong" enough to cease of itself by perceiving the falseness of the world, and the heart becomes immaculate to reflect the Reality of God. Baba also made it clear that no amount of mere reading or verbal understanding could be of help in experiencing the state of "God Alone Is Real."

During one of the darshan days, Beloved Baba allowed the Mayor of Poona to visit him in Guruprasad. He came with his two predecessors. Though they did not belong to the same political party, they were three-in-one in coming to Baba's darshan. The three sat on the carpet along with Baba lovers, and during the informal chat, Baba conveyed the following: "God alone exists as Existence Eternal and all else is illusion - a creation of Maya. And what is Maya? Maya is the principle of ignorance. Maya makes you feel what in fact does not exist.

"In reality, neither man nor woman, neither the so-called animate beings nor the inanimate things, do exist. It is Maya which causes the unreal to appear as real and existing.

"Mind, the issue of Maya, imagines infinite divisions, and so creates innumerable worlds of worries. As long as mind exists, ignorance persists. And what a joke, that mind tries to gain Bliss through furious thinking and worrying, which is an empty dreaming! For Bliss to come into being, the mind has to be quiet. You cannot invite Bliss. It is ever present, everywhere."

As I looked at Beloved Baba, He appeared to me as Bliss and Quietness personified.

For Baba lovers, the second fortnight of May 1961 was a festive yet solemn occasion of renewing their love for the One Beloved, Avatar Meher Baba.

In the circular about darshan issued by Adi K. Irani, Baba's secretary, mentioned that Baba would not wish His lovers from distant places to visit only once and for such a short time. But for Baba lovers the journey to see Him is neither tiresome nor strenuous. And money is not of much consequence. No wonder that people from distant parts of India came to Poona for Baba's darshan, including some new faces too. When one such group from India was in Guruprasad, Baba made a reference to the point of "long distance" mentioned in the circular. And addressing the gathering, He said, "Did you not read the circular properly? Haven't you noted about the better opportunity mentioned therein for you?"

Someone from the group replied, "Baba, we have implicit faith in you as God, but not so much in your words (promises)! So we could not even dream of missing such a chance, and here we are." At this Baba smiled and said, "I too have complete faith not only in myself as God but also in my words, though not as you understand them."

On another day, Niranjan Singh, the former principal of Khalsa College, Delhi, was one of the visitors at Guruprasad. Baba asked the principal to sit near His seat. Baba looked pleased with him, for his soft-spoken words of convincing love. In the course of the programme, Baba made a reference to the bold and frank talk given by Mrs. Niranjan Singh before the college students at Delhi, about Baba's Divinity and Godhood.

Then He turned to the Principal and teased him by saying, "Your wife loves me more than she does you." Niranjan Singh shook his head in approval and said, "Baba, that was during Your visit to Delhi. Now I am at Bombay. Will You pay a visit to Bombay?" Baba replied, "Yes, next year. Maybe in February. But you also know My way of making promises!"

One Baba lover, a retired District and Sessions Judge, had been on a pilgrimage to Badri Narayan, a famous shrine in the Himalayas. As he told about this visit to Baba, Baba said, "Did you see Me there?" The lover kept silent. And this silence turned into an opportunity for all of us to have a discourse from Baba.

Baba said, "The fun is, though I am with you and within you all, you travel far and wide to find Me. I am the Infinite One, infinitely near to everyone; but because of this infinite nearness, it becomes infinitely difficult for you to find Me. Till you see the world as the world, you cannot see Me. Once you catch a glimpse of My Divinity, you have an infinite longing to see Me as I am. Owing to this intensity you get painted unawares, spiritually (*Rang lag jata hai*)."

Baba here quoted the following lines of Kabir in Hindi: "*Rang lagat lagat lage, Mana bhagat bhagat bhage; Bahut dinoka manua soya, jagat jagat jage.*" The meaning of this *doha* [poem] of Kabir can be stated as follows: "One very, very slowly gets painted spiritually; Mind takes a very, very long time to vanish completely; and the man who has slept [the sleep of ignorance] for ages gets awakened very, very gradually."

Baba continued, "On the spiritual path, in the subtle world, at different stages, the aspirant gets unusual and splendid experiences of sweet music, perfumes, and

the sights of the lovely lights. In the mental world, the 'seeing' of God has its beginning and culmination. A rare one, who with enough patience, keeps his heart open, 'sees' Me as I should be seen; but even this 'seeing' is not the goal. You have to become Me.

"Time steeped in infinite eagerness and patience rolls on and at the opportune moment the aspirant begins to lose the awareness of himself as a separate 'self' Though awake, he becomes literally blank to all that can be seen in the six planes of consciousness and thus experiences infinite Vacuum or the complete 'Blackout of the Nothing.' Then in an instant, he becomes fully conscious of God as Everything.

"Consciousness of nothing in the Vacuum state. Consciousness of Everything in the God-state. This needs My Grace."

One of the lovers interjected, "So, Baba, we seek Your Grace." To this Baba replied, "No one has it [Grace] for his seeking or asking. You may be ready even to give up your very life for it, but with all this, you cannot claim Grace. How can you demand Grace? The very desire to possess Grace is a barrier to receiving it. It is an act of unbounded spontaneity."

Baba continued, "However, in a sense, you cannot love Me without My Grace, and as such, all the experiences that you have is nothing but a game of My Grace.

"But Grace as Grace is quite different. It is not received in parts. It is infinitely indivisible and so indescribable. It is the Whim of the fully conscious 'Infinite' to make the apparently 'finite' realize its Infinity. On the part of the 'finite', it can be likened to a 'drop' gulping the 'Ocean.'"

We felt it was good that the lover visited Badri Narayan, for his visit gave us a chance of hearing the words of wisdom from Narayan²⁶ Himself At the end, Baba gestured, "Enough of this subject now. Only love counts. Is it not mentioned in the circular that you are not to expect any discourses from Me? So let us have some songs now." Then the programme of music commenced.

The next day, as the devotees took their seats in the hall, Baba asked them, "What is your programme?" Someone replied on behalf of the fresh group that had arrived, "As You wish, Baba." Baba said, "It is not the question of My wish. I am asking you about your wish."

"If You permit us to visit Guruprasad for some more days, we can very well stay in Poona for that period." The cat came out of the bag.

"Have you read the circular?"

"Yes Baba."

"Accordingly you are not to seek advice from Me on any personal or spiritual problem; you are not to expect any discourse from Me; not to seek permission to repeat the visit to Guruprasad."

"We are not claiming permission. Can we not request you, Baba?"

"But then, what will you do over here?"

"We shall just be sitting in the hall, Baba."

"Alright. Stay on in Poona but without jeopardizing the jobs or the family responsibilities. And if there is nothing to be attended to in Guruprasad, we shall just sit or doze!"

In spite of this remark from Baba, every day's programme had its surprising splendour, and those who participated in those small gatherings won't forget the rich quality of that glorious atmosphere.

On one of these days, as the devotees started entering the hall, Baba began to inquire of some in His own familiar way and joke with some. To a veteran old and chief worker and an ardent lover from Andhra, Baba said, "I like old men and children." And as the lover lowered his head with closed eyes, Baba continued, "But you are neither an old man nor a child. With a clean shave, you look fresh and young too!" This was in recognition of the energy he put into furthering Baba's cause in Andhra despite his old age.

The visitors were not to expect any spiritual discourse or explanation from Baba, and they were not to tell Him about their personal problems. So the group heads used to tell Baba how they celebrated His birthday in their area. Baba's expression, as He heard these reports, showed that throughout these celebrations He had given them an opportunity to spread His Name, which in fact was for their spiritual benefit.

After hearing the report of the Birthday celebrations at Vijayawada, which included a grand procession of Baba's picture, Prabhat Pheri (morning walk through the streets singing Baba's name), feeding the poor, etc., Baba looked very pleased. The programmes were spread all over Vijayawada to give many of His lovers a chance to express their devotion. On most of the days, they had to keep awake until midnight. Looking at the "trio" and others from Vijayawada, Baba remarked, "Have you gone crazy in My love? Haven't you to attend to

your business or service?" The lovers felt exceedingly rewarded with this intimate remark from Baba.

During the fortnight, on some occasions, Madhusudan sang some songs on Beloved Baba's Godhood. He has composed a number of songs on Baba in Hindi and Marathi. In his melodious voice, he has also entertained Baba by singing selected ghazals. The other Baba lover from Poona to sing ghazals is Sholapure. One afternoon as he sang a ghazal beginning with the following lines: "*Haseel-e-zindagee ho tum, tumse hai zindagi meri ...* " The hall was filled with resonance. Baba was pleased to hear this and had a mood to give a gist of this ghazal to those who did not understand Urdu.

Summarising the meaning of the first two lines, Baba said, "The lover says: 'O Beloved, my moods, and whims depend on Your moods and whims. If You are pleased, I am pleased. If You are happy, I am happy.'"

Then, looking at the lovers gathered in Guruprasad, Baba said, "You take Me to be Your Beloved God. Now, if I ask you to vacate the hall immediately and return to your respective places, will you feel happy? Be honest in replying what you feel and not what you should feel."

The question set some minds thinking which could not arrive at a definite conclusion. Some were honest enough to answer, "No, Baba, to be frank, we will not feel happy to leave the hall."

Baba continued, "It is said, it is very difficult to love. Why? Love is a gift rarely received, and only the recipient of such love can obey the Beloved quite willingly and naturally." With reference to those who were not prepared to leave Guruprasad, Baba in a light vein remarked, "Alright. Remain sitting and your Beloved God, Baba, will be sitting here to please you!"

Baba proceeded to give the general idea of the next part of the ghazal. He gestured, "Here the lover in a fit of distress says, 'Although you, O Beloved, are so very unfaithful to my love, the fact remains as clear as the crystal that my breath, nay my very life, depends on You. There can be no other 'go' for me!'" Baba asked Sholapure to recite the last part of the ghazal and asked one of His learned lovers to tell the gathering its meaning in English. Finding him confused in his interpretation, Baba said, "It is really very difficult to bring out the depth of words in poetry from one language into another.

"In these lines," Baba continued, "the lover says, 'O Beloved, do not ask me anything as to how I pass my life. It is steeped in restlessness. I burn in Your love, and every moment sets ablaze the fire of separation.'"

At the end of this explanation Baba remarked, "Only the one in whose heart the 'flame of love' has been kindled as a gift of Grace can experience what that state of 'burning within' is."

On some days, Baba met His lovers in the living room adjacent to the hall. One day as Savak Kotwal entered the room Baba noticed that he had lost one of his teeth. So He said, "Savak, now you look old!" So keen was Baba's observation! I have noticed Him joking about a change in the cut of a moustache or a variation in the haircut at the very first sight. Later, as the turn of every lover to Baba was over, He said, "What is to be done next? No discourse, no personal talk." On that particular day, no bhajan-singer was among the visitors, so to pass time Baba said, "Today is the time for anyone who wants to sing." We started looking at one another. But soon someone had the courage to break the ice with his high-pitched voice,

As Pukar finished singing a song of Surdas - "O Lord, pray pay no heed to my weaknesses" - Baba remarked, "Pukar, you have a huge body but a very low voice!" Dr. Deshmukh recited a Sanskrit hymn of Shri Shankaracharya. I also sang - if that word could be used - an *abhang* [song] of Tukuram.

Now, one old Parsi Baba lover (Madan) wished to entertain Baba. In Baba's presence, he looked so absorbed in thoughts about Baba that he was not conscious enough of his environment. As he tried to read some lines from a poem on Baba, he could not read them properly. Baba had to suggest that he had forgotten to use his glasses. After this reading he wished to sing a song in Hindi composed by Madhusudan: "*Prabhu mai charanan chod na jaun*" (O Lord, I will not leave Thy holy feet).

As he continued to sing, he closed his eyes. His body began to shake sideways. Owing to emotional outburst, the twinges on his face and twitches about his limbs were clearly visible to the listeners. His voice had no rhythm or pitch. Some could not help smiling. At the end, we all clapped, and Baba remarked, "See, what courage he has shown! Of all these days during My present stay in Guruprasad, never before have I enjoyed such fun!"

Then there were some Telugu and Gujarati songs. We tried to make the best of this opportunity. Some had an ardent desire for years to sing some Baba songs in His presence and this wish was coincidentally fulfilled to their hearts' content. Baba knows best. At the end, Mani [Manu] Jessawala entertained Baba with one *abhang* of Tukaram, much liked by Baba. It is in Marathi, and it begins thus: "*Sadguru Vachoni sapadena soya ...* " Baba appeared a bit solemn as He heard this *abhang* and gestured, "Tukaram wants one to surrender completely to the Perfect Master. But I rarely find anyone who surrenders to Me as he ought to."

On some other day, a song in Hindi which stressed the need of surrender to the Master was sung. Baba remarked, "In this song, the lover expresses his earnest desire to surrender to the Beloved Master. And what do you understand by real surrender?" Later He clarified, "Unless you become as 'dust,' you cannot realize God. But first, you have to become stone, for you cannot become dust right away. What is needed is to retain human consciousness and become as 'stone,' and then wear yourself to 'dust' at the feet of the Perfect Master."

To tease His lovers from Andhra, Baba said, "Have you such a daring to surrender to Me?"

The reply was, "Yes, Baba, if You so wish."

Baba said, "But what about your wife? Will she not catch hold of your neck?" The lover replied, "No, not at all, Baba."

With a smile, Baba concluded, "Then perhaps she may catch hold of My neck and then that will be My surrender to you!"

The hall resounded with loud laughter, and Baba too appeared pleased. Baba's arti was performed and the day's programme was over.

In spite of the intense heat, thundering clouds, or showers of rain, people from various parts of India gathered at the gates of Guruprasad, Poona, by 4:00 P.M. in that second fortnight of May, waiting for a call to go inside for Baba's sahavas. Baba lovers continued to visit this place in small and big batches till 31st May 1961. For them, there in the hall, Heaven was close to Earth. The joy making and love-evoking "phenomenon" was on. Baba radiated brilliance, silently sitting on a sofa. Baba lovers felt that Baba's health was perfectly well. However, on the very first day, He remarked, "You have no idea how much I suffered during the last few months, and I am still suffering."

On one of the days, a lady approached Baba for darshan with her child. She requested Baba to bless her baby. Baba gestured, "As you wish. But do you remember that last year, on your request, I had permitted you to visit Guruprasad to have My darshan for the second time. You did not come." From the hundreds and hundreds who visited Guruprasad last year for Baba's darshan, it seemed incredible that Baba remembered such a small detail. For Him there is no past, only the Eternal NOW.

The lady felt ashamed and apologised. She said, "Baba, treat me like one of Your daughters. I had to attend the marriage of my brother, and being engrossed in that work, I could not come. Please pardon me." Baba, as usual, pardoned her, but also said, "I forgive you, but remember, you had asked for an opportunity which you did not avail of. Any appointment with Me has a special significance which cannot be repeated. Making up that loss is difficult. However, now be happy and forget about it."

The first visitor from the West for this sanctifying session to see Beloved Baba was Diana Snow, from Australia. The second one was Ann Conlon, a journalist from the USA. She was meeting Baba for the first time. She came with an intention to be in Baba's presence, just for an hour, and then fly back to New York. No wonder that Baba remarked, "She is a wonderful soul. She is blessed."

The day's programme commenced with the pieces of dancing skillfully performed by Miss Nene, a teenage daughter of an ardent Baba lover from Bombay. There were ease and grace in her movements. The peacock-dance and the Gopi-dance were performed. The Gopi-dance exhibited the daily routine of a Gopi, ever absorbed in the love of Lord Krishna. These dances were accompanied by soft music. The performance was praised by all.

In the course of "conversation," there was a reference to the songs of Mirabai. Baba asked Eruch to tell some incidents from the life of Mira to the audience. Mirabai (a saint from Rajasthan in the fifteenth century) had great devotion for Lord Krishna from her childhood. Though she was married to a Rana (ruler), worldly things held no charm for her. Fair of form and fairer of heart, Mira passed her days in singing and dancing before the idol of Lord Krishna. Krishna was her very life. She used to sing with the sadhus and joined in bhajans with the common people. All this enraged the royal family, and she was driven out of the palace.

This pleased her all the more. Now she freely devoted all her time in "sadhana of singing the Divine Name." Her ecstatic communication with Lord Krishna endlessly continued. Like the Gopis of Brindaban, she loved Lord Krishna (Giridhar Gopal)²⁷ as the Divine Mate. (This form of devotion is known as Madhura Bhakti). Finding her adamant in her devotion, the Rana sent her a glass of poison with an order to drink it. Without the least hesitation, she gulped the liquid happily. It is said that the effect of the poison was seen on the idol of Krishna, and it turned blue. Whatever be it, she continued to be a singing apostle of Lord Krishna to her last breath.

After this Baba remarked, "Mira was not born during the time of Lord Krishna as the Avatar in human form. Even then her love surpassed that of the Gopis. In this sense, her love is unique, unparalleled. The same can be said about Saint Francis of Assisi's love for Christ. He had not seen Jesus (the God-Man) physically, but his love for Christ excelled that of Peter - the Rock." After some more songs in praise of Baba's Divinity, the newcomers were introduced individually to Beloved Baba by the group heads.

There were a few more visitors from the West other than Diana Snow and Ann Conlon, Lt Col Francis and Olla Goldney from the Faroe Islands timed their visit on the way home from Japan. Fred Winterfeldt, one of Baba's very dear ones from New York, had also managed to visit India to see Baba. He did not come with Ella, his wife, so Baba gestured, "Fred, you are here with me, but I am 'there' with Ella." The Luck Brothers, Irwin, and Edward, from Florida (USA.) came on the last day. It was indeed commendable for these two quite young men to cross the oceans just to be in Baba's company for an hour. Aren't these the living miracles of Baba's Love? Beloved Baba was touched with their love for Him and gestured, "Your love will reward you someday."

On the 29th of May, Dr. Harry Kenmore gave a pleasant surprise. Without any previous intimation, Dr. Kenmore came to Guruprasad. Eruch brought him near Baba, who embraced Dr. Kenmore and made him sit near His seat. Baba said, "Harry, you could have at least phoned your arrival from the hotel in Poona. Perhaps you wished to give a pleasant surprise. How long do you wish to wait here?" Dr. Kenmore promptly replied, "Till 5:30 P.M. only." This pleased Baba very much, and on His own, He permitted Dr. Kenmore to visit Guruprasad till 31st May, every afternoon.

Baba asked again, "Harry, what made you come here?" Dr. Kenmore answered, "God tempted me with the bait of one hour's sahavas." Baba said, "Had you cabled Me for permission, you anticipated 'no' from Me. So to avoid that reply, you decided to come directly to Poona! Anyway, I am pleased to have you here. And do you know, Harry, how proud is your Dad because of your coming here, just for one hour's sahavas? Great lad!"

Baba as a boy was fond of games. He was also a good singer, actor, and even a playwright. As a student, He had written a short drama in Urdu. The same tastes continued in the latter period of His life as the God-Man. During the seclusion periods or on festive days, occasionally there would be a skit, dialogue, mimicry, or some such entertainment. The present seclusion did not prove an exception.

These were two one-act-plays played before Baba during this fortnight. The first one was performed by Beloved Baba's two nephews, Sohrab and Rustom. The theme expressed the agonies of a person about getting a suitable match for his daughter. It ended as a comedy. Baba remarked, "The world is a drama. You weep, you laugh, to weep and laugh again. It is all a *tamasha*. When the inner eye is opened, you will see this more clearly."

Casually Baba had remarked, "Mind is always caught by some sort of attachment. You free yourself from one and get tethered to another. The grip of Maya gets tightened in your attempt to loosen it. It can be unfastened in a flash of a second, or it may not be loosened at all in billions of years. The trickery of Maya continues till you discern the Divine beneath this Mayavic mischief."

The second one-act play was a part of a plan to invite Baba, the Eternal Presence, to Nauranga to inaugurate the installation of His own life-size statue in marble. Pukar, a few others from Hamirpur, and I participated in the play. In a nutshell, the topic presented was as follows:

In the district of Hamirpur, all of a sudden people suffer from a strange fever. It is an epidemic. Various treatments are given but to no avail. One of the doctors, a leading practitioner, has a brain-wave. He diagnoses it as "Baba-fever." So he tells people to write letters to Baba imploring Him to visit this area. "That seems to be the only remedy," he says. People start writing letters to Baba. By the time these communications go on, one patient becomes very seriously ill. He is about to breathe his last; just then a postman comes with a telegram which reads, "Baba definitely visiting the district of Hamirpur. Love" These words act like magic on

the patient, and at that very moment he becomes perfectly well, stands erect, and hails "Jai Baba."

There was loud applause in the hall from the audience when the patient walked straight to Baba, who was sitting on a sofa, for confirming the contents of the telegram. A day before this there was the reading of a fairly long poem suggesting the necessity and importance of Beloved Baba's visiting Nauranga and other places in Hamirpur district.

In short, during the last few days, there was a tug-of-war between the lovers and the Beloved, in which the Beloved won. Perhaps Beloved Baba wished to bring home the lesson of utter resignation to His Divine Will. Devotion consists in being voluntarily helpless, powerless. The more the power, the greater the defeat; for power in any form is the stronghold of "me" and "mine." The life of a *mast* clarifies this point. *Mast* presents an example of total resignation to the Will of the Beloved, and so it is the Beloved who seeks union with the lover (*mast*).

Beloved Baba has explained this state as follows:

"*Masts*, because of the terrible fire of love, present a challenge to the Beloved, and this challenge - that the Beloved should manifest Himself - is always accompanied by heroic efforts to achieve total self-elimination or egolessness, efforts that may take many forms.

"It is not given to everybody to be a lover of God. Such lovers are so consumed in the fire of love that they are not conscious of their spiritual progress, and they do not have any thought about their separation from the Beloved or any thoughts of union with him. They are resigned to the state in which they find themselves, and when their resignation reaches its climax, it is the Beloved who seeks Union with them."

The 31st of May turned out to be a big Darshan Day. Baba permitted His lovers to repeat their visit to Guruprasad on this last day. And with this programme of darshan, the fortnight was over. Every one of us was eagerly and anxiously waiting for this period, this moment of sahavas, and how quickly it passed away! But in its occurrence, it had awakened many a heart. How can those personal feelings and profound experiences be caught in the net of words? So my salutations to Beloved Baba and Jai Baba to those who participated in this "Sahavas in Seclusion."

FAMILY ENCAMPS IN A GARAGE BY S.L. LOKHANDE

I went to Poona with my family for twelve days, from the end of May to the first week of June. Normally, I would book my return ticket on arrival at Poona, but this time I did not because I was running a fever. The next day we went to Guruprasad and bowed to Baba. Baba suddenly asked me, "Do you fight with your wife?" The question astonished me, as I had never fought with my wife. Suddenly, Eruch told Baba, "They must be fighting daily!" I felt Eruch was joking. Baba, by passing such remarks, would amuse the mandali.

Since Baba would go to the side room of Guruprasad at about 9:00 A.M., I thought we should cook our food and then come to Guruprasad. We did so but got there a little late. To top it, we could not get a bus for Guruprasad. We could not afford an auto or a taxi. When we reached there at about ten o'clock, Baba was about to leave the Mandali Hall. It seems that before our arrival, Baba had enquired why we had not come. He even remarked that although I run the Nagpur Centre, and I do Baba work, yet I cannot come on time to Guruprasad. Baba jokingly remarked, "He may have gone to meet Sadhu Vaswani." It seems that Baba waited for us on the verandah. When we did arrive, my family went for Baba's darshan, but I did not go, as Baba would rebuke me for coming late.

The result of this was that I decided to live near Guruprasad. On inquiry at several bungalows for accommodation, I got negative replies. Desperate as I was, I spied a motor garage in Mobos Hotel next to Guruprasad. On inquiry, the manager refused to give the garage on rent for our stay. It had a tin roof and a lot of refuse in it. I again pleaded with the manager that I was a poor man and could stay in the garage if he gave the permission. Finally, he sent a servant with me to show the garage. I told the manager that I liked it, but he said that it was not a fit place to stay in. I pleaded that we spend most of our time in Guruprasad and so would not mind the little inconvenience. He finally gave me permission to stay in it and to pay him any rent that I liked.

We went home to pack our belongings. Baba sent Bhavsar with a message for me. "When you are in Nagpur, you do Baba work, but when you come to Poona, like a donkey, you go from one rubbish dump to another. Are you going to other saints?" I told him that I knew no other saint than Meher Baba. We shifted our luggage to the garage and the next day went to Guruprasad.

The mandali on seeing me began to laugh because of what Baba had said on the previous day. They asked me why I had come so early to Guruprasad. I told them that I did not come yesterday because I was shifting my luggage to Mobos. I asked whether Baba was angry with me for not coming yesterday. They replied in the negative. Soon Baba arrived. Baba looked at us and called us for His darshan. He asked, "Did you get any message from Me yesterday?" I told Baba that we came to Poona for Baba only and had no other desire. Baba then asked me what message Bhavsar conveyed to us. I told Baba what Bhavsar had said.

Baba called for Bhavsar and said, "I asked you three times whether you had understood My message to be conveyed to Lokhande. You replied in the affirmative. Yet you conveyed a wrong message." Baba continued to tell Bhavsar, "I told you to say that a donkey, not being satisfied with one dump of rubbish, goes to another. I never asked you to say anything else." Referring to us, Baba continued, "These people come with so much love, and by saying such things you hurt their feelings very much." Baba then asked Bhavsar to hold both his ears and bend down near Baba as a punishment for conveying His message wrongly.

The wife of the manager of Mobos Hotel heard about our staying in the motor garage, bearing such hardships. She came to meet my wife one day and asked her why she was bearing such hardships by staying in a motor garage. When my wife told her that we come for Baba and do not mind bearing hardships, she asked, "What does Baba give you?" My wife replied, "Nothing but joy. We forget the world, and this joy cannot be compared with the joys of this world." The wife of the manager was quite surprised to hear this and wanted to take Baba's darshan. My wife received permission from Baba, and then brought her one day to Baba. She came to Baba, and her joy knew no bounds. She now realised why we come every year bearing such hardships. I felt that our stay in the motor garage was meant only to bring the manager's wife to Baba.

When the sahavas was over, Baba asked us when we were leaving for home. When I told Baba that we would leave after two days, He enquired why we were going to stay two more days. I explained that we had got our reservation after two days because I was not well on arrival and had a fever. Baba asked me, "When you had a fever, why did you not ask one of the mandali to go and buy your ticket?" I replied, "The mandali has so much work to do, how could I ask them to go and buy my ticket!"

Baba said, "Are you not one of the mandali? In future, ask them for help." I was very surprised to hear that I was one of the mandali. Baba then told me, "Tomorrow is the last day of the darshan. Since you are staying for two more days, neither you nor your wife should come to Guruprasad." We went to the motor garage and did not go out at all. A day before departure, Baba very lovingly sent word, "Tomorrow before departure, come to Guruprasad for darshan and sing the arti." We were overjoyed.

SINGING FOR BABA BY M. APPALA NAIDU, ANAKAPALLI

On 6th April 1961, I had Meher Baba's darshan for the first time at Guruprasad. During the darshan programme, Baba said that He had wiped off all the sanskaras of His lovers who had His darshan that day. My happiness knew no bounds, and I began to shed tears of joy. I was in the queue and wrote a song in praise of Baba. I showed it to Brother Kutumba Shastri, who was making announcements into the microphone in Telugu. I requested him to take permission from Baba for me to sing it on the mike. When he said that it was not possible for me to sing it, I was very depressed. I do not know whether Baba was informed about my request, but suddenly Baba asked the shehnai player to stop playing and asked me to sing my song. I was overjoyed at this favour to serve Baba.

The same day, Burra Katha was being performed by three persons. At the end of it, Baba called the three and gave each of them His handkerchief as a gift. The Baba lover who accompanied this programme on the harmonium also went up to Baba, but Baba did not give him any gift. During the programme, I had played on the flute. Someone asked me to go up to Baba, but I did not, as Baba had not called me.

From Poona, I went to Masulipatnam with Brother Lokanatham Rao. This was my first visit to his house. Just then a post parcel arrived from Baba. He told me that I was very lucky that a parcel should come from Baba when I was there. The parcel was opened, and it contained a handkerchief from Baba. Rao told me that I was very fortunate that the parcel should arrive when I was present. He asked me to pick it up and press it to my forehead. I felt this was Baba's prasad to me for my small service offered to Him during the Burra Katha.

DIANA SNOW MEETS BABA

It was April 1961, and Diana Snow had been in England for a couple of months and was ready to sail home to Australia. With Baba's permission, she had regularly been corresponding with Francis Brabazon, who had been with Baba in India since 1959. Just prior to embarking for Australia, she had sent a letter to Francis, telling him that she had chosen a ship which would sail via Suez down to Bombay and on to Colombo, and asking whether, if possible, she could get off in Bombay, visit Baba in Poona at Guruprasad for a couple of days, and then fly from Bombay and join her ship in Colombo. She mentioned to Francis that she was aware that Baba was in strict seclusion and was not seeing anyone unless He called them, so she had no expectations of seeing Him. In fact, at the time Baba was not attending to any correspondence from His lovers, and the mandali had instructions not to bring any to His attention, so Diana had little or no hope of seeing Baba. She told Francis that Aden, Yemen, was her first port of call where she could receive a reply.

On 2nd May Francis wrote this reply from Guruprasad:

Greetings at Aden

With news that will gladden;

Baba is pleased that you will see His place

Although (as said) you will not see His Face.

Enuf this time to see the sights

And in His city spend two nights

(But in your sleep

You must not weep

nor loudly snore

nor laugh "haw haw."

for this might constitute an intrusion

upon His very strict seclusion;

but a smile may enwreathe

your face as you breathe -

for He will be very near to you)

"Which all means, dear Diana, that 'the cat's out of the bag' regarding your visit to Poona. No, beloved Baba was not told - He just "found out" in His usual casual manner. And He immediately said that I should meet you at the railway station and take you around and show you the places. Until 14th, Diana—Francis."

Some years later, one of the mandali told Diana how Baba "found out." It seems that Francis, along with the other men mandali, were with Baba in the mandali room at Guruprasad. Francis had contrived to place Diana's letter in his breast pocket along with his handkerchief. At the appropriate moment Francis pulled out his handkerchief, and of course, the letter fell out on the floor in front of Baba. Baba: "What's that?" Francis: "Oh, just a letter from Diana." Baba: "Read it out."

Diana's ship docked at Bombay at 9:00 A.M. on 14th May 1961. In the meantime, she had received a cable aboard a ship that Nariman and Arnavaz Dadachanji would meet her at the Bombay dock. Due to a mix up on arrival, Diana didn't disembark until noon. As soon as Nariman, Arnavaz, and other members of the Dadachanji family saw her, they virtually grabbed her and whisked her off before she knew what was happening, saying, "Quickly, we must be at Guruprasad at four P.M.! Baba has given permission to see you for five minutes!"

Stunned and with a wasted three hours behind her, Diana and her companions roared off with the seemingly impossible feat of travelling the hundred-odd miles to Poona in less than four hours. Nariman drove furiously with his foot to the floor and his hand on the horn all the way, even through a terrific rainstorm which they encountered halfway, and arrived at Napier Hotel Poona at five minutes to four. Francis was there waiting in extreme agitation to be on time for Baba; they all hustled off again and arrived at Guruprasad right at 4:00 P.M.

One, of course, can imagine the scene that followed: Baba, not in the least concerned, as though nothing had happened, embraced Diana, and her five minutes with Baba became three hours! Diana took her leave of Baba at 7:00 P.M. She was shown the sights the next day by Francis and that evening stayed at

Bombay in Nariman and Arnavaz's house, sleeping in the bed that Baba would sleep in when visiting there. The following morning she flew to Colombo and joined her ship for Australia.

Diana Snow had first heard of Baba, and accepted Him as the God-Man, through Francis Brabazon in 1952. She, along with a few others, started helping Francis build a house in Beacon Hill on the outskirts of Sydney. Francis hoped that Baba would one day come to Australia and would have this house to stay in.

Diana met Baba in August 1956 and again in June of 1958 when He returned to Australia. This time He went to Queensland, a northern state, to the place Francis, Diana, and a dozen others had built for Him. Baba named this mountaintop retreat Avatar's Abode. After seeing Baba in 1961, she returned to India for the East-West Gathering in 1962. She lived a few minutes down the mountainside from Avatar's Abode from 1976 till August 18, 2001, when she returned to Baba.

"BLACK MARKET STUFF"

At Guruprasad, every day in the afternoon selected Baba lovers in the rotation were asked to bring a *shrbat* concentrate, which Dr. Goher would dilute with water and ice. Baba would then serve it to the Baba lovers. Many times several rounds of this *sharbat* was given by Baba, much to the joy of His lovers. One day it was the turn of Bhikhoo Panarkar, the Baba photographer, to bring the concentrate. He brought two bottles of it in the pockets of his white jodhpuri coat and took them out simultaneously and placed them before Baba. The way he did, it seemed as if he was putting liquor bottles on the table. Baba jokingly remarked, "Is this good stuff or black market spurious stuff?" Shinde, standing nearby, added, "Oh, he has black market stuff!" Baba, pretending He did not know, asked Bhikhoo, "Oh, you drink, is it?" Bhikhoo replied, "Baba, in our community drinks are a part of every occasion - births, deaths, marriages, etc."

Baba then asked everyone sitting there whether they drink alcohol or not. All replied that though Maharashtra was a dry state at that time, people had stocked liquor and drank on the quiet. Baba said, "I don't like liquor, and this being a dry state, my lovers breaking government rules is not correct. If you are in the habit of drinking, go to a wet area and drink."

A SURPRISE VISIT TO MADHUSUDAN

In their life together, Madhusudan and Subhadra had a great housing problem because he was a high-caste Brahmin, while she was not. As soon as the landlords would find this out, they were asked to vacate their house. This affected Madhusudan's mental state very much. Dr. C.D. Deshmukh once informed Baba about their sad plight. Baba called them and very lovingly asked them about their residence. They broke down telling Baba about their miserable plight regarding their housing problem. Baba very lovingly heard them and then asked Bhikhoo and Shinde to find accommodation for them. Bhikhoo came back and told Baba that he had found a house, but the landlord demanded one thousand rupees from them. Baba knew Madhusudan's difficulties and He felt sure that they could not afford to pay this amount to the landlord.

Baba looked around and in His infinite mercy and love for His lovers, He picked up His sadra and went around asking His lovers to contribute for Madhusudan. All Baba lovers were very much touched that Baba would go around asking for donations from His lovers, and they emptied out their pockets. A list was then made of the contributions of each lover and totalled up. The amount collected by Baba was Rs. 930. Baba gave it to Madhusudan, who had tears in his eyes, thinking of the love Baba has for His lovers and what He would do for them. Baba told him to return the money within a year.

After a year, when Madhusudan went to return the money to Baba, he was full of gratitude to Baba and shed tears. Baba asked Madhusudan to keep the money, for He knew how difficult it was for Madhusudan to make ends meet. Madhusudan fell at Baba's feet with his heart so full of love for Baba and tears streamed down his cheeks. He realised that Baba did not perform miracles to help His lovers but acted like an ordinary person to help His lovers.

Madhusudan could never forget in his life to what extent Baba, the Lord of the Universe, would condescend to help His lovers. Madhusudan's landlord did not know how he had procured the money, but it seems the landlord had to suffer a lot in his later life.

In Poona, Baba used to go to the house of His lovers in the mornings for visits. Baba lovers were overjoyed to see their Beloved in their houses. Once,

He asked Madhusudan whether He could visit his house. Madhusudan very politely told Baba that his house consisted of only two rooms and so it was not a fit place for Baba to visit. He said that Baba was the King of kings and only a palace would be suitable for Him to visit. Baba had visited Madhusudan's house on casual visits in the past, which he did not mind, but the idea of Baba coming on a formal visit with the mandali and other lovers did not appeal to him. Besides, the inconvenience that would be caused to Baba and the mandali during such a visit deterred him from inviting Baba.

One day, Baba called his trio - Bhikhoo, Kamle, and Shinde - and told them that He would like to visit Madhusudan's house on the coming Sunday and they should make the necessary arrangements without informing Madhusudan. Baba told them that Madhusudan's wife, Subhadra, should be informed about His visit and that they should help her to decorate the house while Madhusudan was working, and she should make five kilos of *pakor*as for Baba's visit.

All decorations were done on Saturday when Madhusudan was working. When Madhusudan returned from work on Saturday, he saw chairs, carpets, fans, etc., in his house. He thought that a cultural programme was to be performed in his house. There were five tenants in the building that Madhusudan stayed in, and when a cultural programme was to be performed, it would be done in Madhusudan's house. So he was not surprised at the decoration, but Subhadra told Madhusudan that Baba was to visit their house the next day - Sunday.

Baba arrived on Sunday, and with Him, there were many cars carrying the mandali and other Baba lovers. The whole house was packed to capacity, and many Baba lovers were standing in the narrow lane leading to the house. As usual, Baba's arti was performed and prasad of *pakod*as distributed. On the same day, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was to visit Poona for a congress session. Lots of people were waiting on the road to see Nehru. When they saw so many people and cars outside the lane, they felt Nehru had come, and so they all came inside the lane. They came and took Baba's darshan and His prasad. When Baba was leaving, He asked whether any prasad was left over. Subhadra brought the remaining *pakod*as, which were taken by the mandali for the women mandali in Guruprasad.

THUNDER ANSWERS HIS PRAYERS BY SHALIGRAM SHARMA, CHIEF EDITOR OF MEHER PUKAR

I was born on 14th January 1928. From my very infancy, I was not content with the surroundings and used to look at the sky and horizon for something, someone unseen, feeling loneliness around me. This feeling was further enhanced when my mother breathed her last when I was hardly six years old. She was the only one who loved me. Lack of love and affection in the family, a liking for solitude, and longing for an unknown reality enhanced my reserved nature. One day Shri L.R. Bajpai, a social leader, and spiritualist requested my father that I am allowed to go with him for a greater cause, as he had seen the glimpse of Swami Ramtirth in my eyes.

After a year of study, the feeling of renunciation nourished from my childhood grew stronger. I found love nowhere and this longing for love created a deep indifference to the ephemeral world. I decided to go to Badrinath in search of God. At Gwalior, a blind saint came in my train carriage and sat in front of me. He convinced me of the futility of going to religious places and assured me that since God is so overwhelmingly present in my heart, He would one day meet me in my family life itself. He persuaded me to return home. I feel the saint was none other than Baba who gave me guidance in my life. I resumed my studies and did my law graduation under extreme hardships.

I got married to a very pious girl, Kaushalya Devi. As a law graduate, I joined the service of Assistant Public Prosecutor at Allahabad. I met many saints and heard their discourses, but I found none of them worthy of acceptance as my master. I resolved to stop taking cereals and live on a fruit diet until I attained God-Realisation. In July 1960 I was transferred to Hamirpur. There I was told that the wife of the D.G.C. was devoted to Meher Baba. The moment this name Meher Baba struck my ear, a beautiful smiling divine person wearing a white sadra and pink coat, sitting on a sofa, appeared in my vision.

A few days later I was introduced to the manager of a press where *Meher Pukar* magazine about Meher Baba was published. I asked, "Who is Meher Baba?" He said, "Meher Baba is the incarnation of God of this age." I then met Shri Pukar and others who told me about Meher Baba. I read Baba's book *God Speaks*, and this convinced me that Meher Baba is none other than God incarnated as a

human being. Baba was in seclusion, and His darshan and any correspondence with Him were prohibited. I started attending Meher Baba functions.

In April 1961, I got a telegram from Adi K. Irani that Baba wished that I should resume taking cereals, as Baba would soon be giving darshan. A group of eighteen lovers reached Poona on 14th May 1961. We reached Guruprasad at 4:00 P.M. We were called in, and the most gracious moments of all times came to my life. In that right side room of Guruprasad hall, the unlimited Divinity was enfolded in Meher Baba, sitting on a chair in a white sadra. The moment my eyes saw the effulgence of His divine person, I felt as if my thinking faculty or mind had become defunct, but I felt that from His whole being, piety, peace, and love were flowing. Instead of seeing Him through these eyes and contemplating Him through the mind, I was feeling His presence mostly without looking at Him. When the conversation with the Beloved through His gestures pronounced by Eruch started, I was replying from the core of my heart.

On entering the room, I went up to His feet like a magnet and sat close to them. Baba raised His hand and, pointing His finger towards me, enquired about me and my whereabouts. Baba asked me why I had given up eating cereals. Baba Himself gave the reply while introducing me to Dr. Kenmore - saying that I had given up eating cereals for Him, and when He sent a telegram through Adi, I started taking cereals. From the side room, Baba went inside and came into the hall wearing His pink coat and sat on the sofa in an identical pose to the one which I had seen in my vision on hearing His name for the first time in Hamirpur.

During summer it was most unusual for it to be raining since the afternoon, and this indicated that something unique was to be done by Baba. Baba asked Pukar to introduce me to Him. When he finished, Baba asked a direct question: "What do you want?" I replied, "I want to be absolutely true to my surrenderance to Baba." This had reference to Kabir's poem, as explained by Baba: "Nothing that I have belongs to me; all that I have belongs to You; what will I lose if I surrender to You that which belongs to You?" Hearing my reply, Baba said, "Till today no one has surrendered completely to Me, and now such a time has come when I should surrender Myself to the world."

This remark made the atmosphere tense. For a moment I thought that just as I had met disappointment all through my life, I may go disappointed from Baba also. Instantaneously, Baba resumed the topic, explaining to me that the main

obstacle to surrenderance is the mind. As a simile, Baba said, "Howsoever one may strike a log of wood, it will not produce a sound. But if it is hollowed out and made into a drum (tabla), it will produce a sweet sound. In the same way, you have to become empty from within. A stone slab has no desire. From head to foot, likewise, you have to become like a stone. Dust has no thought of honor or disgrace; likewise, you have to become like dust."

Baba then asked me, "Why do you want it? If you get it, you will become useless to the world." He then asked one of the mandali to quote Hafiz regarding this. Baba explained the couplet, "Ever since I established my longing for Him, I became useless for the world." I replied, "Baba, I have seen Your world. Now make me useless for it." Changing the topic, Baba suddenly enquired from Pukar the whereabouts of my wife and children. Pukar replied that she with her children were at her parents' home. Baba asked me whether my wife had anything against Baba. I said no and added that she could not come to Guruprasad, though I had sent her a letter to join us.

Baba then asked me, "What do you want for them?" I replied, "I have left it to You, Baba." My father, who had come with me, was a witness to all this talk. Though my wife was absent, Baba kept my father in testimony to what He was going to do for me in that meeting, and to take the responsibility of my family. He remembered, referred, and disposed of the matter of those with whom I was concerned, before finally taking the main subject of the surrenderance.

Baba then asked me, what else did I want after getting surrenderance? He gave the reply Himself: "Nothing else remains in the world after surrenderance." I added, "Baba, I don't know, but I want nothing after that." Baba then asked Pukar, "How is Sharma's throat?" Saying this, He glanced at my throat. Pukar, probably not understanding what Baba meant, said, "Baba, he has got a sweet voice." Pukar then asked me to sing a song composed by me and one which he liked.

This suggestion upset me, as I was in no mood to sing while the most important issue of my life was being dealt with Avatar Meher Baba. Baba too, was equally indifferent to hearing a song and He gestured His disapproval for the song. Baba then asked me, "Now tell me whatever you have in your heart." I do not remember Baba's exact words, but they signified that He wanted me to ask for the long-cherished boon of my heart and life. This shocked me. From the

very core of my heart, the words came out: "Baba if you must give me, give me complete self-surrenderance, and give me the capacity for self surrender."

Looking very radiant in His pristine glory, He raised His right hand with His two fingers pointed up. Just then, a loud thunderclap and profuse lightning filled the hall. Hearing the thunder, Baba said, "Khuda [God] heard your prayer, and everything is granted, and the thunder and lightning are its proof." This was the fulfilment of my long longing. My joy knew no bounds. On my very first appearance before the Divine Beloved, the unique grace of surrenderance was bestowed on me. I could never imagine what was going to happen to me that day.

To thank Baba for His gracious gift, I had nothing to offer Him, not even a flower garland. Yet, my entire being, so to say, had itself become a garland for Him. From the core of my heart, I was full of gratitude to Baba for giving everything that I aspired for. Rather, it was He who had inspired me to surrender myself to Him, and also it was His infinite compassion to accept my limited individuality into His Unlimited Divinity. These were the most precious and happiest moments of my life. Baba too, was very happy to accept my surrenderance to Him, and in His infinite grace, He accepted me with all my shortcomings.

YOU ARE MY OWN FOR ALL TIMES, BY SWAMI SATYA PRAKASH

In 1961, I was at Delhi on my way to Rishikesh. Suddenly, I received a letter from Kutumba Shastri to proceed to Poona as Baba was to give darshan from the 15th to the 30th of May 1961. I had to cancel my ticket to Rishikesh and bought a new one for Poona via Bombay. The booking clerk would not take money from me in spite of my insisting on giving it. I reached Bombay, but it was an ordeal to get into the Madras mail for Poona, as the train was packed with Congress workers going to Poona for the A.I.C.C. meeting to be presided over by Sanjeeva Reddy. The next morning, Brother Ramakrishnan, secretary of the Poona Baba Centre, guided me to Guruprasad. This was my first visit to Guruprasad.

Baba lovers were cheering "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" at the gates of Guruprasad. Two queues were formed, one for the men and the other for the women. Beloved Baba was sitting there smiling and embracing and kissing His lovers. While Baba was thus giving darshan, He was looking at the queue and pointing to one lover in recognition or smiling at another, or welcoming another to Guruprasad. He was in a very happy mood. While I stood in the

queue, I watched this *Leela* [divine play] and was so fascinated with the love-filled atmosphere that I did not realise how long I stood in the queue. I had no sign of fatigue despite of my age.

Ultimately it was my turn to meet Baba and I stood in front of Him. Seeing Baba, I lost consciousness of my body. Unconsciously, I put my *kamandal*²⁸ on the floor, and then all I know is that I was in Baba's tight embrace. Only when Eruch lifted me up did I realise where I was. Those blissful moments in His embrace can never be described. When Eruch lifted me up, I looked around, dazed. Just then, Baba asked for a chair to be placed near His chair, and I was asked to sit down on it. I could now think rationally and knew that it was Baba's kiss and embrace that gave me such ecstasy that I had lost body-consciousness.

The function finished at 12:00 noon. Baba got up from His chair amidst loud cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai." All eyes were glued to Baba as He turned to the right and walked slowly to His room. It was heart-breaking to see Baba leave the hall, and tears flowed profusely from my eyes. Till now I did not look at who was in the hall, as my eyes were glued to Baba. After Baba left the hall, I met my old friends.

In the afternoon I sat with friends, but Baba called me and asked me to sit on a chair near Him. On the microphone, it was later announced that seven persons would be given a special interview with Baba. Brother Adi K. Irani told me that I was one of the seven and that I could ask Baba for anything. I told him that I had nothing to ask Baba. Just then I was called by Beloved Baba. I bowed down at His lotus feet. Baba blessed me with His embrace and kissed me. Baba told me that I could now ask Him anything. I had nothing to ask from Baba. Baba then said to me that now I was free to go anywhere I wanted. Baba said, "Wherever you are, you are My own for all times." I replied, with love and honesty, "Having surrendered to You, I have no place of mine to go to. I am always at Your bidding."

1962

STRICT SECLUSION

On 21st March 1962, Adi K. Irani issued Life Circular No. 52, which reads as follows:

All lovers of Avatar Meher Baba in the East and West are eagerly awaiting the word from Baba regarding the possibility of His giving them darshan sometime this summer during His stay in Poona. In response to this, Beloved Baba has directed me to send out this circular to all His lovers conveying the following:

1. Baba will be in Poona at Guruprasad Bungalow, 24 Bund Garden Road, from the 31st of March till the 30th of June 1962.
2. Baba will NOT give His darshan in May 1962 or anytime during His stay of three months in Guruprasad, Poona. During this period, except for those whom He will call expressly for some work, no one should visit Him or express a desire to do so.
3. Baba says that His seclusion will continue to remain as strict as now and He wants His lovers to continue to help Him remain undisturbed whether He is in Seclusion in Poona or in Ahmednagar or elsewhere.
4. Baba will return to Meherazad, Ahmednagar, on the 1st of July 1962.
5. Baba with the men mandali will make a special visit to Guruprasad, Poona, on the 30th of October 1962 expressly to give darshan to His Western and Eastern lovers for seven days from the 1st of November 1962.
6. Baba wants all concerned to bear in mind that His permission to visit Him at that time in November will be only for His lovers, who are close to Him in His love, and is not meant for the general public.

7. Baba has lovingly agreed to allow all His lovers from the East and the West to visit Him in His seclusion during this period of seven days from the 1st of November to the 7th of November 1962, between 4:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.

Lovers from overseas ONLY will be allowed to visit Baba at Guruprasad Bungalow, Poona, each morning from 9.30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. in addition to the afternoon sessions. Easterners must NOT visit Baba in the mornings. '

Baba wants all to strictly abide by His following wishes:

- (a) Baba will not see any lovers individually.
- (b) Baba says that only those who can afford conveniently to make the trip may do so, being mindful not to risk their health and jobs.
- (c) Baba says that those unable to make the trip due to unfavourable circumstances should not feel upset but remain resigned in His love.
- (d) Baba does NOT wish any of His lovers to write to anyone at Meherazad or to Adi K. Irani any problems or queries regarding this visit. Any lover of Baba who wants to come to Poona during the period and can afford to make the trip is free to do so. None should seek or expect to receive any special permission or instructions from this end. Each one visiting must understand that he or she comes on his or her own responsibility in every respect.
- (e) Baba wants His lovers to fully help keep His Seclusion undisturbed by:
 - i. Not seeking nor expecting to have an interview with Him.
 - ii. Not seeking His advice on personal problems of oneself or others.
 - iii. Not putting questions to Him, spiritual or otherwise, not expecting any spiritual discourses.
- (f) Baba wants all those coming to Poona to make their own arrangements as regards conveyance, stay, food and other personal comforts. These arrangements must be seen to by the persons concerned without seeking the least aid from resident mandali at Meherazad, from Adi or his office.
- (g) Baba says that by observing all these points His lovers will help Him to keep intact His Seclusion, and therefore those deciding to visit Him must come fully determined to please Baba by observing His wishes.

Note Carefully

For the Western lovers coming from abroad, Baba has asked me to add the following:

1. You must make your own travelling arrangements right up to Poona.
2. You must ensure your return tickets from Bombay, from your travel agents.
3. Each one who is coming to India in November should write to Meherjee by AIR MAIL, on the 1st of October, a short letter simply stating (in capital block letters), name and address, date and time of arrival at Poona, as well as the duration of stay in Poona. Address your letter to Meherjee Karkaria, Meher Villa, 7 Gidney Park, Salisbury Park Road, Poona - 1, India.

Please do NOT expect a reply to your letter to Meherjee.

4. Meherjee will reserve for you accommodation available at one of the hotels in Poona, at reasonable rates, and will arrange to meet you at the Poona railway station upon your arrival.
5. Those who cannot afford or wish to stay the full week allowed may stay a lesser number of days.
6. Baba puts no restriction on the type of food eaten during the visit, non-vegetarian or otherwise.
7. There is no restriction on any sightseeing in India, or en route while returning, AFTER the Darshan week is over on the 7th of November.

Mani added:

And lastly, a word from me to help you decide on suitable clothing for November in Poona. I suggest light clothing, but with warm jackets and pull-overs for the cold hours of the mornings and evenings, which can conveniently be removed during the hot afternoon hours. To the women, I would say wear comfortable skirts and footwear for the darshan hours, as the formal apparel of tight skirts and high heels will prove an inconvenience and a definite handicap for those wanting to take His darshan or preferring to sit Indian fashion on the ground.

FAMILY LETTER 46 (MAY 1962) BY MANI S. IRANI

10th May 1962

We have been in Guruprasad since six weeks - long enough for the Baba lovers in Poona to groan and bemoan the fact that half the time has already expired and now only six more weeks remain before their Beloved leaves for Meherazad. They argue that even if Baba does not allow them to visit Him, just the knowledge that Baba is in the same town makes all the difference, for the very atmosphere of Poona becomes enlivened and vibrating with His presence, and they are content. Not that they have had a chance to prove their words, for He who is "as soft as butter and as hard as steel" has found His heart melting enough to call them now and again on a visit, mostly on a Sunday afternoon, when they could gather at His feet during a bhajan or qawwali singing. Usually, it's been the intimate group of few Baba-families (including those from Bombay holidaying here), but once in a while, the reins are relaxed enough for all lovers of Baba in Poona to receive the opportunity.

Guruprasad, which is but a silent expression of Shantaben's (our dear Maharani of Baroda's) love for Baba, is not only our summer haven but the "heaven" of His many adorers wherein they might be allowed when God wills it. But although Poona is the second home to us and Guruprasad is so well situated, it takes us Meherazadians a few days to get used to the city noises that carry on long past our customary early bed-time: all variety of road traffic, dogs barking, sometimes music blaring over the loudspeaker or the noisome gaiety of festive processions, hammering of roofs being repaired before the onset of monsoon, and the trains with their puffing steam-engines and piercing whistles - for the station is not far away. This is quite a contrast from the quiet of Meherazad evenings when the bursting open of the seed pod of a flowering tree (the *pangara*) sounds as startling as a revolver shot and where the serenading of a stray cat splinters the silent surface of the night like a rock flung in a pool.

We heard a catfight at Guruprasad too, right in the hall where Baba and His assembly were gathered, although no cats were present! The feline screams, as well as the barking of a dog, whistling of birds, the sound of musical instruments playing Indian and Western tunes, were all being emitted by a gently spoken little man - a professional known as Swami, whose half hour performance of

imitations and impersonations was an offering of love to Baba. He had attended the Birthday program at His Centre in Bombay and expressed his desire to be allowed to perform some day before Baba. Some of his dialogues, in different languages and different voices, were brilliant - and it was good to see the Beloved's bursts of laughter. Along with His Love-blessing, Baba gave him the prize of His own kerchief.

When the Swami heard of the absence of one of the mandali, Pendu, who was in the hospital for a major operation, he insisted on visiting the hospital and giving a little private performance exclusively for Pendu, saying it is what a patient would need most. We heard that it cheered up Pendu no end and of course, the nurses and other staff who got to the ward in time had a good laugh too!

At the time of writing, poor dear Pendu has been in hospital for five weeks, and not for another couple of weeks or more is he expected to return to Guruprasad to his brother disciples, who miss him very much, and to his Friend and Master who has been more than ever with him throughout his days of crisis and pain.

Then there have been programs of singing: qawwali by a fine singer from Nagar who had sung for Baba in Meherazad, and who has that purity of voice and drive needed for rendering these songs of great Sufi poets. At the end of a song, or even in the middle of it, Baba would explain to us the meaning of some line particularly pleasing to Him in voicing a true lover's feeling. In one such line, the lover says to the Beloved: "I have no wish. I have no desire - not even for God - Realisation. May the agony of your Love abide with me always?" Another says, "Try a million ways to keep Your daaman from my grasp, I still claim to have You - for You and You alone are in my heart - there is naught else."

Still, another cries: "Parched with thirst, we cling to our empty glasses, for when You lift the wine jar, O Saki, You will pour out to fill to the brim!"

There was the inevitable bhajan singing - by our young bhajan group of Poona, who prepared many a new song to regale the Beloved with - as usual composing the words and setting them to music. Baba liked them all and had some of them sung again, particularly the song "Nauranga," which the bhajan boys had sung at Nauranga on the memorable occasion of the installing of Baba's statue at Meher Dham. And there was "scientific"-style singing (which requires infinite precision and vocal command over the intricate patterns of scales), rendered beautifully by a woman who sings over the radio and has come to love

Baba. As she is from Nagar and regularly attends the Centre there, Baba heard her in Meherazad and was so pleased with her singing that she was called to sing at programs in Guruprasad.

The 6th of this month was our sixth Sunday since coming here, and the small, intimate group (of about 150) gathered at His feet had the joy of watching their Beloved truly enjoying a recital by three musicians from the music department of the All-India Radio station in Poona. The instruments were the sarangi (played with a bow), the tabla (drum), and the sitar (seven-stringed). The artists proved their superb mastery over their instruments, and it was as entrancing to watch them as to listen to them. The speed, grace, and poise with which they played the instruments made us realise how akin music is to dance! It was a thrilling recital, and the embrace that each [of the] three received from Baba was their happy reward, as they had performed for love of Him. When Baba told them their performance was the best, the principal player said it was due to His presence, for they had never before played so well.

Of course, to the assembly of Baba lovers, the entertainment aspect of a programme is merely incidental. To them, the performance or music is a reflection of the beauty of His presence, and the singing is often an expression of their own hearts. And so while they sit before Baba, drinking in His sweetness and following the endearing expressions of His face, the artist sings for and to Baba. As Baba said, to the last qawwal, "None of these people will really understand the songs. But don't let that bother you. You are singing to Me, and that is enough - for I alone know their true meaning."

Often on an odd holiday or Sunday morning, Baba has called a meeting of "The Boys" (Baba lovers and workers in Poona, from 8 to 80 years of age) where work and pleasure, solemnity and laughter, are blended as only the master-hand of our beloved Master can do. Among these have already been four meetings devoted exclusively to discussing and deciding on the manifold arrangements to be made for the oncoming East-West gathering of Baba lovers in November.

It is expected that a minimum number of 2000 Baba lovers will arrive in Poona from outstations, and many points, including the difficult task of obtaining accommodation for such a large number for their stay of seven days in Poona, were considered and put forth for Baba's decision and His instructions to the various workers concerned. The Westerners' hotel accommodation (and arranging

for their police registration, etc.) will be seen to by Meherjee, while Baba has appointed His brother Jal to see to their "sightseeing" in Poona - taking them round in batches to the important places associated with Baba's life and work.

For your special attention, here are a few points in addition to the ones intimated to you in the last Family Letter:

8. Baba's wish is that you must NOT bring any gift for anyone in India, neither for BABA nor for any of His folk in India.
9. Those planning to come by sea, please inform Meherjee *sooner* of your definite coming - i.e., do not wait for the margin of October 1st stated in the previous letter.
10. Those coming by sea might not be able to time their arrival too near to the date of Darshan beginning from 1st November. In that case, if they find they have more time on hand than they wish to spend in Poona prior to Baba's arrival from Meherazad on 30th October, they may visit (on their own) other parts of India for sightseeing if they wish to do so - keeping in mind, however, not to visit *masts* or saints. Also, anyone may, for reasons of work and business, visit places en route prior to arriving in Poona by the end of October.
11. I mentioned about the available reservation that will be made for you at hotels in Poona at reasonable rates. For your information, I would like to explain that "reasonable rates" would mean about \$4 to \$5 per day, including meals (breakfast, lunch, supper, plus morning and afternoon tea or coffee). It might also help you to know, the hotel rate in Bombay is about \$6 minimum, per day, at any standard hotel like The Grand and others.

15th May

This newsletter could not be complete without including Sunday the 13th, a day to be indelibly remembered by the mandali.

That afternoon, during the qawwali singing from 4 to 6, the Guruprasad hall was filled to overflowing with Baba lovers of Poona. Among them were also the well-known cricketers Nari Contractor and Polly Umrigar, who love Baba and had come from Bombay with their family to have Baba's darshan. Nari Contractor, the Indian skipper who had a most serious head injury during the recent match in the

West Indies, was particularly keen to see Baba and Baba was happy to see him. Dolly, his wife, told us at parting, "People are amazed at Nari's quick recovery, but that is because they do not know Baba and His love that protected and helped him throughout the crisis!"

The gathering had to be thankful to the singers, for Baba liked the songs so well He let the program continue past the usual margin of 6 o'clock. Next morning, He said, "The qawwali made Me so happy that in My happiness I absorbed Vishnu within Myself"

Vishnu is one of the men mandali who had lived with Baba for over forty years, a smallish man with a regal bearing and the kindest of hearts, who had never been known to express anger or harsh words during his life with Baba. He had been suffering for some time from coronary thrombosis, and scarcely an hour had gone by after that Sunday's assembly had dispersed from Guruprasad, when dear Vishnu dropped dead of heart failure, in the midst of a sentence and with laughter on his lips.

In death, as in life, he wore a tender look, and as his beloved Master sat by his body, it seemed as though Vishnu had drifted into a gentle sleep. Baba sat thus for over an hour, and to Vishnu's brother disciples gathered around, Baba said, "I have never before sat by any of my mandali as I am doing today by Vishnu - he is indeed most fortunate." We later recalled Baba's remark to the mandali that morning, "Vishnu has one foot in this room and one foot in the grave." The ashes of this very loving and loved companion of ours will rest in the place dearest to him: Meherabad.

FAMILY LETTER 47 (22nd JUNE 1962) BY MANI S. IRANI

It is morning's quiet hour before the sun has kissed the tallest tree, when Bund Garden road traffic is limited to milkmen cycling with shiny brass pots to deliver to many a home the bounty of their buffaloes. The stretch of road visible from Guruprasad is filled this morning with a seemingly endless stream of cattle with bells around their necks, donkeys carrying hens, children, improvised tents, and various household paraphernalia on their backs, and a spattering of goats. Beside them walk sturdy-looking men with staffs in their hands, and women in colourful clothes and fascinating jewellery of silver and ivory: the Gypsies are on the move again, their exodus proclaimed by the cattle's brass bells tinkling in a most melodious medley of chimes.

Some years ago an Indian classical singer visited Russia, and the story goes that after a performance Premier Khrushchev asked him to open his mouth so he could see for himself that the singer did not carry any instrument in his mouth. Delighted, the singer obliged, to reveal that it was his vocal cords alone that had been responsible. The singer's name is Sri Patwardhan, and about three years back he had sung for Baba (a performance offered in love), and Baba was so pleased He removed the garland that was around His neck and gave it to this master-singer.

Sri Patwardhan is visiting Russia again this year, leading the Indian music delegation to a cultural conference to be held there. On a Sunday of this month (3rd June), he was singing at Guruprasad again, and the applause from the hall full of Baba lovers was as spontaneous as it was strong. The Beloved enjoyed it extremely, and with His embrace gave the singer His handkerchief - which was received with the happy blush of a young boy and the deep reverence of a devotee.

There have been other "smaller" Sundays too when only a few are permitted to gather at Guruprasad. We take the opportunity of asking the visiting Baba lovers about Baba: "How does He look?" As our Rani replied, "A little thinner perhaps but radiant as ever!" Kari [Harb] said, "A little tired the first time we saw Him here, but now He looks just wonderful!" Another said, "When does Baba ever look anything but glowing!" Our answer to that is: "Often, as we have seen Him during His Seclusion, looking tired and bowed down as with the weight of the world's suffering."

This aspect of Baba, i.e., His suffering, is puzzling and difficult for many to understand - particularly those who try to attain faith through understanding. They argue that there is no need for Him to suffer if He is all-Power. How, in fact, can He be suffering when He is all Bliss? Once Eruch and I got to talking of this, and his explanation deeply impressed itself upon me. Eruch said to the effect that:

When man becomes God, he is released from the finite and merges into the Infinite. But when God becomes Man, it means caging the Infinite into the finite - the finite being the absolute opposite of the infinite.

Bliss signifies freedom, whereas suffering signifies bondage. Infinite Bliss, therefore, expresses Absolute Freedom. Only the cords of Bondage (suffering) can hold down and restrain that Freedom (Bliss) into captivity within a human form. Hence God, who is Infinite Bliss, binds Himself with suffering when He assumes

human form. In short, God remains amidst mankind as a man, only when He suffers Himself to be bound by suffering.

This emphasises what Baba has told us: "The Sadguru has attained Absolute Freedom and therefore (as Man-God) has merely to play the part of suffering in bondage, just as an actor in a play lives the part of a king or a beggar while enacting it. On the other hand, the Avatar takes on bondage, and therefore (as God-Man) actually "becomes" the role He has assumed and has to really suffer."

We are leaving for Meherazad on the 8th of July - just two days before the Silence day, and I'm sure with the saving of all the energy and time usually spent in talking we will get more unpacking done on that day than would otherwise have been possible. We are looking forward to the Baba Calendar being specially issued for the occasion by Adi Arjani, a Baba lover in Chittagong (East Pakistan). It is full of Baba pictures, sayings and messages, and its main feature is that it begins the year from 10th July, in commemoration of the Day of Baba's Silence.

On a Sunday afternoon at Guruprasad, one of the advocates in the assembly related to Baba how his son Govind had asked whether Baba would be able to speak audibly at the breaking of His long years of Silence. Turning to the child, Baba smiled and nodded emphatically. Baba said, through gestures interpreted by Eruch, "Yes, I *will* speak audibly. In fact, when I break My Silence it will be heard infinitely clearer than the loudest of speech uttered by anyone."

FAMILY LETTER 48 (16th AUGUST 1962) BY MANI S. IRANI

Meherazad

Actually, Poona was very dry-skyed during the latter part of our stay there; there wasn't a drop of rain for many days, and the city fathers were planning to cut down further on the supply of water and of electricity too. But the Heavenly Father decided otherwise, and the monsoon broke in earnest on just the midnight before we left for Meherazad on 8th July! We slept fitfully that night through the sound of the rains beating down, visualising the throng of umbrellaed and rain-coated Baba lovers standing ankle deep in the slush at Bund Gardens next morning, where they would gather for the few minutes allowed to bid adieu to their Beloved.

But we need not have lost any sleep, for it couldn't have turned out better for them. Baba had one of the mandali stationed at the Bund Gardens early next

morning, to direct the Baba lovers to Guruprasad, where He gave them a full hour of His company! It was just like another darshan program, with the arti sung at the end - and, so that every one of the gathering could have the opportunity to approach Him closer, He allowed each one to kiss His hand before He got up to leave.

To quote from Eruch's letter to a dear one: "The parting scene was most touching - about 500 lovers of Baba came for the send-off on the 8th morning. It was raining heavily ... and all our luggage lying scattered on the verandah, and some of the children having a good time playing amidst it. Baba looked radiant and appeared to shower His love more profusely than the clouds that were giving us rain at the time." The group head Ramakrishnan put it differently in his letter to Eruch a week later: "It was the suppressed tears of sorrow within our hearts, caused by the pangs of separation from the Beloved that found expression through nature. And, from the morning of 8th July, Poona is still weeping." ...

PLANNING FOR THE EAST-WEST GATHERING

According to the circular issued by Adi K. Irani on 21st March 1962, Baba declared that He would give darshan to His lovers from the West and the East from 1st to 7th November 1962 at Guruprasad. This news brought immense joy to His lovers who were longing for His darshan. Later, in Mani's Family Letter 47 of 22nd June, it was announced that the programme was curtailed from the 1st to the 4th of Nov. Though Baba stayed at Guruprasad from the 31st March to the 30th of June, He did not give darshan, and His lovers abided by His wish that they should not disturb Him. The darshan in November would be meant for only those who loved and obeyed Baba and not for the public.

K.K. Ramakrishnan, the secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, took the challenge and the responsibility of this stupendous work of arranging this programme at Guruprasad. Months before the darshan, the Poona Centre lovers discussed the plans with Baba.

It was decided that two men and two women volunteers should be posted at the main gate of Guruprasad, and the same number at the second gate. In the main awning (pandal) to be constructed behind Guruprasad bungalow, it was decided to have twenty or more volunteers. A book stall to sell Baba's books and photos were to be erected near the gate, with four volunteers present. To provide drinking water for the pilgrims, two or more volunteers were to be responsible. Volunteers

were to be needed at the railway station to guide the pilgrims to the place of their stay and also to handle their luggage. Many lodges, *karyalayas* [offices], schools, and other places were reserved for the pilgrims to stay without paying anything.

It was decided to have a medical first-aid post near the gate where five doctors, three volunteers, and a sweeper were to be on duty. I, as a doctor, had the responsibility of visiting all the places where the Indian Baba lovers from out-station were lodged. Baba had instructed me that my round to all these places should begin early in the morning, but He had ordered me not to leave the awning where He was to give darshan when He was on His chair. This order was to become very difficult, as I will later explain. Dr. Donkin had the duty of visiting all the hotels where the Western pilgrims were staying. The other doctors were asked to stay in the medical tent when Baba was giving darshan.

Caterers were appointed at each of the places where Baba lovers were staying. They were to provide breakfast between 6:00 and 7:00 A.M., lunch between 9:00 and 12:00 noon, tea in the afternoon, and dinner between 7:00 and 9:00 P.M. This was arranged so that the pilgrims got clean, wholesome food and did not have to go to hotels, which might not be too clean.

Watchmen were needed to take care of the chairs, etc., in the pandals at nighttime. People were appointed to clean the pandal before Baba began giving darshan in the mornings. The Poona municipality was contacted to provide for extra supplies of clean drinking water and to look after the sanitation. Letters were written to many societies, *vidyalayas* [educational institutions], schools, colleges and the Poona Anath homes for free accommodations for the pilgrims. Extra bus service had to be arranged with the local Poona municipality to take the pilgrims to the place of their residence from the railway station and bus stations and to bring them to Guruprasad.

At Guruprasad itself many things had to be looked into:

Protection of the gates and walls had to be arranged to avoid intrusion by the local public. A huge awning had to be erected behind the bungalow to accommodate the pilgrims. Chairs had to be arranged for the Westerners in front of Baba's stage and for the Indian pilgrims behind the Westerners.

Lights had to be fixed over Baba's stage and some in the pandal in case of an emergency. Temporary sanitary arrangements had to be made for the thousands of pilgrims coming for Baba's darshan.

At night, when medical aid at Guruprasad was not available and chemists' shops closed down, if medical aid was needed, the sister in charge at the Ruby Nursing Hall was to be contacted for the drug. She would give it, and it had to be replaced the next day. Baba was so meticulous, as can be seen from the following. When the doctor who needed an emergency drug at night went to the Ruby Nursing Hall, he had to give a code word to the sister in charge so that she would give the drug without delay. The code word was "Meher Baba."

Outside the gates of Guruprasad beyond the road, a pandal had to be erected for Baba lovers to sit in before the gates of Guruprasad were opened. Most lovers would come much before the scheduled time for darshan and sit in the pandal singing Baba bhajans. Loudspeakers had to be put up for all the lovers to hear the different announcements made by Eruch from the raised platform where Baba would sit. Again, the announcement had to be translated into the local languages for the benefit of Baba lovers who did not understand English. Besides these loudspeakers, others were needed for the singers on the platform.

Car parks had to be fixed up for lovers who came by car. These would not be far from Guruprasad. A cycle stand was also erected for local Baba lovers who came in cycles. Many lovers would want to remove their shoes before they went to Baba for His darshan. A place was erected where the lovers could safely keep their shoes. Police arrangements had to be looked into to avoid stampedes and allow the lovers to take darshan in queues without any disturbance. Badges or tokens were to be given to each Baba lover coming into Guruprasad, as this darshan was for Baba lovers only. Volunteers and workers were to be given badges so that one could differentiate them from the Baba lovers. Pilgrims could take their help in case of need.

Arrangements had to be made to take the Westerners to Baba places in Poona. The pilgrims would want to visit the David Sassoon Hospital where Baba was born. They would want to see Baba's house where He spent His childhood; then, a visit to the Bund Gardens where Baba would go and sit and also give His last darshan after His stay in Guruprasad. A visit to the Poona Baba Centre would also be worthwhile. Prasad had to be arranged for the pilgrims after they had taken Baba's darshan, which they could carry home for those lovers who could not attend the East-West sahas.

In short, a million things had to be planned and duties given to different Baba-lovers of Poona. I must say that these volunteers performed their duties excellently and with so much love that after the four days' sahavas Baba called all the volunteers for His embrace. There are no words to appreciate the efforts of Ramakrishnan, who worked selflessly for months planning everything before the darshan programme. In his own way, during the sahavas programme, he was so unassuming that no one could even think that he was behind this colossal work and was responsible for its successful completion.

LIFE CIRCULAR NO. 55 (20th SEPTEMBER 1962)

Important intimation to all lovers of Baba visiting Guruprasad, Poona, for the East-West Gathering from 1st to 4th November 1962.

Avatar Meher Baba wants me to draw the attention of all His lovers visiting Him from different parts of the world, to the fact that they should come with the sole idea of enjoying His PRESENCE collectively, and NOT hope or want to ask for any individual personal attention or guidance from Him regarding any matter concerning themselves or their families and friends or in connection with Baba work or group and centre activities. No question should be asked, spiritual or otherwise.

Baba says that this November gathering will be uniquely different from any of the past sahavas or darshans, and He, therefore, stresses that any expectations other than just being in His presence would be an intrusion into the atmosphere that Baba desires, and would cause the person thus intruding to lose the real benefit of being in Baba's presence.

During this sole programme of simply being in Baba's presence in the pandal from 3:00 to 6:00 each afternoon, there will be the reading out of messages given by Baba specially for the occasion, and reciting of the arti. Carefully note that apart from the Poona bhajan group's usual singing at darshan time, and one qawwali and Burra Katha and bhajan programme already fixed by Baba, He does NOT wish any individuals or groups to offer or request to sing, perform, or recite for Baba during the November gathering.

Baba says that to be actively in His presence means taking one's place along with the rest of the lovers in the pandal during this East-West Gathering, and not crowding or edging towards His seat.

Baba says He will embrace each person once, on the first day of the gathering. After this embrace, each one should return to one's own seat in the pandal.

If each one maintains this discipline of Baba's wishes, that person will not only derive the most benefit from Baba's presence but will also help Baba and the whole of the assembly.

Baba sends His love to you each.

[Signed] Adi K. Irani

Note:

- a) Baba will not be available at Guruprasad to any visitors from Poona or from anywhere in India or Pakistan during the morning sessions of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th November 1962. Therefore, NO Easterner should visit Guruprasad before 2:00 P.M. on each day of the four days of gathering.
- b) The morning sessions at Guruprasad are exclusively reserved by Baba for the benefit of Westerners.
- c) None of the Easterners should visit the Westerners at their hotels in Poona because Baba does NOT want them to be disturbed. Only the workers and doctors are permitted by Baba to visit the Westerners in their hotels to carry out duties assigned to them.
- d) Baba does NOT wish the Easterners coming for the November gathering to visit His boyhood home at Dastur Meher Road in Poona Camp. However, those who have NOT been there before and wish to pay their first visit to the Baba Room may do so.

FAMILY LETTER 49 (20th SEPTEMBER 1962) BY MANI S. IRANI

Meherazad

This is the unexpected letter that I expected to write before His dear Novemberites leave their homes on their "journey to God."

The list of those of His Western family attending the November Gathering now numbers 171 - with a few marked "tentative." This [is] made up roughly of 123 from the USA, 33 from Australia and New Zealand, and the rest from England and Europe. The youngest of these will be a fair six-year-old from Australia, Radha Rouse; while the eldest will be 92-year-old dear Ruth White

from His Centre at Myrtle Beach in the USA. Every name on the List has been read to Baba, and Baba wants me to say that He knows the sacrifice it entails for a number of you in making this trip, and the heartache it entails for still more who cannot make it to India. He is happy for those of you who are able to come and wants the rest of you to be happy in the knowledge that He will be present with you during your absence from the November Gathering.

While the problem of mass accommodation for the 2000 Easterners from outstations is nearly and unexpectedly solved, suitable hotel accommodation for His growing number of Western Novemberites is beginning to cause some slight anxiety. This does not mean there will be lack of accommodation, but it might mean less comfortable accommodation as a result of rooming perhaps more individuals together. However, any hardship is a worthy part of every true pilgrimage, and should not be a subject for concern when the Object is the Highest of the High! Drowned in the outpouring of His Love, all discomfort is as the particle in the oyster that becomes the pearl. I cannot help recalling the first lecture that our dear Kaka gave to the Beloved's Western followers gathered with Him in Cannes (France) in the year 1937, in his halting English. Although many of those who heard it at the time have actually lived the lesson many times over during their long and hardy years of life with Baba, I reproduce here an excerpt from Kaka's short but comprehensive lecture, as it might help others who are coming to Poona for the November Gathering:

"Now I want to talk about our Master's order. When Master passes order, it must be obeyed. Never mind if you like it or not. There should be no discussion. When you follow the Master, every desire must be left. Somebody wants good food, somebody wants a good bed, somebody wants to go swimming, somebody wants to shop - then what use is it coming to the Master? Go for a vacation!" ...

N.B.: Baba wishes you take very careful note of the Circular attached herewith: "ATTENTION Western Novemberites," for which this special Family Letter is being sent out. Please bring with you this important circular to Poona, for your reference.

Meherazad

20th September 1962

ATTENTION Western Novemberites!

To be on the safe side, all available accommodation at all suitable hotels in Poona is being reserved from the 28th October. It is Baba's wish, therefore, all who possibly can, should arrive in Poona on 28th. He wishes that you do NOT tarry in Bombay after your arrival thereon or after the 28th, but catch the soonest train possible for Poona. Those whose flight is arranged to reach Bombay on 29th or 30th may thus arrive in Poona on 29th or 30th. All must be in Poona by latest 31st morning (except some of the Australians whose ship arrives on 1st November).

Baba wants you each one to immediately and finally let Meherjee know the exact date of your arrival in Poona. Despite this reminder in the last family letter, many have not done so! But whether you have already done so or not, Baba wants you to rush to Meherjee a final confirmation of the dates of your arrivals and departures, in and from Bombay and Poona, and whether you are coming independently or by a group flight arrangement (stating group flight number and name of the Baba lover under whom it is arranged).

For our double-checking, those in charge of group flights must also please intimate Meherjee well in advance (if it is not already done) details of group flights arranged: flight no., the number and names of passengers, arrival date and time in Bombay and in Poona, and departure dates and time and flight no. from Bombay. Individuals flying independently must also furnish Meherjee with the above information, which is most essential and must reach Meherjee right away.

On your arrival in Poona, Meherjee will help you in intimating the authorities concerned regarding your Foreigners' Registration (this does not apply to British and Australian passports), and in confirming your return flights.

If you are stranded and need to contact the Mandali in any emergency (during the daytime), you may phone Guruprasad: 23158. After 7:00 P.M. phone Meherjee's residence: 24578. Also take note of Guruprasad address: 24 Bund Garden Road and cable address: Care IRANTOJJAR, Poona.

Regarding any electrical equipment you may bring with you (shavers, etc.), note that the voltage applied in Bombay and Poona is 220 volts AC.

A word of caution for you to remember during your stay in hotels: Please keep your cash and valuables *locked* before leaving your hotels.

As the failure of electricity is not an infrequent occurrence in Poona,

you will find a torch (flashlight) a useful item to bring with you.

Program During Your Stay In Poona: Beloved Baba is reserving the morning hours from 9:00 to 12:00 noon exclusively for the gathering of His Western lovers, to be held inside the hall at Guruprasad from 1st to 5th November. In the afternoons, during the gatherings under the pandal (awning) at Guruprasad from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M. from 1st to 4th November, the Westerners will participate with the Easterners.

Jal will arrange for transportation to bring you to Guruprasad each morning and afternoon, for you to reach Guruprasad at the following times: On the mornings of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th November, by 10 minutes to 9:00; on the afternoons of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd November, by 10 minutes to 3:00. On the afternoon of 4th November, by 10 minutes to 2:00. On the 5th *morning* also, Baba wishes you to be at Guruprasad by 10 minutes of 9:00, for a final darshan program and embrace.

Jal, with his group of Baba lovers to assist him, will also arrange for your sightseeing of some Baba places (as per list attached), in groups on 29th, 30th, and 31st October, in accordance with your arrival in Poona. Those who feel indisposed need not go, but should at the time inform Jal accordingly.

All such transport expenses will be borne by you, in arrangement with Jal. This includes your trip to Ahmednagar-Meherazad-Meherabad on 6th November. Sarosh and his wife, Viloo, will be your host and hostess at their home in Ahmednagar during your halt there for refreshments and lunch en route to Meherazad and Meherabad. You will also be visiting the Meher Publications Office and the Baba Centre at Ahmednagar that afternoon on your way to Meherabad. You will have to leave Poona at 7:00 in the morning, to return the same evening. The entire mileage of your trip on that day will total about 180 miles.

Baba has appointed Dr. William Donkin in charge of the welfare of the Western Novemberites' health with the assistance of Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, and in cooperation with Dr. (Mrs.) Bhandari, who is also in charge of the Eastern women Novemberites' health. It is Baba's wish that you must therefore promptly inform Dr. Donkin whenever you feel indisposed, night or day. In the daytime, Dr. Donkin will make the round of your different hotels at least once and will be at Guruprasad during the morning and afternoon gatherings there. At night he will be on call at the Napier Hotel, and anybody needing any medical aid should, without fail, phone him at Napier Hotel, phone no. 22627.

A Circular is being sent out by Adi to all Eastern Novemberites, and Baba wants me to draw your attention to the following paragraph in it because it equally applies to His Western Novemberites:

"Avatar Meher Baba wants me to draw the attention of all His lovers visiting Him from different parts of the world, to the fact that they should come with the whole idea of enjoying His PRESENCE collectively, and NOT hope or want or ask for any individual personal attention or guidance from Him - regarding any matter concerning themselves or their families and friends, or in connection with Baba work or Group and Centre activities. NO questions should be asked, spiritual or otherwise."

[Signed] Mani

(Instructions to Jal)

Places to Be Shown Round by Jal

To the Western Novemberites

1. Sassoon Hospital where Baba was born.
2. The house with the well where Baba and family moved after His sister Mani's birth and where now His brother Beheram lives with his family. This house has the room where Baba used to knock His forehead on a stone on the floor, during that period of infinite agony after the meeting with Babajan. This is known as "Baba's Room."
3. Point out the house where Baba spent His childhood and much of His boyhood. It is known as Bhopla (Pumpkin) House, because of the large round stone at the entrance.
4. St. Vincent School (where Baba studied right through school).
5. Deccan College (that Baba attended after leaving school).
6. Babajan's shrine by the Neem Tree, in Poona cantonment.
7. The Bund Gardens that Baba often visited, as a boy and later. Show the mango tree under which Babajan used to sit often with her followers, at the Bund Gardens.
8. Tower of Silence which Baba frequently visited in order to sit there for hours at a stretch.
9. Take them via Laxmi Road and Janglay Maharaj Road, and show statue of Jhansi-ki-Rani (The warrior queen who fought the British in 1857.)

10. Take them round Race Course side (of recent years Baba has often been there in the mornings to have a quiet walk with the mandali).
11. Take them to the site of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, where the Centre Hall is under construction.

THE EAST-WEST GATHERING OF BABA LOVERS IN POONA, INDIA, NOVEMBER 1962²⁹ BY FILIS FREDERICK

Ahmednagar, India, October 23, 1962

My Health Is Very Bad, But Your Love Will Help Support Me During The Days Of East-West Gathering Stop Pass On This Information To All Concerned Travelling With You.

Baba

Some of the Western lovers of Avatar Meher Baba were already on the high seas when "Fredella" Winterfeldt received this cable in New York. Others were leaving in a day or two, singly or in group flights, bound for Guruprasad, Poona, India, where the Beloved had called His lovers, East and West, for a momentous spiritual gathering at His feet. For almost a year, preparations had been in progress, cables, letters, circulars exchanged around the world, not to mention all the private struggles and preparations, financial and otherwise, individual lovers were making to take the great trip.

This was the long-promised, East-West, men and women Sahavas which the Master had planned for 1958 in India, then postponed. Later, it was scheduled for May 1962, then shifted to one full week in November 1962. The Sahavas period was again cut short to four days only, November 1st to 4th. In a letter from Mani, dated October 16, the women learned that Baba wished a special visit on the morning of October 31st with us and the Eastern women mandali. No one was to arrive in Poona before October 28, except those coming by sea. The Sahavas was, Baba said, only for His lovers, not for the general public, and no one was to hope for individual attention or help, spiritual or otherwise, but to come only to enjoy His company, the true meaning of the word *Sahavas*.

"My words can never be in vain. Whatever I have said must and will come true. When it appears otherwise, it is due to your ignorance and lack of patience." In 1956, at San Francisco, Baba had pointed to each of us, saying, "*You must come*" to the coming East-West Sahavas; thus we became known as the "Musts."

And Baba recalled this fact to several who were hesitating to attend the 1962 gathering, a further indication this was the same meeting He had foretold.

I planned to travel from the West Coast, joining the Sufi Group in Hawaii but had many setbacks in health. Baba cabled that I must "try my best to come"; so, with His Divine help, I made the 18000-mile trip, in the pleasant company of a dozen Baba lovers, led by Murshida Ivy Duce. As usual, the Master's meeting was called at a crisis-point in world affairs: The Russians in Cuba, the Chinese in India. We stopped one day at Tokyo and one day in Kowloon, Hong Kong, where Herman Alvarado, Baba's sailor-boy, popped up to join us, and Dr. Chamberlain got on our plane at Bangkok; he had been lecturing in the far East. We arrived around midnight, October 28, in Bombay; the immigration officer shook his head when he read my reason for coming - "spiritual darshan program." These mad Westerners! But we were joining lots madder Easterners!

Our cab whirled through the soft Indian night to the bursts of sound and light that signalled the Indian Diwali, or Festival of Lights, to the Taj Mahal Hotel, whose long arched marble corridors reminded one of a cloister or a girls' dorm. A huge fan and restless thoughts of Beloved kept me awake most of the night. At 6:30 on a walk around the hotel I had my first shocked glimpse of the Indian poor; sleeping against the wall of the hotel were men, women, boys, with nothing but a brass pot and a bundle of rags for worldly goods. Across the street, the Victoria Gate framed the Bay of Bombay as hundreds of black crows whirled overhead. The day was grey, cloudy, and hot. A little boy in nothing but a ragged shirt walked along by the sea, playing his flute, symbolic of India, the Beloved's homeland.

After an English breakfast at the hotel, where we met up with Margaret Craske and some of her young dancers, we caught the train to Poona, our baggage balanced on the red turbans of the native porters. In one compartment, Charmian Duce, "3-B" Dimpfl;³⁰ and I sang ourselves hoarse most of the 3 1/2-hour journey up into the Deccan hills, past the most fascinating railroad stations full of people, camping out bag and baggage on the platforms. At several stops, they peered into our faces or thrust a hand out for alms. Both men and women wore violent, marvellous colours, purple, orange, green, and so on. We passed many rivers where the women were washing out their saris or carrying water home in enormous brass pots on their heads, or men were washing the huge black water buffaloes.

At last, we reached Poona, where the Eastern volunteers, led by Jal S. Irani and Meherjee Karkaria, met us and drove us to our separate hotels. Mine was the Poona Hotel, a small hostel where I shared a room with Adele Wolkin and Norma Gould. Other friends of the New York Group and many of the Australians were stationed here. We also met the Eastern volunteers, appointed to aid our group (under the direction of Baba's brother Jal): Minoo Kharas, Beheram Dadachanji, Eruch's brother Meherwan Jessawala, Dr. Bharucha, staying in our hotel, Sorabsha (Sorabji) Siganporia, and Kishanchand Gajwani, who taxied me and several others to Guruprasad every day. Adi Sr. also came over to say hello and deliver a message. The afternoon passed quickly in struggling to clean up our quarters, unpacking, and chatting eagerly about the coming reunion with the Divine Beloved.

Tuesday - October 30

After a breakfast of sweet limes, bananas, tea, toast, porridge, and eggs in the Poona Hotel, we were visited by a charming lady from Air India and by Baba's longtime disciple Meherjee Karkaria, who had been in charge of our hotel arrangements and the group air flight from New York. The Air India girl had been so impressed by this band of Westerners coming to see an Eastern Master that she decided to meet Him. Meherjee urged us to pay a visit en-masse to the bank to change our money into rupees, for later there would be no time. Not being able to walk that far, I called for a cab, making my first and biggest mistake, I guess, at the Sahavas, for while I was gone at the bank, Baba called for me, and no one knew where I was.

At the bank I felt a most peculiar unease and impatience at the whole money-shuffle; on our return to the hotel, I discovered the cause! Frantically I prevailed on one of the volunteers to drive me to the colourful arched gate of Guruprasad (he was not allowed further). I hastened up the dirt road, bordered by gay flower beds and bookstalls, past the supercilious marble noses of Victorian stone angels and up onto the tiled portico of that long-dreamed-of holy of holies - Guruprasad itself!

With thumping heart, I waited while my name was sent to Baba. The others He had called that morning had already come and gone. When I walked into the inner hall, the first thing I saw from afar was the white light beaming from Baba's eyes - it seemed soft and brilliant as a sun, and of all the glimpses of Beloved

that came afterward in the crowded Sahavas calendar, I still remember that first marvellous nazar or glance of Baba. He was seated alone on the couch, dressed in His dear familiar pink jacket and white sadra.

I leaned over to embrace Him and kiss His cheek and remember thinking, "His eyes are brown, after all!" And also that He was a little stouter than in 1958. Baba asked His special question, "Are you happy?" and I nodded - "To see You." He then inquired how my hip was, and how I had made the trip. Then I heard Mani's lively voice addressing me and for the first time saw the girls standing at the left. Baba beckoned for me to embrace them - dearest Mehera, Baba's chief woman disciple; Mani, Baba's sister; Dr. Goher; Rano Gayley; and Meheru, whom I had met in 1952 at Myrtle Beach, and also Naja and Khorshed, whom I had heard so much about. Then Baba asked, "How do I look?" "Beautiful!" I replied. I fell silent, eyes travelling over every line of that beloved and oft-recalled face; then Baba beckoned for me to leave.

At the lunch table, I picked at the odd food, trying to joke with the others, absorbed in my meeting with Baba. After a brief interval, our group was all packed onto buses in charge of Jal, Baba's charming young brother, and Minoo Kharas. We were going to make a tour of spots in Poona associated with Baba's life. It is indeed a holy city and no doubt one day will be the scene of worldwide pilgrimage.

Naturally, our first stop was the house where Baba spent much of His youth, now occupied by Baba's brother Beheram and his family. As soon as our two buses unloaded, the narrow streets filled with curious householders and swarms of children - all as delighted with our outlandish clothes as we were with theirs. We heard the words "Meher Baba" pass from lip to lip. We crowded into the narrow alley and into the garden of the house with its screened-in well (which supplied water to hundreds during the desperate water shortage followed by the 1961 Poona flood); then one by one into the little dark room where Baba in the early days of Godhood after Babajan's kiss of Realisation, used to knock His forehead on a stone on the floor during that period of infinite agony. Relics of Baba's youth were in a lighted glass cabinet, including His cricket bat, a photo of His parents, His white cotton sadra, nails, and hair. Catty-corner across the alley was the house called "Bhopla" (Pumpkin) House (because of a big round stone at the doorstep), wherein the Irani family actually lived at the time of Baba's birth.

Next was a visit to St. Vincent's High School, now being torn down and rebuilt, where Baba was a student. I stooped and pocketed a broken brick. We proceeded to a crowded thoroughfare in Poona Cantonment and saw in the distance a sort of open shed, built near a lacy green tree. Here again, a curious crowd collected as the foreigners took off their varied footgear and entered the tomb of Hazrat Babajan to pay their respects. Pictures of her, and of Baba, her spiritual son, were hung on the walls. The trunk of the neem tree under which she used to sit was enclosed inside the shed.

We visited another sacred tree - a huge living mango tree by the misty banks of the Mula-Mutha River, in the Bund Gardens, already familiar to us through films. We wound our way to it through the Bund Gardens, near the race track, where Baba often walks with the mandali on the shady paths bordered by exotic flowering shrubs and trees. He used to frequent these gardens in His childhood. The buses stopped here, and those in good shape trod on foot down the dirt path. At the mango tree by the river, we also got out of the buses and strolled about.

I picked up a few brown leaves and touched the gnarled bark, feeling a strong charge in this old living tree whose branches had already sheltered two living Perfect Beings - Babajan and Baba. This is the "goodbye spot" for Baba's Poona lovers. Across the bridge (two years ago almost covered by flood waters), we drove to Deccan College where Baba was a student until His sophomore year. A handsome brick building of the Victorian era, like almost every other public building I'd seen in India, it was now deserted and used only by the government.

Twilight was falling as we re-crossed the bridge and stopped at Sassoon Hospital where Baba was actually born - in the left wing. Shirinmai, His mother, once recounted how the nurse was a nun, hastily called from Mass early one Sunday morning, who actually delivered the new little Christ child into this world. She said, "I didn't even give her time to take off her veil!"

Now our bus went to the far side of town; we stopped and walked down a muddy lane past a cowshed or two to an open field, where the floor and the brick walls of the new Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre Hall is being built. It was explained that land is very hard to obtain in Poona and the construction had been delayed. Bamboo scaffolds were used, the same as seen in Hong Kong.

On our way home via Laxmi Road, we paused at the equestrian statue of Queen Jhansi-Ki-Rani, Warrior Queen who stood off the British. Then we

bisected the narrow lanes of the Poona bazaars - tiny cupboards open to the street, stacked with "bizarre" wares of every sort, lit by flickering kerosene lamps or Diwali lanterns, and often provided with stove and bed for round-the-clock comfort. Crowded as the stalls were, the air was fresh, not fetid as in Bombay. Poona seemed endless, or was it just fatigue? Now we could believe it was inhabited by 1,000,000 souls. Anyway, the hard hotel bed felt soft and very welcome as I fell asleep, thinking of that one marvellous glance from Baba.

Wednesday - October 31

There was an air of excitement among the women at breakfast - while the men grumbled good-humoredly. We women were to be the first to greet Baba - as Mani had intimated in her letter of October 16: "The Beloved has wished a special visit on the 31st morning of all the Western women to Guruprasad to see Baba and Mehera and the rest of the women, plus Arnavaz [Dadachanji] and our dear Rani [of Baroda] who will be with us at the time." The Maharani Shantadevi is the devoted follower of Baba who has for many summers, and now for the special Sahavas, loaned Baba the villa well named "Guruprasad."

We were to go in separate groups. Our group - Jeanne Shaw, Ella Winterfeldt, Adele Wolkin, and myself - went in first. Baba gave each of us a warm individual embrace, and then we each greeted Mehera, who looked as beautiful as ever - Mani, of the sparkling black eyes and gay smile - Dr. Goher, and Rano - both thinner than I recalled, and Meheru, Naja, Khorshed, and Arnavaz. Baba introduced us to the Maharani, who sat on the floor near Him.

Baba inquired, "How is your hip today?" and this time I had the presence of mind to ask Baba about *His* hip. With His hand, He made His characteristic "so-so" gesture. Then He questioned Jeanne Shaw at length about her heart attack. "How long before the Sahavas did it happen?" Jeanne told Him, "Four days." Baba seemed very pleased that she had been brave enough to come. He told Ella to hold on tight to His daaman, actually knotting it up in His hands as an illustration. "And this is for all of us," I thought. I will never forget that gesture. "You all say I look well," Baba said, "But I carry this whole burden."

Another group of women entered, and each was greeted lovingly by Baba; then still another group came in from another hotel. I could hear Mani whispering their names excitedly to Mehera as each one stepped forward, for both had been

corresponding with many whom they had never met till now. I too was seeing many friends for the first time in several years - Margaret Craske, Kitty Davy, Elizabeth Patterson, Jeanne Shaw, Jane Haynes, Enid Corfe, Carrie Ben Shammai from Israel, Anita Vieillard from Paris; and then the Australian women stepped forward, some of whom I had corresponded with but never met; it was fun to tie up names with faces. It was a brightly dressed throng of about sixty women from the West, all in their best, who gathered around Baba.

All our hearts concentrating on Him and His return of that love seemed to fill the room with an actual radiance of peace. What a long-awaited moment - to see our dear Master again, and here - in His homeland of India! He felt at home - and somehow I think we all felt "at home" too, especially together as we were now, with His precious dear family of Eastern women.

Baba broke the silence that had fallen after all had embraced Him. "Tomorrow there will be discourses. Anita has to be serious!" We all chuckled. "It's something new - about 'The Four Journeys.' A new book of discourses is coming out. I am giving it to Dennis O'Brien, an Australian, to publish - not to Ivy! Ivy has too much on her mind!"

Baba kept twitting Ivy about all her problems, but she took it with good humor. I recalled how Baba had sent us to notice that we were here strictly for His Sahavas or company, not for help in our personal affairs. As the room vibrated with Baba's living Presence, all problems - even those unknown ones buried deep in mind - seemed to dissolve. The only problem I felt was: "How can I love Baba more? How can I fill my heart up with love for Him? All that love comes from Him ... I am helpless even to love Him without His grace."

Baba told us part of the Australian group had been delayed by a cancellation of their flight from Colombo, due to the war crisis. They were coming on by boat.

When someone mentioned how wonderful He looked, He said, "I look all right on the outside but on the inside I am like a volcano. The world situation is weighing on Me. Jesus Christ suffered ... I suffer." When He mentioned the "volcano," His hands made a swirling motion over His chest. His eyes twinkled as He intimated that He had averted the Cuban crisis. It was touch and go, He said, the whole world hung in the balance.

Again going back to the subject of discourses, He said that no amount of reading will give anyone God-Realisation. But once one gets it - it comes

suddenly. He emphasised that God is Love, Infinite Love and that this world is nothing. Yesterday has gone - it is nothing. The future is nothing too. And when you get that Realisation, then everything goes - it no longer exists. One realises it is all nothing, illusion, Maya.

There are so many divisions, Baba continued, even though God is One. Why are there so many divisions? It is all because of Illusion and our ignorance of it.

Speaking of "dreams" and "illusion," Baba told us of one of His devotees who was now bravely giving up taking drugs for His sake and was undergoing tortures. He also said to one of us in the group who had a drinking problem, "Fill your cup with the Wine of Divine Love; then you will not want to drink anything else." Again Baba cautioned us to take care of our health but also hinted that we might have to suffer for the sake of being here with Him. How real a hint this was many of us found out shortly as we made our acquaintance with "Poona belly," "Poona flu," and a few other goodies.

All too soon the happy hours were over. Those who had not yet met, or embraced the Eastern women, did so now, while the rest of us mingled in a reunion from all quarters of the globe. Baba remained on the couch where a few, as usual, lingered for an extra embrace or bit of personal attention.

Then the various buses and cars arrived outside the portico to take us back to our quarters in various parts of town. In the afternoon, trips to the bazaars of Poona were arranged for those women who wished to go; meanwhile, the Western men had their first glimpse of Baba, at Guruprasad. Making up for the rest lost on our 18,000-mile trip, I slept a greater part of this afternoon, and chatted with the many friends, new and old, in our little hotel. Outside our door, a ragged band of magicians, with their baskets of cobras and mongoose clamoured for us to watch their performance. But no one was interested. Hadn't we just been to see the greatest magician of all - the one at whose command the whole illusory Shadow-Show of Maya performs all its tricks?

In the afternoon, Baba called the Western men to His side. Darwin Shaw gives the following account of this all-male Sahavas:

Someone asked Baba 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 situation), 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.)

"One who knows what love is enters deeper and deeper *within* and finds that he has four journeys to make there. These journeys within have no space, yet it is an infinite process." "Only Jesus 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 will go 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. This is the solution." "I have always been 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." "I am with those who wanted to come but could not."

"Do you know what would happen if I gave you My real 'embrace'? Maybe I would crush you and make you the dust at My feet. If I gave you the real embrace, you would burst. Christ did not give this embrace, even to Peter." "Repeating My name is not enough; it should be done 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." "Hafiz says: '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.'"

After a curry dinner topped by English "trifle" and exorable demitasse, I hastened to the Mobos Hotel (which the Dadachanji "mob" had taken over for the Sahavas), driven by Adi. Here a group of us met to discuss whether we should invite Swami Shuddhananda Bharati to the United States next year. Francis

Brabazon explained that the Swami (whom we would see tomorrow, on the first day of East-West Sahavas) wanted to come to America to spread Baba's message, feeling America was the country of the future. I guess I was too tired, but my eyes kept drifting up to the enormous chandelier, which reminded me of that well-known painting of Hyman Bloom of the lights in the synagogue, in which each prism is a face. Baba was the light of the world, we but tiny crystals reflecting bits of Him here and there as dimly as the dusty prisms of this old Victorian chandelier. Could anyone really spread His message? Hadn't He said, "I don't need any of you to do My work, but you need Me"?

After the meeting, the Dadachanji family tendered their generous hospitality to us all. We drank tea or mango pop, and sampled some kind of chocolate-coloured sweet "spaghetti," (Parsi sev or vermicelli) on the verandah of the Mobos Hotel, then drove back to our own quarters.

Thursday - November 1 - Morning Session

On this morning around 9:00 o'clock in the main hall, the 144 Western men and women gathered together around Baba for the first time. Virginia Rudd asked Baba how He had slept. Baba replied, "I cannot go to sleep now, or I would wake up in 700 years!" Baba then embraced each one of us individually, including several of the men who had not yet met Him. He said of Clarissa [Adams], "You are exactly the same and Ena [Lemon] too!" He asked Lenny Willoughby if he remembered the song he sang for Baba in 1958, "He's got the whole world in His Hands," and asked him to sing it again. After the song, Baba said, "Tomorrow there will be no embraces. Otherwise, we will fill up the session only with embraces - and I will be limp!"

Eruch said the Easterners were now arriving at Guruprasad and collecting in the waiting hall for the afternoon session. Baba then made a personal comment here and there to those in the group. He asked Bunty Kelly, "Are you worrying about little Margaret?" (Her 3-months baby) He said, "Worry about Me! Let Me worry about her!" Baba commenced on how thin Tex Hightower, the ballet dancer was and said, "He loves Me very much." Then He asked, "Ben, are you awake?" - continuing the joke about Doctor Hayman's drowsiness from the 1958 Sahavas.

He told Harry Kenmore and Ben to keep near Him. He told Dr. Chamberlain He was very happy he could make the trip. He said to Warren Healy He was

pleased with the pamphlets Warren had printed. He asked several of us if we had slept well. When Charles Purdom replied, "No," Baba asked, "Were you thinking of Me?" He inquired after Joseph Harb's health, and told Ruth White, "Do not think of anything but Me, so when you drop the body you will be with Me."

The Master then handed Dennis O'Brien and Bill Le Page a manuscript of the latest Discourses in which He has answered many questions. Dennis was to get it printed with Bill's help. He teasingly said to Anita Vieillard, "You won't read it. You don't want to know anything about God. At least read it to know what I have said." Then He mentioned the gift of 1000 copies of the book *Sparks of the Truth* presented by Kitty Davy and Delia Deleon on behalf of the Western disciples. Baba said He was very happy with the gift. He mentioned the many pamphlets printed by Easterners on sale in the stalls in front of Guruprasad. Eruch said Baba had called all the Western men (yesterday) for half an hour just to have His embrace, "Then He gave us men two hours when you women were not here."

Baba began: "What is the aim of life? It is to see God and become one with God. If God is, then we must see Him. That is our sole aim. There are different ways of seeing God, called Yogas. Some try to see God through meditation and concentration on the Absolute within. That too is a very long process. And this process of concentration does not help you to rip open the veil that separates you from the Beloved and allow you to see God within.

"There are many yogis all over the world. Many of them try to gain bliss through extraneous means and become drug addicts; many of them get addicted to smoking hemp. After one or two puffs they get a feeling of elation, then the effect wears off. Different types of yogis try to see God through different means, and naturally, they get different experiences. But these are in fact only different kinds of hallucinations. Many fakes dupe people and advertise their so-called experiences, although they are nothing but hallucinations. People flock to them to have some experience also, and thus they have their own circle of followers. They pass around a pipe of drugged tobacco and then their followers smoke these pipes and begin to have 'experiences' too.

"One in a million, through intense concentration, does see God within himself; then for him, nothing exists anymore; he sits absorbed within. Even a yogi who is genuine and who gets absorbed in this real experience cannot reach the

Goal, the aim of his life, unaided by the Perfect Master. It is made so complicated, and books on Yoga have made it still more complicated."

He continued: "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." To Anita, He added, "Do you want to be one with God?"

Anita replied, "I just want to see You!"

Baba smilingly chided, "How can you have two things - see Me here, and see Me as I really am?"

Baba: "How very complicated a simple thing has been made! I am giving you a hint - the easiest way to achieve the Goal of life is to leave all and follow Me through love. I don't mean that you should leave your house and family and come here! Don't do that! [*Laughter*] I mean that you must stay in your house and with your family but love Me as I want you to love Me - love Me above all. That is the simplest way. Another hint - a still more simple way to attain the Goal is to obey Me. Obey Me implicitly. Is it possible? That is simpler than the simplest thing. Try. If you try, I help you.

"It is because of My love I have drawn you all to Me. If I did not love you, you would not come to Me or care for Me. It is not your love that has brought you to Me, it is My love that has drawn you to Me. Good old Margaret, she helped two other lovers to come to Me."

Eruch then read out Baba's message for this day: "No one dies, no one is born; the only fortunate and rare one who does die, dies the Real Death and takes birth in God. Otherwise, no one dies, and no one is born." "What does this mean?" Baba asked. "It's like going to sleep; and when you take another birth, another form, it is like waking up in the morning but in a new body, in new circumstances. This process goes on repeating itself until you die the real Death and take birth in Me.

Harry, do you have anything to say?" Dr. Kenmore: "This represents the ultimate blessed culmination of the supreme purpose of life."

Baba: "Another point. There are some who exist to hate others, to be jealous of others and make others unhappy; and there are some who exist to love others, to make others happy. One who has become one with God exists for all, both good and bad. Jesus Christ existed for others. To become one with God, one has

not to renounce anything but one's own self. How does one renounce his own self! Anita, can you tear yourself out of yourself!

"I remember one incident when I was a boy. There were four spiritually minded Iranis who had read in books that one must renounce oneself. They decided the best way to lose themselves was to get intoxicated. They started to drink, and for them their experiences were wonderful. Near the wine shop was a bullock cart ... trying to get rid of themselves, all four pulled hard and continually at the bullock cart .in an attempt to tear themselves out of their selves and thus renounce themselves. By morning they were exhausted. They had lost body consciousness. This is how they tried to renounce their physical selves! They only had books; they had no living guide. How will you renounce yourself, Anita?"

Anita: "Through obedience to the Perfect Master."

Baba: "Once you have determined to obey, you are no longer your own. But the slightest hypocrisy spoils your determination and makes the whole thing a farce. You must be honest and sincere in your obedience to the Perfect Master. It's not that easy. Only one rare one can do that! Ivy, can you obey implicitly?"

Ivy Duce: "I'm awfully tired of me!"

Baba: "Harry, can you obey Me implicitly?"

Dr. Kenmore: "If I have to, yes."

Baba continued: "The third point to which I want to draw your attention is titled, 'Love of Woman and God.'

"A man loves a woman who is living in a distant place. His love makes him think of her all the time. He can't eat, he can't sleep. He longs for her continuously. When this longing becomes too great, he either goes to her or compels her to come to him. This is called *Ishke Mejazi*, or physical love. There are two kinds of love - physical love and love for God. Spiritual love is the gift of God to man. Even a man who has this physical love hundred percent is rare. That kind of love is well nigh impossible. Majnu had hundred percent love for Laila."

At Baba's request, 3-B Dimpfl told the story of Majnu [or Majnun] and Laila. Baba continued, "Majnu loved Laila. That was *Ishke Mejazi*. He loved Laila hundred percent the way a man should love a woman. He went mad for love, he couldn't sleep, he couldn't eat, he lost everything but his love for Laila. Even this sort of love of a man for a woman is rare. Then what about Divine Love?"

"There is a difference between these two kinds of love. You cannot have a love for God unless it is a gift from God. Then it is effortless. Once you receive this gift, you go on loving. It is all a burning within. The lover thinks only, 'When will I see the Beloved, my Christ, My Baba, when will I become one with Him?' He lives only for this. This is *Ishke Hakiki* - or spiritual love - the real love. Majnu had physical love, *Ishke Mejazi*, for Laila. When he couldn't find Laila, he asked everyone where she was. He even went to Mecca and embraced the pillars of the Kaaba, asking, 'Where is Laila?' He almost went mad for this love. Then he met a Perfect Master, who told him, 'God is real, the world is an illusion. There is no Laila at all. How can you find her? Only God exists and is real.' Majnu said, 'Whether my Laila is real or illusory, I want her.' Then that Perfect Master had a whim - he touched Majnu on the head. Majnu became God-Realised and experienced himself also as Laila. There was no one but Himself

"In love, one has to suffer a lot. If I tell you, Anita, to discard your dress and go naked around the city and beg, would you be able to? You won't do it willingly. Ella, will you do it?" Ella Winterfeldt: "I'll try."

Baba: "Ben, you won't do it!" Ben: "I won't keep awake!" Baba: "It's your duty to keep Me awake this noon when all the Easterners come! And if you keep awake, I'll keep awake! To love God, one should think of God, long for God, and suffer the fire of separation until such longing reaches its utmost limits and is quenched in Union. But one who obeys the Master - who is one with God - need not suffer, for in obedience there is the grace of the Master. Even obedience is not easy. Therefore, there is no solution at all! Eruch is with Me, he loves Me, he works for Me wholeheartedly, but even for him it is not easy to obey Me."

Eruch: "I just tell Baba we are helpless, in this and all other matters. I found this out during my long stay of many years with Baba. I thought obedience was easy, but I didn't know Baba would say 'Get up' and 'Sit down' at one and the same time! So I tell Baba, 'I am absolutely helpless, I can't obey You, I can't love You!'"

Baba: "Eruch loves Me very much - he is My right hand, but obedience is a terrible affair. The apostles of Jesus also knew how difficult it was to obey Him." Eruch: "We can't please Baba even with obedience; so it is not obedience. Yet to please Him is the aim of everything we do."

Baba: "The best is just to remember Me and forget everything else, leave everything to Me. This is a complicated matter for those who are very interested in spirituality, but not for those who love Me. Try to remember Me, try to please Me, try to do as I wish. That is how you should live in this world; otherwise, it is too complicated. Hafiz says, 'When I first began to love God, I thought that was the end of everything, that I had fathomed the ocean of love, but I was only on the beach.'

"He didn't know anything about the ocean. As soon as the ocean touched him, he got a breeze of love, but then the waves tossed him back on the beach. He shouts, 'O why did I crave for you, God? What is this being tossed back and forth from the ocean to the shore? I have left the world for You, but I cannot find You!' Then the Perfect Master comes to his rescue. He teaches him that the Pearl (of Realization) is on the ocean-bed You have to learn to swim, then learn to dive, then find the Pearl and bring it back! After forty years, Hafiz got the Pearl in his hands. It took forty years for one who was absolutely determined. Not like you people here who have just heard of it!" Baba smiled.

"A person on the spiritual path gets the urge to know God. Then if on the Path, he begins to see lights, colours, etc., he thinks he has reached the goal, that he is experiencing God! He does not realise he has not even begun the journey. It is all Tamasha [the play of Illusion]. There are lots of experiences of the Path, but all of them are but a passing show. The sign of having realised God is that a person continuously experiences, without a break, that he is everything and everyone. He is the infinite ocean of Bliss; he is omnipotent and omniscient. But this experience is not got by everyone - only one rare soul realises God.

"To realize God is not so easy as one thinks. But this can be gained through love for God - by becoming dust at the feet of the Perfect Master. This means to obey Him implicitly. You are no longer your own - you belong completely to the Perfect Master. Hafiz says, 'If you want to be the chosen one, leave everything and stick to Him in obedience. The question of why, wherefore, and what should not enter your mind.' Harry, Margaret, is it clear?"

Baba continued: "Another point is that God alone is and there is nothing but God. God is indivisibly One, and He is indivisibly in each and every one, He cannot be divided. Yet we see everywhere the divisions. What is this separateness? There is Anica, Beryl, Ella, Harry, Charles, others. Why this separateness? Why

are you all separate? God is in everyone and in Baba too - and God *is* everyone. Baba Himself is God. Then what are these divisions? It is only the play of Maya and your ignorance. There are no divisions.

"God is the Ocean, infinite, shoreless ocean. Every drop in the ocean is the Ocean itself, for there are no drops at all ... it is all indivisible shoreless Ocean. But once you have a bubble ... there is an appearance of separateness. Here is one bubble ... there another and there another. Each bubble encloses a drop. The mind is the bubble, you do not know that you are the Ocean, because the bubble gives you an appearance of individuality, until that bubble bursts. When the bubble of Anita (for instance) bursts and disappears, then Anita as the drop comes to know that she is really the Ocean."

One of the mandali, Aloha, recited a Persian couplet by Hafiz which was translated: "Obey the Master implicitly and willingly, then that solves all your difficulties," *and* "What you hear about a Perfect Master, never say it is wrong, because, my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand Him." *And* "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: "God is indivisibly one, He is in each and every one. What then causes these apparent divisions? There are no divisions as such, but there is an appearance of separateness because of ignorance. Drops in the ocean are not separate from the ocean. The bubble over a drop gives the appearance of separateness. When the bubble of ignorance bursts, the individualized self realizes its oneness with the Indivisible Self. The drop *is not*, and the indivisible ocean *is*."

Eruch said: "Baba has given us twenty-one points, some not even as long as a line. They are not for the lovers of Baba but for general use." He read them out while Baba elaborated on some of these points:

"God is absolutely Independent. The only way to approach Him is through love, through constant repetition of His name and invocation of His Mercy.

"Mercy is God's nature.

"Bliss is God's original state.

"Power is God's existence.

"Knowledge is God's duty.

"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.

"There is no Time ... only eternity. How can you grasp eternity? The one who has realised God realises 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 one of you ... that also is a contradiction! When He reaches that Christ-State, He says, 'I am God.' It takes many, many births for anyone to arrive at this answer to the query of '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 coloured' - and so on.

"The Infinite State of God gets lost in the infinite jumble of infinite contradictions. "To know God in His infinite contradictions is to become conscious of His consciousness of His unconsciousness-His Beyond-Beyond State. Do you follow it, Harry?" Eruch: "Baba says even He can't follow it!" Everyone laughed.

Baba: "Explain it to Me, Harry!"

Dr. Kenmore gave his interpretation, then Baba 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 conscious 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. A poet says to his Master, 'I can't understand all this, it goes in one ear and out the other. Why can't you give me a glimpse of Your Infinite State?'"

Aloba recited a couplet in Persian, which Baba translated: "The Master can turn this dust into the Touchstone, He can bestow His grace by only a glance. Hafiz says, 'I don't want your full attention - just a side glance of yours is enough to turn this dust at your feet into gold.' Harry, when will that be?" Dr. Kenmore:

"When we are fortunate to receive the grace of a Perfect Master."

Baba: "You are more 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. When will that be, Margaret? Harry?"

Dr. Kenmore: "Well, the time comes when Baba gets that urge, that whim." Baba: "And that whim has no time ... otherwise, it would not be a whim. A whim has no time. It is all of a sudden. Tukaram, the Perfect Master, says, 'No amount of knocking your head at the feet of a Perfect Master will give you that grace. It happens at the appointed moment.' You have to wait for that moment. That moment is near, and for that, you have to love Me wholeheartedly. Otherwise, you will miss it. If I knock on your door and you are asleep, I will go away!"

Eruch: "Baba, you said that today you would give an explanation of the Four Journeys."

Baba: "I am infinitely bored. Why should I give explanations when you cannot understand anything? It can't be understood. I am infinitely bored, so much so that I am waiting for the moment when I can break My Silence ... when at last the heart of the world can be touched. I am eager for the *Word* to come out! But I have infinite patience. I know that just that Word can solve everything, for that Word is the source of all words; yet I am so infinitely patient that I go on day after day repeating the same old truths.

"The book of Discourses will come out and give many explanations and answer many questions. But as for Christ-Consciousness - one has to *have the experience* to know it. Charles, what do you think?" Charles Purdom: "It amounts to the fact that we are helpless ... we can only have the will, and the will will bring us grace." "True!" Baba gestured. He indicated it was time to disperse - it was then 11:30 - and to return to the *pandal* at 2:45 when the Easterners were coming.

However, Baba resumed: "To know God in His infinite contradiction is to become conscious of His consciousness of His unconsciousness. It is not meant for you all, but for those too eager for spirituality and with an intellect to back them up. "To achieve the God-State, do absolutely nothing while doing everything. Harry, isn't it true?" Dr. Kenmore: "Everything is done by doing nothing." Baba:

"You are not to do anything but become the dust-like aspirant, leaving all to the Perfect Master. To find God, you must find yourself lost to yourself."

"The discourses that Dennis will get printed will help even the scientists - the points on space, time, habitable planets, universes, etc. "To be infinitely conscious, you must consciously lose consciousness of yourself What does it mean? It's not like taking chloroform - you must be consciously unconscious of yourself Space is the gulf between Imagination and Reality. The evolution of Consciousness fills this gulf."

"Time is the interval between your very first imagination and your very last imagination. Yesterday has gone, today is today, and by tomorrow, today will have become yesterday ... and again comes another today. So it is eternally TODAY - NOW. There is no yesterday, there is no tomorrow. There is only *NOW* - the moment, the instant, and eternally it is only the NOW. There is no time. Time is the interval between your very first imagination and your very last imagination. Where imagination ends, God IS, and Godhood begins. Imagination is an eternal mimicry of Reality affecting the shadow-play of illusion." ,

"God is not anything comprehensible. He is Reality: Consciousness Absolute Consciousness, Infinite Consciousness. The Realization of God is Absolute Consciousness minus consciousness of imagination being imagination. It is all a headache. Do you all want to hear this? Harry says it is very clear!"

Eruch adds: "Just reading it is a tongue-twister for me." ¹

Baba: "There is nothing like space-consciousness. Here is an ant on the floor. You are also sitting on the same floor. The ant crawls up your body. But its consciousness is different from yours. What is the difference?" Anita replies, "The ant is only conscious of his crawling, I am a little conscious of this room, but You are conscious of the whole universe."

Baba says, "There is a world of difference between My Infinite Consciousness and your ant-like consciousness. You are all ants before Me in My consciousness, you are all crawling on My body! 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! You are ants, big ants, and you sting Me all the time! Don - tell us that story you wished to narrate." Don Stevens relates how he came to show his movies of Baba to the executives of Aramco, who spoke of that "silent man."

Baba: "I am very pleased to hear this. I am not silent. How can I be silent? I don't speak with My tongue. I speak continuously with My heart. But when I open My lips to speak the Word, then all sorts of things will happen. Everything will be topsy-curvy. But the hearts of the world will get the Word. The time for it is very near."

The remainder of the "21 Points" given by Baba, were read out by Eruch. Then Baba told us, "Today, disperse at 11:30 and come back to the Meeting Hall at 2:45. There won't be any discourses or explanations then. Just sit there quietly and be witnesses. There is nothing beyond sitting near Me, loving Me, remembering Me. This session of discourses is good for Charles because he has to write a book that will do My work. It is also good for Harry's 'baby' - the tape recorder!"

Baba mentioned how hot it had been in this same hall last May. Even Colonel Goldney had to dash out of the room. Baba then mentioned that many Easterners were trying to get in for the three days of the East-West Gathering, demanding "Sahavas" badges. "Charles, are you happy?" Baba asks. "Who is not happy? Raise your hands-Timur's hand is up!" Timur: "I can't say I am unhappy, either!" Baba: "What is the reason?" Timur: "I don't know - that's the problem!" Baba: "I am ready to make up for it. I will give you five minutes near Me. Now others will want to put up their hands too!"

Baba enquired about the work at the Centres. He then said in the State of Andhra there were about 72 Centres, and all His lovers from places all over India want to come to Him here, and if by some miracle He were to change their circumstances, the population of Poona would be doubled. But His lovers are very poor; they all love Him, and they compete with each other in working for Him. Baba then jokingly remarked that in spite of their circumstances, if one prints a calendar, another prints a larger one; if one feeds a hundred poor, another feeds a thousand, and so on.

The condition of His lovers in the district of Hamirpur is very different. When Baba went to a village there some years ago in a car, the villagers had never seen a car before! They had to improvise a road. They joined hearts and hands and tried to give Baba all the conveniences they thought of, such as oil lamps, an improvised bed, hot bath, etc. - they had seen these things done at the Meherabad Sahavas. When they saw Baba for the first time in their village, they

were overwhelmed. They are all so poor - all over the district - and yet so rich in love of Baba. They feel the statue of Baba which they erected a year ago is not a statue, it is Baba Himself. That is what is meant by having Baba as one's constant companion. That is why their love always makes Baba very happy.

Thursday - November 1 - Afternoon Session

We adjourned to our several hotels, reconvening under the sun-struck cloth *pandal* of Guruprasad. At 2:40 P.M. Baba appeared on the platform to shouts of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai," as the entire audience stood, about 5000 Eastern and Western lovers of Baba. About 1000 were from Andhra State, and Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh. The Westerners were seated at the front, men on one side and women on the other. On the platform with Baba were seated the Yogi Shuddhanand Bharati, the Maharani Shantadevi of Baroda, the young boy Balak Bhagavan, the four interpreters, and also Adi K. Irani and Eruch Jessawala. Eruch conveyed 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."

This was translated at once into Hindi, Marathi, and Telugu by separate interpreters. Dr. Kenmore then stood and, after embracing Baba, recited the Master's Prayer in English. At the close 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 continued addressing the gathering: "I have been seeing the Westerners and giving them My embrace and love and also discourses. Today is the first day of the East-West Gathering. I want the Easterners to come to Me, one by one, and to put their hands on My knees and I will pat each one. That will amount to My embracing and meeting the Easterners. Come, come one by one. All of you will not be able to come to Me today; those leftover can come near Me tomorrow.

"The purpose of this gathering is not to give discourses or 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 and discourses, your love for Me will bring you to Me as you should come to Me."

After the translations and a song from the Poona Bhajan Mandali, the Australians approached Baba; then the Easterners, women first, came up to the

platform and took Baba's darshan. Traditionally, they took off their sandals, and this caused some delay and congestion. Then, very suddenly, it began to rain, in fact, to pour, and Baba gestured to Ramakrishnan to hurry the line. In very few moments, we were soaked, and Baba gestured for the Western women to go inside Guruprasad. Here began a new kind of East-West exchange as the women mandali gave the Western women dry clothes and we hung up our wet garments. It was quite a colourful scene as Mehera, Mani, Goher, Rano, Naja, and Meheru tried to find garments to fit us. I was wearing a gauze skirt and petticoat held up precariously by one pin. I thought one good sneeze would be my undoing.

Outside the microphone shorted out and Baba gestured, "Even though there is no mike, think of Me." When we returned to our seats, it was through squishing mud. But the Eastern women, many with bare feet and a child on the hip, were still patiently standing in long lines for Baba's darshan. It was announced Baba would greet Easterners until 5:00 P.M., then the Westerners, and then arti would be performed. Those who missed His darshan could come up to Him for darshan tomorrow, but no one should do so tomorrow who had been to Him today.

Even in the midst of greeting the 5000 present at the Sahavas, Baba was thinking of those who could not come. Someone came through the throng to me to ask for an address only I knew - and only Baba could have known I knew! He sent the lucky one this cable: "While Your Love Is With Me Here I Am With You There. -Baba." Others also received loving cables from the Master, who, reading all hearts everywhere, must have felt the ache of those not present.

At 4:45 the Westerners ascended the platform for a quick embrace and left through a corridor to the right of the dais. Baba said the rain was very significant and that it was a unique East-West meeting. At 5:15 a group of seven women led by Madhusudan, each one dressed in one of Baba's colours, performed arti up on the stage, with trays of lighted camphor, while varicolored lights played over them and the cymbals, conch shell, and tabla were played.

The Western dancer Buntie Kelly performed with them. The audience of 5000 joined in singing Baba's arti "Gaate Chalo." Dusk had fallen as we filed slowly out of the tent, many of us still in our bizarre new clothes! Mani said later she felt this sudden exchange of clothing was somehow symbolic of Baba's remarks that world conditions would change greatly after December.

Friday - November 2 - Morning Session

Arriving early at Guruprasad, I sampled the "Baba wares" in the stalls by the gate-calendars, photos, booklets, lockets, and Baba bhajans set to English tunes, Dr. Deshmukh's contribution. I was happy to meet him at last, a tall, genial man in a black cap.

At 9:00 A.M. we were again gathered around Baba's *gadi* [seat] in the hall of Guruprasad. It was a beautiful sunny day. Baba began by asking, "Who got wet yesterday?" All raised their hands. "Did anyone get a cold? No? It was a nice dress rehearsal!" Baba gestured. Everyone enjoyed the joke.

Baba: "Elizabeth, you looked very nice in that brown dress of yours!" "It came back to me after ten years!" said Elizabeth. Baba: "It was a real East-West gathering! I could greet only one-quarter of the visitors; today I will complete the three-quarters remaining. So be early today - come at 2 o'clock. Be ready for the rush and struggle! These crowds are nothing. You have no idea of the mass darshan programs. I had to satisfy thousands, and I did. Those who have come are only the close ones who obey the instructions ... that is why they have been given badges. When I give public darshan, the masses don't realize I am in a human form ... they fall on Me ... the mandali have to stop them from breaking coconuts at My feet, throwing colored powders and rice over My head. They do not realize the *kumkum* [colored powder] can get into My eyes "

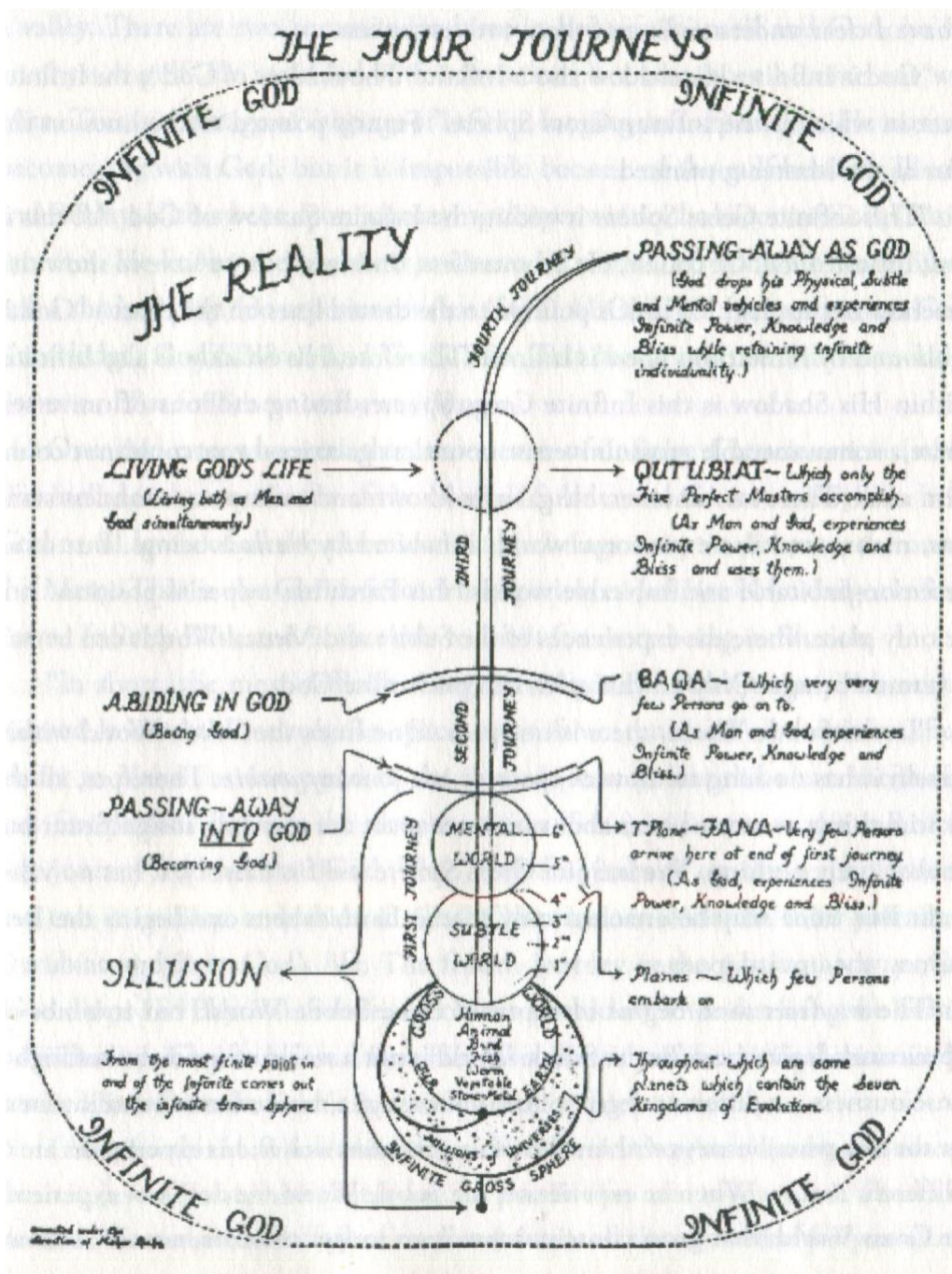
Baba continued to inquire solicitously about our health. He told us how "Energy" (Marian Florsheim) and Mrs. Bahjejian had had passports and money stolen from their hotel rooms. Baba gestured, "Isn't it surprising Energy has lost something?" and she replied, "If I lost everything, I could stay here!"

Baba explained that the word of a big meeting like this gets around and the toughs and pickpockets are lured to town. But on His mass darshan tours when there were 60,000 or more, there were no thieves in the crowd. Once a man had his arm around Eruch's neck and tried to take the rupees out of his pocket. Baba made Eruch give the notes away. "It is your fault, not their fault," He told Eruch.

Yesterday, Baba told us, there were five thousand, not the three thousand expected; many came at the last minute. So He has more work today. He asked us if we noticed the boy with the red loincloth who came up on the platform, Balak Bhagavan, and said he was revered as an "avatar" in Central India. Baba had to explain to him that he should not accept homage, that he had no authority to do

so without attaining the Goal and the experience of the state of "I am God."
 "He came to pay his respects to Me, he loves Me very much," Baba said.
 "There are so many saints of this type in India. A man was claiming to be My chargeman and asked for money from My lovers. He holds classes on spirituality, but he doesn't know the Path, its difficulties, the love, let alone God-Realization. Very recently he visited Canada and made the people believe that he was a Spiritual Master!"

Francis Brabazon set up a large chart in front of us.



Baba: "This is the Chart of the Four Journeys. Charles - are you able to see? The difficult thing is put here in a very simple form. Through your learning, the simplest things have been made very difficult.

"When you set out on a journey from place to place, as you have journeyed from the United States, Australia, England, and Europe to India, and as some men try to reach the moon, Venus, or Mars, you go on an outward, external journey. We will talk here about the *inward* journey - the real journey. I want you to have a clear understanding of these two sentences:

"God is Infinite; His shadow also is infinite. The shadow of God is the Infinite Space in which is the Infinite Gross Sphere." Francis pointed to the lines on the chart as the Master continued:

"This infinite Gross Sphere is within the Infinite Shadow of God. All this is God, Infinite God. Of course, He is boundless, limitless, but we have to show this somehow in the chart." (Francis pointed to the dotted lines on the chart.) "God is not bound by limitations. God is Infinite. Therefore, His Shadow is also Infinite. Within His Shadow is this Infinite Gross Sphere, having millions of universes. There are innumerable gross universes, countless galaxies - you could not count them at all. There are innumerable galaxies known and unknown, countless stars, suns, moons and there are some worlds inhabited by human beings. But of all these non-habitable and habitable worlds, this Earth has a special position. It is the only place where the experiences of the Subtle and Mental Worlds can be had by human beings. Only on this earth can one realise God.

"In the Subtle World, there is no space. One finds the Subtle World within oneself; it has nothing to do with space, it is a journey *within*. Therefore, all the celestial things we see or hear about in outer space are not only insignificant but are absolutely nothing. The Infinite Gross Sphere itself is illusory, it has no value at all. But value may be attached only to the Earth where one begins the Real Journey, the inward journey.

The wayfarer then begins to experience the Subtle World, but it is not an experience of space because the Subtle World is not a world of space, but of higher consciousness-a different degree of consciousness, a more mature consciousness. For the one who journeys within, everything remains as it is; his experiences are of a different nature. When he experiences the Subtle World, he does not experience the Gross World; that gross consciousness is no longer there; it has now become

the Subtle Consciousness. When he journeys farther on (but not in space, he remains where he is) - his consciousness gets still more mature, and it is now of the Mental World, not of the Subtle or the Gross. Then he begins to know the thoughts of other individual minds, he knows what one is thinking. Then a stage is reached when he actually sees God the Infinite within himself, and this 'seeing' is seeing God everywhere.

"Then there comes a stage in the Mental World when he finds himself facing a valley. There are two summits for him; in between himself and God, he sees an abyss, a gulf. He sees God with conviction, but he cannot become one with Him. This is the stage of *longing*, of infinite longing and separation. He wants to become one with God, but it is impossible because of the gulf between Illusion and Reality. If he is bent upon journeying deeper within, he becomes God. Illusion vanishes. He knows there was no universe, no worlds, no body, no space; it was just a shadow-play. He experiences that GOD ALONE IS. He experiences God's Knowledge, God's Power, and God's Bliss. But he cannot use that Knowledge, Power or Bliss for others or for anything.

One rare one who gets that experience of Infinite Consciousness [which also includes the experience of the Mental, Subtle, and Gross worlds], can bring God to all levels of all the three worlds. He brings unity in diversity, the one in the Many. That is the Christ-State. He experiences Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power, Infinite Bliss, and is also able to use it for every being in Illusion.

"In short, the most difficult thing is to *begin* the Real Journey. It's easy to succeed in outward journeys in space, to go from continent to continent, from planet to planet, as compared to the inward journey. But this chart shows that very few persons arrive at the seventh station (Fana) and come to the end of the first journey and become God. Very, very few embark on the second journey and end it in Baqa and abide in God. One rare one ends the third journey in Qutubiat and lives God's life. The fourth journey is the passing away *as* God (God drops His Physical, Subtle, and Mental vehicles) while retaining the infinite individuality; Christ, as Jesus, is as He was and ever will be, as God, because He retains His Infinite Individuality *in* God and *as* God.

"Are you able to follow something of it? If not, there's no harm; don't worry about it. Jesus Christ knew that it was not possible for men to love God. Therefore, He said, 'Come unto me, follow me,' and that is all that is needed for you all.

"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's no need for 'trains or planes' when He is here!"

Eruch then read the Discourse on the Four Journeys [later published in *The Everything and the Nothing*], explaining some of the points Baba had just given us spontaneously. Baba continued, "The Creation-Point is a finite point; out of this finite point the whole of the infinite Creation is issuing forth. It is a continuous process; there is no end to it. Out of a Speck in the INFINITY, called Creation-Point, has sprung forth in stages this whole Creation. This world of ours is nothing but a most finite speck in the Speck. Although to you it appears to be the world, for Me it is nothing, not even a tiny speck."

Eruch continued reading the Discourse on the many universes, visible and invisible, and many worlds, of which a number are inhabited. Baba said that scientists will gradually come to know what He has been saying for many years and also today. He continued, "It is not possible to see all the universes and the worlds. They are not visible even with all the modern means; nor will it be possible for man to reach them or contact them; yet the scientists will come to know about them."

From the Discourse, a paragraph on the Seven Kingdoms of Evolution was read, which stresses that only on the planet Earth do human beings reincarnate and begin the evolutionary path to God-Realisation. The Earth is at the centre of the millions of universes, to which all souls must migrate to begin the Inward Journey.

Baba: "In Infinity, you cannot have a point as the centre. Otherwise, it's not Infinity. And yet on the chart, we have made, the Earth is the centre of Infinite Space. Why? Because there are many habitable worlds in Infinite Space, and human beings of those worlds have to migrate eventually to the Earth. In some worlds, the people are very intelligent, much more so than on Earth, yet they must come to this Earth-speck for the sake of the 'heart,' the evolutionary journey."

The Discourse continued. Baba explained, "Charles has individuality as Charles, the human being. He knows he is Charles. When he is God-Realized, he has Infinite Consciousness; he loses his limited individuality and merges in God. The world doesn't exist for him, nothing exists but God, and then he experiences

Infinite Bliss. When Charles regains his individuality, it is infinite, and he is still Charles, but with infinite consciousness; he is Charles and God simultaneously. But all this is not meant for you people." Baba smiled, "It's all useful to posterity. For you, it is sufficient to obey Me, love Me, and hold on to My daaman - then wherever I am, you will also be; if you were to begin your inward journeys, you would also be with Me, because I am also there on those journeys. All this is illusory; God alone is real.

"You must love God, see God, become one with God; that is your duty. Your duty is to know this is all illusion; God alone is real. But to love God is also not in your hands. It's a gift from God to you - and the one who receives His Grace has nothing to do with these journeys whether outward or inward. Where you go on the journey is not important if you hold on to My daaman. Everything is immaterial - Hafiz has given us consolation."

Francis read his translation of Hafiz's ode:

Although you have not received love's guerdon,
 One day this desert will become a garden - so *be not grieved*.
 Do not turn your heart away, nor expostulate
 Against the Beloved, but bear your present state - and *be not grieved*.
 Let this disgusted mind and troubled heart be stilled,
 One day desire for union will be fulfilled - so *be not grieved*.
 Behind the curtain, a secret game is being played
 That you know not, so don't give up, nor be dismayed - nor *grieved*.
 Once you have set out for the Beloved's abode
 Do not let mere stones and thorns turn you from the road –
nor be much grieved.
 Maya will do her best to thwart your labour,
 But when you have a captain like Noah you will reach safe harbour –
 so *be not grieved*
 Although the way is full of dangers and seems to have no end,
 There is an end to every beginning with this Friend – so *be not grieved*.
 When this Friend is the same as God, don't plague him with petitions,
 But suffer gladly love's rules, trials and conditions - *and be not grieved*

Baba: "What is there to worry about? So don't worry! Yesterday it rained and you got drenched. What did happen? Nothing! Today it is just the same here. Nothing happened yesterday, it is just today!"

Baba took in His hands a large glass that was covered with bright golden paper and marked "GOD." Baba said, "Do you like me to play some tricks? Take this glass as God the Infinite. God can't be seen with our limited eyes. He is Infinite, absolutely invisible, independent, yet He pervades everything. Now see that there are three illusory existences inside God [three smaller glasses inside the large glass] .

Here is one of them, the Gross World, it is the smallest [innermost glass covered with a copper shade], though to us it is so big, so Infinite. This Gross World depends on the next illusory existence - the Subtle World [second inner glass]. The Gross existence depends on the Subtle and is within the Subtle, and this Subtle existence depends on the Mental World [third inner glass]. This Mental Existence depends on God [the large glass]. Thus the Gross depends on the Subtle, and the Subtle depends on the Mental, and the Mental depends on God, and God is independent. Note that there are four glasses and that each one is different and separate; but each one is dependent on the other, except the large outer glass marked GOD. Only GOD is independent [like the outermost glass that holds all the others]

"Today I have to meet about 4000 people from outstations. More than 10000 will be coming on the 4th for My darshan, for it is the darshan day for the public in general, so be prepared. It might rain again today, and you might have to change clothes! Did you get wet yesterday, Ben? Were you awake when it rained?" - to which Ben Hayman replied: "During the rain, I fell asleep."

Baba teased: "I was infinitely bored, so I brought on the showers. I would like to retire to My Sound Sleep State for 700 years. But I have to give 'My Word' to the world. The heart of the world has to feel the impact of My Word. I can't help it, though I would like to go to sleep for 700 years!"

Baba inquired who got wet yesterday. He said: "No matter how hard it rains or blows, stick to your posts. Hafiz says: Be firm as a rock in the midst of the storm of love, or it might turn you topsy-turvy. That was nothing yesterday, only a shower. Let us see what happens today. Dr. Chamberlain, were you wet?"

Dr. Chamberlain: "I had no protection." Baba: "I was the protection there! Joseph - were you wet?" Joe Harb: "It was the universal baptism!"

Baba: "Harry?" Dr. Kenmore: "The outside was as wet as inside." Baba: "I'm happy to hear it. But when you feel completely wet, soaked in love for God, it will be so glorious that even the brilliance of the sun will be dim before that glory. You must become saturated with Love."

Eruch: "The Australians have not come yet. They are expected at 12:30." Baba asked: "Will they be able to go back?" and Eruch said: "There's no news that they can't!" Baba told us, "When you reach your homes, write one letter directly to Me - only to Me - then no more letters. 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. Anita - when you are here I can't work!" Baba teased.

We were told to be in the pandal at 1:45 P.M., and that there would be no embraces. Baba: "Dana, are you worried? Didn't you hear what Hafiz said - not to grieve? Who else is worried?" No one answered. "If no one is worrying," Baba gestured, "I have to worry. But My worry is great fun for Me! It's a very old habit of Mine to worry about the whole creation, to worry continuously for the release of souls from the bondage of life and death. It's great fun. 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 souls 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."

This ended the morning session.

Friday - November 2 - Afternoon Session

Promptly at 1:45 we took our seats in the *pandal*. One thousand more chairs had been added. On the platform, the Poona Bhajan Group was singing in praise of Avatar Meher Baba. By Baba's chair were Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati and the Maharani of Baroda. At 1:46 Baba entered as we all rose, 6000 strong, crying: "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai." Baba embraced a tall Sikh, then gestured, "It may rain!" Darwin Shaw stepped to the microphone and read Baba's message as follows:

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 My Love afresh 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 realisation 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 the 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 among you who love Me and accept Me for what I am, there is sometimes lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

Patently I have suffered these things in silence for 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 realise 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.

Baba gestured that the translations should be completed before the rain started. He said there was no need for a Gujarati translation, and He called for the Easterners to come for their embrace, starting with the women. Colourfully dressed, many carried flower and tinsel garlands which they placed on His wrist and then Eruch lifted aside. One was made entirely of sweets and nuts. The weather was warm and every so often Eruch would tenderly wipe Baba's face and neck. Sometimes a lost child was held up by the mike to be claimed by its family.

Then the men and boys took their turn - Sikhs, Moslems, Jains, Parsis, Hindus, Christians, of every size and description. Sometimes a proud father would stop and introduce his whole family. One or two cripples on crutches hobbled painfully up to the dais to have the Beloved Master's darshan. Once Baba teased, "Ben, are you awake? Keep awake, so I can keep awake!"

At 3:15 rain seemed to threaten again, and Baba dictated: "I am very happy you stayed in your places, and everything is going well. Even if it rains, I want you to remain silent and disciplined." At 4:00 P.M. the Australians, whose flight had been cancelled by the war emergency, arrived at Guruprasad and came up to the dais for their first embrace from Baba. He also embraced a devotee who had to leave the following morning for a meeting of Parliament.

Baba asked all of us, "Are you feeling tired? If so, I will stop. I'm not tired."

Voices all through the hall joined in a loud "No." Baba then said we had to thank the Indian climate for the slight showers that fell again, as they helped somewhat to cool the oppressive heat. At 4:30 a special song was sung. At 5:00 Baba stopped the line of devotees and asked those who had not yet met Him to come at 2:00 P.M. the following day, and the others to come at 2:45. The colourful arti song-ceremony again ended the day of "Avatar darshan."

Saturday - November 3 - Morning Session

Some of us were at Guruprasad early this morning - 8:30 A.M. - and we witnessed the affecting scene of the little band of Andhra villagers and some fisherfolk greeting Baba on the outer porch. Baba had sent for them at the bus station, where they were about to leave without having had His embrace. Now as they squatted around Him in a colourful semicircle of men, women, and children, He asked them to sing something for Him. This was their spontaneous song: "I bow to You in Your Infinite aspects. Infinite Bliss, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Powers 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." Eruch said even Baba was moved with the devotion expressed in their song. A prasad of sweets was passed out, and after each one had the privilege of embracing Baba, they left.

At 9:00 the Westerners were again seated before Baba in the inner hall. He said today He would give time to individuals or groups to be with Him exclusively as He called for them. For tomorrow (the 4th) there would be no time for individual talks, but there would be a performance by a noted singer.

Three men now entered, and Baba explained that these were the workers who had arranged to bring all the Andhra lovers to Poona on a special train. The workers had not yet seen Baba, although it was the third day after arrival. He reminded them He had once told some of the mandali twenty years ago, "There will come a day when you'll want to come from far away, and you will not be able to see Me." Now, He embraced each of the three Andhraites and said, "The only work you three have to do now is to see that it doesn't rain here!" They embraced Baba with such love that He gestured after they left, "I'm limp in the arms, but by 1 o'clock I will be strong again to embrace the people."

Two more men came up for an embrace. Both said they loved Him very much. He then reminded Dr. Hayman He had promised him five minutes today. "Today's the day, Ben! Shall we send all these people away?" At Baba's request, Lenny Willoughby sang "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" as we all clapped the rhythm. Baba gestured, "The words are true. It's a fact. I am very happy to have the whole world in My hands. It seems so quiet, calm, peaceful ... just a little speck!" We all smiled with Baba about the "little speck" in His hands. Now different groups and individuals who belonged to no group had their turn alone with Him. To the Sufis Baba said:

"The only thing I must give is the Word ... next year. That is the reason why I plan to stop everything next year. I will not call for either Easterners or Westerners ... no one! I will prepare for the urge to break My Silence. It is simple, but I must have that urge. You do not know how eager I am to give that Word! I am preparing everything. I must see to the affairs of the whole world. Meanwhile, I stress that when I give that Word, all of you who love Me will know it in your hearts. Much will be revealed to you then. God is the Truth. So why worry about the future? Didn't you hear yesterday what Hafiz said - 'Why worry, it never means anything?'

Murshida [Duce], give up some of your worries! "Do your duty, but don't feel worried about it. Remain hundred percent happy, hundred percent honest! Do the best you can; then at night, relax and forget about everything. Keep happy, that is your duty! And remain honest; don't compromise. When you do, you get a fear complex in the heart."

"I am telling the whole world not to worry. The time is fast approaching when I will give the Word. The whole world will know about it, and there will be many changes. You have no idea how insignificant your worries will become then; so why not stop worrying today? Try to live until I give the Word. You may worry yourself to death unnecessarily - and then when I give the Word, you won't be there!"

Some of the young ones were concerned about their careers. "The whole world is bound by worry," said Baba. "I am full of worries - you have no idea what real worries are! But with Me, there is Infinite Bliss, and that sustains Me. Otherwise, it is a burden." Lud Dimpfl described how he worried briefly about money left in a pair of trousers sent to the cleaners. Baba sent for his wife, Bea, who said she hadn't worried about the lost money at all! Baba continued to Lud:

"Why not lose yourself, so you can come to Me! Forget your worries and find Me within you. When I give out the Word, let it touch your heart ... it will give you such happiness that the loss of even millions of dollars will not matter. No amount of money can give you that Experience! The time must come when I will give My Word. Meanwhile, I want your love. I want you to love Me as you should." When asked about the Sufi Centre, Baba said, "It is one of My channels. I am the Source I have so many channels, tributaries." Baba said that now Francis was with Him, he knew how much Baba suffered. Baba continued, "And

the end of all suffering would be the giving of the Word; that would be the release for Me! But I tell you all again - do *not worry*."

I went in to Baba with my old New York group, together with a friend from California. I mentioned some of His Western lovers who could not get to the Sahavas. He kindly inquired after my health and work, and in the same way, made personal contact with others in the group. He said to us, "I am very happy to see you all here. How is the group, Fred? How do you manage among yourselves?" Someone replied there were hitches, hindrances caused by little personal things, but that everyone met on common ground.

"To maintain an atmosphere of cooperation and harmony is most essential," Baba told us. "Do you know that I am also there with you all at the meetings?" About the problem of establishing other Centres, Baba said, "All these problems will be solved when I give the Word. The problems of the whole world will find a solution. Continue to love Me ... and those who love Me will feel the impact of that Word in their hearts ... you may even topple over or do a somersault!" Baba teased.

"That new book of discourses will give some satisfaction; even the scientists will find information in it that will help them a great deal. But what is wanted is help through the heart. One has to find Me there. That feeling gives such happiness that you will even stop reading My discourses. When I give out the Word, then all problems will be solved. Are you happy?"

Others saw Baba individually; some He embraced. After He left the room, I went in search of Dr. Donkin and some of his magic pills.

Saturday - November 3 - Afternoon Session

Around 2:30 we were back under the rainbow-coloured pandal. A workman clambered on the roof, adjusting the side panels to cut off the glare. Swallows darted freely back and forth under the portico. After Baba arrived on the platform, again hailed by all His lovers, He embraced several devotees from Calcutta and Madras. It was announced He would give a parting embrace to the Westerners on the morning of the 5th, and the Easterners who had not yet embraced Him were to come to Him at 8:30 A.M. on the morrow. Baba added, "Once you have My Real Darshan in your hearts, there is no need to come up here on the stage for

darshan. I want you to love Me as I should be loved, so one day you will have My Real Darshan."

After this, Darwin Shaw read the following message:

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 you 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 harbour 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 laboured hard in this work: publishing magazines and other literature, organising meetings, sacrificing your vacations in travelling, 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 organisations 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 realise that there is a greater work ahead of you than what you have been doing. And you have been searching your minds and heart 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 differently. 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 yourself 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 yourself 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.

Baba gestured, "If it rains, we're finished!" Again He gestured to Ben Hayman, "If you go to sleep, I go to sleep!" A young lady, Miss Lata Limaye, sang a ghazal which Baba translated for us: "The lover says, 'Never let anyone drink the wine of love!' His life is then nothing but turmoil. He is like a fish out of water; he experiences a volcano within. 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."

Next, the Andhra group, headed by Balagopal Bhaskara Raju, gave us a glimpse of how they spread Baba's name through a narrative song called "Burra Katha." Four men came on stage to the accompaniment of tabla and harmonium; one narrated Baba's life story and the other three, representing a Muslim, a Christian, and a Hindu, interrogated him. Baba gestured, "My workers make Me naked! They tell of My childhood - how mischievous I was!" This was their 150th performance.

Eruch came to the mike and relayed the management's request for all to pay their transport fees. Then he added as Baba made a sign, "Baba says He has been talking about God and now I have spoiled the atmosphere by talking about transport charges!"

Next (around 4:00 P.M.) came Baba's favourite real qawwali songs, sung by Habib Qawwal and his group. These songs are based on God the Beloved, and the pangs of separation felt by His lovers. As if to illustrate this theme, Balak Bhagwan, the beautiful young boy in red trunks, came upon the platform by Baba and kissed Baba's hands and cried on them. All through the afternoon, he kept his eyes only on Baba, trying to win a glance or a smile from his beloved Master. His genuine feeling for Baba touched my heart.

The first qawwali song was sung by an Indian man accompanied on the harmonium. Baba said it all boiled down to this: "Because God is infinitely close to you, He appears to be infinitely at a distance. He is closer to you than your own breath. But you cannot find Him unless you become dust at the feet of a Perfect Master." Baba continued explaining, "These are wonderful words. The lover tells the Beloved, the Perfect Master, O My Beloved, I am also non-existent in your love; I am burned up from head to foot. I am a live volcano all aflame! Don't stop the tears that fall in the pain of separation from you! Don't comfort me - don't wipe away my tears with your daaman. Otherwise, your own daaman will burn. I only want Union with You, nothing else, otherwise, keep away!" This is the complaint of the lover.

"The lover warns other lovers: 'Beware, once you drink the wine of love, you don't belong to yourself. You are dead to the world. You cannot complain, for love seals your lips!' Here is a warning to Baba lovers: either keep away from this wine of love of Beloved Baba or, if you taste it, seal your lips against all complaints!"

Baba continued: "The joke is that the lover says, 'I try my best to tread the Path, yet when I see you I lose myself, I do not know where I am!' It is impossible to appreciate this qawwali without understanding the depth of the meaning of the words. They are full of love; it is the language of the heart."

Another song: "Whoever is struck by this disease of separation from the Beloved never feels rested; he is always restless like a fish out of water. But he can't complain." Baba continued: "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.

"It is no joke to love," commented Baba. "If you have come to see this as fun, you will become fun yourself! The singer is saying, 'I tried to see You a thousand ways, but I could not see You. I see a face, eyes, nose, limbs, but I can't see Your Oceanic Form. I have knocked my head on a thousand thresholds, but I cannot see Your Real Form.'"

"But only one in a billion can see Me as I really am, in My Real Form," Baba added. Then He gestured, "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.

A sigh of happiness ran through the great throng. Baba continued: "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."

The musicians embraced Baba, and the "Gaate Chalo" arti closed the meeting as the swift Indian twilight fell on the crowds streaming out of the *pandal* through the lighted gate of Guruprasad.

Sunday - November 4 - Morning Session

This was the great day of public darshan - when anyone who wished could come to see Baba. I was at Guruprasad early enough to see Baba enter alone from the dais into the inner hall. He looked terribly tired, infinitely tired, His face full of Christ-suffering. Since 6:00 A.M. that morning He had already embraced 3000 people. But in a few moments, He entered the Hall again, and with one of those miraculous changes seemed fresh and glowing. Eruch said Baba had already embraced 7000 persons during these three days.

"I have been on the dais from 6:00 A.M." Baba greeted us. "All rest is suspended for the sake of My lovers. I cannot give embraces. I have to be free for the public at 2:00 P.M. This morning I have done My duty of love, now you will help." Baba referred to the fact that our love seemed to renew Him, and as the morning wore on, this became a fact.

"In about half an hour you will hear some of the best musicians of India," He continued. "They play classical music. The chief singer, Sri Vinayakrao Patwardhan, visited Russia some months ago and it is said that Khrushchev looked down his throat to see if he was concealing some instruments [so remarkable was his voice]. He and his whole family love Me very much. He usually charges a big fee to perform but gives his best performance for Me without any fees. When I sent word, he postponed an engagement at Calcutta, and will be here soon to sing before Me."

Baba said that yesterday we had heard the best qawwali singing. The song was based on the lover's complaint at being separated from his Beloved God. "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. "The seventh plane biblical saint Zacharias³¹ sealed his lips, although he was sawed from head to toe. I am thinking of sewing you up, Anita, from head to foot, to seal your lips!"

Baba inquired where Ivy Duce was, also Helen Webb. Both were ill, but the Master sent for them, saying it was their last chance to see Him in His physical form.

Then He began to joke a bit with us all. He twitted Dr. Kenmore about eating so much ("right after breakfast he is hungry"). When He heard "Energy" and Mrs. Bahjejian had got back their passports from the thieves, He said, "Nothing goes anywhere, but it comes to Me. Remember that you wanted to give Me 400 rupees? The thief took away exactly 400 rupees. So now it's settled!"

Baba reminded us to send Him one letter upon our return home. "In 1963 I won't see anyone nor hear any correspondence. I will prepare for the urge to break My Silence. In an emergency, you may send Me a cable reply-paid. Reply-paid forms, when not needed for replying to you, can then be used for My cables to others."

An Easterner came in to say farewell to Baba, who explained that even when this man's son died, the father (unmindful of the incident) carried on Baba's work without pause. Baba chided Dr. Kenmore for yawning and when he retorted he was relaxing, Baba said, "If I relaxed, everything would collapse."

He then advised us not to go to far off places in the North of India, or we might get stranded. Also, we should all inform Meherjee of our departure plans. Then some of the Eastern mandali and volunteers came in and embraced Him.

Baba gestured: "Instead of blood, let the love of God flow through your veins. Is it possible, Francis?" and Francis replied, "Nothing is impossible when You say it." Baba then told the story of how the body of one of Krishna's lovers was discovered in the ruins of a collapsed building by the "Tick Tock" of Krishna's name; even though badly hurt and unconscious, he automatically repeated the Lord's name. The Name had become his breath.

All during this time the musicians were tuning up offstage and wetting their "whistles" with tea. Eruch told us the better the musician, the longer it took to tune up. Tomorrow we were to hear musicians from the All-India Poona Radio Station. Perhaps hinting this would be the last Sahavas, Baba said there would be no other opportunity to hear music like this in His Presence.

At last, about 10:10, the famed singer began an exhibition of his extraordinary skill, accompanied by his troupe, a young tabla player, the sitar player, and a flautist. One song was the classic *dhun* [chant] "Shahanai Gat," composed by Saint Mira. In her song, she tells Krishna, "Don't leave me all alone! Kindle the flame of Love in my heart. Even if I burn to ashes, apply those ashes to Your body so I can remain with You, O Lord." Another was based on the theme of complete surrender to the Perfect Master.

Baba translated: "You are the Highest of the High, the Protector of all. You are Infinite Bliss and blessing; You are everything, and I want to surrender to You. Don't leave me, I am the weak one. No one will listen to me but You. Don't let me go." The tabla player gave us a solo; Baba told us to watch his fingers.

At 11:15 the musicians embraced Baba and left. He said ordinarily they needed more time to warm up to give their best performance, but today He gave them no time. "If you could understand what he just sang, you would feel so happy. There will be no singing tomorrow."

B. Bodh, the development engineer who supervised the drying of the *pandal* after our "petite monsoon," came in for Baba's embrace. Baba said he would be the city engineer at Poona next year. Then Baba asked the women and the men to exchange seats this afternoon, for the women had had the sun for three days on their side of the *pandal*. On this note, the morning session ended, without embraces.

Sunday - November 4 - Afternoon Session

Around 2:00 P.M. the last day of darshan commenced. Baba was already on the dais and women were filing past Him as I entered the *pandal* and found a seat on the shady side. Commenting on the heat of today's sun, Baba said:

"If you were inside the sun itself that would be no comparison with the heat of love within the true lover of God. There, God, the Beloved doesn't allow one to use fans, but here, Beloved Baba does permit you to have fans!"

Don Stevens stepped to the platform and read "The Universal Message," given several years ago on the anniversary of His Silence. After the reading, the Master said, "Next year I will not be available to anyone, either from the East or the West. I must prepare for the *urge* to break My silence." This was translated by the three interpreters. Baba corrected the Telugu interpreter at one point, and then He continued: "I have to break My Silence and give My Word to the world. But I have not yet prepared Myself for the urge to break My Silence. I feel it will take about a year's time to break My Silence. I have been telling you all I will break My Silence next year, but now next year *means* next year! For the first time, I take the responsibility of My own promise to you all."

Then Baba asked Dr. Kenmore to recite the Prayer of Repentance in English.

"You should all pay attention to this prayer in My Presence. I want you to forget and forgive everything of the past." We all stood as the Prayer was said. At the end, Baba made a beautiful gesture as if He took away the load and burden of our collective past. Then He allowed the mandali one by one to come and bow down to Him for the first time in many years - "twenty-two years," Eruch said. This was surely a significant moment for them all.

"If I finish with giving My darshan to the public, you may all bow down to Me. If not, you can all go home thinking you have taken My darshan, which you have had the last four days," Baba announced. A basket of hard candies was presented to Baba and blessed by a quick gesture, then passed out among us. The Poona Bhajan Mandali continued their devotional songs. Meanwhile, the throng filed continuously past Baba, averaging about thirty a minute. Among those coming by were the gypsy caste of Banjaras in colourful clothes sewn with big pieces of mirror, and wearing heavy ornaments. They had walked twelve miles to see Him, Baba said. "These are nomadic tribes. I have visited their huts. Each one has a photo of Me; they worship Me as the living God. The government support

has changed their habits of dress. They used to wear many more ornaments, even sleeping in them.

"I am in the least one of them and in every one of you. No one is low and no one high in My nazar. Because God is One; I am One, you are all One; there is no difference of tall or short, man or woman, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor. All are one in My nazar." At this point, a woman devotee began crying "Baba, Baba" at the back of the tent and came rushing forward. She was caught by the workers and taken outside. Baba said, "She is full of love, but if permitted to come to Me, would take hold of Me and never let go." He gestured with hands at His neck.

He also said, "When the queue is over you may come to Me and bow down, and that will be the first bowing down and the last bowing down." Now the queue extended one-third of a mile outside the gates; 7000 people were here, Eruch reported. So many garlands piled up beside Baba, they looked like a mountain of blossoms. Some were just tiny strings, some gorgeous affairs of roses, jasmine, ginger flowers, marigolds. One family brought their bald-headed baby to Baba whose hair they had cut off. Baba explained it was a custom to cut a child's hair and take it to Kashi or to Benares to drop it in the sacred Ganges, but for His lovers, Kashi and Benares were here at His feet.

In small groups, the Western women were invited to go inside Guruprasad and say farewell to Mehera, Mani, and His other women disciples. At 3:30 Baba speeded up the line. A correspondent of the *Maharashtra Times* asked Baba which country would be ultimately victorious, China or India. Baba replied, "As the Avatar of the Age, I have taken birth in India, so India (Bharat) will eventually be victorious. Just now someone was reciting the call of Lord Krishna in the Gita. I am Lord Krishna. I am the Ancient One; time and time again I come down to protect and redeem My lovers. I am the Christ, the personification of Love."

Shouts went up from each language group as Baba's pronouncement of His Avatarhood and India's victory was translated. At 4:30 the queue was still longer than ever. Baba gestured, "At this rate, they won't be able to have My darshan." He added, "The Westerners will have no chance either." Kitty Davy replied from the front row, "It's enough just to sit here and watch You." But Baba answered, "It's one thing to see the ocean and another thing to dip your feet in it," at which the Easterners murmured approval.

Still, the crowd seemed endless but amazingly patient; even the innumerable babies made no outcry. There were more lost children held up to the mike and an amusing moment when one little fellow on the platform lost his trousers. I kept my eyes on Baba's eyes continually and on His exquisite, gesturing hands. He was wearing a heavy, fantastic garland all of the roses, and every now and then Eruch tenderly wiped the sweat from his brow and neck.

The crowd came on and on, first men then women. And no matter how poor, His lovers offered the Avatar a gift - coconuts, sweets, bananas wrapped in paper or leaves - and above all they offered Him their hearts. Mothers with babies swung the little ones off their hip and onto Baba's feet in one swift gesture of surrender. Others laid their hands on Baba's knees or touched His feet with their forehead. Baba did not always glance down at those before Him but sometimes carried on a lively *mudra*³² conversation with Eruch or others! It was as if He really was the Ocean of Love and to touch His feet was all the individual needed.

Around 4:45 Baba said, "After a very long time I am giving My Poona lovers the opportunity to bow down to My feet. In January 1956, I gave My last public darshan in Poona. Today I have again allowed the Poona public to come for My darshan. After they are finished, you will have an opportunity if it doesn't rain." He gestured to Dr. Kenmore, "Your thoughts are on Me within."

An Eastern poet read a poem dedicated to Baba. The queues of men and women on both sides still pressed forward. At 5:30 Baba announced: "It's impossible for all to come near Me and bow down at My feet. The queue is just where it was. You have been gazing at Me all this time. Carry My form there in your heart and see it as often as possible."

Harry Kenmore, guided by Christine Wise, went through the darshan line, and Baba said, "You are a daredevil to go in the queue and you are blessed for it." Groups from different Centres at Delhi, Dehra Dun, and Andhra came on the platform to sing bhajans. I went indoors to say goodbye to dear Mehera, Mani, Naja, Meheru, and Dr. Goher, and to receive some prasad of puffed grains. During this time the gates of Guruprasad were closed, and the queue cut off. Those remaining went by Baba more quickly, followed by the volunteer workers. A spontaneous dance by one lover, a song from Lenny Willoughby, and then arti - the last arti of the Sahavas - were performed.

Baba said, "All of you - take Me with you." As we left the *pandal*, it was twilight with spectacular coloured clouds piled high around a slender moon. I looked back at Baba's white figure seated in His chair under the soft glare of the lamps, still surrounded by the colourful throngs of His lovers. The Avatar in person was still showering His love after having embraced over 10000 souls. Truly He is the inexhaustible Source of Grace in our time. Later, we heard the crowds had broken down the closed gate of Guruprasad in their intense desire to see Baba, who then in His mercy drove out among them in a car, and in this way gave all of them a glimpse and His blessing.

November 5 - Morning Session

How impatiently I waited for my two companions to finish breakfast so we could go to Guruprasad early, for this was the very last day of Sahavas! Even so, there were some lucky ones ahead of us. Baba was already asking Dr. Kenmore why he was late this morning, and he replied, "I had to visit my dear uncle!" which made Baba smile. Baba then told us that the boy who played the tabla in this morning's program practised every day before Baba's picture.

"Poona belly" had me in its full grip by now and I just prayed I would be able to stay conscious through this last morning. Baba, reading my thoughts, turned and asked if any of us were sick. I raised my hand. Baba gestured with His hands over His tummy and gave a few words of advice - I shouldn't eat everything set before me! Marion Florsheim said she felt sad. Baba said, "Why should you be sad? Take Me [home] in your hearts." He told us that many of the Easterners had to leave the meeting last night without seeing Him, so He went out in a car, and they were very surprised. They had His darshan after all.

The Maharani entered and sat on the floor close to Baba as before. Baba continued saying that the Eastern volunteers under the charge of K.K. Ramakrishnan, had to arrange accommodations for 3500 Baba lovers from outstations and there were 3000 more who had to find their own lodging. He said that after the meeting this morning we should all disperse except Ned Foote, who was to be near Him for five minutes.

As more entered the hall, Baba queried, "Are you all in good health?" A few had colds. He said, "Tomorrow is the day for your trip to Ahmednagar to visit My resting place at Meherabad, and residence at Meherazad. I want you all to go,

health permitting. Meherabad, where I will rest after dropping my body, is now like a desert. After 100 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?" About twenty were not going for various reasons.

"Jeanne [Shaw], Baba wants you to go," Eruch interpreted the Master's gestures. "What if you die going on this pilgrimage; you will be blessed if you die on the way to Baba's last resting place." Jeanne smiled and nodded bravely.

Manohar Sakhare and his wife from New Delhi now entered. A Wing Commander in the Indian Air Force, Manohar Sakhare had to leave on emergency service. They embraced Baba tearfully. Baba then told Kitty Davy she could break her journey in England to see her brother and Will Backett, also take her usual Christmas vacation in Canada. He told Mrs. [Elizabeth] Patterson to carry home one of His garlands for the Myrtle Beach Centre.

Then He was asked to go outside in the compound with all the Westerners so that Beheram, His brother who was filming parts of the Sahavas, could take fifty feet of film. We assented, "Yes, Baba, we want to be with You exclusively!"

Baba continued, saying that Dr. Donkin and Dr. Bharucha were to accompany us on the trip to Ahmednagar. "Francis, are you going? Please see that no one dies en route," He teased. "Jeanne, stop worrying. You all will leave at 6 A.M. tomorrow. Meherjee wants to know if you want snacks on the bus or tea and toast in your hotels?" Then Baba Himself decided for us "No snacks!" He continued, "Don't go to far off places in India [after the Sahavas] - there's likelihood of transportation services being suspended, and you may be stranded," and He asked us to confirm our dates of departure with Meherjee. Baba touched on a few more personal details with some of us. He asked Charles Purdom, "What are you thinking? Why are you sad?" "Because this is the last," Charles answered. I felt it might be the last for all of us.

Now four men entered to take their leave of Baba, and they spoke to Him in Persian. Baba explained to us they were from His Centre in Iran; two from Shiraz, one from Teheran. They asked for a copy of Baba's film. Baba said the Muslims out there are fanatics, as they cannot accept God in human form, but even their hearts are turning. These workers were asking Baba for strength to do His work in Teheran. It takes great daring, Baba said; people are often murdered there if they

say God is on earth in human form. It is not like India, where they accept the concept of the Avatar coming again and again. But, He said, "Once the Muslims understand, there will be throngs of them - perhaps by the time I drop My body, and because of their fanatic nature it will be impossible to stop them coming here, even without passports.'

"All this nothing is but Adnyana [ignorance]," Baba concluded. "God alone is Real. Once you are able to see Him within yourself, then it is all bliss. This bliss is unimaginable. When you can't imagine that Bliss - what about that Infinite Knowledge? Knowledge in an instant! Knowledge of the past, the present, and the future! This Infinite Knowledge makes God omnipotent. Because He knows everything, He doesn't have to do anything in order to know. This Knowledge is beyond the function of the mind."

3-B Dimpfl describes the story of the skit performed for us all this morning:

"On the third day of the East-West gathering, Meher Baba gave individual groups a chance to see Him alone. When the Sufis' turn came, one question which arose was what professions three of the young men should follow. The answer was one doctor (Khaled Al-Faqih), one physical education instructor (Gary Mullins), and one dancer (Jim Mehl). On the last day of the Sahavas, Khaled suggested that the three of them prepare a short skit satirising each of the three professions. The skit could be given before the final embrace next morning (November 5). The plan was put up with Baba's sister Mani, who got Baba's permission for this short interlude.

Late that night the conspirators gathered. Gary Mullins suffered stage fright and took an Indian version of "French leave." Charmian, Corriner and 3-B Dimpfl agreed to help. First, they scheduled the budding doctor to examine Baba's fitness for the performance. This to be followed by an "incident" narrated by the M.C. (Charmian) involving a cow (3-B), a Gopi (Khaled), and Lord Krishna (Jim). As Jim relates it:

"Four brilliant heads went together with the hope that they would come up with something soon. One by one the lights and the houseboys were taking leave. Ideas began to flow slowly - desperately; after many false starts, it wasn't until midnight that we got things sketched mentally. Due to the hour and vague states of mind, trying to rehearse was like trying to make a pin-cushion jump by sticking it with a pin! We all collapsed in good-humoured despair and vowed to rehearse in

the morning. Little did we know that this also was not to be. Also, there was the task of 3-B's disguise as a cow to be made. The thoroughly unrehearsed diversion took place as follows:

"Charmian, the M.C., in a gorgeous blue-green sari, announced at the mike: "This morning some of Baba's youngest children are happy to present a light entertainment titled, "Forgive us, Lord, our little jokes on Thee, and we'll forgive Thee Thy great big joke on us!"

"One great trouble with performing before the Avatar is that one knows not when one might be reduced to the stone stage! Right next to the 7-Day God-Realisation School is a 2-Day earn-as-you-learn medical school. We are happy that its first graduate has offered to examine Baba and make sure that He's 7-UP to the entertainment. May I introduce Dr. Khaled, Donkin, Goher, Bharucha, Chamberlain, Hayman, Kenmore, Al-Faqih, Jr.!"

"Khaled (in a white coat, wearing a stethoscope) bends over the Master to listen to His heartbeat, saying: 'Oh Baba, You have an enlarged heart!' Feeling Baba's pulse: 'Oh Baba, You have very high grace pressure!' Looking in Baba's right ear: 'I see many galaxies, and they are all disturbed!' Feeling Baba's knees, 'Aha! Coconuts on the knees!' Examining Baba's feet: 'And babies on the foot!'"

"Baba, I must check your throat condition - please open Your mouth and say "OM"!"

Baba very solemnly refused by shaking His head. Then Khaled said he would write a prescription for Baba to cure Him. Baba, entering into the spirit of the play, threw up His hands and pretended to be terrified at such a prospect. Khaled started to walk to the door, but Baba called him back. Baba said: 'Doctor, I will take your prescription if it does not make Me go to sleep for 700 years!' Khaled reassured Him, and Charmian read aloud the prescriptions (much of this prescription is an allusion to amusing happenings when Baba was with us in Meher Mount, Ojai, in 1956): 'two pounds of grapes three times a day, to balance the excess of Us-nuts lately; 2 cc's of Urge; one large, darshan daquiri to aid in Your 700 years of troubled sleep; one large glass of milk.' Baba appeared highly amused, tweaked Khaled's cheeks, and gave him an embrace.

"Charmian: 'Thank you, doctor! Now, before you lies a serene hillside pasture in which a lovely cow is wandering in search of succulent grasses (enter cow, Diane mooing soulfully and ringing dinner bell). Behind her in close pursuit

is Lord Krishna (enter Jim Mehl, costumed, garlanded, and highly made up, hopping nobly on one leg). As Lord Krishna well knows, cows are always attended by beautiful, sinuous, seductive, voluptuous, gentle maidens called ... uh ... Goobers? Gorpods? Goofies? Guppies? ... oh yes, Gopis! ... by gentle maidens called Gopis.' (Khaled garbed in a sheet, boing-boings in, accidentally tripping over the audience.)

As the Gopi shoos the cow away, Lord Krishna cannot help but notice her. He looks apprehensively at the maiden so obviously by His side and then lifts her veil to get a better view. He recoils, startled at what He sees (Gopi Al-Faqih's five o'clock shadow). Lord Krishna goes limp. The bewhiskered Gopi quickly aids Him, and Lord Krishna nobly consents to dance with His admirer, who promptly falls flat on her sari. Whatever conclusions Lord Krishna drew about this adoring maiden must have been quite lordly indeed, for He took her by the hand, and the three of them danced off into the meadow. Three of them? Yes, the gentle cow went along for kicks!

"Charmian: 'The moral of our story is that all love is dependent on the Avatar's Whim and only He has love enough for all!' Baba was hugely amused at these antics, which all present enjoyed, and embraced the cast lovingly."

At this juncture, Baba's brother Beheram wished to take some movies of the group of Westerners together with Baba on the steps of Guruprasad. We filtered slowly out into the brilliant sunshine and stood or knelt about Baba seated in a chair. Lud Dimpfl struggled comically to keep Baba shaded with his umbrella except at the moments of film-taking. Other amateurs were clicking their cameras too. An amusing touch was Beheram telling his big brother to make some gestures to liven things up!

At 9:25 the two musicians from the Poona All-India Radio Station entered the room. One was Sri Golwalker, music director of A.I.R., a sarangi player; the other was Sri Chandra Kamat, a tabla player. Baba asked them for a farewell piece for the Westerners who were leaving Him today, taking with them His farewell embrace. They played a song depicting a bride leaving the house of her mother to go to her husband's home. Baba gestured, as the minor liquid notes poured forth, "Tears are falling," and at that moment I found myself crying.

After another "song" came a solo on the tabla or drum to which Baba kept time with His hands. At the end, He said He was very happy with their performance

and reminded them to keep out of a draft when driving home. The young tabla player had played especially vigorously. When Baba asked him if his arms ached, the boy said he was getting different vibrations while playing for Baba than while he was practising. "Did you like the tabla playing?" Baba asked us. Most of us nodded.

One of the Westerners said she was staying on in Poona, at which Baba gestured, "Then you make Me stay!" He continued: "I am the Christ. If your eyes were opened, you would see Me as I am Ben, what is your percent of happiness today?" Dr. Hayman replied, "A hundred and fifty percent!"

Now Baba gestured for each of us to come forward individually for that heart-rending final embrace. Some stepped forward at once, others hung back. A few prostrated themselves at full length before Him. Some were crying, others looked grave. But as usual, Baba gestured to them, "Look happy!" I took advantage of this moment to kiss Baba's "lotus feet" for the first time, for previously Baba was always in the New Life phase when this was forbidden.

Everyone cheered when Ruth White, unaided, walked up the aisle to Baba and embraced Him. He called her "My soldier!" Ruth is ninety-three. On a final note of humour Baba cautioned all of us not to come to Guruprasad that afternoon, and [gestured] "Harry, don't phone!" Harry had phoned Guruprasad even before leaving New York. Then very, very slowly, supported by many loving arms, Baba walked out of the hall into His own room until all we could see was the top of His head. That was my very last glimpse of the Beloved Avatar. May it really not be the last for any of us!

In the afternoon I visited Kitty Davy at the Poona Club and met Katie Irani, who had shared the early ashram days with her. They exchanged lively reminiscences of the hardships and the humorous and wonderful moments of day-to-day life with Baba in the old Meherabad ashram.

Two interesting stories Katie told were of Baba warning her family to move from Quetta because it would be destroyed. Her family moved to Bombay; two years later a terrible earthquake completely destroyed Quetta. Another time when Baba visited the northern part of India, He paced up and down a certain road, saying, "The line will be here." It came about that after some years the border between India and Pakistan was settled along that very line.

At the beginning of the New Life, Katie was one of those whom Baba sent back into the world; the shorthand and typing Kitty had taught her in the ashram helped her procure an office job with "strange-speaking people" - as Baba had predicted - the Japanese Consulate.

When I returned to the Poona Hotel, Adele said she had seen Baba again that afternoon about her work and also to deliver the gift of medical supplies. She reported a few of the things Baba said: "Within one year I will break My Silence, then drop My body; My glorification shall last for one year." "You must go through the ocean of fire and come out alive." "Discourses and writing mean very little. In Persia, Rumi was a famous poet; well-known people sought his advice. But he was barren of spirituality until he came to the feet of the Perfect Master of the time, Shams-e-Tabriz. Then, he disposed of his writings." "I am impatient to break My Silence ... to prepare for the urge to break My Silence."

Several others were present that afternoon, including Charles Purdom, who discussed his forthcoming revised biography of the Perfect Master. Giddy with the prevalent "Poona belly," I skipped dinner except for a banana and tea, and went to bed early, for we had to get up at 4:30 A.M. on the morrow.

November 6 - Visit to Ahmednagar

After the tea and toast allowed by Baba, we climbed into the buses and cars arranged for us and met in the pearly-grey dawn hours by Baba's mango tree in the Bund Gardens. Far out in the river, men were fishing with a lantern. I talked for a few minutes with Dr. Donkin, a rare chance because he is so often on night duty and vanishes during the day!

With Adi Sr.'s car leading the way, we started the pilgrimage to the Master's abodes, past and present, at Ahmednagar, about 80 miles east of Poona. Driving at what seemed moderate speed after the breakneck California freeways, along dirt roads built like old-fashioned washboards, we encountered the typical Indian traffic hazards of bicycles, mixed herds of goats and sheep, cows, bullock carts piled high with a peasant family and all its possessions, or women carrying enormous brass water pots on their head and sometimes a baby on the hip.

Native trees lined the road that wound over the flat plains of the Deccan with table-like "mesas" in the distance, over which enormous clouds piled up in all the colours of the rainbow. Dawn was breaking spectacularly just as we passed the

Agha Khan's Castle, where Gandhi was interned by the British and where his wife, who died in prison, is buried. Later on a huge double rainbow, Baba's good-luck sign to us, arched over the fields to our right. Our car was second in line, and we reached the halfway dak bungalow (resthouse) ahead of the others, and in time to try the unique Indian contribution to sanitation, a paved hole in the ground.

Another hour and we had reached Ahmednagar and the home of Sarosh Irani, Baba's long-term disciple and past Mayor of Ahmednagar. We were greeted by his charming wife, Villoo, and daughters and treated to a sumptuous "brunchfast." Our next stop was the place where Baba lives now - Meherazad in the fields of Pimpalgaon, past the little "guard-booth." Here Francis gave us the guided tour in small groups. We were shown the meeting hall (once a garage), where Baba sits with the mandali from ten to twelve in the mornings (sometimes He is as early as 8:00 A.M.) and from four to six in the afternoon.

On to Baba's house, with the pleasant paved verandah overlooking the beautiful garden tended by Mehera. The flowers here seem to know they are in God's garden and bloom like sparks of fire. Baba's room used to be on the top story before the 1956 accident, but now His bedroom is on the ground floor. Francis told us that Baba is never alone at night - one of the mandali is always present, or Rano Gayley, the only woman ever allowed to stand guard for Baba. There is a painting by Marguerite Poley of a winged white horse on the walls of Meherazad. Apropos of this, Ivy Duce tells of the following incident:

"One day, I had walked behind the curtain at Guruprasad looking for Mani, when I encountered beloved Mehera alone. I seized my chance and asked, 'Mehera, I so often hear of a white horse in connection with Baba. Would you mind telling me the significance of it?'

"She replied, 'You know the vast cycles in time are called *yugas* in India, and there is a symbol which represents the Avatar of each yuga; the symbol of the Avatar of this particular age is a white horse. Baba has told us that at the time of Rama, people were rather good and the world was not like it is now; but He told His devotees and disciples that it would not always be so; that when the Kali-yuga or Iron Age came, it would be the worst and the most destructive in the world's history, and that there would be much war, degeneration, and depravity. The word got around, and all the followers came and begged, Lord Rama, please do not let us incarnate in the dreadful Kali-yuga Age. So here we all are!'

"Mehera smiled brightly. She continued: 'You know, Ivy, this is why Baba has called all His lovers here to Him because He wants to fortify and protect His lovers in the bad times to come so that they can work for Him and spread His love and Message in the new era!'"

Baba is in His sitting room before 10:00 A.M. or after 6:00 P.M. He returns to His bedroom at 8:00 P.M. Dr. Goher's room is just outside, then comes Mani and Mehera's room. Across the hall is the dining room where Baba eats His meals with the women. Everything is in a simple style. We passed through the porch where Mani has her little office that keeps in touch constantly with the Western lovers of Baba and where she types all her letters (sometimes by kerosene lamp, for Meherazad doesn't seem "electrified"), then to Meheru and Naja's room, and Rano's, Here Elizabeth and Norina stayed in 1948.

Down by the [men] mandali's quarters, we saw the famous "blue bus" on its cement dais and the little caravan that was pulled by two bullocks used by the women in the New Life trek. Here too was the cabin that used to be on Seclusion Hill (the small peak in the back of the ashram); now it is Eruch's office. Bhau's room was once a stable; Pendu's room was once used for Baba's *mast* work. We saw Kaikobad's room where he repeats the name of God 100,000 times a day; Kaka's "storekeeper" room full of all kinds of supplies, Baidul's room (he also repeats Baba's name constantly); and finally Francis's room, where he has the Western luxury of an old rocking chair and a bed with a cotton-stuffed mattress. We also inspected the primitive kitchen where the simple mandali meals are cooked over an open fire. The cook must be an Eagle Scout for sure!

A crowd had collected at the gate of the ashram, for there was the *mast* "Twelve-Coats" (Barracoat), squatting on the ground waiting for Baba's return. Someone had given him a cigarette. When he was asked in Hindi, "Who is Baba?" he replied, "Baba is my God." What wonderful eyes he had. One of the mandali leaned over and flipped the lapels of his ragged jackets one by one - twelve indeed!

For a few moments, we sat and chatted in the mandali quarters and drank the delicious spring water provided for us, the only good drink of water I had in all of India, One Easterner had filled a pop bottle to take back home as "holy water." Adi rather smiled at this and said, "Only Baba counts."

At mid-day, we had a fabulous luncheon, again at the home of Sarosh Irani, of spicy dishes ending with a sweet liquid "pretzel" for dessert. From here we drove to

the Avatar Meher Baba Ahmednagar Centre, where arti and discussion of Baba's teaching take place each Saturday evening. Baba Himself opened the Centre on October 26. We were treated to beautiful prayers chanted by a young Indian girl before Baba's photo: "O Meher Baba, Thou art everlasting and the Avatar of this Age. O Meher Baba, beyond words and deeds, may I surrender to You and think of You only." This was followed by a song, "One who has the Real Darshan becomes You. It is not possible to know You through ordinary consciousness." Then she performed the arti ceremony while a rainbow spotlight slowly changed the colours of her jasmine headdress.

We filed out to make a quick tour of Adi's office and storeroom, where a treasury of Baba's documents is filed - but alas! not in American-style fireproof cabinets. How I longed to stay right there and "dig"!

Our first stop in Baba's old ashram at Meherabad was the Great Hall near the men's quarters which I recognised from accounts of the New Life Phase, for here it was in 1949 that Baba announced His momentous decision to give up the Old Life and all its "impedimentia," including the whole ashram. Here was His *gadi* or seat; the desk on which He wrote the great book which no one has read, to be published after His death; a box containing relics of Hazrat Babajan, her hair, a molar tooth, some coins, and her shawl. Here, too, was the last alphabet board used by Baba before He gave up this mode of communication in 1954; and the sheet on which the mandali stood to take their vow of the New Life. Many precious Baba photos, large and small, lined the walls; some were those I had made long ago for Norina and Elizabeth.

Outside was the cage in which Baba stayed for over a year. Nearby was the little room of the *mast* Mohammed, one of the "Five Favorites." He seemed happy to see us and took our small gifts of bananas, chocolate, and cigarettes eagerly. The ground between the stones of his porch was dug out from picking "deesh" [dirt]. When asked about Baba, he replied, "*Dada Poona hai*" [Baba is in Poona]. Adi pointed out his flat feet, acquired when he stood motionless for so many months, caught up in "the point of enchantment" between the third and fourth planes. Through Baba's grace, he is now on the fifth plane. His eyes are full of the childlike happiness of the true *mast*.

It was mid-afternoon as we crossed the railroad tracks and started up the hill to the women's ashram. Because my leg hurt, I turned back; then I felt Baba urging

me on. And I did get a ride near the very top. Mansari and two other Eastern women greeted us with *namaskars* at the gate, and warm cries of recognition for Elizabeth Patterson, Kitty Davy, and the other "old-timers."

We climbed up into the second-story dormitory, absolutely bare now, but with a fine view of the surrounding countryside. On the porch downstairs, wonderful Baba-things were laid out for us to see, and touch reverently: His very old patched brown jacket, His *chappals* or leather sandals, a white "birthday coat" with bands of gold embroidery, and a "crown" to match, all hand-made by Mehera and the girls. There were other birthday "crowns," embroidered slippers, and garlands. From here we ventured westward, to Baba's own sleeping cabin, which none was allowed to enter; past the row of seven tiny meditation cells dated "1928," to Baba's future tomb topped by the symbols of the four great religions [cross, mosque, sacred fire urn, and Hindu temple]. We took off our footgear and filed in one by one to walk around the narrow ledge above the crypt. The walls above were painted with solemn figures by Helen Dahm. My thought was, "O how happy I am my beloved is still alive! And this tomb will never hold Him!"

Outside again, I wandered down the hillside (where a shepherd had left his flock to come and stare at all the visitors), to the graves of Baba's father and mother, Nonny Gayley (Rana's mother), Norina Matchabelli, and Nadine Tolstoi. Someone had told me Baba had said Norina was already reincarnated as a little Indian boy, one of those in the line for darshan at the Sahavas. I think this fact of our dear Norina returning soon to serve her beloved Master was one of my deepest impressions of the Sahavas. How quickly the Master spins the Wheel of Birth and Death for us all! Below this hill near Meherabad well is the grave of the saint who insisted on being buried there - long before Baba came, saying a Great Being would one day make it His abode.

Time to go! The sun was setting over the Palestine-like hills, and the once a day Ahmednagar train was puffing up the valley. A crowd of ragged boys shouted "Avatar Meher Baba" as our car passed, and we returned their greeting. Baba's name was chalked out on the broken walls of the old Fort against which the Arangaon villagers had built their simple thatched huts where man and beast share and share alike.

We drove through a fantasia of exquisite cloud-mountains charging over the great plains stretching on either side. Nowhere in the world could one see so

much land at once. We stopped again at the *dak* bungalow where I exchanged a few hurried goodbyes. As we neared Poona, lightning flickered and danced for a hundred miles east, west, north, south, like the play of Baba's fingers. Was He signaling? It was pitch-dark (8:30 P.M.) as we rode past the lighted gates of Guruprasad for the last time, calling out softly, "Goodbye, Baba!"

That was the last time our West Coast group saw His abode, for we had to scramble to the Poona station early next morning as flocks of lazy crows wheeled against a rosy sky and the red-turbaned porters fought to carry our bags - away from Baba! When would we see Him again? In this life or in another seven hundred years? I pressed a little love-note into Jalbhai's [Brother Jal's] hand, as he said he'd be seeing Baba that morning. And then we were jumping on the Kiplingesque train and lumbering down through the Deccan foothills, back to Bombay and the plane "home." From now on, after visiting Baba's homeland, "home" will always be in quotes!

It was a beautiful, clear day as our plane flew straight across India ... and there lay Poona, far below, a cluster of white buildings against a bend in the river. Down there was God in human form. And we had seen Him, laughed and talked with Him, embraced Him. Would anyone believe it? Not many, not now, but in the centuries to come, the whole world would know His Name.

Those who stayed on had one more glimpse of Baba on the day He left Poona for Meherazad. Bili Eaton describes it as follows:

"We did see Baba on the day we left, November 10. We arrived at the mango tree in the Bund Garden at 7:00 A.M. and waited for Him for about an hour. They spread a carpet, I thought for Baba, but no, it was for us to sit on. Then they set up a chair for Him with cushions. Finally, He came in the car, which was driven almost up to the chair. He was assisted to His seat by some of the mandali. Nothing much was said, and then we all sang His arti. He got back in His car and drove slowly - ever so slowly - away.

The car hardly moved, and naturally, we all crowded around. We were packed like sardines, and the mandali in the car kept saying, "Look out for your legs." Then someone rapped me on the shoulder, and I saw a wide path open in front of me, and a voice said in my ear, "You want to get in front?" I shot up the path just in time to see Baba extend His hand from the front seat towards the back window where the path ended. Some Indians were reaching in to touch His hand; I did

too and barely made it. All the while, Baba didn't look around. It was rather an eerie experience because Baba seemed so impersonal, and the path had opened up so suddenly. A lot of Indians had stood aside to make the path, they are so nice, really."

In a few days, Baba's great East-West flock of lovers had flown home to every quarter of the globe, all hoping, like the lucky swallows, to return someday to the porch of Guruprasad and the feet of the Divine Beloved. Meanwhile, each of us would try, as dear Mehera admonished me in parting, to "carry that love Baba has given you wherever you go, and share it with others."

TWENTY-ONE POINTS GIVEN BY MEHER BABA

November 1962

1. God is absolutely independent. The only way to approach Him is through love, the 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*).
6. The infinite state of God gets lost in the infinite jumble of infinite contradictions.
7. To know God in His infinite contradictions is to become conscious of His consciousness of His unconsciousness.
8. To achieve the God-state, do absolutely nothing while doing everything.
9. To find God, you must find yourself lost to yourself
10. To be infinitely conscious, you must consciously lose consciousness of yourself.
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.
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. Realisation of God is Absolute Consciousness minus consciousness of Imagination. Godhood is Absolute Consciousness plus consciousness of Imagination being imagination.
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. The 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 Realisation. But complete obedience to the God-Man brings one directly to God.

1963

IN THE SUNSHINE OF HIS LOVE

7th APRIL, 1963

Baba gestured that during His last seclusion at Meherazad, He had suffered a lot for the past three months due to the strain of His universal work. He said that despite the strain He gave a lot of explanations and discourses to the mandali during this seclusion.

He then began to mention the "weaknesses" of previous Avatars. Zoroaster, He said, was attacked by His adversary while He was praying. Just before He died, Zoroaster flung His rosary (made of *kerba*, a yellow jade) at the person who had killed Him, and it is said that the man got burned instantaneously. Baba said that this was the weakness on the part of Zoroaster. Baba continued that Ram had denounced Sita even though she was pure in heart and mind and proved herself so after her return from Lanka.³³ This He should not have done. Arjuna was with Lord Krishna all the time and took Krishna only as an intimate friend. During the battle of Mahabharata, when Arjuna refused to fight in spite of being asked by Krishna to do so, Krishna showed Arjuna His *virat swarup* (Universal Body).³⁴ This Krishna should not have done.

Buddha explained to His lovers that the goal of life was Nirvana; but He did not reveal and explain the states beyond Nirvana, such as Majzoobiyat, Sulukiyat, and Qutubiyat,³⁵ which follow Nirvana. This was Buddha's weakness. Christ should not have said when he was crucified, "O Father, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Lastly, Muhammad did not reveal to the people that He was God in human form. He said that He was a messenger of God. He should have said that He was

the God-Man, at least just before His death. Baba jokingly continued, "I have one weakness too, but I shall reveal this when I return after seven hundred years!"

Baba continued, "In the state of Nirvana (Fana), initially there is the experience of Infinite Vacuum. This is followed instantaneously by the experience of Infinite Bliss or the Fana Fillah state. A Qutub enjoys Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss, and utilizes all these, while the Avatar only utilizes Infinite Knowledge and does not use His Infinite Power and Bliss. If He did so, how could He suffer and be helpless for the sake of humanity?"

The talk drifted to the recent inauguration of Mehersthan at Kovvur in Andhra State. Baba said that people from Andhra had love for Him. He added that now at Dehra Dun, in Uttar Pradesh, His lovers had laid the foundation stone for a Baba Dham (temple), but before it gets completed He might break His Silence!

Baba then retired for a few minutes. Soon we were asked to gather in the assembly hall of Guruprasad. Baba sat in His usual seat. The hall was filled to its maximum capacity, and many lovers had to sit on the verandah. Baba informed all that those who would embrace Him today must not do so on every Sunday, should they happen to come again on weekends for His darshan.

Baba returned to the topic of the weakness of the past Avatars. He said that His weakness would be revealed by Him after seven hundred years. He said, "I have the continuous experience that I am the singer, the song, the musical instruments, and also the audience. You cannot even imagine what Infinite Bliss means. The greatest joy man feels is when he lives happily with his beloved. That joy is only the seventh shadow of Real Bliss. I am real, but My shadow is not real - it has no value. The value of My seventh shadow would be absolutely nil. Similarly, worldly joy, which is the seventh shadow of Real Bliss, has absolutely no value. Once one experiences that Bliss, one would not want to leave it and return to this worldly consciousness, not even as a Perfect Master."

At 3:00 P.M., Baba asked a singer, M.Y. Mohan "Saigal," who had come from Bombay specially for this occasion, to sing a bhajan. After one bhajan, he began to sing some ghazals. His voice was very melodious and reminded every one of the great singer, the late Saigal.³⁶ Baba was immensely pleased with his singing and as a token of appreciation gave the singer His handkerchief after the programme was over.

Baba would often interpret what the singer was singing, for the benefit of those who could not understand the language. The following are some of the explanations given by Baba.

"On the spiritual path there comes a stage when the Beloved [Master] asks the lover to continue to live and not think of dying. And, when the lover struggles to live, he is asked by his Beloved to be ready to die! But in the end, the lover becomes one with God in Love. He gets drowned in Love. May God help the man in whom the fire of Divine Love is blazing intensely. Apparently, his life is a misery. He loses everything, including himself, in the end. But then the easiest way for all is to hold on to My daaman until the end.

How indifferent and independent God is, although He is everyone and everything. The more you love Him, the more He turns His face away from you. But if you persist, you compel Him to turn His face to you.

God is closer to you than your breath, and yet He is so far away.

The lover says: To gain You is to lose myself

What is love? What is the effect of love? Your making Me helpless and My becoming helpless."

Baba said, "My continuous experience is that I am in everyone and am everything. This is not said as a result of My having this Truth by the mind, but it is the actual experience of My being that. This experience is the height of all experiences. This state of Mine cannot be understood with the help of the mind."

While the singing programme was going on, an old man paralysed with herniplegia was brought to Baba, who told him that if he lived till Baba broke His silence, he would be able to walk.

A small girl about four years old came from the crowd to Baba. She bowed to Baba and then sat next to Him on His sofa, fearlessly facing the huge crowd and not at all perturbed by the thousand or more eyes watching her. Baba remarked, "Some men drink and then hide their faces; others drink and boldly face public criticism. The *masts* are also in an 'intoxicated' condition, but they do not care about people or anyone. This child also has *masti*, for she is unmindful of the

crowd." After sitting next to Baba for about half an hour, she got up and went to her mother. Following her example, children from the crowd started coming to Baba for darshan in an orderly fashion and then went back to their seats. Baba said, "They come to Me because I am also a child."

Baba then interpreted the meaning of more songs sung by the singer:

"The lover says: I am not on the earth nor even in heaven; I am like dust floating about everywhere in search of the Beloved."

"It is against the precepts of his religion for a Muslim to drink. If he is seen drinking, he is called a sinner. But the lover says he has drunk the cup, and yet he is not a sinner. But if he is considered as one, then he is such a sinner that even paradise has awaited his arrival for thousands of years."

"Only after self-annihilation can one become one with God. Only when the body and the mind are pulverized does one become one with God."

Baba added, "This is not easy. Who would like to become dust?"

"My Love has reached such heights that even the Beloved cannot cure Me of this Love."

At a little past 5:30 P.M., Madhusudan arrived. Baba asked him to sing the new song he had composed for the opening of Mehersthan at Kovvur. After this, all sang Baba's arti. Baba asked all to leave the hall and ordered that no one should come to embrace Him. He said, "You should embrace Me in such a way that you do not need to embrace Me again."

14 APRIL, 1963

As soon as one entered Baba's room, one could feel that the atmosphere was very tense. Baba was not at all in His usual good humour. He was in a noncommunicative mood. His fingers moved about ceaselessly and He never glanced at those who were seated in the room. From His face, one could judge that the burden of work was tremendous. He suddenly gestured that the burden had been very great since yesterday. At 8:20 A.M, He asked me the time. In the fifteen

minutes that followed, He must have asked a dozen lovers what the time was. The importance of those minutes He alone knew, but I could not help thinking that some great event must be taking place somewhere in the cosmos.

After 8:35 AM., He began asking us as usual if we had slept well the night before when we arrived in Poona. He told us, quoting a couplet of Hafiz: "If you want the Beloved, remember Him always. Forget everything else. There is no need to be bodily near the Beloved. Just remember Him with love."

He asked Dr. Deshmukh to recite some Sanskrit verses. After he had finished reciting, Baba explained:

"I have left the Paratpar State (Beyond the Beyond State) and come down to your level. In that Paratpar State, there is no binding; there is absolute freedom, absolute existence. What a sublime state it is! One in a billion has such an experience of the Beyond State. From that state, I have come down, and I feel bound to you. This suffering is terrible. In Me, I am free. When I break My Silence, a great push will be given to humanity. Even stones will start dancing. After that, I shall be in Bliss for seven hundred years. On hearing this, Francis, who was seated near Me, whispered in my ear, "Then we fellows do stand a chance!"

At about 9:30 A.M, two American women came in to see Baba. They were newcomers and knew very little about Baba. Baba told them, "If you cannot accept Baba as God, then that should not worry you. Accept Baba as a True Friend. I am God undoubtedly. But it is difficult for the Western mind to accept the concept of God in human form. Jesus was God Himself, but Judas did not accept him as such. Even Peter denied Jesus thrice. So how can you accept Me? I am the only Reality, while all else is false."

Two tapes had been received from New York from a Baba lover. These were played on a tape recorder for about one and a half hour. One of them was a reproduction of a letter written by a Baba lover to his father, wishing him a happy birthday. It also gave the Theme of Creation, briefly but very comprehensively, as explained by Meher Baba in *God Speaks*. It explained the concept of Perfect Masters and the Avatar being God in human form. The next tape presented the three messages given by Baba during the East-West Gathering of November 1962:

"My Dear Children," "My Dear Workers," and "Baba's Universal Message." It

ended with the Master's Prayer and the Repentance Prayer. While the last prayer was being recited, Baba asked all of us to stand up. He also stood up during the prayer. These different messages and prayers were interspersed with Indian music. The programme finished at 11:45. Baba asked us all to leave for lunch and return at 2:30 P.M.

In the afternoon, before Baba came into the assembly hall of Guruprasad, He received some lovers who had come from Andhra, and also a sadhu who had come for His darshan. This sadhu hailed from Mount Abu (Rajasthan), where he had spent fifteen years in penance. He had a long beard, and his hair fell over his shoulders. He told Baba that he had long wished, to have His darshan. Baba told him, "I am in your heart."

On the wall of the room was a board carrying a Marathi verse from the poems of Saint Tukaram. Baba asked His lovers from Andhra if they could read it. He then began to explain the verse. He said:

"Many hypocritical saints have long hair and who smear their bodies with ashes. Tukaram says: Let their dead conscience be burned. Even to thrash them is no sin."

"Tukaram, though he was Love Incarnate, could not tolerate hypocritical saints. Ninety percent of all so-called saints know nothing about the spiritual path. In northern India, such bogus saints abound. Out of the ten percent who are genuine saints, there are only five Perfect Masters, and these five bring Me down to this earth. The present five Perfect Masters will come into public recognition after I drop My body.

An atheist is better than a hypocritical saint. God is not to be found in the skies or in the Himalayas or in the hills of Abu. He is in the hearts of everyone. Once your heart is clean, I will shine out in it. But it is not easy to clean one's heart. It is as difficult as diving deep into a sea of fire. One out of thousands of Mardan-e-Khuda [true lovers of God] has such courage, for he has become the dust of the feet of the Perfect Master. Only he has the right to ask to see God. To love God is very difficult. The easiest path is to hold onto My daaman. Throw all your burden of

sanskaras at My feet. I am the Ocean and can absorb all your burden. In fact, there is no such thing as a burden. It is all imagination."

At 2:30 P.M. Baba sat in the assembly hall of Guruprasad, which was filled to capacity. Various singers gave good performances, and Baba enjoyed them very much. He gave His handkerchief to two of the singers. Baba did not explain much during the afternoon session. He once said, "I see Myself in everyone. You don't see Me in everyone. When I feel like worshipping, I worship Myself. Who else is there to be worshipped? This is My continual experience." At about 6:00 P.M., we all sang Baba's arti and then dispersed according to His orders.

21st APRIL, 1963

Baba asked us whether we had slept the night before. He said that He had not slept for even five minutes, as the pressure of work was tremendous. Baba then asked one of His lovers to read out a poem written in Hindi by one of the mandali. The poem was in praise of Baba. It said Baba was everything in this world and also beyond it.

The talk drifted to the workings of Maya. Baba explained that it is said that Maya can be compared to ringworm on one's skin: "The more you scratch, the more you want to scratch and the more miserable you become. Even so, the more you indulge in Maya, the more you want to get involved in it and become all the more miserable."

A lover came in and sat down. Baba asked him, "Did you sleep well last night?" He replied, "Very well, Baba." Baba remarked humorously, "What sort of love do you have for Me? I did not sleep for even five minutes, while you enjoyed very good sleep!"

Some Baba lovers in Delhi had met the President of India some time back and told him about Baba. The President said that he was very pleased to hear about Baba and expressed a desire to meet Him soon. Baba said, "The President will come someday. Everyone will come one day. Even saints, real or false, will come. They have no alternative but to come to Me."

Baba then asked Dr. Deshmukh to recite his "English kirtan." Baba said there has never been anything like it in history before. He asked another lover to sing along with Dr. Deshmukh. This lover had a voice of which the less said

the better. Even Dr. Deshmukh's voice was not great, and the kirtan had to be abruptly stopped as Baba said with a smile that He got "palpitations" from it! Baba added, "For one who gets Self-Realisation, everything illusory vanishes. Yet I have maintained My sense of humor, and hence I can bear the universal burden."

Baba said, "The Beyond State is achieved when one gets Real Knowledge. It cannot be attained with the mind. You see everything with your eyes, but you cannot see your own eyes unless- you place a mirror in front of you. Similarly, place the mirror of Real Knowledge before you, and you will then see your Real Self. On the Path, perfect honesty and selfless service are needed. If you have even a single thought of self, your service is not selfless. A poet has said, 'First renounce this world, then the next, then God, and lastly renunciation itself.'"

One of the lovers questioned Baba, "What action is not motivated by the 'I' thought?" Baba replied:

Love. In true love, the lover wants to see the happiness of his Beloved without thought of self. He then feels that he loves all. This is the highest state of love. All other actions, whether good or bad, are binding. The actions of one who has surrendered one hundred percent to a Perfect Master or the Avatar has no "I" thought. In true surrender, there is no thought of why or wherefore. Once surrender is complete, all actions done by you are not yours. You have to renounce nothing but your own self. One has ultimately to go beyond the mind, as Reality is beyond it. How can you go beyond the mind?

The only solution is Love. This comes only with the Grace of the Perfect Master. Once the 'I' thought goes, nothing remains. But this is very difficult. One unconsciously asserts one's ego when one says, "I am sick," "I am hungry," etc. This is one's natural ego. However, it is egoless "I." The real ego still remains when one asserts, "I am a doctor," "I am rich," "I am serving the poor," etc. This ego creates anger, jealousy, and greed. The status of love is beyond the reach of the mind. Only those who carry their lives in their sleeves can reach the threshold of love.

In perfect love, there is perfect obedience. Very few have this courage. Even Arjun, who loved Krishna dearly, did not obey Krishna when he was

ordered to fight in the battle of Mahabharata against his own relatives. Krishna as a last resort had to show Arjun his *virat swarup* [Universal Body]. Obedience must be unquestioning. Only then it is of the highest order. But this is impossible.

He concluded by saying, "I am the only One who loves everyone. No one loves Me as I should be loved."

He asked one person whether she had slept well the night before. She said she had not. Baba said, "If you do not get sleep it is good, for you can then remember Me all the more." Baba then asked if anyone could repeat the 101 names given in the Zoroastrian prayer book in praise of God, with their meanings. No one could. He said, "If you repeat these names with love, no other prayer remains to be said. Anyone can repeat these 101 names irrespective of the religion he belongs to."

101 Names of God

NAME	MEANING
1. Yazad	Worthy of worship
2. Harvesp-tawan	All-Powerful
3. Harvesp-Agah	All-Knowing
4. Harvesp-Khoda	Lord of all
5. Abadeh	Without Beginning
6. Abi-Anjam	Without End
7. Bun-e-stiha	Root of creation
8. Frakhtan-taih	Endless Bliss
9. Jamaga	Primal Cause
10. Prajatarah	Exalted one
11. Tum-afik	Purest of the pure
12. Abaravand	Detached from all
13. Paravandeh	In touch with all
14. An-ayafeh	Unattainable
15. Hama-Ayafeh	Attainer of all
16. Adro	Most Righteous
17. Gira	Upholder of all
18. A-chem	Beyond reason
19. Chamana	Sovereign Reason

NAME	MEANING
20. Safana	Bountiful One
21. Afza	Ever Prolific
22. Nasha	Reaching equally to all
23. Parwara	Nourisher
24. Ianaha	Protector of the world
25. Ain-aenah	Never Changing
26. An-aenah	Formless
27. Kharoshid-tum	Most Steadfast among the Steadfast
28. Mino-tum	Lord Invisible
29. Vasna	All-Pervading
30. Harvastum	All in all
31. Hu-sepas	Worthy of our profound thanks
32. Har-Hamid	All embracing Goodness
33. Har-naik faraih	All embracing Holy light
34. Baish-tarana	Remover of affliction
35. Taronish	Beyond Affliction
36. Anah-aoshaka	Immortal
37. Farasaka	Fulfiller of Holy Desires
38. Pajohdehad	Creator of Holy attributes
39. Khwafar	Compassionate Judge
40. Avakhshiaea	Merciful Giver
41. Abaraja	Bountiful Giver
42. A-satoha	Unconquerable
43. Rakhoha	Freest of the free
44. Varun	Deliverer from evil
45. A-farefah	Never Deceiving
46. Be-fareftah	Never Deceived
47. A-dui	One without a second
48. Kam-rad	Lord of desire
49. Farman-kam	Decreeer of Sovereign Desire
50. Aekh Tan	Soul Supreme
51. A-faremosh	Never-forgetting
52. Hamarna	Just Accountant
53. Sanaea	Knowing all things

NAME	MEANING
54. A-tars	Fearless
55. A-bish	Devoid of pain
56. A-frajdum	Most exalted one
57. Ham-chun	Ever the same
58. Mino-satihgar	Invisible Creator of the Universe
59. A-minogar	Creator of the Profoundly Spiritual
60. Mino-nahab	Hidden within the spirit
61. Adar-bad-gar	Transmuter of Fire into Air
62. Adar-nam-gar	Transmuter of Fire into dew
63. Bad-adar-gar	Transmuter of Air into Fire
64. Bad-nam-gar	Transmuter of Air into dew
65. Bad-gail-gar	Transmuter of Air into Earth
66. Bad-gred-tum	Supreme Transmuter of Air into dust
67. Adar-kibritatum	Supreme Transmuter of Fire into divine sparks
68. Bad-gar-jae	Spreading Air everywhere
69. Ab-tum	Creator of Lifegiving water
70. Gail-adar-gar	Transmuter of Dust into Fire
71. Gail-vad-gar	Transmuter of Dust into Air
72. Gail-nam-gar	Transmuter of Dust into water
73. Gar-gar	Master Craftsman
74. Garo-gar	Rewarder of sincere desires
75. Gar-a-gar	Creator of all Humanity and its actions
76. Gar-a-gar-gar	Creator of all Human and Animal Life
77. A-gar-agar	Creator of all the four elements
78. A-gar-a-gar-gar	Creator of all the planets and all other worlds
79. A-guman	Never in doubt
80. A-jaman	Ageless
81. A-Khuan	Eternally awake
82. Amast	Ever-alert
83. Fashutana	Ever-Protecting
84. Padmani	Recorder of Man's actions
85. Firozgar	Victorious

NAME	MEANING
86. Khudawand	Lord of the Universe
87. Ahuramazd	Lord of Life and Wisdom
88. Abarin-kuhan-tawan	Preserver of Creation
89. Abarin-nao-tawan	Renewer of Creation
90. Vaspan	Embracing All Creation
91. Vaaspar	Giver of All Things
92. Khawar	Infinitely Patient
93. Ahu	Lord of existence
94. Avakshidar	Forgiver of sins
95. Dadar	Divine Creator
96. Raiyomand	Rayed in glory
97. Khorehmand	Haloed in Light
98. Davar	Lord of Justice
99. Kerfaigar	Lord of Just Rewards
100. Bokhtar	Liberator
101. Farsho-gar	Awakener of Eternal Spring

Baba said, "The whole creation is a shadow, and it has no importance. It is My shadow. Your mind makes you feel that it is not a shadow but real. There was a Muslim who would enter a wine shop through the back door, lest he be seen by anyone. He would drink till he got drunk. He would fearlessly then come out of the front door of the shop and challenge anyone he met. Once the intoxication abated, he would sheepishly slink away home. This is not the sort of intoxication one gets in God's love. Love's intoxication is continuous."

Once Baba asked me what I was thinking about. I said, "Why don't you share Your burden with us?" He said, "The time is very near. Don't worry. You all will become like reeds bearing the burden." He asked Aloba to repeat a couplet from Hafiz. Baba translated it: "The Beloved says to the Lover: How long your friendship with Me remains is what is important, and is what remains to be seen."

Baba asked us to go for lunch at 11:15. In the afternoon, an old lady whose right hand was paralysed came to see Baba. She had recovered some movements of the hand already. Baba asked her to do exercises. She said, "Baba, bless me." Baba

said, "When I asked you to do exercises, that itself is a blessing. Remember Me more and more." After his incident, Baba meaningfully said, "The five Perfect Masters bring Me down. Now, even if five hundred of them want to bring Me down, I will not come for another seven hundred years!"

Baba asked one of His old lovers who had formerly worked in the railways to relate some funny incidents in his life. He did so, much to the amusement of Baba and other lovers in the room. Baba then related a funny incident that took place in Panchgani. One of the mandali went out into the jungle to ease himself. As soon as he reached there, he saw a tiger just a few feet away from him. He was so shocked that by reflex mechanism his bowel action stopped, and he raced inside the house. Baba later reprimanded him by saying, "I am the tiger also, so why feel afraid of Me? If the tiger had eaten you, it would have been none other than I who would have eaten you!"

Baba said at one point, "When I break My silence, the hearts of all those who have come in contact with Me will be ignited with love."

At about 3:00 P.M, the renowned singer Shri V. Patwardhan stepped into the assembly hall and gave a wonderful performance till 4:30. Baba and all others were greatly pleased with the singing. Baba often kept saying, "He is blessed because he can make Me happy." Baba embraced him after the programme and gave him His handkerchief. Baba also had a photo taken of Shri Patwardhan with Himself. After Shri Patwardhan left, Madhusudan sang a few ghazals.

The day ended with each one going to Baba, kissing His hand, and then leaving the hall.

28th APRIL, 1963

A lady with two children came to see Baba. Baba asked her, "Do these kids trouble you?" She replied, "Yes, Baba." Baba said, "If only two kids can make your life a living hell, can you imagine My plight, for I have billions of children."

Some more women arrived and wanted to embrace Baba. He said, "You come here with big buckets to receive My love, but unfortunately your buckets are closed tightly with lids, and so you cannot take away My love in spite of trying your best. As a result, you can never have enough of My Love and want to embrace Me every time you come here."

I told Baba of a man in my town who had powers to drive out evil spirits from people who were possessed by them. I asked Baba how these powers could be developed and whether the people who had them were really advanced souls on the Path. The question led to discourse. Baba said, "It is possible to derive such powers if you gain 'tantric' knowledge. These powers may be then utilized for good or bad purposes: good when they are utilized for removing bad spirits from people, and bad when they are utilised for selfish aims and for self-aggrandizement. Such powers have nothing to do with the spiritual path. Miracles performed by people who possess such powers are very childish. Even Swami Vivekananda got himself into a fix when he began to crave such powers. His Guru, Ramakrishna, saved him in the nick of time."

Baba then explained that a person who seeks to gain such powers sometimes resorts to sitting within the limits of a small circle for forty days and nights, repeating a mantra. If he succeeds in sitting there for forty days without a break, he gains certain powers. Baba said that it is not easy to go through such an ordeal, as the person often sees weird sights during the period and is practically forced to leave the boundaries of the circle due to fright. If he leaves the circle, he gets no powers and would have to start the process again.

Regarding miracles, Baba told us the story of Baba Farid of Shakarganj.³⁷ He said:

"Farid did a lot of penance in order to gain powers. He did not eat food for long durations and so had severe griping pain in his abdomen. As a last resort, he hung himself upside down in a well. After several days he was brought out of the well miraculously and found to his utter astonishment that he had gained some powers. He at once began to experiment with them. On a nearby tree, some birds were sitting. He said, "Let the birds fall dead." All the birds fell to the ground, dead. He then said, "Let the birds come to life and fly away." Immediately the birds flew away. He went from village to village showing off his powers and thus feeding his ego.

"At a village, he saw an old woman drawing water from a well and then splashing it just outside the well. This monotonous procedure the woman continued for a long time. Farid, disgusted at the madness of the woman,

went up to her and asked her why she did such a foolish time and energy consuming action. She replied, "Son, by splashing water here I am trying to put out a fire that is raging in a village ten miles from here. This action is not as easy as making dead birds fly away again!" Farid at once realised that the woman was not an ordinary person and asked for forgiveness for his past deeds. She directed him to a Perfect Master who was some distance away.

"Farid approached the Master and found that the tree he was sitting under was completely dry. The hot sun was beating fiercely on the Master. Farid at once made use of his powers and turned the tree green. The Master just looked up at the tree, and it again became dry. Farid again made the tree green, but a glance from the Master again made it dry. This happened five times. At last Farid realised that his powers were nothing compared to the Masters. He surrendered himself to the Master. The Master told Farid to become a real Fakir and not play like a child with such powers. He said that miracles are not the criterion of Fakirhood."

Baba then told us another story of a Muhammadan who had gained certain powers through such a tantric *vidya* (knowledge or teaching). Baba said:

"He had powers even to give sight to the blind, and so he had a very big following. He stayed in a huge building that had several floors. One day while he was standing on the terrace of his house, he saw a cow fall in a well. He instantaneously stretched his hand up to the well and pulled out the cow. Very near to his house was a river, and on the other bank lived a Perfect Master. Since the Master did not work any miracles, his following was very limited. The Master, on hearing about the cow incident, sent one of his men to the Muhammadan, asking him to stop all such nonsense. The Muhammadan flew into a rage and swore that he would take revenge on the Master, and made his plans.

One night he called a beautiful prostitute and asked her to go over to the Master with wine and pork. She was instructed that she must entice the Master to eat the pork and drink the wine. She went over to the Master as instructed. The Master was very happy to see her and thoroughly enjoyed

her company and also the food and wine she had brought for him. The next morning, the prostitute returned to the Muhammadan very happy with the news that she had made the Master eat the pork and drink the wine. The Muhammadan was also very happy, for he now had proof to denounce the Master and his spirituality, as he had gone against the tenets of the Muslim religion by eating pork and drinking wine.

The Muhammadan with a band of his followers decided to go to the Master, who lived on the other side of the river and denounce him. Astride a horse, he soon began crossing the river, while his followers waded after him. When the horse was midstream, it stopped and began to pass urine in the river. The Master, on seeing this, shouted out and reprehended the Muhammadan for polluting the river with his horse's urine. The Muhammadan scoffed at this and thought the Master was insane, for he could not imagine how a little urine could pollute the whole river. He shouted back at the Master, "How can a little urine pollute a river?" The Master replied, "How then can a little wine and pork pollute the Ocean that I am?" The Muhammadan understood the depth of these words and went to the Master and surrendered himself to him."

Baba added, "Powers have no importance; only love counts on the Path. It requires daring to annihilate oneself. Miracles are childish things."

Just then an old lady came to embrace Baba. She was very ill. Baba asked her to think of Him more and more and not to forget Him while breathing her last. Baba continued with the topic of trying to attain powers through tantric knowledge. He said:

"My own father, Sheriarji, was a real dervish. He wandered from place to place in Iran for many years in search of God. He came to India and continued his search. His feet were blistered, and his soles had become hard like rubber tires from wandering on foot. Once, in the desert of Kutch,³⁸ he was dying of thirst. Suddenly a man appeared before him with some drinking water and offered it to him. After drinking the water, he continued his search. He even took the forty-day penance. He succeeded sitting there for only thirty days. He felt very dejected at his

failure. It was at this time he heard a voice telling him not to worry, for God would be born to him. Remembering this, he believed in Me as God and used to worship before My picture until his end."

Baba drifted to the subject of Hafiz, His favourite poet. He said:

"There is no one equal to Hafiz in poetry. He was a Perfect Master. He was very ugly and was born of poor parents. His father was a coal merchant. From his childhood, he had a desire for hearing stories of Perfect Masters. He knew the Quran by heart and hence was given the title of Hafiz. When he was twenty-one years of age, while passing by a big mansion, he saw a very beautiful woman on its terrace. He fell in love with her and longed to marry her. The girl did not even take notice of Hafiz in the street below. Hafiz was helpless, so he thought of gaining her through the forty-day penance.

He succeeded in his attempt, and on the fortieth day the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and told him to ask for anything he wished. The beauty of Gabriel was so overpowering that Hafiz forgot his beloved whom he had wanted to marry. He thought that if Gabriel could be so beautiful, how much more would be the beauty of God? So he at once replied, "I want God." Gabriel directed Hafiz to the Perfect Master Attar. Hafiz served Attar for forty long years. He, so to say, broke his head at the feet of Attar. Attar still had no compassion for Hafiz. After forty years of such hell on earth, one day, Attar all of a sudden gave Hafiz God-Realisation."

Baba ended by saying, "Powers have no importance. Hafiz says that the one who does not lay his life at the feet of the Perfect Master cannot know God. It is very difficult to become one with God. The Master's grace makes it very easy, but to get his grace is as difficult as trying to realize God by one's own efforts. It becomes easy once one become a slave at the feet of the Perfect Master. Ages of restlessness are eased as soon as one surrenders one's life at his feet. This does not mean cutting one's head and putting it at the feet of the Master. It means literal obedience."

Baba asked Dr. Deshmukh whether he would obey Baba if he was ordered to go back to Nagpur and walk through the streets completely naked. Doctor

replied that he would. Baba observed, "Dr. Deshmukh is a very intelligent fellow. He knew that Baba would never ask him to do such a thing, and so he replied in the affirmative."

Madhusudan then sang a few ghazals. Baba asked me if I knew Urdu or Persian. I said no. He asked Eruch the same question. Eruch said that he did not study any language. A Baba lover next to Eruch told Baba, "Eruch knows Your language of gestures, which none of us can understand!"

All the residents of a small village near Bombay had come for Baba's darshan that day. Baba told us that the village consisted of only thirty houses. All the villagers decided to come to see Baba, and so not only were their houses locked, but the whole village was deserted. They had left enough fodder for their cattle to last until they returned home.

Baba's love had been ignited in the hearts of these poor villagers by one Baba lover of Bombay. He had a bushy beard. Baba remarked that he looked like Father Christmas. Someone said that if his beard were white, he would have positively looked like him. Eruch intervened and said that he could rightly be called Father Christmas since he had brought the gift of Baba's love to all the villagers. Eruch then remarked that so many new Baba Centres were springing up that it was not possible to keep a record of them. Baba said, "Once I break My silence, all will come to know Me. Fortunate are those who know Me now."

Baba explained a line here and there from one of the ghazals. He said, "The lover says to his Beloved: I remember you always, and that is the reason why I have a share in your suffering. I am constantly in search of your footprints, and I swear I bow down my head as soon as I see them. For me, there is no Kaaba to bow down my head to. Every thought of you is my Kaaba. I don't know how to worship you. All I know is to bow down my head wherever you ask me to do so."

Baba said that this means one hundred percent obedience. He continued, "The lover says, the Real Sight that sees God is like a nest in the midst of lightning." Baba explained that a nest means a place of protection, while lightning denotes destruction. The lover must thus be prepared to build his nest in lightning - that is, to be prepared for complete annihilation. One should thus not seek the Beloved amidst bodily pleasures but should seek Him in constant suffering."

Baba said at one point, "Where you are, God is not. Where God is, you are not." He continued, "It is very easy to become good but very difficult to become

God." Adi K. Irani remarked, "It is very easy to become God after becoming good - just knock off one *o*." Baba said, "Trying to knock off *o*, you may even die, but you will not succeed. It is not easy at all!"

Baba gave some more explanations from ghazals sung by Madhusudan:

"The lover complains to the Beloved: I have given myself to You completely, and yet You are so cruel that You do not even care for me."

"Your simplicity is Your beauty. Your beauty is Your simplicity."

"Do not leave me once You have embraced me, for now, it is a question of life or death for me."

"It is impossible to be united with You, so I only pine to have the pangs of Your love."

Baba then asked Mrs. Mona Sakhre to recite the Master's Prayer. It seems that she felt a little nervous. Baba said, "I am the only one present here, so why worry? I alone will hear you." Baba then asked a few of us to wait, and all others were asked to go for lunch and return at 2:30 P.M.

We enjoyed several games of La Risque, that incredible game of cards, with Baba. There were exactly thirty-six of us. The losing party (almost always the party opposing Baba) had to rub their noses on the ground in front of Baba. After a few games, we also went for lunch.

In the afternoon Baba remarked that none except a very few mandali knew of the actual work Baba had done incognito for the poor. Eruch told us some of the stories of Baba's work with the poor, and they brought tears to many eyes. At the end, Baba remarked, "Formerly I used to go in search of people; now people come in search of Me."

Baba said, "I was completely free before and what a Whim I got that bound Me with this creation! Actually, there is no past or future. Only this moment exists. The past and future are ingrained in this present moment. The present moment is eternity itself. It is so difficult to see Me as I am. Even Judas, who had lived with Jesus, could not know the Christ. Lord Krishna says that due to Yoga Maya³⁹ people do not know Him as eternal and infinite. Whatever you see is not God. When you are not, then you see God."

In the afternoon, Shri Deshpande sang many bhajans and Baba enjoyed them. During one of the bhajans, Baba suddenly turned to a woman sitting near Him and said, "While you are here, think of Me. He who thinks of others is not present here."

After Shri Deshpande left, Madhusudan sang a ghazal. Baba interpreted it as follows. "Seemab⁴⁰ writes that when he met a Perfect Master, he gained everything that had to be gained. When he got the Perfect Master's footprints, he possessed everything worth possessing. He had met One who knew Himself, the Path, everything and everyone. He had met God in human form undoubtedly!"

After the programme, Baba asked all to come to Him and kiss His hand and then leave the hall.

1st MAY⁴¹ 1963, BY MR. N KHER

Dr. Vinoo Kher, a professor of physics and brother of Nana Kher, came from Amravati in the morning. Eruch told Baba that Vinoo had delivered a nice speech before his colleagues at Amravati on the occasion of Baba's Birthday, and he had tried to explain Baba's status as the Highest of the High with the help of scientific reasoning. Baba asked Vinoo to read the summary of the speech the next morning.

Baba said, "The basis of the Creation is nothing but gas, for the first thing to have come out of Creation was gas; except gas, there is nothing. And gas is also nothing. But the Nothing is." Explaining this further, Baba said, "Nana has a peculiar nose; Mona is fair; Meherjee is here, but I say all this is nothing. What is your reply to this statement, Vinoo?"

Vinoo: "Till we experience this as nothing, we presume it to be real."

Merwan: "Can we not use the simile of a dream to show this as nothing?"

Eruch: "But then people will say: We feel and see this as real, so how can this be nothing?"

Merwan: "That is exactly what happens in a dream."

Vinoo: "If this is all nothing, people will say: Why should we do anything?"

Baba: "No one does anything."

Eruch: "Is it true that the scientists say that there is nothing like matter and that all is energy?"

Vinoo: "This is not so. Matter and energy are interconvertible. Matter and anti-matter create energy when they come together."

Baba: "In the November [1962] Gathering I have explained about the Four Journeys. They are journeys within. There are also outer journeys. The Creation is based on gas, and gas is nothing, and Nothing Is. The mind is the junction between the inner and the outer journeys. There are two outlets, the inner and the outer. The outer (Creation) is nothing but the shadow of Reality. Just as your shadow is there because of you, so the Creation is there because of Reality. The mind is that which gives substance to matter and energy. If you do the outer journeys, there are infinitely vast fields in space which contain millions of universes with innumerable suns.

"There are 18,000 worlds in creation with human habitation. I have explained more of this at Meherazad to Francis and Eruch. Scientists will someday have to come to an agreement among themselves that there are innumerable expanding and contracting, evolving and dissolving universes. Just as, according to varying conditions, a shadow is sometimes bigger and sometimes smaller, so it is with the galaxies. How can the mind imagine the limitlessness of Creation? It cannot. Why not? It is because we try to understand with a mind that which is beyond the mind. Mind and energy are absolutely nothing. Hence all these universes which the scientists find so astounding are also nothing."

"Now, on the other side of the mind, the 'inner side,' there is shorelessness. You cannot pinpoint anything or any direction in it. No universes, no galaxies! Then what is there? Who is there in your sound sleep? Nobody. Only the 'Isness' is there. It all means that the Goal is to be fully awake in sound sleep! It is impossible without My Grace."

Vinoo: "Baba, what is mind?"

Baba: "My health is not well, and it has been a good while since this discussion has been going on. Now, to explain what is mind, hours and hours will not be sufficient. It is good that you think more deeply about what I have already explained. However, Baba continued, "There is such a thing like a mind. It is different from matter. In your sound sleep, if at all there is anything, there is God. Every thought of

yours has its imprint on the mind. There are impressions which bring you out from sleep. Thus, you daily awaken and go to sleep. Ages and ages have passed by, but mind, energy, and matter have remained, though as nothing. I will explain one day what mind is."

Baba asked Vinoo whether he knew Persian, to which He received a negative reply. Baba: "Hafiz, the God-Realised Persian poet, says in one of his couplets, 'The status of Love is so sublime that it can never be reached by mind!' And, with the help of mind, you try to reach that which is beyond mind! This is the difficulty.

"Majzoob-e-Kamil, the Majzoob of the seventh plane of consciousness, has no mind. He is all merged and absorbed in God. With your physical eyes, you can see him eating, drinking, talking, and walking. But the Majzoob is above mind. He is not conscious of mind, energy, or body. When you sleep, you snore. But you are not aware of it. So with the actions of a Majzoob; he appears to eat and drink to those around him.

"Well, what is mind? The mind is the junction between the 'inner' and the 'outer,' between Reality and its shadow. If the mind is annihilated, you experience an infinity of the Reality."

Here Baba put a question to Vinoo: "You see things in this room. Is it not so? But then who is seeing?" Vinoo: "That I do not know."

Eruch: "Mind sees. Baba has said that it is the mind that sees and does not see, that eats and does not eat, that speaks and does not speak, that sleeps and does not sleep, etc., etc. It is the mind that does everything."

Baba: "You are that One who does not see anything but only exists. As soon as you identify yourself with the mind, you are a person. If you don't, you are the Infinite."

Baba further added: "Vinoo, why do you want to go to the length of satisfying others through reasoning? This is doing wrong to them."

Vinoo: "Baba, because they believe in the power of reasoning!"

Baba: "Why feed them with that which ought to die?"

Vinoo: "To help them to go beyond reasoning with the help of reason."

Baba: "Help them to unlearn what they have learned."

4th MAY, 1963

In the morning Baba told us that the pressure of His Universal work was so much that He had not rested for two nights. He was in no mood for discourses, though a great number of His lovers had come to see Him from different parts of India. The three days were mostly spent in giving darshan in the mornings, and in the afternoons all enjoyed the singing of the famous vocalist Begum Akhtar. Her love for Baba poured something special in her ghazals that moved the hearts of one and all.

A Hamirpur group of lovers had also come, and Baba embraced each of them. Baba embraced all newcomers from other stations also. He then asked Lata Limaye, a young and budding singer from Ahmednagar, to sing a few ghazals. She sang so well that Begum Akhtar sitting next to her patted her back in appreciation. Baba asked her whether she was willing to go and live with Begum Akhtar for six months and learn ghazals. She readily agreed.

In the afternoon Begum Akhtar sang for nearly three hours. Her accompanists were Shri Golwalkar and Muhammad Ahmed, the former on the sarangi (a bowed instrument) and the latter on the tabla. Both of them are top-class players, and it was a treat to hear these "Big Three" musicians. Before the programme started, the Big Three were tuning their instruments. Baba said, "The original Naad - celestial music - does not need such tuning of *tal* or *sur*.⁴² It is continuous. All worldly music is only the seventh shadow of that Naad." After the programme, all came to Baba, kissed His hand, and left the hall.

5th MAY, 1963

In the morning Baba told one of His lovers, "Obedience is higher than Love. If I ask you to leave tomorrow, you must immediately accept My wish and leave tomorrow. If you tell Me that you have two more days leave and would like to stay, that is not obedience. None of you see Me as I am. In order to find Me as I am, you must lose yourself. It is very difficult to find even one who has found Me. What you see is only My hands, feet, and body. The Real Baba is Infinite."

During a music programme in the morning, Baba remarked that He loved Guru Nanak very much, for such a soul is rarely found.

He said:

"The Beloved rarely gives a lover the cup of divine wine to drink. If He ever gave, instantaneously the "drop" would become the "Ocean." The time has come when I shall break My silence. The whole world will get a spiritual push, but the hearts of My intimate lovers shall be opened then. Such a time will not come again and has not come in the past. Today the anti-spiritual element is at its height. Tibet, once known as the seat of God, is now a military camp! Hypocritical saints abound in these times. Science has advanced in the last ten years much more than it has ever done before. Hence, when all these factors are at their highest, spirituality will also be at its highest, in order not only to balance these factors but to overrule them. The time for breaking My Silence is very near, so hold fast to My daaman. I shall break My Silence in nine months.

Baba inquired about a lover's personal problem. Baba then said, "I am the Highest of the High, and yet I descend to your level and inquire about your everyday problems. But I am simultaneously conscious of all the seven planes and am also beyond these planes."

A sadhu came to see Baba. Baba asked him if he had anything to say. He replied that he had come for Baba's blessings, as he had plans to start a universal spiritual Centre. Baba said, "Your idea is very good, but do everything with one hundred percent honesty. Let no hypocrisy enter in your doings. Do not allow your ego to be tickled. Do it with the thought that you are not doing it but that it is being done, as it is God's will. Only then will My nazar [glance] be on you."

He told one of His lovers, "You may have a family and live in the world, but be detached completely. What does it mean to be detached? It means that if your wife and children suddenly die, or you take it as God's will, and not feel anything about it."

A three-year-old girl was sitting opposite Baba. He called her, and she at once came to Him and bowed down. Baba said that this girl had come to Poona from Sagar to see Him without her parents. Her neighbours were coming for Baba's darshan, and she insisted on joining them.

Madhusudan sang a few ghazals, and then all left for lunch. In the afternoon an Irani woman with her children came to see Baba. She told Baba, "Keep Your

nazar on us." After she left, Baba told us that His nazar is on everyone all the time, but that it does not fall upon just anyone. Once it falls on somebody, that person instantaneously becomes Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss!

Esfandiar Vesali, who had been at Baba's school in Meherabad during the years 1927-1928, had come from Iran to see Baba. Soon after the school had been closed, he had left for Iran and had not seen Baba since then. He was extremely anxious to meet his Master after thirty-five years of separation, but Baba would not grant His darshan at once. On the contrary, Baba told Esfandiar to sit outside and read verses from the *Divan-e-Hafiz*. He sat on the verandah reading the book. After about half an hour, Baba called him in. It was a touching scene to see him meet Baba after so many years. He put his head on Baba's feet and wept bitterly. After a couple of minutes he was lifted up and then he embraced Baba. One can only imagine the agony this lover must have felt while waiting outside for Baba's call.

In the afternoon Begum Akhtar gave her second ghazal programme. During the last two ghazals she began to weep, and yet her voice did not break as would normally happen. Baba gave His handkerchief to her and asked her to wipe her tears with it. Many others were seen weeping silently whilst she sang her last two ghazals. All dispersed at about 6:00 P.M. after the programme.

6th MAY, 1963

Baba was busy giving private interviews to several persons from 7:00 till 9:15 AM. He then came and sat in the assembly hall of Guruprasad where all had gathered. Hamirpur lovers staged a drama for about an hour and a half. The theme of the drama was the early opposition of the people of Hamirpur district who did not believe in Meher Baba and strongly opposed His lovers, even to the extent of setting fire to their huts and destroying their crops. In spite of this tyranny, Baba lovers won over all the opponents to Baba, by the force of their love. The whole drama would normally take six hours, but Baba asked them to wind it up in an hour and a half. All the actors played their parts perfectly. Baba was very pleased with the performance and was made to give His promise that he would visit Nauranga, where Meher Dham had been erected by the lovers of Hamirpur district.

In the afternoon Baba embraced all lovers who were to leave the next day. At 3:00 P.M. Shri Vatve, a famous *bhav geet* (devotional songs) singer, gave a wonderful programme till 4:30 P.M. Baba had asked him to learn to sing ghazals. Shri Varve had picked up these ghazals so well in such a short time that Baba was very pleased with his singing. After the programme, Baba stood up, greeted all, and then retired.

11th MAY, 1963

A woman came with a garland for Baba. Baba told us that she was once very rich, but her relatives duped her of her property illegally. She went to court and she had to face eighty-three lawsuits against her. Baba said, "In spite of such mental and financial troubles, it is her good fortune that she has still stuck with Me." Baba asked her to leave all her troubles to Him and then wait and watch the results.

Dr. Ram Ginde, a famous neurosurgeon from Bombay, brought grapes for Baba. He distributed all of them to us. Baba then asked Manu Jessawala to sing a few bhajans. In spite of not having practised for a long time, she sang and also played the harmonium very well.

The topic drifted to the experiences on the planes. Baba said:

"On the fifth plane, man experiences a little of Anhad Naad (celestial music), which he feels is coming from within himself. On the sixth plane, he sees God everywhere as effulgence. It is on this plane that the lover pines for union with the Beloved, but to attain union with God is not easy. Once a union is achieved, everything becomes endless, boundless, and continuous. From that sublime state, I have come down to your level. Babajan often used to remark on My having come down from that exalted state to get Myself bound over here. Now that I have accepted to become bound, I have to come and go every seven hundred to fourteen hundred years."

Baba went on:

"The 101 names given in praise of God in the Zoroastrian prayer book were supposed to have been given by Zoroaster. These names are the attributes of God in the Beyond State and not of the Beyond the Beyond

State. These names are of My attributes. God has infinite attributes, but only 101 have been mentioned in the book.

Law holds illusion; Love takes one beyond illusion. When God comes in human form, He controls the laws and abides by them, but gives love to all. He is the Master of the Law, while you are the slaves of this Law. You are all addicted to Maya, just as you are addicted to many things in Illusion. You may be able to overcome these addictions, but to break through the addiction to Maya requires the Master's Grace."

"Saint Tulsidas left his home when young and did a lot of penance. Once, after many years, he came back to his native village. An old woman, on seeing him, called him "Tulasia," the pet name of Tulsidas in his boyhood days. Tulsidas felt insulted at not being respectfully addressed and so left the village. He did this because he was still addicted to some aspects of illusion. I used to be insulted in the early days, yet I remained unaffected because I am God and above the addiction of illusion. When I break My silence, all will know who I am."

Baba turned to Maharani Shantadevi and told her, "Guruprasad has been immortalized."

He then switched over to the subject of *masts* and told us amusing incidents of His extensive tours in search of *masts*:

"I loved *masts* very much, and so I bore all the difficulties and hardships to meet them. I contacted *masts* wherever they were stationed, traveling in third-class railway train compartments, by bus, by car, by bullock cart, by tonga, and often walking in the unbearable heat, cold, or rain. Once the heat in Ayodhya was so intense that S.K. [Savak Kotwal] asked Me to relieve him of his duties and let him go home. S.K. has been with Me for years, yet he could not bear the strain of these *mast* tours. As soon as I was informed of a *mast*, I would start out, whether it was day or night, whether transport facilities were available or not. Once I saw the *masts*, I would be very happy and would do anything for them and anything they would ask Me to do. They often gave Me dirty food, which I would eat, and presents, which are still well preserved in Meherazad."

"Once I heard of a *mast* who was in a village ten miles away. I asked the mandali to procure a bullock cart. They met a drunkard who, in his tipsy state, said that he would bring his bullock cart if they paid him X number of rupees and also agreed to give him a tip of a certain amount. The deal was settled. He demanded his tip first! He was given it. He at once raced off, not to get a bullock cart but to the nearest pub, where he had his fill, He then set out asking friends for a cart, for he did not possess any of his own! After much waiting, he did bring a cart, but his eyes were red and rolling.

Baba and the mandali climbed into the cart, and the drunken driver whipped the bullocks. They bumped along a stony track. On the way, they came to a hill. The driver whipped the bullocks, and they climbed the hill at good speed. On the descent, he let go the reins, and the bullocks had the freedom to run at breakneck speed. The cart rattled down the hill with all its occupants. None of them thought they would arrive alive or in one piece. The driver seemed delighted with the speed at which the cart was rolling and thoroughly enjoyed the ride. The cart did arrive at the foot of the hill, but the bones in everyone's body were rattled to the extent that they felt they would fall apart at the joints. Poor old Gustadji suffered the most from this joy ride."

"When I am on *mast* tours, I have no compassion for the mandali nor for anyone involved in our transport. My sole idea is to get to the *mast* at the quickest possible speed. Sometimes we would walk for miles, and by the end of the day, our groins would be sore. A village remedy is to apply moistened gram [lentil] flour to the sore parts. Once the mandali applied it to Me, and since we were all tired we went to sleep without washing it away. Next morning the mandali had a difficult time trying to remove the sticky stuff that had dried stiff on Me overnight."

"Kaka and Baidul were the chief *mast* hunters. Not always did they bring *masts*. At times they would bring madmen. Kaka and Baidul would always disagree with each other regarding whether the man was a *mast* or a madman. When Kaka would bring a man whom he thought was a *mast*,

Baidul would fiercely disagree by saying that he was merely a madman! *Masts* have a volcano of love within themselves. One *mast* would smoke bidis [Indian cigarettes] and then pass them on to Me. I would puff at them, as I would not refuse a *mast's* offer. He went on giving Me bidis until I felt giddy! At last, I would throw away the bidi after one puff."

"We usually went to meet *masts* at night time; for we were sure there would be no disturbances from their followers at that time. During the day we would be traveling, and during the nights we would see the *masts*. Thus the mandali hardly got any sleep or rest."

"Once we arrived at a dak bungalow [travellers' rest house] for a night's rest, which was rare during these travels. The keeper said that it was not possible for him to permit us to stay in it, as the executive officer was residing there. After much argument, he agreed to give us a room if the officer permitted. One of the mandali got his sanction, and we got the room. It was 9:00 P.M. and all were happy to go to sleep at once.

The officer in the next room was busy with his work and had a ceiling fan going due to the heat. The fan was making a creaking noise, and I felt disturbed. I asked one of the mandali to go and ask him to put off the fan! The officer felt annoyed at our audacity but finally agreed to turn it off. After some time, I could not stand the noise of his movements in his room and sent one of the mandali to tell him that it would be better if he stopped making noise. This was the last straw for the officer. In his fury, he even forgot that he could drive us out of the bungalow, and he acceded to the request to be quiet. Next morning, much to the amazement of the keeper, the officer came to Me to pay his respects, when he came to know it was I who had been the cause of his fury."

Eruch said that as a rule, Baba would not stand even the slightest noise made by the mandali while He rested, though He would not be disturbed by moving trains when He slept on railway platforms during these tours. Once when Baba and the mandali were sleeping on a platform, a chief, to evade the police, came and slept among them! Eruch continued that when Baba travelled by car, the car would always be filled up with the mandali and luggage; yet Baba would stop the

car every now and then to give a lift to an old man or woman on the road. Eruch said that he once got exasperated at this because there was not an inch of space in the car, yet Baba wanted to give a lift to a person carrying an enormous bundle of his belongings. Eruch told Baba, "I shall come walking, let this man occupy My seat." Eruch added that Baba would try their patience, love, and faith in Him to the extreme.

Baba continued:

"Once, in an overcrowded third-class railway compartment, the mandali had to keep standing to give Me a little space to sleep. Some co-passengers objected as to why I would sleep while they were standing. The mandali tried to explain to the passengers that these were their seats that they had given to Me and so there was no need to quarrel. Just when the quarrel would settle, I would get up and give My seat to some old man. This would again enrage the other passengers, and the quarrel would start all over again."

"Once, at Nadiad station, the compartment was packed. Baidul was standing at the door of the compartment. The mayor of some place tried to enter the already overfull compartment by the wrong entrance. Baidul obstructed his entry, and in the tussle, the mayor fell off onto the platform. He called in the police. The police started taking statements of all passengers who had witnessed the event. The train was detained for an hour. At last, the guard requested the police to board the train and then continue to take statements. The train moved along while the police were taking statements. We reached our destination, and all of us got off and went away while the police did not realize who the accused in the overcrowded compartment was!"

During the last world war, when several compartments of the railway trains would be reserved for military personnel, Baba and the mandali once got into a military compartment, as the train was overcrowded. A number of the occupants objected to this, while the remaining helped Baba and party to enter. A quarrel ensued among the occupants, and heated discussions followed. When the train moved, Baba and the mandali found themselves watching a free fight, of which they were

the cause. Soon the train left the platform, and at the next halt Baba clapped loudly and gestured to them to stop fighting. Baba distributed sweets to both parties, and this brought about a complete change in the tense atmosphere. All became friends long before Baba and party reached their destination.

Baba said that of all the *masts* that He contacted during His *mast* tours, fifty made Him very happy. Chatti Baba was one of them. Baba used to bathe him daily with one hundred to one hundred and fifty buckets of water! In Quetta, where it is bitterly cold, Chatti Baba would move about with only a loincloth on. He never suffered from a cold or cough in spite of the severe temperatures. In Ajmer, Chatti Baba's room was like an oven, yet he seemed not to feel that heat at all. Many people where he lived revered him, and they would bow down to him on the roads when he moved about. In response, he would bend down, pick up a pinch of dust, and give it to them as *prasad*.

Baba said that Baidul once brought news that a very good *mast* was staying only a short distance away. Baba and the mandali went at night to see him. Baidul forgot the way and took them to another house, where Muhammadan women were living in *purdah*. The mandali banged the door at night and were vigorously rebuked by the women.

It was 11:00 A.M. and Baba asked us to go for lunch. In the afternoon there was no special programme. Baba played *La Risque* with a few of us. While the game was going on, someone came for His *darshan*. Baba was annoyed at this interruption. He said that even during the game of cards, He is quietly engaged in His internal work, and that is why He does not like interruptions. Baba retired at 3:30 P.M.

12th MAY, 1963

In the morning, Baba gave *darshan* to all newcomers. A sadhu who was running an ashram in Delhi and who had a big following came to see Baba. He bowed down at Baba's feet and then sat on the ground near Baba with a reverential attitude. Baba told us, "The sadhu has a big following, and yet he is so humble, and so he is great." He turned to the sadhu and said, "My continuous experience is that I am in everyone. Have the experience of seeing Me everywhere. On the Path, one hundred percent honesty is required. At present, there are lots of hypocritical saints because the time is very near for the breaking of My Silence."

A lover from Jhansi had come. He related to Baba in a very touching manner how Baba had helped him lately. He said that he had to go to Delhi for his son's marriage. Finding accommodation for the marriage party was impossible. He met some higher authorities but was refused accommodation. He resigned himself to Baba's will and left the office. Just when he was at the gate, he was called in again and was told that they could spare a house for him! He told Baba that his son had met with a motorcycle accident resulting in paralysis of his left foot. Neurosurgeons had advised craniotomy (surgical opening of the skull). He was afraid of getting his son operated on. Baba called the son, who came limping. Baba gave him a packet of biscuits and asked him to eat a small piece of biscuit daily, repeating Baba's name.

Baba again turned to the sadhu and said:

"There are two types of egos. The ordinary ego of this world and the Divine Ego "I am God." One who has realised God says that he is God, whether people believe it or not. He has got to assert that he is God. If people were to tell you that you are a woman, you would be forced to assert that you are a man. In the same way, one who has realised God is forced to assert that he is God."

"When I break My Silence, people will realize that I am God. Blessed are those who recognize Me before I break My silence. On the fifth plane of consciousness, the lover pines for union with God. Out of thousands of such lovers, one gets God-Realisation. Out of thousands of such realized ones, a rare one comes down as a Perfect Master on this earth. One may intellectually believe that one is God, and one with all, but one has to remove six curtains before one actually sees God everywhere! That seeing is clearer than your seeing this world with your eyes. To say, "I am God," is easy, but to experience this is extremely difficult."

Two men came to ask Baba to distribute prizes to several cricket teams affiliated with the Poona District Cricket Association. They said that they knew Baba liked cricket very much, and so they had come with this request. They also said that the cricketers would be very happy to meet Baba. Baba consented to distribute prizes on the 26'h of May between 2:00 and 3:00 P.M. He said, "I don't play cricket now, but I do play the Universal Divine Game, which includes cricket."

In the afternoon Baba told us that there would be a great upheaval in the world when He broke His Silence. A year after the breaking of His Silence, He would drop His body. Baba said that He was a hard taskmaster, and so we should keep courage and face all that happens. He said that many years have passed away, but the years to come are more important.

One lover who was greatly depressed because of some personal problems had come to see Baba. Baba told him, "Resign to My will one hundred percent, and I shall take care of everything." The man replied that he would try.

Baba said, "There has been no poet like Hafiz in the last two thousand years. All Urdu and Persian poets have taken inspiration from the words of Hafiz." While this talk was going on, a ten-month-old baby was playing at Baba's feet. Quite oblivious to who Baba is, she was playing with His daaman, pulling it here and there. Baba said, "*Masts* also played with Me, quite oblivious to what they were doing. Some of them would even try to poke their long nails into My flesh. *Masts* are grown up babies."

At 2:00 P.M. we had a qawwali programme. Habib Qawwal of Ahmednagar gave a programme for two hours. Baba enjoyed it and gave him His handkerchief. At four o'clock we all kissed Baba's hand and dispersed.

18th MAY, 1963

Baba embraced all lovers who had come from Andhra Pradesh. They had brought with them two big pictures of Baba that were very life like.

It seems that the day before, discussions had taken place among the main workers as to how Baba work should be done in Andhra. Adi was also present at that meeting. Baba brought up the same subject today and summed up how His work should be done without feelings of anger, jealousy, and dislike among the lovers. He said, "No decision can be arrived at if you speak all at once and don't practice what you preach. All your hearts must be united in My work. One must live what one tells others to do; otherwise, it can never impress them."

Baba then asked some of the main workers if they were satisfied with the way in which Baba work was being done in Andhra. They replied in the negative. Baba said, "Hypocrisy spoils Baba's work. The purity of heart and the feeling of oneness with others are required while working for me." One of the main workers expressed his apologies and promised that he would henceforth be more careful in

his relationship with other workers. Baba was pleased with him, for he admitted his fault and gave in. Baba then asked Sadashiv Patel how work should be done.

He replied, "We should talk less and do more work. We should be so engrossed in Baba's work that we find no time for petty discussions."

Baba said, "I intend to break My silence after nine months, and so you all should work intensely for this period. Live what you preach. Have one hundred percent honesty or keep your mouths shut. The best judge as to whether you are one hundred percent honest and living up to what you preach is your own heart." Baba then said that though the Avatar is the Master of all Laws of Illusion, yet He abides by them.

Quoting an incident from the life of Prophet Muhammad, Baba said, "Muhammad was very fond of eating dates. One day a mother brought her child to Him, complaining that her child ate a lot of dates every day and so suffered from dysentery. The child refused to obey his parents, telling them that he would abstain from dates only if Muhammad told him not to eat them. Muhammad could not tell the child not to eat dates when He was very fond of dates and ate a lot of them. He told the mother and child to come back after a few days. Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad stopped eating dates, and when the mother brought the child after a few days, He told the child not to eat dates. The child obeyed at once."

Thus Baba was trying to impress upon us that we should live up to what we preach to others. He said, "If you tell others not to tell lies, then even if your life is at stake, you should not tell a lie; otherwise it would amount to hypocrisy. My workers should be one hundred percent honest and do My work with all hearts united. Both parties must give in; only then there will be no trouble in Baba work."

One worker told Baba that a van was an absolute necessity so that older workers like him could move in it from village to village, talking to people about Baba. Baba said, "Who is to pay for the van? If I had to ask some lovers, they would willingly contribute towards it, but why should I ask them to pay for My work? If I am going to break My silence in nine months time, then this van or all such plans to spread My messages would seem insignificant compared with the work that will be done as soon as I break My Silence. If you have no van, travel by bullock cart. If this is not available, walk. If you are old and die while doing

My work it would be good for you." Baba summed up "In short, there must not be jealousy or backbiting among workers. Be one hundred percent honest. If you have something to say about another worker, tell it lovingly to his face and not behind his back."

After this, lovers from Andhra sang bhajans. Baba said, "I am one with the highest state of consciousness, and simultaneously I am on all the planes of consciousness, and so I am one with you all. Only Knowledge (*dnyan*) can make one realize that I am nearer to you than what you are to yourself. Your eyes are very close to you, but you cannot see your eyes unless you hold a mirror in front of you. If you want to see Me, hold the mirror of *dnyan* before you. This is only possible through My Grace."

At about 11:00 A.M. we sang Baba's arti, and then Baba asked the Andhra lovers to go outside and relax for half an hour. Lovers from other Centres came and sat near Baba after the huge group of lovers from Andhra left. Baba asked Manu to sing. After her, Adi Sr. sang a ghazal although he had a sore throat.

The president of the All-India Hindu Maha Sabha (a nationalist organisation) came to see Baba and asked Him for a message. Baba said:

"Love God to such an extent that you become God. That love can be had through selfless service, but this service should be such that there is not even a single thought of self. What counts most is experience and not mere understanding. One has to go beyond one's mind. You can see Reality within you, but for this, you have to dive deep into yourself. By reading, you may have the conviction of God's existence just through intellect, but conviction by sight is better. Conviction by becoming one with God is much better than conviction by sight. After gaining the conviction of being one with God, one in thousands comes down to normal human consciousness on this earth as a Perfect Master."

The president left soon after this message. Just then a few lovers from Eluru arrived and embraced Baba.

After lunch, a few of us had gathered in the side room. Baba does not have lunch; He has one meal of rice and dal at about 6:00 P.M. after all lovers leave Guruprasad. Shri Dhake and Dr. Deshmukh's son told Baba some amusing

stories. Baba said that they helped to relieve His burden. Baba said at one point, "Highly placed individuals in society get a lot of respect and honor in this gross world. Such fellows would be kicked out of the subtle and the mental worlds if they had no spiritual value. I am the slave of those who love Me."

At 1:00 P.M. Baba again came into the central hall. Bhajans were sung by several lovers. From Andhra came two sisters who sang well. Baba said that they go from village to village singing Baba songs. They have even sung at public functions in aid of the Defence Fund.

After arti, Baba said:

"I am so Infinite that I Myself cannot fathom My own Infinity. My shadow [the Creation] is also so infinite that once I tried to see with My gross eyes all that had come out of Me, but I failed. Scientists will soon discover a little of what I say. 18000 worlds are inhabited by human beings. In some, the people are extremely intelligent; in others less; and in still others, still less. None of the people who live in these worlds have any experience of the subtle or mental worlds. People from these worlds must be born on this earth to experience the subtle and mental worlds. This is an Avacaric age, and a special Avataric age, as I am observing silence. Science and anti-God elements will reach their zenith in the nine months before I break My silence. My manifestation will also be the greatest.

Breaking My silence will be as forceful as hundreds of thousands of atom bombs exploding. Science is practically heading to its zenith today because of the very intelligent souls from other worlds coming down here. Our population is increasing by leaps and bounds for the same reason that souls are migrating from other worlds, as they want a human body on the earth in this Avataric age. Remember one thing: all is an illusion, only God is Real, and I am God in human form."

That evening some Andhra lovers had invited Adi, Francis, Deshmukh, and me for dinner. When scholarly minds get together, intellectual interpretation of spiritual events is the rule. Adi asked, "Why does Baba ask us to introduce all newcomers to Him when He is all-knowing?" Someone said that though Baba

knows everything, He likes us to introduce newcomers to Him to make them feel that Baba is taking an interest in them. Adi said, "When God descends into Illusion, He is the Master of all laws of Illusion, yet He abides by them. Thus He comes down to our level and expects us to introduce newcomers to Him."

Someone asked, "Why does Baba so often postpone the date of breaking His silence?" Dr. Deshmukh said that if Baba had told His lovers in 1925 when He started His silence, that He would break it in 1975, His lovers would have lost patience. Man always lives in expectancy. Baba, by postponing the date of breaking His silence, keeps His lovers in a constant tension of expectancy. Dr. Deshmukh also said that Baba keeps on postponing the date because we are not yet ready to accept the breaking of His Silence. Francis said it was beyond him to answer this question. Adi did not give a direct reply. Many such questions were discussed before we were informed that dinner was served that we thoroughly enjoyed.

19th MAY, 1963

In the morning the talk drifted to last night's dinner given by Andhra lovers. I told Baba that many subjects had been discussed, including the one as to why Baba kept postponing the date of breaking His Silence. I said that it was immaterial for Baba lovers if Baba kept postponing the date, but when other people ask us the reason, it is not easy to convince them. Baba replied, "I shall positively break My Silence after nine months."

Rhoda Dubash from Karachi arrived with her son Merwan and embraced Baba. She said that after they had returned to Karachi from the East-West Gathering last November, Merwan fell very ill. His Senior Cambridge examination was to start, and he could not attend the first two papers. The Parsi disbelievers of Baba in Karachi told her that she should not have gone for Baba's sahavas when her son's examinations were so near. Doctors reluctantly permitted her son to attend the examination after the second day. All expected that the boy would surely fail and were waiting for the date of the results when they could again taunt the boy's parents regarding Baba. The results astounded everyone. Merwan passed with first class and was the only Parsi in Karachi to get the first grade! He had taken eight subjects for the examination when only six were compulsory, so it was not impossible to pass, even though he did not appear for the papers on the first two days.

The assembly hall was full of lovers from Andhra. Baba asked K.S. of Andhra to summarise and tell everyone what Baba had said regarding the carrying out of His work in Andhra. After this, M.Y. Mohan Saigal of Bombay, who had sung before Baba this summer, gave a wonderful feast of ghazals. Baba enjoyed his ghazals for two hours. At one point of time, Baba sent him out to have tea. While he was away, a blind musician from Andhra played on his violin and then on a flute. Baba explained a few lines of the ghazals:

"The lover says that his Beloved's eyebrows are like bows, while his nazar [glance] is like an arrow. The lover asks his Beloved to shoot such an arrow that it would go deep down in his heart."

"The lover's weeping for the Beloved is so intense that there are waves of tears, a regular storm, so to say. He cries out that he does not know where his love will lead him. He says: I live. Why? To die for you. Again, dying for you is nothing, for I have staked my life for you."

"The lover says: Even my enemies cannot bear the sight of my suffering for you, O Beloved!" ,

At eleven o'clock, Baba's arti was sung, and all went for lunch. Baba arrived in the side room only a few minutes later. Shri Dhake told us a funny story as usual, and Baba enjoyed it.

When Baba took His seat in the hall, Lata sang a few ghazals. From 2:00 to 4:00 P.M., three lovers from Andhra performed the Burra Katha. In it, one of them asks questions about Baba, and the other replies, with songs interspersed in between the talks. The end was rather delightfully dramatic. One of them said, "Now that I have heard so much about Meher Baba, please take me for His darshan." The other leads him by the hand to Baba and says, "This is Avatar Meher Baba!" Baba and all of us enjoyed the Burra Katha very much.

This was followed by a dance drama by about ten young girls from Andhra. They wore very gorgeous costumes, and the stage was magnificently decorated. Their expressions and movements in the dance were wonderful. They had been trained so well that there was perfect harmony among them. Coloured lights were focused on them, adding to the beauty of the dance.

The first scene was of Lord Vishnu in the heavens with angels dancing around Him. In the next scene, Lord Vishnu hears a call from the earth, saying that there is a great need for Him to descend on the earth as Avatar. In the third scene, God descends in the form of Merwan among nature's picturesque settings. In the fourth scene, Babajan kisses Merwan, who instantaneously gets Self-Realisation. In the fifth scene, Meher Baba declares that He has come not to teach but to awaken. He also gives His message of Love to the world.

In the sixth scene, the world celebrates one of Baba's birthdays. In the seventh scene, Baba shows His Real Self to Adi's mother, Gulmai, before she dies. The eighth scene shows Francis Brabazon singing one of his poems about Baba. The last scene was of the East-West Gathering, which ended with Baba's arti. The girls did not speak a single word but conveyed all this through their dance performance. The commentary was given in English before each scene. The little girl who acted the role of Baba, Bal Rani, was so natural and imitated Baba so well that Baba applauded her often. The background music and songs were also very good.

After the dance drama was over, Baba embraced all the actors and had photographs taken of Himself with the full cast. Baba retired soon after the photo was taken. No darshan was given, as it was already 6:00 P.M.

25th MAY, 1963

In the morning Baba said that He was in no mood to meet anyone, as the burden of His Universal Work was tremendous.

A Baba lover came in and said that for a week he had thought that he should not come to Baba, for he felt that Baba was a hoax. Baba replied, "The time for breaking My Silence is very near. It is during this time that there are great chances of My daaman slipping from your hands. Maya will try to take you away from Me. What does it matter if I am a hoax? I am everything - the Highest of the High as well as the lowest. But do not stop coming here even if you feel that I am a hoax. Do not go hunting for other masters or saints." Baba finally said, "The whole world is a hoax, not I."

A lover from Hyderabad had come to see Baba. He had helped the mandali to construct a small room on a hill where Baba had stayed for some time. After Baba left this place, the lover used to keep Baba's photo in that room and pray to Him. He developed great faith in and love for Baba. One day, he had a sudden stroke

of hemiplegia – paralysis of one arm, one leg and his face. He could not move, His condition was serious, yet he refused to take any medicines or injections. He would keep a glass of water before Baba's picture and pray to Baba. He would then drink the water as medicine. His faith in Baba was so great that he was cured and had come to see Baba. Baba asked him to lift his legs and arms, which he did with considerable ease!

A young woman who had appeared for an examination in medicine came to see Baba. He asked her how she had fared. She replied, "Not to my satisfaction, Baba." Baba said, "Didn't you cheat?" She said, "No." Baba then told us that when He was at school, He had to always cheat in arithmetic to get through His examinations!

One gentleman had come to see Baba for the first time. He was a mild schizophrenic and had had to give up his medical studies halfway. He had been given treatment with many drugs as well as shock therapy. Baba asked him what trouble he had. He replied that he had not slept well for the last fourteen years and at night had very conflicting thoughts and that his brain functioned at top speed, particularly at night. Baba prescribed him some tablets for one month.

This person came out of the hall and told me that he had taken these tablets before, to no effect. I told him that it was not so important what tablets Baba prescribed. What was more important was that Meher Baba – God - was prescribing them. Baba may give a pinch of dust, and that may work miracles. He obeyed Baba and took the tablets that night. Next morning, when he came to see Baba, he was asked if he had slept well. He replied, "Baba, in the last fourteen years this was the first night that I slept soundly!"

The previous year, the baby daughter of one of the keepers at Guruprasad had died, and the mother had entreated Baba to grant her the boon of another child. Baba had promised He would. The mother had delivered a baby girl about a fortnight ago, but the doctors at Poona were at their wit's end trying to keep the infant alive. The baby had been shifted three times from one hospital to another. At times she would show improvement and at times it would seem that she would not survive.

The mother again entreated Baba to keep her baby alive. Baba said that He does not use His powers and so could do nothing in the matter, but He asked the mandali to phone Kaikobad, one of the mandali at Meherazad, and ask him to

beseech God with his prayers to keep the baby alive. Baba said, "When Kaokobad prays earnestly, the baby feels better; as soon as he dozes off, the baby's condition deteriorates. Kaikobad's request to God to keep the baby alive is nothing but his request to Me to keep the baby alive." Baba asked Dr. Alu whether the baby would survive or not. She said, "If Your grace is on the baby, it will live." Baba replied, "If My grace is there, the baby will become one with God!"

Just then a beautiful Siamese cat (named Pegu) entered the hall and climbed onto Baba's lap. Baba said that the cat belonged to some people staying in the bungalow near Guruprasad. For a few days, it had been coming into Guruprasad and would not return to its home in spite of frantic attempts by the owner. The cat wanted Baba's company all the time. Baba said, "Any animal that comes in contact with the Avatar's body gets a human body in its next birth."

Baba then continued the previous day's topic of the different types of Qutubs, or Perfect Masters. He repeated in brief that Qutubs are of three types - Qalandar, Khwaja and Ghous. A Qalandar or Khwaja or Ghous is not a Qutub per se, but a Qutub can behave like a Qalandar or Khwaja or Ghous. The Qalandar type of Qutub is usually naked and never stays for long in any place. Totapuri, the Master of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, belonged to this type. Usually, a Qutub does not move from His place.

The Khwaja type stays in one place. Upasni Maharaj and Babajan belonged to this type. The Ghous type can separate all limbs from his body and reunite them at will. Any mortal who tries to look at him in that state loses his eyesight. Baba said, "Sai Baba was of the Ghous type. He used to keep a night watchman who had strict instructions not to look at him after he went to sleep. One day the watchman's curiosity got the better of him, and he peeped in, and lost his sight at once.

He continued, "After I left Sakori I used to stay in a small hut in Poona very near where Fergusson College now stands. During the day, people would come to be with Me and go away at dusk. I had a night watchman called Arjun who was a tough fellow. I had ordered him to sit outside the hut and not enter it under any circumstances. One night, while on duty, he saw a huge, awesome figure. Overcome with fright, he rushed into My hut. He disobeyed My order. Arjun began to lose weight from that day, wasting away until he finally passed away."

Baba then said that though He was talking to us, He was doing His internal work simultaneously. He said that just as we breathe and at the same time do all other things, He does His work while engaged in talks with us. Just as breathing is natural and one does not have to exert oneself to do it, similarly His internal work was natural. But He said that when He was doing some special work, He wanted no disturbance at all.

A girl called Mehera, about four years old, was sitting near Baba. He called her and asked her to say the Master's Prayer. Mehera boldly repeated the prayer in English perfectly, much to the surprise of all. A few bhajans were sung and then all joined in Baba's arti.

Baba said, "In the world today there is pain, suffering, and a gloomy depressive atmosphere everywhere. In the coming nine months it will become worse. Everyone will get desperate. As soon as I return to Meherazad, this depressive atmosphere will begin to increase. Just as a pregnant woman has to undergo all sorts of trouble during her pregnancy, which becomes worse during labor, so there will be suffering for nine months, and it will reach its zenith when I break My Silence after nine months. Once the delivery is over, both mother and baby will feel relieved."

Baba then told us about a funny incident that had happened when He had visited England for the first time. He said it was winter when He and the mandali reached there. It was bitterly cold, and the mandali were given warm clothing and blankets, and some of them even slept with their shoes on. The English devotee of Baba's who had made the arrangements did not give any of these amenities to Baba, as they assumed He did not feel the cold, being God. Baba said the nights were bitterly cold and He had only a sheet to cover Himself with.

One day His English lovers thought of taking a film of Baba early morning. All had woollen coats and gloves on, while Baba had only His sadra on, in that severe cold. And, to crown it all, He had to keep smiling so that His lovers did not feel that He was suffering from the cold. He could not even cough or sneeze, as God cannot possibly get a cold! He was given only a slice of bread and butter, while the mandali were given solid meals, as His English lovers at that time thought that God does not need food! Later Baba told them that when God descends in human form, He has all the limitations of the human form. If He were a *mast*, He would not have felt the cold.

At 10:30 A.M. Baba asked one lover to sing His arti in Bengali, after which all were asked to disperse, except the mandali and a few others. We collected in the side room and began to play La Risque. Just then a man who had had paralysis of his left leg and arm for six years came for Baba's darshan. He told Baba he had taken treatments of all sorts, yet he was unable to move his paralysed limbs well. He had developed contractures (deformities owing to permanent shortening of muscles and tendons). Baba asked him to repeat His name with full faith and love and to do exercises every day unassisted. If he did this, Baba said, he would be absolutely all right in six months.

After lunch, there was no special programme. Baba played La Risque and some of the lovers told amusing stories. At 3:30 P.M. Baba left us.

26th MAY, 1963

I arrived at 7:20 A.M. Baba said He had been with the mandali since 6:30 A.M. He again told the lover who had lost his faith in Baba and thought Him a hoax: "Judas grew up with Christ and yet betrayed Him in the end. Peter, who was the apostle of Christ, also denied Jesus. So why worry if you get such thoughts about Me? Stick with Me, and do not leave My daaman until at least the first of January. Do not go to any saint. Come here daily for fifteen days, and your mind will be free of all such thoughts."

Dr. Ginde came to see Baba from Bombay. Baba had him lifted up the steps on a chair, as he had recently developed heart trouble. Soon after his arrival, Baba came into the main hall, and a lover sang Indian classical music for about twenty minutes. Next, M.Y. Mohan Saigal of Bombay sang ghazals, which Baba enjoyed very much. After that, we sang the arti, and then all who were leaving on that day embraced Baba.

After lunch Baba sat on the verandah while His lovers sat around Him. The hall was completely vacated, as Baba was to distribute trophies to several cricket teams of the Poona District Cricket Association. Baba had consented the previous week to preside over this function at Guruprasad. The local newspapers had given it a good write-up, one of the papers stating, "History will be made next Sunday when a Saintly Personality will take an active and in fact the most important part in a sports function."

The different teams collected in the assembly hall by about 1:45 P.M. Many local invitees had also come. Baba sat in His usual seat. All trophies and certificates were arranged on a cable to His left. Press reporters and photographers got busy. Baba said, "This is the first time I have taken part in such a function. There are two reasons for it. The first is that I was born in Poona, Maharashtra. The other is that from My childhood I have been very fond of cricket. Spiritually, I am the Universal Being. I always like to watch cricket matches, but people do not allow Me to do so in peace! Once, I was invited by the Mayor of Ahmednagar to witness a good match. It was one of the Ranji Trophy matches. When I reached there, the Mayor was waiting for Me with a garland and behind him was his whole retinue, who had My darshan one after another. People began to crowd around Me, and finally, I had to leave without having seen the match."

At 2:00 P.M. Sadashiv Palsule, the Honorary Secretary of the Poona Cricket Association garlanded Baba. He introduced to Baba the members of the executive committee. In his speech, the Secretary said that the winner would receive not only the trophies but also the blessings of Avatar Meher Baba. He said that this was a unique function because their chief guest, Meher Baba, was also their host. Besides, this was the first time that this function had been held in the afternoon. The usual annual report of the Association was not read out.

After Palsule's speech, Baba distributed Cups, Shields, and Merit Certificates to the skippers of the different teams. Baba's message to the cricketers was then read out by Eruch:

"I am happy to present these trophies today. When I was a boy at school and college, I played cricket. Now I play My Divine Universal Game, which includes cricket, and so I am still fond of that game. It is good to excel in whatever one takes up, so long as with excellence there is a feeling of humility; for this leads to love of God, and to love God as He should be loved is the best excellence. I give you My blessing that one day each of you may have this love."

Baba then gave a special message:

"Play cricket for the sake of playing the game. Don't think of victory or defeat, but like a real sportsman, give pleasure to the spectators. If you

play with all your heart to make the spectators happy, it is a great work done by you. But if you play with the thought of not getting out, you will make the spectators unhappy and will have wasted their money.

I give My blessings so that you may play the game for itself Once, when I was a student at St. Vincent's School, we had a match with New High School. I was a good wicket keeper as well as a good batsman. In that match, I was the opening batsman. I came back from the field not out while My whole team was out, but I had scored only thirty-three runs. When I came back to the pavilion all the boys hooted at Me. I did play steadily, but the spectators were unhappy. So play the game in such a way that the spectators feel happy."

A few bhajans were sung, followed by Baba's arti, after which the cricketers dispersed. Baba lovers again filled the assembly hall and heard the great singer Deshpande till 4:30 P.M. Those who had not embraced Baba that day came to Him for a parting embrace after the singing programme was over.

1st JUNE, 1963

Baba mentioned that Dr. Harry Kenmore had arrived from New York five days back. His coming was a big surprise for all. I was told that during these five days Baba had given many discourses. Harry had brought with him a camera that took and developed colour pictures in thirty seconds! He took many pictures of Baba with this camera.

Attending to a small personal problem of a lover, Baba said, "I am dragged down from My Highest state to look after such small problems. The whole universe is a zero, and yet I have to take care of this zero. All the miseries of the world that you experience at present will become insignificant when I break My Silence. Even now, these miseries are insignificant, but you do not feel them to be so."

Baba said that the first copy of His new book of discourses, called *The Everything and the Nothing*, printed in Australia, had been sent to Him by air. Baba said that it was a very well-printed book. He also said that the recent book by Francis Brabazon, entitled *The East-West Gathering*, was excellent.

Once Baba said, "Imagination is greater than intellect. When you start imagining something, you create. When you keep on imagining, you sustain what you have created. When you stop imagining, you destroy what you have created. Similarly, God's Infinite Imagination breathes and sustains the Creation."

Baba then asked me, "Who created God?"

I said, "God was, God is, and will always be."

Baba said, "God was, but how did God come into existence? God Himself created God, and so He is called Khuda. This fact cannot be understood with the mind but can be experienced only with the Real Knowledge."

Lovers from Navsari sang a few bhajans. On hearing the singing, Baba jokingly said, "Today I feel as if I should come again after fourteen hundred years, as even the thought of coming after seven hundred years seems very tiresome!"

Harry was asked to recite the Parvardigar Prayer. Baba then jokingly said to D. and K., whom He always referred to as miserly fellows, "If you give me ten million rupees, I will give you God-Realisation!" D. replied that if Baba helped him, he would be able to procure that sum! Baba replied, "I don't want your money. What I want is your love and a clean heart, which are beyond all the millions of rupees."

After arti, Baba came into the side room and played La Risque with the mandali and a few others. Baba told us that Kaka, one of the mandali at Meherazad, had been shifted to hospital for urinary trouble. He did not want to leave Meherazad, and finally, Baba had to order him to do so. At twelve noon Baba left us.

Baba returned at 1:15 P.M. He said that during the coming nine months there would be great suffering, and it would start after His return to Meherazad. He warned us not to let go of His daaman. He said, "I am God, undoubtedly."

One of the mandali had gone to Harry's hotel to deliver some food. He came back late, in fact after Harry had arrived. When Baba asked him why he had arrived late, he began to justify his omission with long explanations. Baba said, "My heart is soft as wax and yet as hard as a stone. Hafiz says, 'Do not be arrogant with the Beloved, for in His hand even the hardest rock becomes like wax.' Once the 'Beloved gets upset, there remains no solution. I become intimate with My mandali, but the latitude I give you should not be taken advantage of. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it; do not go on arguing."

Baba then began a discourse:

"There are seven stations during the process of evolution. After one has crossed these, one gets complete consciousness in the human form. But unfortunately with the consciousness, one has also gathered impressions [sanskaras]. One has to shed these during the involution process, which also has seven stations. As soon as all sanskaras are removed, one experiences that one is God. To reach the first station of the evolution process, it takes many, many ages. To reach the second requires less time, the third still less, and so on. Similarly, to reach the first station of the involution process, it takes many, many ages, while the other stations are reached more quickly.

Hafiz says that once one reaches the first plane of consciousness, one is likely to tarry there for a long time. Hafiz continues that the man on the first plane is compared to a man in a caravan. Everyone rests during the night, but early in the morning, the leader of the caravan rings his bell so that all may get ready to move on. Similarly, a man on the first plane is likely to tarry, and so the Perfect Master has to remind him to keep moving. Hafiz says that the aspirant complains that he reached the first plane after ages of evolution, and as soon as he reached it, his Master rang the bell so that he would not tarry there for long.

Hafiz also says that on the third plane one should not hurry to leave, because it is a zigzag path, and ahead there is the likelihood of one's falling from the fourth plane. Hafiz says to the aspirant, "Why are you in a hurry to reach the threshold of the Abode of God?" On the fourth plane, there is a treasure-house of all powers. Hafiz says that once the threshold is reached, one should cross it quickly, as one may fall from the sublime heavens to the depths. Once you are on the fifth plane, there is no possibility of a fall.

On the sixth-plane the aspirant sees God everywhere and so there is no question of hurrying or tarrying. This seeing comes all of a sudden. Hafiz says that the aspirant on the sixth-plane exclaims, "How fortunate I am tonight that my Beloved entered my room all of a sudden." (The sixth-plane is referred to as night, while the dawn is the seventh plane). As soon

as the Beloved entered, the aspirant saw the ocean of effulgence of God and bowed down, and he felt very blissful. Hafiz says of his experience that there is no wonder that he saw his Beloved that night, for it was the fruit of his labour of being at the feet of his Perfect Master for forty years. Hafiz continues that when he got up after bowing down to his Beloved, he wanted to plunge into the ocean of Effulgence, but an infinite vacuum had to be crossed [between the sixth and seventh planes].

Baba explained that the aspirant takes fright at this juncture and hesitates whether he should plunge in or remain on the shore. At the dawn of day [seventh plane], he finds himself relieved of all his miseries of separation and becomes one with his Beloved.

Hafiz said: I was stripped down totally naked and found myself all alone in all my glory. What a glorious dawn it was that I was given a pass to the Highest. It was the grace of my Perfect Master that I became the dust at his feet and thus became the Highest.

It all means that God alone is real and all else is Illusion."

Baba went on to discourse on the Pararn-Purush, the Supreme Being:

"There is Paramatma.

Paramatma is All-Existing. ,

All Atmas are in Paramatma. ,

All Atmas are Paramatma.

When an Atma apparently comes out of Paramatma, the Atma becomes Jivatma and begins to gain consciousness of falseness.

For the Jivatma to become One with the Paramatma is the Goal.

After passing through the processes of evolution, reincarnation, and involution, the Jivatma eventually becomes Shivatma and remains so eternally.

When Shivatma "comes down" to normal consciousness in duality - that is when Shivatma is duality-consciousness - he is Nar (man) and Narayan (God) simultaneously. So the Atma that thus regains normal consciousness (in duality) should be called jiv-Shiv-Atma. This boils down to the fact that the Atma has to go through the hell of a thing, one after the other, in order to become Self-conscious. To become Self-conscious is to experience the I-Am-God state consciously. After becoming Shivatma, there is the state of Baqa. Such a one, in the state of Baqa, is termed Purushottam (*purush + uttam*), the Best of Man.

Atma is Purush. Prakriti has come out of the Nothing. Purush and Prakriti are linked eternally, till Purush releases himself from Prakriti and becomes Self-conscious. Majzoob of the seventh plane is the Shivatma. Avatar is Shiv-jiv-Atma, and He is the Pararn-Purush, the Highest or the Beyond or the Eternal Man."

Baba closed the above discourses with the following remark: "All that I say is all that I *know*, and to you all these are words."

Baba then asked Bachoobhai Soni of Navsari to sing. Just when he finished, Haribhai of Bajwa arrived and, dancing in ecstasy, began to sing. He then fell at Baba's feet with tears rolling down his cheeks. After Baba embraced all Bajwa lovers, He retired for the day.

2nd JUNE 1963

By 7:30 A.M. a huge crowd of lovers had collected. Baba sat in the assembly hall and embraced the lovers from Andhra. After this, bhajans were sung by the Navsari group, following by ghazals by Mohan Saigal. Baba said, "On the Path, one hundred percent honesty is required. The least hypocrisy washes you away from the shores of Reality. God never manifests in hearts that are unclean. But to have a clean heart is impossible without the Grace of a Perfect Master."

A man who could imitate the sound of almost anything imaginable arrived. He gave a short performance, much to the amusement of Baba and of all. At 10:30 A.M. Baba's arti was sung, followed by the Parvardigar Prayer recited by Harry Kenmore, after which all dispersed.

The sick baby girl of one of the keepers of Guruprasad (reference 25th May) expired. The mother came to Baba, but she did not shed a single tear before Him. She bravely said that she was happy in whatever was Baba's Will. Baba comforted her and told her that He had bestowed on her two children (one last year and one this year) and had taken them both back to Him. Now He would bless her with another, one for her to keep.

In the afternoon Navsari lovers sang bhajans till about 2:00 P.M. Professor Panjwani then sang ghazals, drumming at the same time on a big special *chatti* (earthenware pot) for an hour. Mohan Saigal again sang several ghazals. At about 4:00 P.M. Baba's arti was sung, and then all dispersed after embracing Baba.

3rd JUNE 1963

Baba was in the assembly hall by 7:45 A.M. Newcomers took His darshan. The Ahmednagar bhajan party had come and performed a very good bhajan programme. Baba mentioned, "Hafiz says how foolish people are to compare pearls with seashells. The Real Pearl is here [*pointing to Himself*]. Do not go after the shells elsewhere."

Baba explained a line or two from a ghazal: "Jigar says, when I dive into the ocean of love, the waves of suffering embrace me. That embrace is like the embrace of my mother. They are chicken-hearted who seek the safety of the shores."

At 10:30 A.M., Harry recited the Parvardigar Prayer as usual, and this was followed by the arti. After this, Baba posed for a group photo with Haribhai of Bajwa and his family. Baba said that He had consented to this only because Haribhai's newly wedded son had also come. He did not want this to be made into a precedent for all.

Baba soon came into the side room and sat for about three-quarters of an hour chatting about various topics. He went to His room at 11:45 A.M. to return to the assembly hall at 12:10 P.M. The Ahmednagar bhajan party once again entertained Baba. The main feature of the programme was a young lover called Manek, who had dressed up as a qawwal. His accompanists were wearing peculiar caps. He sang well, delightfully imitating the typical gestures of a qawwal while singing, much to the amusement of all. We dispersed after arti at 3:30 P.M.

5th JUNE 1963

To someone who invited Baba to his town, Baba said: "I am here and also there. I am near, and also away; I am everywhere."

Today, Baba was in a mood to give a discourse. He said:

"Fana is of three types: (a) Fana Fillah, (b) Fana-fi-Sheikh, and (c) Fana-fi-Rasool. In Fana Fillah a person becomes one with God. Fifty-six persons are existing in this state always. In Fana-fi-Sheikh, a person becomes one with the consciousness of a Qutub [Perfect Master]. He is one with the Infinite Consciousness of the Qutub, but he is not one with the office of the Qutub. In Fana-fi-Sheikh, he sometimes and to a very limited extent makes use of the Infinite Power-Knowledge-Bliss. The person in the Fana-fi-Sheikh state drops his body immediately after the Qutub who has brought him to the state of Fana-fi-Sheikh drops his body. Five Qutubs are existing always.

In Fana-fi-Rasool, which is a very rare state and occurs very rarely, a person becomes one with the Avatar (Rasool). When it does happen, it is during the Avatar's physical presence on earth and just before the unique, worldwide manifestation of the Avatar. It is a rare occurrence. It has happened in the past. None from Fana Fillah can become one of Fana-fi-Rasool state. An ordinary man who is only gross-conscious is chosen by the Avatar Himself, and on him is bestowed the state of Fana-fi-Rasool. In Fana-fi-Rasool the person becomes like the Avatar but does not hold the Avatar's office, and he drops his body immediately after the Avatar drops His body.

The fourth plane is called the threshold of the Abode of God. If a man of the fourth plane tries to harass one on the fifth plane (a Wali) with his powers, then the Wali on the fifth seeks the help of the Avatar (Rasool), but not of a Qutub. Thus he is protected directly by the Avatar from the pranks of the fourth plane man, and the latter's powers are curbed. Very rarely does one on the fourth plane ever become arrogant to a Qutub; if any mischief or arrogance is displayed, the Qutub sternly deals with such

a person, who eventually surrenders to the Qutub. The Qutub then raises him to the fifth plane of consciousness at once.

In the Fana Fillah state, there are fifty-six souls. The state of Baqa means being established in God and being able to use Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. A Qutub is the one who leads the life of God and uses Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. Some Sufis believe that Fana Fillah is the highest state. Others believe that the Qutub state is the highest, while still others believe the state of the Rasool to be the highest."

On the afternoon of the 5th, referring to His Five Perfect Masters, Baba said:

"Tajuddin Baba, Sai Baba, and Babajan were of the *jalali* and *jamali* traits. Upasni Maharaj was only a *jalali*, while Narayan Maharaj was only a *jamali*. These five Qutubs precipitated the Advent of the Avatar of the age. Of the present five Qutubs, three are Hindus and two Muslims. They are all men. My next advent will be after seven hundred years when all five Perfect Masters will be men.

If a man on the fourth plane misuses his powers and if the Qutub is a *jamali*, He does not bring the fourth-planer to the stone consciousness but brings him down only to a gross-conscious human being. But if the Qutub is of a *jalali* trait, then He will bring about his fall right to the stone consciousness. The Avatar never contacts the man on the fourth plane, except His agent, for in that case, the fourth-planer will automatically lose all his powers. But if the one of the fourth plane approaches a Qutub, He accepts him and raises him to the fifth plane consciousness."

Baba continued that a Qutub can appear in physical form in ten places simultaneously, while the Avatar can do so in a thousand different places. A Perfect Master has two types of agents: *abdal* and *avtad*. An *abdal* can take many forms - usually that of an old man or a child. Suppose a pilgrim of the spiritual path is very thirsty and is about to die of thirst; a Qutub immediately directs an *abdal* to go and help him. Baba said that His father was helped by an *abdal* when he was dying of thirst and was lost in the desert of Kutch. At that time, a man

with a long beard carrying a *pakhal* (leather water bag) of water appeared before Sheriarji. No sooner had he drunk the water than the old man vanished.

Baba continued: "An *abdal* does important work, but mostly in the male form. *Abdals* are of either male or female form. An *abdal* of the female form does not appear in a male form but changes from one female form to another as it suits the duty assigned by the Qutub. Likewise, an *abdal* of the male form does not appear in a female form. The *avtad* is always of a male form and does very little work in the way of odd jobs assigned by the Perfect Master."

Baba also hinted that five billion years in Illusion is like a moment in Eternity.

6th JUNE 1963

Baba said:

"The journey between the third and the fourth plane is very difficult. At this stage, the connection between the pilgrim and the Perfect Master is so very delicate that it may be said to be linked with only a hair. Thus neither of them can afford to create a strain or too great a resistance lest the connection be snapped!"

"Even the longing for union with God must be given up!"

"The Nothing came out of the Everything. From this Nothing came out this everything called the Creation. The Nothing appears to be everything. Thus, when one crosses the sixth-plane to Reality, one has to necessarily pass through complete emptiness - that is, the Nothing. The experience of emptiness cannot be described. Sadgurus and Majzoobs have all passed through this experience of the emptiness. The experience of this emptiness is of a very short duration, for the pilgrim at once passes to the Fana Fillah state of "I-Am-God" and experiences himself as God the Everything. For the Perfect Master, who has regained normal consciousness, the Nothing becomes His Universal Body. From this Universal Body, everything of the Creation is projected and absorbed, chewed, and spat out incessantly."

8th JUNE 1963

Baba was in the assembly hall by 7:45 A.M. He gave darshan to more newcomers. He said that He had explained many things during the last four days. He then asked us if we had slept well the previous night. One of us said she could not sleep because she had a headache. Baba replied, "Remember Me and all headaches will disappear." Another woman said she could not sleep, as she was constantly thinking of Baba. Baba said, "If you do not get sleep for this reason, then it is good."

One lover's luggage was stolen while he was coming from Bombay to Poona. He lost practically all the clothes that he had and also some money. Baba said, "It's good that you have no family or you would have lost that also. If you had got lost, it would have been good. If you don't brood over the loss of your belongings, then it's something you have achieved."

A woman who had been composing poems about Baba for a long time was asked to sing by Baba. She had longed for this opportunity, and all her poems were on the theme that she should be called by Baba to rest at His feet forever. She sang very well, with fervent love. Tears rolled down her cheeks. When she finished singing, she fell at Baba's feet and wept. Baba gestured to one of us to help her rise, and then she returned to her seat. Baba told us she held an M.A. in philosophy. Baba then asked Lata to sing. At 9:00 A.M. a radio artist played the shehnai for about half an hour.

Baba then spoke of someone who had come for an interview with Him. This man told Baba of all the experiences that he felt he had had of the Path. Baba said, "The man had a mental breakdown four years back for which he had consulted a doctor. The next day after this, he came to Me for the first time and embraced Me. During the eight days that followed this embrace, he said he had complete peace and tranquility of mind and also inner experiences like hearing celestial music, smelling unearthly scents, seeing circles, colours, and lights. He has been telling these experiences and discussing them with others. He felt that he was very near the Goal.

I told him not to discuss these experiences, as they have no significance and are illusory. I gave him instructions to get up at three A.M., as was his usual practice for meditation, but to remember Me before beginning meditation." Baba continued, "Had I not exhorted him, he would have been an addition to the present-day hypocritical saints. Getting enamoured of such experiences is rawness

on the Path. Love for God is something quite different. In Love, there is no compromise. Either you love God, or you don't.

Hafiz says: In the school of God and in the company of the Perfect Master, try, try, and try again, so that one day you also become perfect. Wash your hands of the coppery existence, so that one day you get the alchemy of Love and become gold. Hafiz adds that even to think of being united with God is sheer madness because it is almost impossible, but if you must persist in your madness, then become dust at the feet of a Perfect Master, for only then may it be possible."

Lata sang another ghazal. Baba explained a few lines of the song:

"On the inner journey, there are seven planes of consciousness, and every plane has its *mukam* [abode] and *manzil* [station]."

"The lover says, "I am making an effort to make my heart pure, but I do not expect any reward." The lover feels that all life is meaningless, and now the fear of death has also gone away. In love, there is no fear."

"For those who are earnest, the Path and the Goal become the same. Therefore, go on trying."

"Hafiz consoles the lover, saying that if all efforts fail in bringing him to the Beloved, the lover should leave everything to the Beloved's Will."

Adi then sang a ghazal. Baba explained:

"Those who step into the domain of love think that they have reached the destination. God only knows what a foolish thought it is. Hafiz says that when first he set foot on the beach, he thought that he had already got the pearl; but little did he know that he would have to face the waves, storms, and whirlpools and that he would have to dive deep into the Ocean before getting the Pearl. The lover says he has grown so much in love that he quenches his thirst by thirst itself!

Hafiz says that you are the curtain between yourself and God. Remove yourself, and you will realise God. This is as difficult as sleeping soundly and yet remaining fully conscious. This impossibility becomes a possibility by Baba's nazar.

On the slightest indication or hint from his Beloved, the lover gives all that he possesses in this world and the next. The only thing he considers his own is his love for his Beloved."

After this, Harry Kenmore was asked to recite the Parvardigar Prayer and the Repentance Prayer. Baba then went into the side room and talked to the mandali for a short while. Later He continued the explanation of the ghazal Adi had sung:

"The true lover has no interest in palaces and things of this world. For him, each breath that he draws reveals to him a new world.

Only those eyes which have an intense longing for the sight of the Beloved can have some idea of the secret of that intoxication that the Beloved's eyes impart.

One who is not advanced on the Path and gives tall talks on wine and wine jar cannot fathom the Knowledge of the Master who knows from the beginningless beginning the secrets of the Wine and the Jar of Wine.

Those who are raw in love do not know of the pain they give to their Beloved. That love which gives the slightest bit of burden to the Beloved is not loved."

Baba then went to His room while the mandali had lunch. He returned at 12:40 P.M. to be with the mandali and a few of us. Some more lovers from Andhra had just arrived, and so they embraced Baba. The number grew so big that Baba had to shift to the assembly hall. Adi and Lata sang the same ghazal they had sung in the morning. A lover from Andhra sang in Telugu. A spokesman for the Andhra Baba lovers invited Baba to come to Andhra. Baba said, "I know I love the Andhraites very much, but I cannot promise a visit. If I go anywhere, I will go to Andhra."

A tape received from New York from Louis Agostini was played. He gave several talks interspersed with Indian music. After it had finished, Baba said:

"In *God Speaks* I have explained about representing the *vidnyan bhumika*,⁴³ the region near it as the *mana bhumika* [mental plane]; the region still

further away from it is the *prana bhumika* [subtle plane]; while this gross world, being farthest from it, is the *anna bhumika* [gross plane]. But I have not mentioned therein that the *anna bhumika* has two states: the first, ignorance, and the second, intellectual conviction. The "sun" sheds its rays all over.

On the *mana bhumika*, the rays are very powerful. On the *prana bhumika* they are milder, while on the *anna bhumika* they are milder still. Some take advantage of the "sun" and bask in its sunshine on the *anna bhumika*, while others out of ignorance stay under a roof and do not take advantage of the sun. Basking in the sunshine on the *anna bhumika* is called *ilm-ul-yaqin*, i.e., intellectual conviction. The state of Qutubiyat, though on the *anna bhumika*, has its place in the "sun" itself, for it is one with the "sun." My consciousness is on all planes or *bhumikas* simultaneously. Jigar says that the other name for Love is annihilation, so do not seek life in Love. Do not seek life in the rays of the sun, but become the sun itself."

Baba then began talking about His five Perfect Masters:

"Two of them were Hindus, two were Muslims, while Sai Baba was both Hindu and Muslim. At night Sai Baba would rest on seven bolts of cloth supplied by his followers from time to time for making robes for Sai Baba to wear. Before leaving the mosque and going to the *chavdi* [night resting place], Sai Baba would wave his hand seven times in the air as if blessing someone. As for Babajan, if anyone called her "Mai" [Mother], she would get very angry and say she was not a woman! She would constantly go on stroking her arms as if brushing something off. This gesture of hers had great significance."

Baba related a funny incident. Once, when He was in seclusion on a hilltop in Kashmir, Gustadji and Chanji were keeping watch. Chanji was equipped with a penknife and Gustadji with his silence! A small lantern placed on an empty kerosene tin served to break the pitch darkness. Tigers abounded in this place. One night Chanji happened to doze off, and his leg kicked the kerosene tin. The lamp and tin fell down and made a big noise. Both the watch-keepers were frightened to death, thinking that a tiger had pounced upon them! Baba said that

these two watchmen reminded Him of the time when He was Krishna. He had four companions then: one was a stutterer, the other was lame, the third squinteyed, and the fourth was deaf.

At 3:00 P.M. arti was sung and then all dispersed.

9th JUNE 1963

Baba was in the assembly hall at 7:30 A.M. After darshan, a sitarist performed. Baba liked the solo very much. Mohan Saigal then sang ghazals. Baba would explain off and on:

"The lover tells the Beloved: While passing by, if you would just cast a glance at me, my destiny would be changed.

The lover whose heart has stopped in the pangs of separation tells his Beloved: O my merciful Beloved, you have come too late.

Don't look with revulsion on one who is mad with love for God. It is his love that makes his Beloved appear in all glory.

The lover tells the Beloved: I have heard for ages that you are very glorious, but my eyes have not yet seen your Glory. So my complaint is not about my ears, but about my eyes.

The lover complains to the Beloved: There is no defect in your heart but one, and that is that you are indifferent to my love.

The lover says: If it were in my fortune to become one with you, it would be unfortunate, for then I would merge in you and would no more have the sweetness of pain in longing for you!

The lover in his agony cries out: If your arrow of Love had pierced my heart through and through, it would have relieved me of my suffering.

The lover says: To die once is easy. But I die and live for you every moment. At last, my heart became so restless that my Beloved had to respond.

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The lover in his heart of hearts knows that the Beloved will not meet him, and so he says: I know you will not fulfil your promise, but your promise to meet me tomorrow makes me so happy that I feel I have already met you.

Jigar says that when he put his heart at the feet of the Beloved, his restlessness of ages came to an end."

At 11:00 A.M. arti was sung, and then all dispersed for lunch. Baba was in the assembly hall again at 12:20 P.M. Lata sang for a short while. A sitar solo followed. Shankar Shambhoo, a qawwal from Bombay, sang before Baba for three hours in the afternoon. Baba gave a handkerchief of His to each of the qawwal party. This was followed by arti at about 5:00 P.M. After Arti, each one filed past Baba with folded hands. Baba retired at 5:30 P.M.

15th JUNE 1963

At 7:10 A.M. Shri M.R. Appa Rao, Minister for Excise and Prohibition, Andhra State, arrived. Baba had specially permitted him and his wife to do His *pada puja* (traditional worship of the Guru's feet). Both of them anointed Baba's feet with honey, milk, curds, perfume, etc. They then washed His feet with eau de cologne and lastly with rose water. They offered Baba tea, of which He sipped a little and then returned it to them as His prasad.

Baba then came into the assembly hall, and long queues of people stood for His darshan. Madhusudan sang some bhajans while the people were taking darshan. Baba then asked Lata to sing a ghazal. Another girl gave a dance performance. Baba was very pleased with it, particularly when she danced standing on the rim of a brass platter.

A qawwal then sang for about an hour and a half. Baba enjoyed the ghazals and gave him His handkerchief. At 10:50 A.M. arti was sung, and all were asked to disperse.

Baba then came into the side room to be with the mandali. He said that the nine months to follow were very crucial from the point of view of His work. He warned us that under no circumstances should we let go His daaman. At 3:00 P.M. Baba retired.

16th JUNE 1963

In the morning at 6:45, Baba came into the mandali's room. He asked me to hold fast to His daaman during the coming months. He then asked the mandali to say the following: "O God, help us all to hold on to Baba's daaman till the very end."

Baba embraced two cricketers who had come from Bombay and said that He was very happy to see them. He then came into the assembly hall. Long queues of lovers waited for His darshan. While they were taking darshan, Madhusudan and others were singing bhajans. At 8:30 A.M. Baba asked Harry to say the Parvardigar Prayer. About a dozen Gujarati women came in for Baba's darshan, led by one woman who is revered as a saint and has a large following in Gujarat. They asked Baba if they could be given the privilege of singing one bhajan. Baba permitted them. They sang in perfect rhythm, and all other lovers joined in. Even Baba began to tap on His chair in tune with the bhajan. After this, there was a dance performance by the four-year-old daughter of one of the Poona Baba lovers. Baba asked His brother Behram to shoot some film of the girl. Baba's brother was kept quite busy with his camera that day.

At about 9:30, Shri Vithal Shinde, a famous All-India Radio artist from Bombay, came on his own for Baba's darshan, and sang some ghazals. He had a very melodious voice, and Baba enjoyed his singing very much. On hearing a particular ghazal, Baba said, "In spite of the prevailing prohibition enforced by the government of Maharashtra, many people drink. There is no prohibition regarding 'drinking' the Wine of Divine Love, yet rarely does one drink that Wine!"

A lover who was a Parsi priest came. Baba asked him to sing one bhajan. It was quite unusual to see a Parsi priest, who would usually be engrossed in ritualistic ceremonies, singing a bhajan whose theme was that only Ram (God Incarnate) existed and nothing but Him. At 10:30 Baba's arti was sung and all dispersed.

Baba was in the side room at 11:00 A.M. and met five Parsi cricketers from Bombay, including the well-known players Nari (Nariman Jamshedji) Contractor and Polly (Pahlan Ratanji) Umrigar. Baba talked to them about His school days when He used to play cricket. Baba said to them, "To know Me as I am is very difficult. I am Infinite within. I experience this continuously. A rare One experiences this."

Baba then told Nari, the Indian skipper, that He often wished to witness good cricket matches, but people would not allow Him to do so in peace. Nari

invited Baba to Bombay and said he would make all arrangements for Baba to see a match undisturbed. Baba said, "For nine months I shall be at Meherazad and will want to remain undisturbed. I may remain for many days without food and water. When I break My Silence after nine months, the world will come to Me, for they shall then know who I am. But there is no charm in coming to Me after I break My silence. Blessed are they who come to Me now."

Baba then remarked, "Truth cannot be hidden. If there is no Truth, no amount of words or show can help Baba's Divinity. If Baba is not Baba, of what use would it be if so many came to Him!"

Baba again returned to the side room at 11:50 A.M. He asked one lover from Navsari to sing. She had sung before Baba many years ago. At 12:20 P.M. Baba came into the assembly hall. Long queues of people awaited His darshan. This was the last day of Baba's darshan, and so there was a huge crowd. Madhusudan sang a few bhajans. A Parsi girl of about three came to Baba for darshan. He asked her to recite the Parvardigar Prayer at the microphone. Quite bravely she sat facing the audience and said the prayer.

Kohiyar Satarawala of Mahabaleshwar, an old lover, came for Baba's darshan. Baba asked him to chant a Zoroastrian prayer. He said the prayer in such a heart-touching way that it brought tears to the eyes of even those who could not understand it.

Madhusudan then sang a new song he had composed at Guruprasad. He had the song framed and presented it to Baba, who gave it to Maharani Shantadevi. Baba then asked Madhusudan to sing a song the theme of which was that we should all hold on to Baba's daaman till the end.

Shri Vithal Shinde, who had sung in the morning, sang a few more ghazals. Shri Golvalkar then played the final tune - bhairavi. Practically everyone in the hall had tears in their eyes. After him, Madhusudan sang a parting song. The hearts that had not yet melted into tears did so now in Baba's love. Harry Kenmore was asked to recite the Repentance Prayer, which was followed by the Arri. Those who had not yet had Baba's darshan that day came to Him for the last darshan. Baba left the hall at 5:15 P.M. and all lovers departed with a mixed feeling of pain and joy in their hearts - the pain of separation and the joy of having just had Baba's sahavas.

Thus ended the darshan programmes of the 1963 summer. Lovers from all over India had come to have a glimpse of their Beloved Baba and to bask in the

sunshine of His Love. Their love had sustained them throughout their weekly journeys on overcrowded trains. They found their haven in Baba. The peace they got from His sahavas gave them strength to resume their roles in life and to do His work. True love can best be recognised by the fact that it thrives under circumstances that would blast anything else to pieces.

The hustle and bustle at Guruprasad ended on 30th June when Baba left for Meherazad. Baba, at Meherazad, silently suffers His "crucifixion" for the sake of humanity. He showers His benediction silently on suffering humanity. Blessed are they who have recognised in Meher Baba, God in human form.

SIX DAYS IN PARADISE:

1st TO 6th MAY 1965

The "Will it—Won't it" heartbeats of Meher Baba lovers wondering whether there would be an Eastern Sahavas this May or not, came to a sudden standstill or cardiac arrest - today when Baba's car turned into the narrow lane leading to the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre. Long before dawn, Baba lovers were seen like bees swarming to their hive at the Poona Centre, from different parts of India, Iran, Pakistan and Aden. Several lovers from the West were also present. Dr. Ben Hayman, Mr. Joseph H. Harb, Dr. Harry Kenmore came from the United States. Mr. Peter Rowan and his wife Helen came from Australia. As Baba's car honked its way through the narrow lane where Baba lovers were massed on both sides, loud cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" rang out. Meher Baba alighted from his car at the Centre at 7:55 AM.

A pick up chair was ready for Him and He sat down in it. Meherjee and Adi K. Irani lifted the front bars of the chair, while Eruch alone lifted the chair from the rear. Baba was carried onto the dais, and the cheers grew to an uncontrollable roar when He stood there with folded hands looking at the thousands who flocked to feast on the divine bliss of his *sahavas* (company). When the cheering subsided, Baba sat down.

The Poona Centre Hall is fairly big with a dais at one end. Baba's life-size portrait hangs on the wall near the dais. On its other walls are neatly arranged beautiful enlarged pictures of Baba. On the opposite side of the dais are three entrance doors. A balcony overhangs the entrance to the hall. An open-air terrace roofs the hall. Surrounding the hall was a *pandal* (awning). Inside the hall about 150, Meher Baba lovers sat on chairs feasting their eyes on Baba. The remaining crowd of about 5000 strong, thronged at the doors and windows to get a glimpse of their Beloved.

After Baba sat down, Patil garlanded Him on behalf of the Poona Centre. Several huge boxes containing *prasad* (gift from the Beloved) were brought to the dais, and Baba blessed the *prasad* by touching the boxes. This was distributed to the lovers after they had Baba's darshan (placing one's head on the feet of the adored or revered One). On the dais were Baba, Maharani Shantadevi to His left, and Eruch on His right.

Amar Singh Saigal then recited the *Parvardigar* prayer in Hindi on the mike in a very touching manner. Baba lovers carrying cameras had descended on Baba like locusts since the time He had entered the hall. While Baba sat on the dais smiling, pointing to someone, catching the eye of another, making a sign of recognition to another, the cameras clicked on merrily. Madhusudan then sang a welcome song. Baba asked him whether it was a new one composed by him. Just then, Baba turned to me and gestured, "The pain in My neck is severe."

Mr. K.K. Ramakrishnan, the secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre, then gave his welcome address. He said, "Beloved of all hearts, Avatar Meher Baba, our first thought this morning is, '*Purnasyavahanam Kutra Sarvadharyasya Chasanam*' - 'What place is there in which to welcome the One who is Infinite existence and what can serve as a seat for Him who contains within Himself all Existence?'"

"However, in the light of Your silent revelation, we understand that is through infinite compassion for mankind, that, responding to the call of human hearts, You have clothed Yourself in human form as our beloved Baba, so that we can offer God Himself a place and a seat among us. We are fortunate to feast our eyes on the beauty of Your divinely human form. Our hearts pour out their love, homage, and devotion at Your Sacred Feet.

"A year ago You opened this Hall which we built as a Centre for Your Message of Love and Truth. We pray that Your coming again today is a sign that all future anniversaries will be blessed by You. We welcome You, Beloved Baba, not only to this place but also in our hearts, to be enthroned there eternally as our Divine Beloved."

Eruch then read Baba's reply to the welcome speech:

"I am happy that in welcoming Me to the Hall which in your love you have built for My work, you are welcoming Me to a place in your lives and a seat in

each of your hearts. For it is to live in your hearts and to share in your lives that I have come among you."

Mr. Keshav Nigam and Mr. K.N. Soman then read the Hindi and Marathi translations of the above two speeches. While these translators were reading out on the mike, Baba gestured, "No one is hearing them." The thousands outside the hall were getting frantic at the delay in getting Baba's darshan. They were cheering loudly - "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai," and were not bothering to hear the speeches. When the Beloved of their hearts was seated before them, all words fell on deaf ears. The heart overruled the mind completely. Everyone was trying to push his or her way to a latticed window to get a glimpse of the Beloved. Those at the windows were clinging to the lattice work for all they were worth lest they be torn away to get drowned in the ocean of humanity behind.

After the speeches, Eruch read the following instructions: --

1. Lovers of Avatar Meher Baba, especially from all over Andhra and from Bombay, whose love offerings helped to complete the construction of this Hall, are today tasting the fruit of their wholehearted response to Jal's (Baba's brother) tour undertaken for the purpose in 1963. During the Darshan program to be held at Guruprasad from tomorrow, Jal will introduce to Baba some of the lovers from Andhra and Bombay who helped to make the completion of this Hall possible by their wonderful cooperation.
2. Those who consider themselves as new lovers of Baba and are having His darshan for the first time will be introduced to Baba from *tomorrow* onward at Guruprasad by the Group heads known to them.
3. Please note that no one should request Baba for a personal interview, or try to come up onto the stage either here or at Guruprasad.
4. Baba will permit each of His lovers (old and new) to again have His darshan at Guruprasad during the next five days. Special seating accommodation for His lovers has been made at Guruprasad as was done at the East-West Gathering in 1962. Therefore, you are requested to be patient and await your turn in queue with your respective groups when they are called during the next five days at Guruprasad.

5. Poona Centre has tried its best to accommodate as many lovers of Baba inside the hall as possible and regrets that this hall is not able to hold all who have come for Baba's darshan. Because of the limited space, the Poona public has *not* been invited here today or at Guruprasad during the next five days.
6. Today, the opportunity of Baba's darshan will be given *only* to those who cannot be accommodated inside the hall due to the limited space. Therefore, all those who are outside the hall are requested to come now in regular queue to approach Baba for his darshan. And those who are seated inside the hall will please remain seated.
7. Those who have unavoidably to leave Poona tomorrow should also join the queue now for Baba's darshan. Attention, please. The following is a direct message from Avatar Meher Baba to you all:

"All These Years I Used To Embrace You, My Lovers, And Bow Down To Your Love For Me. Now I Cannot Embrace You So I Allow You To Bow Down To My Love For You."

1st MAY

At 8:30 A.M. the darshan began. Batches of about 100 women and then men were admitted into the hall at a time. The rushing pushing and stampede at the door was too much for the volunteers to manage. Those who were lucky to enter the hall stood in a queue. They came past Baba, bowed down their heads on His feet and left. As an expression of their love, some offered garlands of fresh flowers, of silk, of paper, of camphor, and puffed rice. Others brought fruits, toffees, and candy. Baba would touch these love offerings and return them as His prasad. Men, women and children of all castes and creeds, of all ranks right from ministers, M.Ps, generals, judges, magistrates, advocates and doctors down to the postman and cobbler, came for darshan. This fleeting panorama of faces, dark and fair, all equally aglow with love, flashed past Baba. After having had Baba's darshan, most were loath to leave, but they were hurried along by the volunteers until they found themselves at the exit where a packet containing prasad was put into their hands.

Before they got their bearings, they found themselves swimming in the ocean of lovers outside the hall. A few lovers had come from Iran. One woman from that group sobbed unabashedly near Baba and had to be lifted up from Baba's feet. Every mother with her baby coming for darshan would hold her child aloft for Baba to touch. For Baba, this entailed bending forward each time. The severe shooting root pains due to the cervical spondylosis failed to register on His cheerful face. Baba turned to me and pointing to His neck, gestured, "The pain is very severe, yet how cheerful I look." None of those who came for His darshan could have dreamed that Baba was in agony for He looked so radiant and cheerful.

Meher Baba turned to Joseph Harb, who was sitting in the first row looking ill and inquired about his health. Baba asked whether he had any pain in his chest and he had. He asked us to lift Joseph on a chair and take him to a doctor. So Joseph had to leave the venue of joy. (He had recovered by next day and attended the remainder of the sahavas)

It was impossible for all lovers to file past Baba, as the arti had to be sung at 10.30. Baba called for Ramakrishnan and asked him to allow big batches of His lovers onto the balcony in the hall in turns so that they could at least have a good glimpse of Baba. Every batch that came onto the balcony cheered, and Baba would wave to them and gesture that all should come the next day to Guruprasad.

At 10.30 about 4000 lovers sang Baba's arti. After arti, all joined in loud cheering for the Avatar of the age. Baba was lifted from the dais on His chair and carried to the waiting car. The car slowly moved through the thronged lane. Baba sat with folded hands as the car crawled along. At the gate, the car gathered momentum and disappeared into the streets of Poona heading on its way to Guruprasad.

In the afternoon at 4:00, Baba gave darshan to a busload of lovers from Hamirpur who had been detained en route due to engine trouble and so had missed darshan in the morning at the Poona Centre. Some lovers from Kanpur were also seen by Baba in the afternoon. They may have been called because there was a bit of discontentment in their hearts as, being roughly pushed around in the frenzied crowd that morning they had missed darshan. Most people in India have an oriental conception of time, and if you demand punctuality, you may become apoplectic with frustration. But with Baba lovers this was quite untrue.

2nd MAY

In the various lodging houses, hotels and schools, where a sizeable population of lovers had been housed, the peace and calm of the cool night were broken from 2:00 A.M. by lovers rushing to have baths to get ready to go to Guruprasad. The volunteers had correctly sensed the enthusiasm of the lovers and so had luckily kept the gates of Guruprasad locked. When I came at about 7:00, there was a huge crowd anxiously waiting on the road, blocking the traffic. The crowd had been waiting since a quiet hour of the morning long before the sun had kissed the tallest tree.

Eight big buses brought lovers from the Hamirpur district, a distance of about 800 miles or more. These were parked on the other side of the road. Some of these poor people had probably sold their belongings to be near their Beloved for a few seconds! Though they were far from rich in pocket, they were millionaires in their love for Baba. The fatigue of their strenuous journey had faded away like mist before the sun after seeing Baba. Seeing the crowd, various vendors had gathered outside the gates of Guruprasad to sell their wares.

Suddenly it was announced on a squeaky mike that I was wanted. Many grumbled and groused as to why I should be permitted inside when they had come long before me. I pushed through the crowd and got inside the gates with my clothes and hair dishevelled. Baba came into the side room at Guruprasad at 7:30. I was called in. Complaints from some lovers who had not been successful in getting darshan yesterday were told to Baba. Baba said, "All these darshan programs are insignificant compared with what will happen when My grace descends after I break My silence. All this is a 'Tamasha.' (Performance on a stage)

Baba then said, "The pain in My neck is very severe. Dr. Goher says that all that could be done to relieve the pain has been done. It will decrease as time goes by. No one knows how much I suffer."

The impatient crowd at the gates had been allowed to come and occupy their seats in the colossal pandal. It was similar to the one at the East-West Sahavas but larger and containing over 3000 chairs. Baba stepped on the dais at 8:45 with Eruch. He came in front of His sofa chair and stood to look at the expanse of

humanity cheering like mad, "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai". Shinde garlanded Baba after He sat down.

Suddenly one lover whose emotion had got the better of him, rushed to Baba crying loudly. He was escorted by the stalwart volunteers back to his seat. Baba asked, "Why are people standing?" Eruch replied, "There isn't enough seating accommodation, Baba." Baba asked Eruch to announce on the mike that when lovers who were seated came for darshan, those standing should occupy their chairs.

Eruch then announced, "Baba says that there are five more days for darshan so please do not be impatient. All will surely get a chance to meet Baba. Please wait your turn. Those who have had darshan yesterday may again have darshan at Guruprasad. Those who have had one darshan at Guruprasad should not come again." May I mention here that Baba often caught several persons coming for darshan twice or even thrice during these five days. One old man was an exception; he came for darshan on all six days!

As soon as Eruch would finish making announcements in English, interpreters would translate into Telugu, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. Eruch again announced, "Baba says those leaving today, irrespective of the group they may belong to, should have darshan today. After them, the rest should come group-wise, while the group head will introduce each one to Baba. Jal will introduce some lovers from Andhra who had helped financially in the completion of Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre Hall at Poona."

Dr. Harry Kenmore then came on the mike and recited the Parvardigar prayer. Soon after he finished the prayer, there were cheers of "*Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai.*" Eruch then re-read Meher Baba's message given at the Poona Centre:

"All These Years I Used To Embrace You, My Lovers, And Bow Down To Your Love For Me. Now I Cannot Embrace You So I Allow You To Bow Down To My Love For You."

After this was read in the various languages, Eruch again read another message from Meher Baba:

"I Am Happy To See You All, And I Am Touched That Many Of You Have Come From Distant Parts At No Small Sacrifice To Be In My Presence For A Few Hours.

"Devotees Spend Their Lifetime Savings And Even Risk Life Itself In Pilgrimages To Bow Down Before God In Forms Sanctified By Tradition And Their Rewards Are According To Tradition. But You Have Journeyed To Bow Down Before God Who Has Taken Human Form Because Of Love. And Your Reward Will Be According To Love."

At 9:20 darshan began. Long queues of men and women stood almost melting in the hot sun. Alternately women and men had darshan while all those seated partook of the feast of His presence. Guruprasad had really become the rendezvous of all Baba lovers. Everyone could reach only Baba's feet as He was seated on His soft chair on the dais. Some bowed on Baba's feet and left; others put flowers and garlands on His feet; others washed His feet with their tears; some entreated Him to help them; while all received from Him in the silence of His love that which they deserved. Baba sat with folded hands, bowing to some, smiling at some, or asking some a question. Lovers of all castes and creeds joined in this darshan program. The bond uniting them was Baba's love. Everyone who had Baba's darshan went with a big smile for the winter of his discontents was turned to a glorious spring by Baba's presence.

The successful management of any illness is facilitated by a good rapport between the patient and physician. The physician needs a keen insight into the nature of the patient's suffering and knowledge of the natural history of the disorder. Here, the master physician, Baba, had not only insight of the patient's illness but with His infinite knowledge knew the very root cause of each one's ailment and He dispensed His grace according to individual needs.

In the thick of the darshan program, Baba gestured, "My lovers seated in the last rows cannot see Me clearly." Then Eruch and I helped Him to stand, while He waved to the lovers seated in the back rows. Baba repeated this gesture of love about three times every day.

The queue had by now reached the gates of Guruprasad. Baba asked, "At this rate will all be able to have darshan in five days?" Eruch said, "A rubber stamp could be stamped on each forehead that has bowed to Baba so that no one may come a second time." Just then an incident occurred which bespeaks of the love and affection of Baba's women mandali or circle. Eruch was called to the back of the dais and given a message from the women mandali. He came back to Baba's chair, removed the pillow behind Baba's back and replaced it with another. To his

surprise, it was soaked with sweat. Only those hearts which are in unison with that of the Beloved could have prompted this suggestion.

At 10:50 Baba gestured, "All those seated will get darshan in the four remaining days of the *sahavas*, so don't feel impatient." At 11:05, looking at the queue, Baba gestured, "It will not finish in fifteen minutes." Each lover coming for darshan was hurried up as it was a great strain on Baba sitting there for so many hours at a stretch. At 11:10 he gestured to me, "The pain in My hip, back and neck have reached a climax. No one can have an idea of the intensity of My suffering."

At 11:30 the queue ended and Baba asked for the arti to be sung. Madhusudan and party started singing the arti, and about 4000 other lovers joined in. Some women stepped forward with a flame on a platter and waved it in the usual ritualistic fashion in front of Baba. After arti, there were cheers of "*Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai*" while Eruch and I supported Baba who was waving to the crowd. Baba walked to the back of the dais and behind the curtain where His wheel chair was awaiting Him. We seated Baba in it and took Him into the dining room. Baba complained of severe pain in His hip and neck. The strain of the darshan had been too much for His frail body. Eruch and I tried to relieve the pain by massaging His legs. Baba's face conveyed that He was in agony. His suffering almost brought tears to our eyes. After about three minutes, Baba gestured that Eruch and I should leave.

When we came back to the dais, all the garlands that had been piled up during the darshan had been distributed to the lovers as prasad. Even a few petals lying here and there were eagerly sought after. In the afternoon, Baba was in the side room at 3:45 sitting on a sofa chair in His silk shorts under a fan. Some lovers had been asked to come in the afternoon. Many others took advantage of this occasion, and there were about 100 lovers present.

Many things transpired between each individual and The Individual, but I narrate only a few incidents which may be of interest to the reader. Baba said to the Vijayawada lovers when they presented to Him an album containing pictures of their recent Baba birthday exhibition. "Baba has heard all about the exhibition and is very happy with the labour of love of the workers at Vijayawada."

Someone talked about Mr. N.S. Moorthy who had arranged a public program at Tirupathi during Babas last birthday celebrations. Tirupathi is an orthodox place of pilgrimage of Lord Venkateswara. It was really daring on the part of

Mr. Moorty to have arranged a Baba program in this town. Since I had been the speaker at Tirupathi, Baba asked me, "Did you say Baba is God in human form?" I replied in the affirmative.

Baba was very happy about the work done in the cause of Truth by Mr. M.R. Appa Rao, Minister for Excise and Prohibition and Social Welfare in Andhra Pradesh. Baba said to him, "I know all that you do. I am pleased with your work." Turning to one lover, Baba asked, "Do you actually know that I am God?" He replied, "No, Baba." Baba said, "When I break My silence, My suffering will come to an end, and the world will know and feel that I am God. My suffering is physical, mental and spiritual. The breaking of My silence will mark the beginning of My glorification. My work will then have been done. I shall live for one year after breaking My silence, and then I shall drop this body."

Some lovers who had arrived in Poona just today came in for darshan.

Baba said to Harry Kenmore, "You should leave India on the 8th. Come back in December." To one lover who wished Baba to give him some duty, Baba said, "Go and tell the world that I am God in human form. When I break My silence, all will know that I am God." This lover had come to Baba for the first time. He told Baba, "We can't love You unless You fill us with love." Baba said, "I am happy to hear this. Remember the duty I have given you. If I fill you with love, you and I won't remain separate. Then there will be no question of performing the duty I have assigned to you. If you are as you are at present, you can carry out My orders."

To another lover, Baba said, "Do you love Me more than your wife or your own self?" He replied, "If I love anybody, I love you, Baba." Baba asked us to tell him a joke. One lover said, "Once a man visited a boys' school. He asked the boys a question: 'If a train 300 yards long crosses a railway platform in three minutes, what is my age?' All the boys were dumbfounded. One boy suddenly raised his hand and when asked the answer to the question he replied, '46 years, sir.' The man was quite perplexed at the answer for that was his correct age. He asked the boy how he had calculated his age. The boy replied, 'My uncle who is 23 years old is only half-mad, sir!'". All enjoyed the joke.

Baba then said that He would now give us a joke. He said, "During the East-West Sahavas in 1962, there was the Chinese aggression on India. During

this Sahavas, there is Pakistani disturbance. All are alike to Me, whether they be Chinese or Pakistanis. But, the fact remains that I have taken birth in India, so don't feel nervous. This is My joke. My joke means your suffering in ignorance. This suffering of yours I take upon myself"

Baba asked someone about how he could get leave to come down to Poona. He replied, "My leave problem is not serious." Baba replied, "Nothing is serious in the world. The only thing serious is that you cannot see Me as I am."

3rd MAY

I squeezed myself through the crowd at the gates of Guruprasad and waited for Baba in the side room. Baba came in at 7:30. After giving some instructions to a patient, a few specially-called persons were given darshan. To one lover who requested Baba to give a few minutes private interview to women from his Centre, Baba said. "No." Then jokingly he said, "I will throw you out if you ask again" He ended by saying, "Have you no consideration for My suffering and the trouble caused to Me in giving private interviews?"

At 8:25 Baba left the side room and in a couple of minutes was on the dais. Everyone cheered "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai." Shinde garlanded Baba. Madhusudan with his party sang a song, and this was followed by the Parvardigar Prayer recited by C.H. Mallikarjan Rao. The same prayer was sung in Telegu by Mr. Chinta Sarva Rao. Eruch then read the following message of Avatar Meher Baba in English, which was later translated into the various languages mentioned previously:

"This time of your being with Me, I do not intend giving you a lot of words to exercise your minds. I want your minds to sleep so that your hearts may awaken in My love.

"You have had enough words; I have had enough words. It is not through words that I give what I have to give. In the silence of your perfect surrender, My love which is always silent can flow to you - to be yours always to keep and to share with those who seek Me.

"When the Word of My Love breaks out of its silence and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that that is the Real Word you have always been longing to hear."

Baba then stood up assisted by Eruch and myself and waved to everyone. When Baba stood up, all stood up also. Baba told them not to stand up for His intention in standing was to give darshan to lovers in the back chairs, and if all lovers in the front rows stood up, those in the back rows could not see Him. Eruch then announced the following:

1. Those who have had darshan should not come again.
2. There would be a *Burra Katha* (dance drama of Baba's life and teachings as story and song) at 7 p.m. at the Poona Meher Baba Centre today. (Every Monday evening is the Poona Centre meeting night.)
3. Today is the darshan day for lovers from Andhra Pradesh, but those leaving today may also have darshan.

At 9:00 darshan began. Many new lovers had come for darshan. Baba's words came to my mind, "The time will come when you will find it difficult to obtain a close glimpse of Me - you will be jostled to the rear by the crowds of new ones who will be flocking to Me." Many a darshaner brought a box of candy or a souvenir to be touched by Baba and to be taken away as prasad. Among the souvenirs were articles of varied interest - marriage rings, handkerchiefs, towels, pillows, wooden sandals, and even pop bottles. The monotony of touching each article did not bother Baba in the least though one can imagine the extra strain of this action. He dispensed to each His love-filled smile and presence that everyone drank in with tears of joy and satisfaction. During this sahas, not one person was kissed or embraced by Baba on the dais.

Almost every day some lost child, screaming in no sweet strain of birdsong, would be brought to the mike, for its mother had forgotten it in the rush of the darshan. It would take quite some time before the mother would realise that it was her child being held aloft at the dais and she would then come and take charge of the child, much to our relief. Baba glanced to the right and saw three queues. Usually, there were two, one for the women and the other for the men. On inquiry, He was told that the two main queues were formed by lovers from Andhra, while the third was formed by lovers who were leaving today. The Andhra queues were so infinitely long that those leaving today if they were to join the Andhra queue, would surely have missed their train.

Baba gestured, "A long queue is standing in the hot sun, hurry up." At 11:05 Baba's arti was sung. He stood up supported again by Eruch and I and waved out to all. As usual, we took Baba inside and seated Him on His wheelchair. Baba was back in the side room at 3:40 p.m. Someone reported to Baba that the Hamirpur group was very anxious for His darshan, as now only three days were left and thousands awaited darshan.

The finance minister of Andhra Pradesh, C. Reddy and his family, came to see Baba. Baba said to him, "There is a conflict between Pakistan and India. India is blessed because I am born in India. There is no cause for worry." The minister said, "Even the Chinese situation is bad, Baba." Baba said, "I know everything. India need not worry - When I break My silence, the world will know who I am. All misery will disappear when people will begin to love Me. They will then come to know that only God is worth worrying about."

Just then an old lover, Mr. Todi Singh, entered. Introducing him to us, Eruch said, "One night he dreamed that Baba and his mandali had come. He had never heard of or seen Baba before. This was during the New Life phase of Baba. In his dream, he also saw a house of a Baba lover who was in contact with Baba during the New Life. He went with food to the house of the Baba lover and said he had brought food for Baba and the mandali. The lover was taken aback as he had never seen Todi Singh. Todi Singh had done a lot for Baba during his New Life phase."

Eight lovers had come from Iran. They had decided to come to India at the eleventh hour, and it was just miraculous how they got passports in such a short time. They had travelled eleven days before they came to Poona. The troubles they had undergone during their eleven-day journey were harrowing. To cap this suffering, the oldest woman had a fall in Bombay on her arrival and injured her ribs. It seems that for three days she came for Baba's darshan daily without complaining of the severe pain or taking any treatment. On the fourth day when she was seen by a doctor, it was found that she had a broken rib and an extensive contusion. Her love for Baba had made her come to Guruprasad daily in spite of her pain.

Ali Akbar (Aloba), one of the mandali, introducing the Irani group to Baba, said, that one of the men owned a taxi, and he had the daring to stick a photo of Baba on the windshield of the taxi in a country where the majority are Muslims,

who believe that there can be no Prophet after Mohammed. It seems one day when he was ill, he asked his friend to drive his taxi, but the friend refused saying that he still wanted to live! These Irani lovers had brought a lot of dry fruits which they placed with love at the feet of Baba.

One woman brought an offering of money from another and explained who it was from: "Just before we left, this woman was in very complicated and difficult labour and the doctors were preparing to perform a Caesarian to save her life. She kept repeatedly calling out 'Baba, Baba!' All of a sudden, to the amazement of all concerned, she safely delivered twins without any surgical aid. She has asked me to place this love offering at your feet" Baba told her to return the money to the woman who had sent it, along with His love, and to tell her to feed the poor in Iran with it. One of the Irani women while taking darshan wept bitterly and told Baba, "I cannot bear your separation." Baba replied, "I too can't bear My own separation."

To someone Baba said, "Only hundred percent honesty leads one to Baba. Never pose. Be outwardly what you are within." One lover asked Baba, "How is the pain in Your neck?" Baba replied, "Infinite. It is both physical and universal. When I break My silence, it will vanish."

A lover said to Baba, "When will You break Your silence?" Baba said, "I am also eager to break My silence, and then I shall be free, and the world shall also be free of oppression. My observing silence for so many years is not for nothing. When I break My silence the impact will be universal. No one knows how I am suffering. My suffering is not only physical but also mental and spiritual. There is a great difference between your mental and spiritual suffering and mine. My mental suffering is very intense and is because of the pseudo saints that abound in the world today. My spiritual suffering is because I know I am free in myself but bound in you. "

Baba, as God, sees Himself in everything and all minds are contained in His Universal Mind. Feeling Himself as One with all, and in all, He suffers infinitely for our limitations - ignorance, physical, mental and spiritual suffering.

Looking to the packed room, Baba remarked, "I had called this afternoon only about twenty persons, but there are about 150 here!" Baba remarked that in the room were several lovers who had got their doctorate in philosophy. To one of them, He asked, "What did you learn in philosophy?" He replied, "I learned

it to unlearn it." When the talk drifted to the Western Sahavas to be held this December at Ahmednagar, Baba said that about 250 lovers from the West would participate in it. He remarked that His lovers were inviting Him to the United States for a sahavas. He said, "But, I will not leave India now."

At 4:50 Baba left the side room and all dispersed.

4th MAY

Baba came into the side room at 7:20 A.M. Baba said to Harry, "Have you any idea of how much I suffer and yet seem as if I am happy?" Harry replied, "Why don't you blow the whole thing off?" Eruch interrupted, "That would mean the end of the whole game."

A few persons had been called for darshan of which some were from Hyderabad. Baba said, "I used to visit Hyderabad quite frequently, but I used to move about incognito for *mast* work. I used to move in cars, tongas (horse-drawn carriages), and bullock carts. We had to sometimes ride camel back. Often I slept on railway platforms. Once we had rested in a shady spot near a P.W.D. storehouse at Ahmedabad. The executive engineer happened to come on a round that day and objected to our being parked there. He fired the watchman for allowing us in. I then asked Eruch to go and explain to the engineer as to who we were, and it was only then that the watchman was reinstated. I am God in human form. The world will know this when I break My silence."

Baba came on the dais at 7:50 - earlier than usual. After the cheering had died down, Baba gave a message for lovers from Hamirpur district. He said, "The love of Hamirpur lovers feels that because Hamirpur lovers are poor, they are neglected. But, whether the lovers are poor or rich, I am the slave of My lovers. All Hamirpur lovers should be patient as I will give darshan to them tomorrow from 8 to 11 A.M. Now let us start the darshan program. There is no need of introducing anyone as I know everyone."

The darshan commenced at 8:05 A.M. Maharani Shantadevi came on the dais at 8:10 and garlanded Baba with a beautiful white rose garland; it was handmade in fine material by a Parsi lover. At 8.40 A.M. Baba stood up to wave to the lovers on the back chairs. Baba asked, "Can all see Me when I stand up?" Several lovers at the back waved that they could, while some waved a "no". I was reminded of what Baba had said once before, "Even those who see Me, do not see

Me as I really am." Many brought garlands and one was a pink rose garland that bloomed with glorious prodigality. Eruch put it round Baba's neck.

During darshan, Baba in His inimitable way would look to everyone's feelings, moods and health, as the great engineer of life keeps the mechanics of living in order ever. For most lovers, beloved Baba's feet would be their haven, and this was clearly shown on their beaming faces after they had had darshan. Some women tried to offer Baba money. Baba refused to accept it and advised the volunteers to inform everyone who came for His darshan that no one should offer Him any money.

The love of the women mandali for Baba was amply shown by the following incident: Adi K. Irani, Baba's secretary, was standing behind Baba's chair and whispering something in Baba's ear. A message from the women mandali to him said, "Do not stand behind Baba as He has to turn His neck to the side in order to hear you." Every movement of Babas neck is extremely painful, and the slight extra strain on Baba's neck during the conversation was too much for His loving women mandali.

Today some lovers from Andhra who had not had Baba's darshan yesterday were the first in the queue. After them, lovers from the smaller Baba Centres joined the queue. The program ended with arti at 10:55 A.M. Baba waved to the crowd and disappeared behind the curtain as usual.

A sad incident on this day was when a young volunteer, Mr. A.S. Jagannatham of Vijayawada, after having had Baba's darshan, tripped over a rope and fell. He fractured his right femur. He was shifted to hospital where he was very brave. His only sorrow was that he would be deprived of darshan on the remaining two days of the sahasas. When we assured him that we would take him back to Baba, he was happy. Even under the effect of a pain-killer given to him, we could see him saying "Baba" unconsciously when his leg was disturbed. He stayed in the hospital overnight and was brought to Baba the next morning.

Since lovers from many Centres had not yet had darshan, Baba came on the dais at 3:40 P.M. when lovers from Delhi, Jabalpur, Bilaspur, Raipur, Sholapur, Gotegaon and others, availed themselves of the chance.

One very touching incident occurred when a child of about six accompanied his mother for darshan. While the mother was bowing down on Baba's feet, the

youngster at her side shouted, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai." After giving darshan for an hour, Baba left the dais amidst loud cheers.

5th MAY

Baba came into the side room by 7:10 A.M. The volunteer who had sustained a fracture was brought straight from the hospital on a stretcher for Baba's darshan. The stretcher was placed at Baba's feet. Baba said to him. "Don't worry, all will be well." The lover with tears in his eyes tried to take Baba's darshan but could not move due to the pain in his right leg. Baba lifted His own right foot which the lover on the stretcher kissed. Coincidentally, the fractured femur was the right one, as is Baba's fractured right hip. Had this lover been lucky in sharing an infinitesimal fraction of the Universal suffering of his Beloved? Just then the minister, M.R. Appa Rao, entered with his wife. Baba said, "I am happy with your work for Me. My grace (nazar) will always be on you. I want you both to love Me more and more. I am God in human form:" Baba embraced both of them before they left the room.

An Army General and his wife came to see Baba for the first time. He had heard and read a little about Baba, but he could never accept the fact that Baba is God in human form. After the General had sat down and was introduced to Baba by one lover, Baba said to him, "What harm is there if you cannot accept the concept of God in human form as long as you are hundred percent honest and follow the three precepts of Zoroaster, namely: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds?" The General's face brightened up, and he said that he was hundred percent honest and followed the three precepts of Zoroaster.

Baba continued, "If you were to read *God Speaks*, you would get an idea of how infinity can be bottled up in human form. You will also know that for God who is infinitely powerful, it is possible to do anything. Do not worry. Read *God Speaks*, and you will understand that nothing exists but God. You are also God, but you are under the hallucination that you are a human being." The General, without hesitation, replied, "Yes, we are all God!"

Baba came to the dais at 7:45 A.M. Today was the darshan day for Hamirpur district lovers. These poor people had spent much money on their travel, had suffered from the heat in cramped discomfort in their buses and lived in a large communal building in Poona where they would cook their own food after

returning from Baba's darshan. This food consisted of *chapattis* (unleavened wheat bread) which they ate with a piece of onion or with some lentils. These men and women were hardy people, who toiled ceaselessly for their simple needs. Living in ram-shackled houses with poor ventilation and primitive sanitation, how they subsisted on a few hundred calories a day is beyond medical conception.

Their greatest possession was their love for Baba and this love cascaded in torrents from their hearts. They came to Baba and bowed down, drinking the nectar of His love for only a few seconds. At times about ten lovers had darshan in one minute. For these few seconds with Baba, they would sacrifice their all. What they saw and imbibed in those few seconds they would treasure for a lifetime, for few can even dream that they will be given such an opportunity again. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

One of the lovers had composed a poem for the occasion of this sahas. He asked Baba whether he could sing it. Baba agreed, and he sang his love song to Baba on the mike. There was no *Qawwali* program this time, but during darshan time singing of Baba bhajans and ghazals by various groups could be heard, accompanied by the usual Indian musical instruments. A small stage was specially erected for the purpose.

During the thick of the darshan, one lover, while awaiting his turn near the Beloved of his heart, collapsed and fell to the ground. He was restored to consciousness and had darshan of Baba. Only once during these six days did Baba accept a garland from one of the Hamirpur lovers and put it round His neck with his own hands. All other garlands were placed by the lovers on Baba's feet. At 10:40 arti was sung. Even before the last lines were sung, Baba asked Eruch and me to help Him stand. He waved and hurried off the dais and just sagged down in His wheelchair. Baba's whole frame shook. We massaged His limbs, but I am sure we could not relieve His suffering even a little bit.

A few words about Baba's suffering would not be out of place here. Baba, as the Avatar (Christ), simultaneously lives and experiences both the "I am God" state and "I am human" state. He lives a dual role of strength and weakness simultaneously. As God, He displays Infinite Knowledge, as man He displays infinite weakness through infinite suffering for those who are in ignorance and who conceive this world as real. As God, He is Power Infinite and Bliss Infinite, but He does not utilise these. He clothes His bliss in the garment of suffering.

The Avatar suffers not because of any karma (past deeds), but because He takes upon Himself the suffering of the world which is the result of its karma. Man finds redemption from his karma through Baba's suffering. Although His suffering is human, it comes of the Godhood which is beyond our understanding. He dons the garb of a human for Love's sake and does not spare His body for its own sake. Last year He said, "What could be more glorious than My suffering for all humanity?"

In spite of His pain, Baba came on the dais in the afternoon at 3:40 A.M. Lovers from Bombay, Bhavnagar and Nasik were to have His darshan. Baba seemed to be in better spirits this afternoon, arti was sung at 4:30 and Baba left the dais in the usual manner.

6th MAY

Baba came to the side room at 7:05 A.M. Eruch showed Baba the first three copies of the Marathi translation of 'The Everything and the Nothing'. Baba signed each of the copies. The two ministers from Andhra came with their families, and Baba posed for a picture with each family, at their request. Turning to Harry, Baba said, "The pain in My neck and hip is very much. I suffer not for Myself but for you all."

One girl of about five came with her parents for darshan. Quite boldly she said to Baba, "Come to Ganeshkhind (her home)." Baba replied, "I am already there." Baba then comforted her saying, "I will come one day."

At 7:45 A.M. Baba was on the dais. This was the last day of the sahavas. Shinde garlanded Baba. Baba presented the autographed copies of the Marathi translation to the three translators who had helped. One lover had brought a small coconut tree and some cashew nut seeds from Andhra. These were touched by Baba, and they were to be planted in the compound of Meher Hall at Poona. Today, Ahmednagar and Poona lovers were to have darshan. Besides these, and lovers who had not yet had darshan were allowed to come to Baba. Many were tempted to come a second time, but Baba would point them out in the queue long before they could come near Him. Many people from Poona came in for darshan. Baba did not want the public. The sahavas was meant only for His lovers. He asked the people to take darshan quickly

At 9:55 A.M., arti was sung. Then Baba stood up and waved to all. Cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" resounded while Baba took His seat on His wheelchair which had been brought onto the dais today. Slowly we wheeled it until Baba was out of sight. At 3:40 P.M. Baba came to the side room. He had agreed to sit for a group photo with lovers from Guntur (Andhra) and Hyderabad. The first group arranged themselves on the entrance steps of Guruprasad. When all was set, Baba came on His wheelchair in their midst. Since the Guntur group was very large, Baba had to have two photographs taken, one with the women and the other with the men. In all, Baba posed three times.

Whether paradise exists high above the clouds or not, whether paradise is a posthumous mental state of intense joy or not, paradise had definitely descended to Guruprasad during these six days for those who saw Baba cheerful and radiant on the dais, a memory which shall remain evergreen.

What Meher Baba's Teachings Mean to Me?

Baba's lovers must have read His discourse on "God Alone Is." Since Baba is God in person, we would not be wrong in saying "Baba alone is." This small statement, although it looks small, when analysed, is pregnant with deep meaning and proves to be the sum and substance of Baba's teachings.

Even before the world was created, God alone was. When He got the whim to know Himself, the Nothing which was latent in the Everything (God or Baba) escaped through the *Om* point and expanded *ad infinitum*. This Nothing, when expanded *ad infinitum*, thought it was Everything, and the Real Everything was thought to be the Nothing. This Nothing seen as nothing is nothing, but seen as God is reality. Baba has said, "The World as world is an illusion, but the world as God is Reality." So the whole universe which came out of Nothing is nothing, but God (Baba). In fact if God (Baba) is infinite, how could there be anything else but Him? Even from *God Speaks* we conclude that "God alone Is." He got the whim, He manifested, He evolved, He involuted, and finally He became conscious of Himself

Thus, everything is God or Baba. To see Baba and to think of His physical form alone as Baba would be to underrate Him. Baba is God just as everything else is God, but the personal form of Baba knows He is Baba or God, while everything else, though being God, is not conscious of it. Thus the difference between the one and the other is only in the degree to which consciousness has evolved. The whim to know implies a duality, an apparent differentiation into two aspects, infinite consciousness and infinite unconsciousness. This infinite unconsciousness had to pass through the long-drawn-out process of evolution until it arrived at infinite consciousness. During deep sleep we are unconsciously

conscious of the Unconscious, but our aim should be to be consciously conscious of the Unconscious (God). Baba once said, "You should be consciously asleep."

Baba has showed two ways for the attainment of this goal, the path of love and the path of truth. Both these paths are so intermingled that any attempt to put them into watertight compartments would be to lose the value of both. By love Baba does not mean to love His physical form but to love the Baba seated in everyone, to love the whole creation, which is the manifested form of Baba. To love Baba is to love His creation; to serve Baba is to serve His creation. To love Baba and to dislike one's neighbour would be absolutely incongruous. Jesus meant the same thing when He said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" St. John said, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Baba says that this divine love is impossible without divine grace. For obtaining this grace, obedience is required, and for perfect obedience, surrenderance to God or a Perfect Master is necessary. In view of "Baba alone is," one wonders how to interpret Baba's message of love. If Baba alone is, then who is the lover and who is the beloved? Baba must try to love Baba! This is Baba's message of Truth, of the one unity in creation, behind the apparent diversity seen by most of us. This is the unity Baba so often talks about. This unity can never be attained without love. It is this unity which alone can bring about world peace and prosperity. When this unity is realised, the words jealousy, hatred, selfishness, malice, etc., will have to be removed from the dictionary. When this unity is realised, all vices will disappear. Baba has come to sow the seed of love in us and to awaken us to this state of unity.

If Baba alone is, then the question of the false "I" or ego does not arise at all. The ego is false and never did exist. Let us try to analyse the meaning of "Baba alone is" still further in our daily lives. Suppose you say, "I got up this morning at 5 o'clock." We have already seen that "I" does not exist; it is false; then who got up? Secondly, in eternity there is no time and space and so how could there be a morning and 5 o'clock? Thirdly, you who are really God or Baba and always supra-awake, how could you have gone to sleep? Thus one sees how ridiculous it is to say, "I got up this morning at 5 o'clock," or "I did this," or "I love Baba."

Every human action is done with the "I" thought, showing what depths of ignorance we are in. We, who are Baba, by our ignorance, think ourselves to be X, Y, or Z. Though we are Baba, and even though Baba reminds us of this fact, we assert that we are X, Y, Z! Baba has said, "I tell you with my Divine Authority that you and I are not we, but one." To some readers it may appear that life would be impossible if we accepted the fact that "Baba alone is," but this is not so. Swami Ramdas, a God-realised person, living in South India today, had once said, "We are always conscious of unity and yet we play in duality." This is what we should also do, know and experience that "Baba alone is," and yet play in duality until He picks us out of His game. One should carry out one's worldly duties and yet not forget that Baba is the real and only doer of everything. Meditation on the above gives such joy, that real experience of this unity would be unimaginable bliss.

The goal is difficult to achieve and patience should be our companion. Baba had once written to me on this subject as follows:

"Baba wants you to keep aglow your aspiration with the warmth of your love and longing for the Goal of all aspirations. Withstand boldly and patiently, your own onslaughts on yourself, for the love of Self, till you are rewarded unawares, with strength sufficient to unhook the 'your' that you had hooked to 'yourself,' and there will then be naught but Self, experiencing and realising and making others realise its pristine Glory and Eternal Bliss."

Notes

- 1 Yashoda was the foster mother of the infant Krishna.
- 2 Vision of the universal divine form. At Arjuna's request, Krishna revealed himself in his universal form, as described in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- 3 "Cow Finder," an epithet of Krishna. (Cowherd)
- 4 For an account of Dr. Hazra's story, see his book *Memoirs of a Zetetic*.
- 5 "Message from Ivy Duce to Baba lovers," 19 January 1959. All excerpts reprinted by permission of Sufism Reoriented.
- 6 Ivy Oneita Duce, *How a Master Works* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Sufism Reoriented, 1975), pp. 325-26. All excerpts reprinted by permission of Sufism Reoriented.
- 7 "Message from Ivy Duce to Baba lovers," 19 January 1959.
- 8 *How a Master Works*, p. 328.
- 9 "Yogiraj" is an honorific title given to spiritual masters, but in this case it was "self-styled."
- 10 The *havan yagna* (or *yajna*) is a sacrificial fire ritual of the Hindus
- 11 *Kohinoor* is the name of one of the most magnificent diamonds in the world.
- 12 Excerpted from *The Awakener*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Summer 1959), pp. 7-11, © Universal Spiritual League in America, Inc. Used with permission.
- 13 Burra Katha is a folk tradition of Andhra Pradesh in which storytelling is performed by three narrators through song, music, and dance.
- 14 In India, to sit with the feet pointing toward someone is normally considered disrespectful.
- 15 Sant ("Saint") Kripal Singh (1894-1974) was a Sikh Guru from Delhi who was the founder-president of the World Fellowship of Religions and the

author of numerous books. He met Meher Baba for the first time in 1952. "Of all the saints and yogis in India, Baba would say that there were seven who were very dear to him and he always mentioned Kripal Singh's name as one of them" (*Lord Meher* 14: 4924).

- 16 From *Determined to Be His: Stories Shared by Eruch in Mandali Hall*, edited by Steve Klein (Ahmednagar: Meher Nazar Books, 1987), pp. 9-11.
- 17 A popular raga in Indian classical music.
- 18 This Shankaracharya is one of four religious leaders of Hinduism who preside over four regional centres of learning, which were established over a thousand years ago by the first Shankaracharya (Adi Shankaracharya, identified by Meher Baba as a Perfect Master).
- 19 Story used by courtesy of Bal Natu.
- 20 The Indian leader Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), of whom Meher Baba said: "Of all the Indian leaders, past and present, I like Tilak the best. He had the best combination of the qualities of head and heart" (*Lord Meher* 8: 2770).
- 21 A reference to Krishna.
- 22 "I am Brahman (the Absolute)," one of the four "great sayings" of the Vedas. - Editor
- 23 Excerpted from *The Awakener*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1961), pp. 21-30, copyright © Universal Spiritual League in America, Inc.
- 24 Reprinted from *Glow International*, May 1987.
- 25 Reprinted from *Divya Vani*, May-July 1970.
- 26 God in human form.
- 27 Giridhar is a name of Krishna that recalls the time He lifted a mountain on one finger in order to shelter His lovers from a storm.
- 28 A *kamandal* is a hand rest that yogis carry to rest their arm on while meditating. (an earthen or wooden water-pot, used by the ascetic and religious student; the pot used by mendicants)
- 29 From *The Awakener*, vol. 9, nos. 1 and 2 (1963), © Universal Spiritual League in America, Inc. Used with permission.
- 30 Diane Dimpfl (later Cobb), whom Baba nicknamed "Baba's Beautiful Baby," hence "3-B."

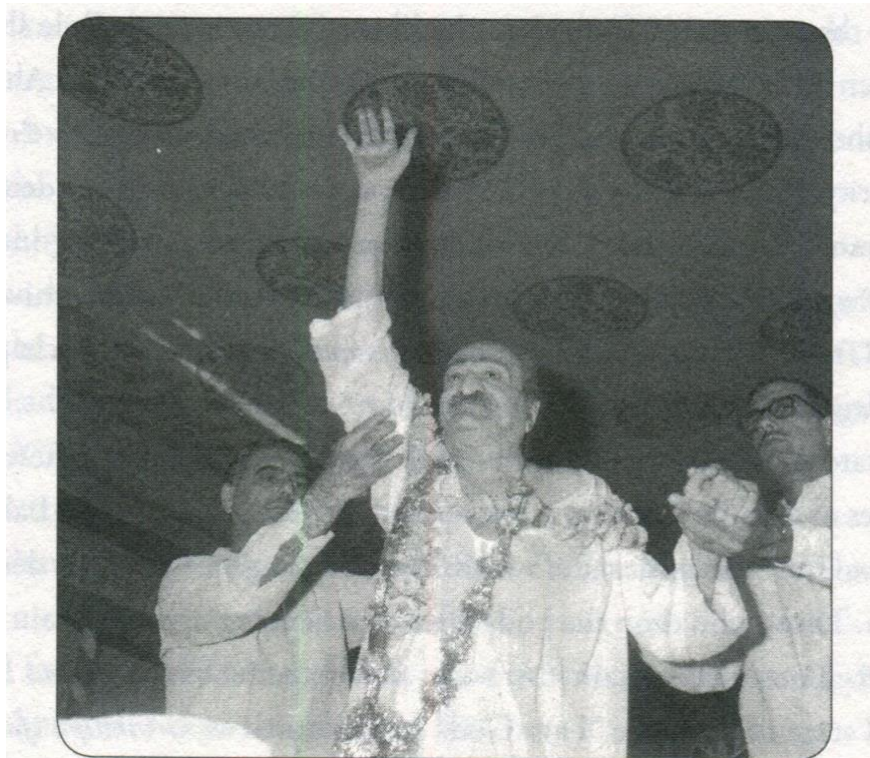
- 31 Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. The story of his being sawed in half appears in the Islamic tradition, where he is known as Zakariyya. See Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher*, vol. 7, p: 2647
- 32 *Mudra*: hand gesture.
- 33 Lord Rama's wife, Sita, who was purity personified, had been kidnapped by Ravana, the evil king of (Sri) Lanka. Rama vanquished Ravana and rescued Sita, as told in the epic *Ramayana*. But after they returned home, people spread the rumor that Sita's virtue had been compromised while she was the prisoner of Ravana. They demanded that Rama denounce her. Although he knew she was innocent and had successfully passed an ordeal by fire to prove her purity, Rama as king felt accountable to his people and thus deserted Sita.
- 34 At Arjuna's request, Lord Krishna granted the vision known in Hindi as *vishwarup darshan*, demonstrating his divinity by revealing his universal form (Hindi, *virat swarup*; Sanskrit, *virata svarupa*), as described in chapter 11 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- 35 The state of the Majzoob, Salik, and Qutub, respectively. These different varieties of God-Realization are described in *God Speaks*. Meher Baba equates *nirvana*, the "vacuum state," with the first stage of *fana* as described in Sufism. Those who drop the body after experiencing *nirvana* attain liberation (*mukti*). Those who retain the body after experiencing *nirvana* realize the second stage of *fana*, the "I am God" state, known as *nirvikalpa* (*fana-fillah*); see *God Speaks*, 2nd ed., pp. 155-56 (pp. 145-46 in the Indian edition).
- 36 Kundan Lal Saigal, a celebrated musical star of the Indian cinema, who died in 1947. - Editor.
- 37 Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj (also known as Ganje-Shakar) was a thirteenth-century Punjabi poet and master of the Chishti order of Sufism.
- 38 Kutch is a region of Gujarat.
- 39 See *Bhagavad Gita* 7.25, in which Krishna says to Arjuna: "I am not visible to all, for I am enveloped by the Illusion of Phenomena [*yoga-maya*]. This deluded world does not know Me as the Unborn and the Imperishable" (translation by Shri Purohit Swami).
- 40 The Urdu poet Seemab Akbarabadi. In *Letters from the Mandali*, vol. 1 (1981), p. 92, Adi K. Irani notes: "There is a ghazal by Seemab which, upon

hearing some of the lines, Baba gave the poet liberation. Seemab was out of the body at the time."

41 Notes from N. Nana Kher.

42 *Tal* refers to the element of rhythm or time in Indian music, while *sur* is pitch.

43 *Vidnyan bhumika*: the state of God-consciousness and Creation-consciousness simultaneously; the consciousness of Perfect Masters.



**Meher Baba with Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, the author
on His left and Eruch Jessawala on His right**



**Meher Baba with Meherjee on His left and Maharani Shantadevi and
Gunatai Gadekar on His right with others**



Present day Guruprasad Memorial room

GLIMPSES OF GURUPRASAD

The mystery and triumph of *Glimpses of Guruprasad* lies in its delay in getting published. Meher Baba or the Compassionate Father is considered the greatest spiritual Master of this generation. He observed silence from 10 July 1925 until He dropped His body on 31 January 1969 and His spiritual work in simplicity has endeared many from all over the world. Meher Baba stayed at the palatial residence called Guruprasad at Pune where for many years, He held numerous public darshans and private meetings with His followers. Meher Baba took a keen interest in explaining the spiritual ethos behind His discourses, ghazals and quawallis sung by His lovers as well as played the part of an intimate companion concerned with the day to day happenings of His disciples.



Dr. Hoshang Bharucha, an ardent Baba lover, took on the onus of publishing these occurrences at Guruprasad. This book was to be released in 1994 on the occasion of Meher Baba's 100th birth anniversary. However, Dr. Bharucha took ill, passed away a year later, and the book was delayed due to inordinate coordination difficulties. Many years later, Dr. Bharucha's dream and promise to the Meher Baba family to publish his diaries is bearing fruit through this edition. Read, savour and relive Meher Baba's love, grace and Godliness through *Glimpses of Guruprasad*.

Register of Editorial Alterations

Page vii, para 1, line 2, ceding changed to acceding
Page xv, para 2, line 2, "be to be" changed to "to be"
Page 99, para 6, line 11, carrassed changed to caressed
Page 202, psrs 4, line 4, a changed to as
Page 202, psrs 5, line 1, had changed to and
Page 219, para 6, line 3, restraint changed to restrain
Page 232, para 2, line 4, fight changed to flight
Page 302, para 4, line 2; gripping changed to griping
Page 306, para 5, line 5, too changed to to
Page 352, para 4, line 2, all changed to call
Page 354, para 6, line 14, long changed to along
Page 361, para 3, line 4, over changed to lover