



*You have made Me
your Master.*

*In turn,
I've promised you
I will never let you sink.*

MEHER BABA

WORLDLY CHALLENGES FACING THE TRUST BOTH ONGOING AND NEW

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Baba Family,
Jai Meher Baba!

“When troubles come, they come not as single spies but in battalions.” This quote aptly describes the current state of affairs for Baba’s Trust. Just as we set out in this issue to update you all about our situation with government regulation of foreign contributions, changes in visa rules, and the effects of local infrastructure on Meherabad and Meherazad, a new set of restrictions has been suddenly imposed on us regarding our use of Lower Meherabad. Although we are reeling from some of these changes, we must have faith in His Will and the good that always comes from it.

Due to security concerns of the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding Lower Meherabad’s proximity to strategic military installations (the VRDE, located on Daund Road near Meherabad), the Trust has been directed to maintain highly restricted and monitored activity for non-Indians at Lower Meherabad. Suddenly in early June we were directed to institute these changes with immediate effect: No non-Indian citizens can reside in Lower Meherabad, no non-Indians can visit Lower Meherabad except on guided tours, and no non-Indians may frequent any of the businesses or vendors along the road within a kilometer on either side of the gate to VRDE. In addition we are required to maintain a register for non-Indian visitors staying privately in the area. Because some of our Baba devotees from abroad do not stay in Trust facilities, we do not normally maintain records

for them, which is why the government now insists we sign them in at the Samadhi itself, with passport details.

We do not know whether these current conditions will change or improve or be permanent. But we know the Government is very serious about these measures and will monitor our compliance. It is the Trust’s responsibility to follow these directives diligently.

We request that all Baba lovers from abroad understand and cooperate fully with the Government’s security concerns and measures to address them.

Update on the registration approval with Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)

Recently, AMBPPC Trust was formally denied the renewal of its registration by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The reason given to us is that the Trust is located in the vicinity of strategic installations, posing a security risk, because we have foreigners frequenting the area.

Without registration approval from the Ministry, the AMBPPCT cannot receive funds from foreign

nationals. The Ministry has given us the option to reapply, a which could take months, if not longer, from its submission to approval.

Visas Are Also Affected

The Ministry also removed the Trust from a category in the Visa Manual that allowed us to give sponsorship letters for student visas to residents wishing to stay under the Trust’s aegis for long periods. The old-timers who had student visas in the past may now have to apply for tourist visas, valid for only 180 days in one calendar year. It will be a difficult, expensive, and disruptive proposition, as it involves frequent travel and longer stays in the country of origin where they may not have permanent quarters. The reasons for removing AMBPPCT from the Visa Manual are the same as stated above. The Trust has done everything it can to remedy this situation but to no avail. We are given to understand that once we get our FCRA registration certificate, we can immediately focus on reapplying for appropriate visa authorizations for our long-term residents.

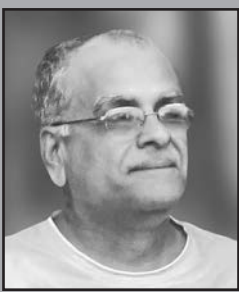
Seeking Solutions

Avatar Meher Baba settled at Meherabad in 1923, whereas the military installation (VRDE) was established in 1947. Meherabad shares a common boundary with the VRDE on one side of its property. For decades, the Trust’s relationship with the military base has been

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBBIE NORDEEN



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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cordial, harmonious, and accommodating. We have always been good neighbors. Neither the military establishment nor the police authorities have ever raised any concern or warnings about a breach of security by the foreign or Indian devotees of Avatar Meher Baba. Hence, the reasons given for these strictures are unexpected and perplexing.

The Trust is making all efforts to address these setbacks. Regarding the foreign contributions and the related visa issue, the Trust has sought professional advice, and a core team of good hearts and minds in Baba's service are working determinedly toward overcoming these hurdles. Beloved Baba formed His Trust, and its care is in His hands. We will try our best and leave the results to Him.

With foreign funding stopped for 18 months, the Trust finds itself in a challenging position to meet its outgoing expenses and is apprehensive about dipping into its capital. The cumulative financial effect is distressing, and the longer this continues we are concerned about its impact on the Trust.

Hopefully, this clarification will inform the Baba family about the changes for Lower Meherabad, the FCRA status, and the visa situation and stop speculation. No individual or Baba centres should take any action on any of these issues with the government on their own. It will hurt the efforts already being made by the Trust. What can be done is being done. In this challenging situation, we take comfort in Baba's assurance that "I want to tell you all that I know everything and am omnipresent." There can be no doubt that Baba knows best and that His Trust is in His loving care.

Embracing the New Normal

The winds of change are blowing through Meherabad and Meherazad, reflecting the modernization happening throughout India. Or is it the other way around? Throughout His Ministry, Baba would raise and bring down the "scaffolding" after His work was done to remind us of the fleeting nature of the physical world. Civilizations have risen and fallen throughout history, setting the stage for the next act.

As progress marches on, the cathedral-like, awe-inspiring canopy of trees that once greeted pilgrims at the start of the approach road to Meherazad will give way to a concrete underpass for traffic hurtling above on the super-express highway from Surat to Hyderabad in search of tech-savvy dreams and spicy biryanis. Even the once-thrilling railway crossing at Meherabad, where Baba would bid His followers goodbye, waving and gesturing, "Take My Love with you," has a long underpass under the original and a newly constructed second railway line.

But progress has also brought some benefits, such as the new flyover bypass road from Shakar Chowk in Ahmednagar City, which has cut the travel time from Meherabad to the Trust Office to a breezy 15 minutes from the once-congested main Station Road, filled with horse-drawn tongas, rickshaws, and stifling traffic jams.

And even as a giant electrical substation rises at the foot of Seclusion Hill (on the far side), crisscrossing

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News UGGETS

TRUST EVENTS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

THE 54TH AMARTITHI was joyously celebrated with wonderful singing, dance, and film programmes. More than 16,000 pilgrims were accommodated from January 30th onward, and approximately 10,000 day visitors came on January 31, 2023. Nearly 1,000 volunteers saw to the smooth operation of all events.

INTERNATIONAL MEHERABAD YOUNG ADULT SAHAVAS in June was attended by 140 participants. Seven days of Sahavas were filled with talks, cultural workshops, service projects, visits to Meherazad and historical places in Meherabad. A highlight was a prayer gathering at Baba's neem tree and the original well in honor of the Centenary.

BABA'S BIRTHDAY: After a rousing 5 a.m. arti at Beloved Baba's Tomb, a soulful mid-morning concert was presented in the Meher Pilgrim Centre (MPC), followed in the afternoon by a lively Birthday play in the theatre "How (Not) To Do a Play at Meherabad." It was about a group of pilgrims at Meherabad performing a play on the life of Narayan Maharaj, one of Beloved Baba's five Perfect Masters. Festivities continued in



the Meher Nazar Ahmednagar Centre for several days with lively concerts celebrating Baba.

MEHERABAD INFRASTRUCTURE: In addition to the new library construction at the MPC and the drainage project, Hostels C and D are getting new bathing rooms and toilets. Aging staff quarters were also improved.

MEHERAZAD SUMMER UPKEEP: Summer is the time for maintenance of Baba's precious home. Following archival guidelines, curtains and

specially fabricated insulated panels are put up in Baba's room to shield the photos and other objects from the intense light and heat. Every repair necessary to keep the buildings in a "state of health" is undertaken. This oasis of beauty and sanctity is rejuvenated and restored so that when Baba's lovers once again step through the gates, His Home will continue to evoke the living memory of the God-Man, Meher Baba.

MEHER NAZAR: Historic tours continue upon request and the Trust compound underwent a lovely landscaping makeover. Treetops were trimmed back to offer more sunlight, a new garden was created, and a beautiful new gate was installed.

LEGACY PROGRAMME: Feb 9–11th the Trust hosted "Discovering the Avataric Treasure," featuring live and recorded talks, videos, and films focused on Baba's life and work period between 1955 and 1958.

YOUTUBE CHANNELS: Arti and livestream can be found on "Meher Channel." The "Meherabad" channel has videos of the livestream programmes from Meherabad, including the recent Centenary programme, Baba's Birthday Play, concerts, and the Legacy Programme: <https://www.youtube.com/@Meherabad/streams>.



ON MAY 4, 1923, Meher Baba and some of His mandali walked from Ahmednagar to a deserted British prisoner-of-war camp near Arangaon village, some 9 kilometers away. Baba sat beneath a shady neem tree facing the ready but still vacant tomb of Giori Shah, a Muslim saint. Two local men brought the hungry and thirsty visitors some simple bread and a bucket to draw water from the nearby well. Little did Baba's mandali know how auspicious this day was or that they had just set foot on what would become "Meherabad."

The Centenary Celebration



On May 4th 2023, exactly one hundred years since Beloved Avatar Meher Baba first touched foot on Meherabad soil, around 1,800 Baba lovers began a two-day celebration of this Centenary event. What a day to celebrate, when Baba first began to transform a dusty, rundown, isolated place into the sacred site of world pilgrimage.

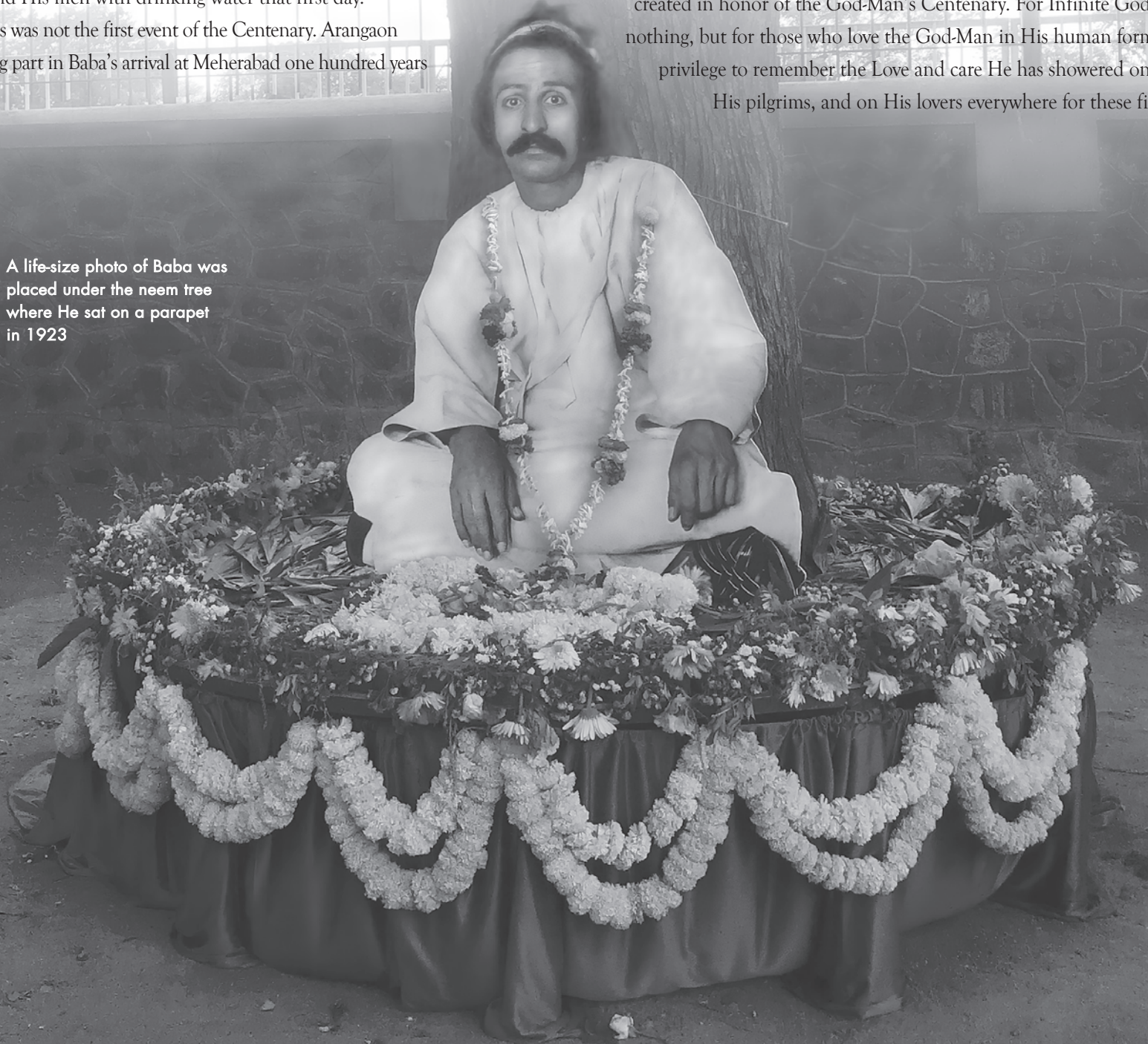
At 9 a.m., the morning program began at lower Meherabad, where Baba lovers gathered under the neem tree that had sheltered Baba when He first arrived. Arti was sung under pandals by the tree, short talks of welcome were given on a stage nearby, followed by a walk up and down the Hill to visit Beloved Baba's Samadhi, with a drop-in to the Memorial Tower. Many welcomed with surprise the unusually cool weather that had come from sprinkles of cooling rain over the last few days. The morning was concluded with bhajan singing, and some visited the well that supplied Baba and His men with drinking water that first day.

However, this was not the first event of the Centenary. Arangaon village played a big part in Baba's arrival at Meherabad one hundred years

ago, and His Centenary anniversary was aptly celebrated there also. At 7 a.m., Baba lovers from Arangaon were pilgrims to pay their respects to Baba at the neem tree. Primarily among them was Tarabai Jawalkar, who at 103 years old was the first to garland Baba's photo under the tree; she was only 3 years old when she met Him in 1923. Soon after a whole procession along with a decorated bullock cart carrying Baba's garlanded photo paraded throughout the village, and then up the Hill to Beloved Baba's Samadhi.

After such a morning, at 4:30 p.m. the celebration continued up the Hill at the amphitheater where Baba lovers sat under a large pandal for both the May 4th afternoon program and the May 5th morning and evening programs. Amid lovely talks, bhajans, songs, and videos from Baba Centres around the world, a little afternoon rain fell on the 4th that provided a lovely, temperate atmosphere throughout. Most memorably, two new films were shown in the evenings that were specially created in honor of the God-Man's Centenary. For Infinite God, 100 years is nothing, but for those who love the God-Man in His human form, it is a great privilege to remember the Love and care He has showered on Meherabad, His pilgrims, and on His lovers everywhere for these first 100 years.

A life-size photo of Baba was placed under the neem tree where He sat on a parapet in 1923





New Library Construction in MPC

Meherabad Library Relocation

New Information Area on the Hill

The Meherabad Library, which had been located in the 1938 Meher Retreat on the Hill, is moving to newly renovated spaces in the Meher Pilgrim Centre at lower Meherabad. The new space offers more room for stacks of books and for studying Baba's life while visiting Meherabad.

The small historic room the Library is vacating will now be a branch of the Welcome and Information Office. Many newcomers go directly to Baba's Tomb. Because of the observance of Silence there, it has not been conducive to answering newcomer's questions about Beloved Baba's life and work. Now they will have a place to visit at the top of the Hill and receive information about Baba.

The former "study hall" of the upper floor of the historic Retreat building will be under the coordination of the Archives and Pilgrim Activities committees, displaying exhibits about Baba's life and work, Trust activities, as well as sharing historical information about how the building was used in Baba's time.

How to Donate

The Trust is supported entirely by love-gifts from Meher Baba's lovers around the world. In truth, it is Baba Himself who gives through your hands, and it is Baba Himself who brings the objects to completion which He laid down in the Trust Deed, when it pleases Him to do so. Please see "How to Donate" on the Trust's website: www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org/where-to-contribute/

Another way to support the Trust is to list it as a beneficiary in your personal Legacy. See "Legacies": www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org/legacies/

Trust financial information is provided annually in the Trust Financial Report, sent out with the June issue of this newsletter and posted on the Trust website. More information can be found in the Trust's website at www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org.

Current news about foreign donations

Although the Trust cannot accept foreign donations at this time, we encourage Trustwallas and Meher Baba organizations to continue to collect the love offerings from Baba lovers and to keep the funds on account until such time that we will be able to accept them.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBOIRON



Flooded underpass in 2020

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEANNE FELKNOR

A New Storm Drain Main Through Lower Meherabad

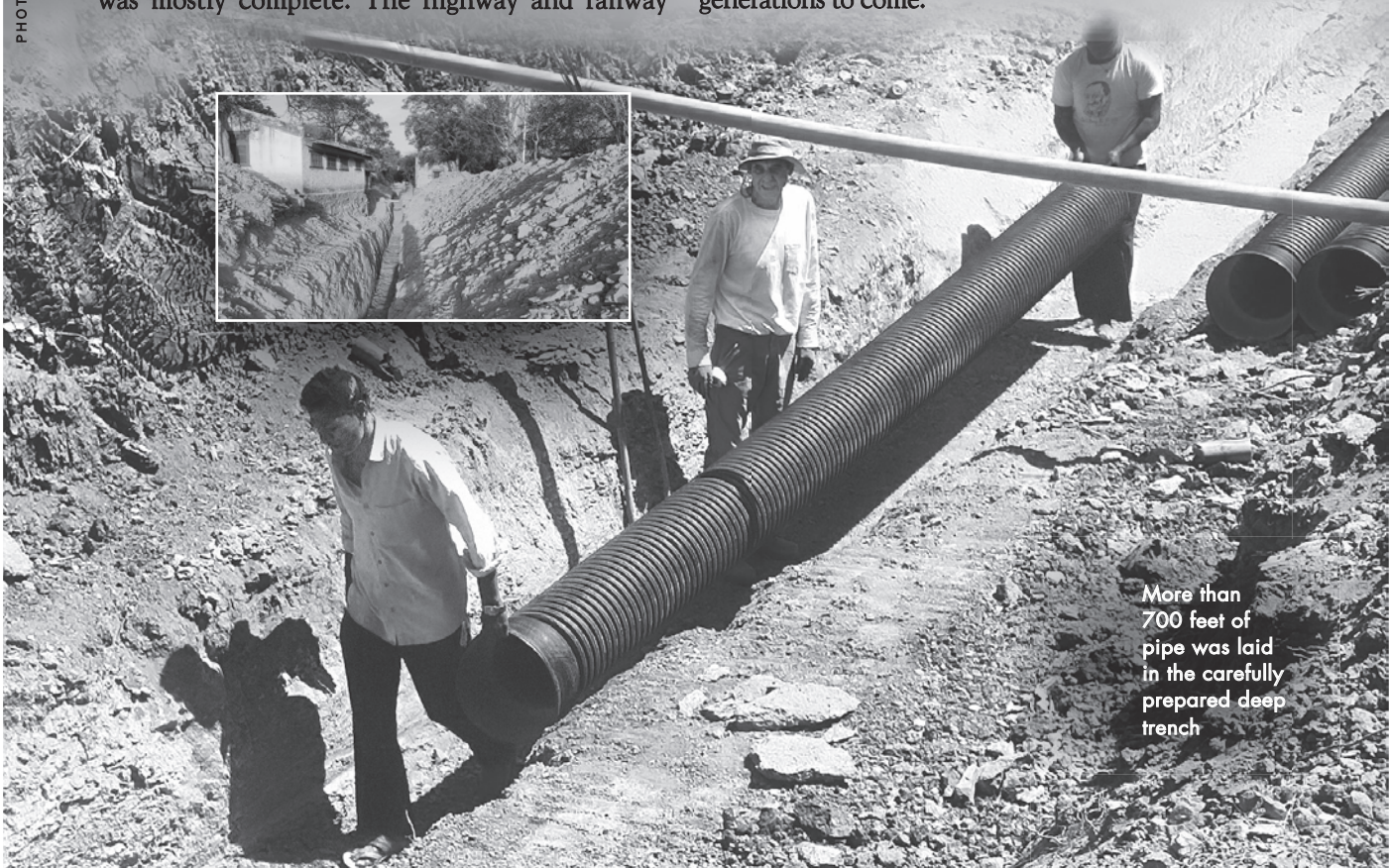
By 2020, the new pedestrian underpass beneath the expanded highway that runs through Meherabad was mostly complete. The highway and railway

underpasses built at that time are part of the Trust's efforts to ensure safe walking access to darshan at Upper Meherabad.

In heavy rains during the past few monsoons, the walkways have become flooded. A pump in a sump was installed to remove storm water, which accumulates in the highway underpass since it is the lowest elevation in that area. However, the rain

was too great and this pump often failed, causing pilgrims to have to walk across the busy highway.

This year, the Trust allocated funding for the installation of a storm drain main running from the base of the highway underpass over two hundred meters east to a ravine, and then north another one hundred plus meters to a water containment area. This storm drain main, which functions by gravity flow, was accomplished by excavating a trench of considerable depth through Lower Meherabad. By Baba's grace this new storm drain will serve for generations to come.



More than 700 feet of pipe was laid in the carefully prepared deep trench

Message from the Chairman

Continued from page 2

power lines over the skyline view, we must trust Baba's divine plan. After all, Baba's comforting presence remains constant amidst the fleeting scenes of progress, guiding us through the ever-changing world.

As I was searching through Baba's writings for some inspiring quotes for this letter, I was struck by how often, throughout the years of Baba's advent, He repeatedly called on His lovers to be resigned to His Will, how often He gave assurances that He will solve all predicaments, and how many times He would ask that we not worry, but have faith in Him, our Master. One lustrous pearl that caught my eye and best mirrors the trial we face today is a poem He composed:

*"Life on my sources first drifted and swam.
Out of me all the forces that save it or damn!
Out of me, men and women, and birds and beasts.
Before God, was I.
Beside and above me nowhere is there to go.
Love or unlove me, unknow me or know.
I am that which unloves me and loves.
I am that which is stricken,
And I am the blow!"*

Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!

In His Abiding Love,
Framroze Mistry
Chairman, Avatar Meher Baba P.P.C.Trust
June 11, 2023

WHAT IS THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST?

CREATED IN 1959 under Meher Baba's direction, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust has the purpose of fulfilling the objectives in the Trust Deed set out by Baba and the Trustees He appointed. The Trust Deed calls for the maintenance of Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb; for the creation of pilgrim facilities; for educational, medical, and other charitable services; for estate development and procurement of sources of water; for the advancement of Avatar Meher Baba's love-message through melas, museums, lectures, publications, and the arts; and for spiritual training.

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Subscribe to Tavern Talk (the Trust's electronic newsletter): <http://mymeherbaba.com/mailman/listinfo/tavern-talk>.

Or sign on via the Trust website: www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org

For Reservations to Stay at Meherabad:

FOR MEHER PILGRIM RETREAT: pimco@ambppct.org.
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