

THE GOD-MAN
The Life, Journeys and Work of Meher Baba with an
Interpretation of his Silence and Spiritual Teaching

Second Edition, second printing with corrections (2010)

By

C. B. Purdom

Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook

June 2011

Copyright © 1964 C. B. Purdom

Copyright © Meher Spiritual Centre, Inc.

Source and short publication history: This eBook reproduces the second printing (2010) of the second edition of *The God-Man: The Life, Journeys and Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of his Silence and Spiritual Teaching*. This title was originally published by Allen and Unwin (London) in 1964; the second edition, first printing, was published by Sheriar Press (North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 1971), and in its second printing, by Sheriar Foundation (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 2010).

eBooks at the Avatar Meher Baba Trust Web Site

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

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

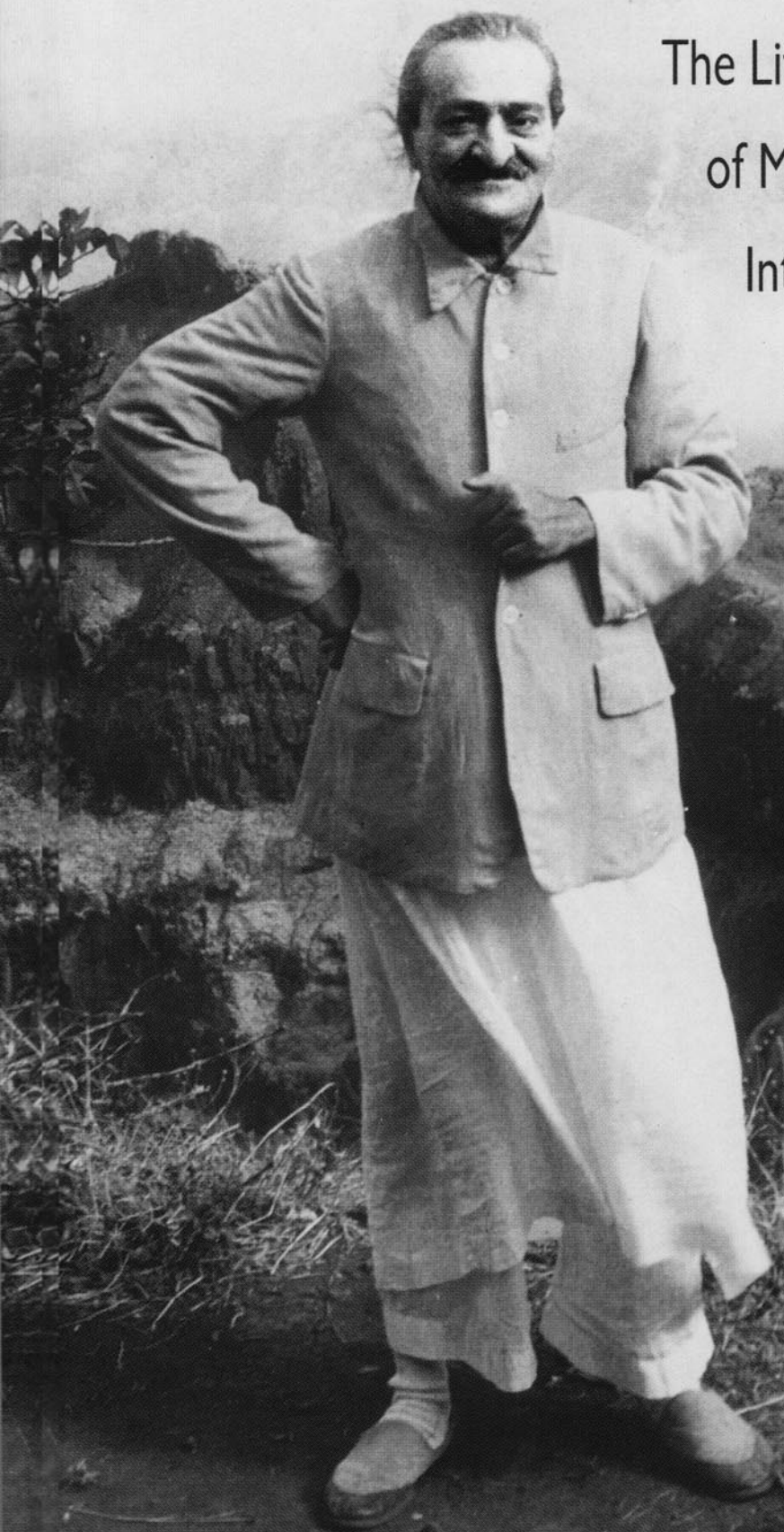
The aim of the Trust's online library is to reproduce the original texts faithfully. In certain cases, however—and this applies especially to some of the older books that were never republished in updated versions—we have corrected certain small errors of a typographic order. When this has been done,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

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

THE GOD-MAN

The Life, Journeys and Work
of Meher Baba with an
Interpretation of his Silence
and Spiritual Teaching

C. B. PURDOM



THE GOD-MAN



Meher Baba, Bombay, December, 1957

THE GOD-MAN

*The life, journeys and work of
Meher Baba with an interpretation
of his silence and spiritual teaching*

BY

C. B. PURDOM

2010

SHERIAR FOUNDATION

North Myrtle Beach, SC

© 1964 C. B. Purdom
© 1971 Meher Spiritual Center, Inc.
Second printing with corrections, 2010

PHOTOGRAPHS

BACK COVER: (*from left to right*) Meher Baba photographed by G. M. Shah, in Toka, India, 1925, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection, North Myrtle Beach, SC, USA; Meher Baba on S. S. Bremen, 1930s, courtesy of MSI Collection; Meher Baba with men before New Life began, Meherabad, 1949, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection; Meher Baba at Khushru Quarters during a Darshan program on 26 September 1954. Photographed by Nursoo, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection; Meher Baba in Guruprasad, Poona, India, taken between March and June 1960. Photograph by Beheram, courtesy of MSI Collection. Meherabad, India.

FRONT COVER: Meher Baba in Mahabaleshwar, India, May 1954. Photographed by Jungoo Irani, courtesy of MSI Collection.

FRONTISPIECE: Meher Baba, Bombay, 22 December 1957. Photograph by Bhikubhai Panarkar of Meelan Studio, courtesy Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar.

INSIDE BOOK: p 352a-(*top*) Meher Baba during his schooldays at St. Vincents, 1909, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection; (*bottom*) Meher Baba at Ganeshkhind, Poona, India, 1957. Photograph by Bhikubhai Panarkar of Meelan Studios, courtesy of Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar.

p. 352b-(*top left*) Upasni Maharaj in Bombay, 1920. Photograph by N. V. Virkar; (*top right*) Meher Baba, 1920, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection (*bottom left*) Meher Baba dressed in the local Pustini dress in Quetta, 1920. Photograph taken by Asthma, courtesy of MSI Collection; (*bottom right*) Meher Baba in Urak, Quetta, 21 June 1923. Photograph taken by Sohrab Irani, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection.

p. 352c-(*top*) Meher Baba with Mandali, Quetta, 23 June 1923, courtesy of MSI Collection (*bottom left*) Meher Baba at the Narbada River, Marble Rocks, Jabalpur, India, 25 December 1938. Photograph by Rano Gayley, courtesy of Hermes Reiter Collection; (*bottom right*) Meher Baba at Upper Meherabad, 21 August 1941. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection.

p. 352d-(*top left*) Meher Baba at Lower Meherabad, 1941. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection; (*top right*) Meher Baba at Upper Meherabad, 21 August 1941. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection; (*bottom left*) Meher Baba in the Cage Room, Upper Meherabad, 30 July 1941. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection; (*bottom right*) Meher Baba, Meherabad, 30 July 1941. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection.

p. 352e-(*top*) Meher Baba at Khushru Quarters during Darshan program, 26 September 1954. Photograph by Poopai Nursoo, courtesy of MSI Collection; (*bottom*) View of Samadhi and buildings, Meherabad, 1938. Photograph by Padri, courtesy of MSI Collection.

p. 352f-(*top*) Meher Baba, Poona, 1961. Photograph by Bhikubhai Panarkar of Meelan Studios, courtesy of Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar; (*bottom*) Meher Baba at the East-West Gathering, Poona, India, 1962. Photograph by Bhikubhai Panarkar of Meelan Studios, courtesy of Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book can be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a written review for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast. For information write to Sheriar Foundation, 807 34 Ave. S, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582, U.S.A.

ISBN 978-1880619360

PREFACE

The first part of this book is as complete and accurate a record as I have been able to make of the life of Meher Baba who calls himself God-Man. It is the more important part of the book. The second part is the more difficult because it is concerned with the question, Why? For the reader who comes to the subject without previous knowledge, I suggest that the first three chapters of the second part should be read first.

I have taken pains to record Meher Baba's movements and journeyings in some detail because they undoubtedly have significance, and many of the 'messages' and 'discourses' of this silent man are given as they were made because time and place have bearing upon what is 'said'. I have had to select, of course, but have done my best to omit nothing essential. The work has presented especial difficulty because Meher Baba is silent and writes nothing, but I have spared no pains to be exact and to avoid vagueness. I am well aware that the book lacks perspective, for Meher Baba is not in the distance; whatever value it has lies in that fact, for it is written with living witnesses available and is a record verified on the spot. I have brought to its writing my own experience, but have done my best to maintain the necessary degree of detachment of mind, if not of heart.

I do not think one can find any parallel in modern times with the life of this simple, subtle, innocent, unpredictable, alarming and engrossing man. He seems to me to be beyond the scope of familiar categories, and our experience is insufficient to account for him except on his own terms.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The account of the early years of Meher Baba is based upon a record compiled by K. J. Dastur, supplemented by my own enquiries, also upon the diaries of the late Behli I. Irani and various diaries and papers lent to me by Indian and Western followers, in particular the late F. H. Dadachanji. I have known Meher Baba since 1931. I have been to India twice and visited many places associated with him and have

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

talked with many people there. I owe special thanks to Irene Billo, Irene Conybeare, Margaret Craske, Kitty Davy, Dr William Donkin, Ivy Duce, Max Hafliger, Eruch Jessawala, Mani S. Irani, Delia de Leon, Elizabeth Patterson, and Don Stevens; above all I am indebted to the diaries of the late Dr Abdul Ghani Munsiff (for the New Life), and throughout to the unfailing help of Adi K. Irani. The typescript was read by Bal Natu, to whom I am indebted for many corrections and suggestions, and who generously gave me much of his time.

In writing the second part I owe much to the works of many writers to some of whom I have referred.

C. B. Purdom

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina-Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire
—Poona, India.

1958-1963

CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments	page 7
-----------------------------	--------

PART ONE

1. The Preparation (1894–1922)	15
2. The First Ten Years (1922–1931)	27
3. The Period of World Travel (1931–1939)	94
4. The Masts of India (1939–1949)	136
5. The New Life (1949–1952)	163
6. The Free Life (1952–1953)	198
7. The Highest of the High (1953–1954)	210
8. The Final Declaration (1954–1957)	219
9. The Sahawas (1958)	295
10. The Universal Message (1958–1962)	343

PART TWO

1. The Man	373
2. The Perfect Master	381
3. The God-Man	390
4. The Silence	407
5. The Teaching	415
6. The Method	431
7. The Work	442
Bibliography	448
Index	451
Epilogue	464

ILLUSTRATIONS

Meher Baba; Bombay, December, 1957	Frontispiece
The School-boy (1907)	Between pages 352-3
The God-Man (1957)	
Upasni Maharaj (1920)	
Meher Baba (1920)	
Quetta (1912)	
Quetta (1923)	
The Mandali (1923)	
Jabalpur (1938)	
Meherabad (1941)	
Meherabad (1935)	
Meherabad (1941)	
Communicating from seclusion, Meherabad (1941)	
Seclusion, Meherabad (1941)	
Darshan, Ahmednagar (1954)	
The Tomb, Meditation Cells, Old Hospital, Baba's Cabin, Meherabad, Meher Baba, Poona (1961)	
The East-West Gathering, Poona (1962)	

In the Text	Page
The Meher Baba Country: A Diagrammatic map	32
Meher Baba's Signature	67
Diagram of the Four Journeys Poona (1962)	365

THE GOD-MAN

To praise and glorify him is to glorify God: Divine fruit is growing from the essential nature of this tray.

Apples grow from this basket in fine variety: 'tis no harm if you bestow on it the name of 'tree'.

Call this basket 'the Apple-tree', for between the two there is a secret union.

Deem this basket to be the Tree of Fortune and sit happily beneath its shade.

- Jalalu'l-Din Rumi

(Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. Rumi: Poet and Mystic 1207-1273.

Allen & Unwin, 1950)

PART ONE

Part I Chapter 1

THE PREPARATION

1894-1922

This will be found a strange book, all the more strange because the story that it tells has not reached its end. It is the story of a man whose life will appear incomprehensible, a life in which the contradictions of normal values and actions are prominent; for this man says, 'I am God'. He chooses neither to speak nor write, nor does he seek even to get followers in the ordinary sense of the word. The story will arouse controversy, and I have no doubt that it will be misunderstood. I have written, however, soberly and plainly, though many will think that what I tell outrages common sense.

The title 'Perfect Master' by which Meher Baba, the subject of this book, is known means one who has himself reached the goal to which he directs others: one who, pointing to God, has himself realized God. Meher Baba, however, is more than Perfect Master, for by his own declaration he is Avatar or God-Man, that is to say, one who comes from God as the Awakener. My object in these pages is to give an account of this man as I know him and as his companions and friends have spoken to me about him, to record his messages and declarations, and to explain what I think to be his significance.

Meher Baba¹ is Merwan Sheriar Irani, born at Poona, India, in 1894. Merwan's parents, as his surname declares, were Persians. His father was Sheriar Mundegar Irani, born in Khooramshah, a village in Persia, in the year 1858, the son of the keeper of the Zoroastrian tower of silence, which belonged to his native village. The family was poor, and Sheriarji's mother died when he was five; the boy spent his days with his father looking after the place to which human corpses are brought to be devoured by vultures.²

¹ Meher' means 'mercy', or in Persian 'sun', and is the name by which he was called as a child, 'Baba' means 'father'.

² These Persian towers of silence, dakhma, are built always on the outskirts of towns. The Zoroastrians believe this method of disposing of the dead to be the least harmful to the living.

At thirteen years of age Sheriarji left his father and became a monk. He could neither read nor write and had had no schooling whatever; but he made up his mind to lead a life of renunciation and meditation and for eight years roamed over Persia as a dervish, wearing the ochre robe of a monastic life. He found that this was not bearing the desired fruit, so with his brother he went to India, landing in Bombay, where they both got work. After five months Sheriarji left his employment, and, keeping two rupees of the pay due to him, having given the rest away, became a monk again. For ten years he wandered throughout India with wooden bowl and staff. This second experience of renunciation seemed no more fruitful than the first. He did not gain the spiritual beatitude he was seeking. In despair he returned to Bombay and went to live in his sister Piroja's house. It is said that he was told in a dream that what he wanted was not destined for him.

His sister wished him to marry and bring up a family, and so persistent was she that Sheriarji pretended to have fallen in love with the daughter of an Irani named Dorabji Khoramshahi. This girl was no more than six years old, and Sheriarji was over thirty; he was sure that her father would not give her to him. He said he would marry no one else, however, and Piroja had to bring off the match so as to carry out her intentions. She succeeded in getting the consent of the parents, for Sheriarji was regarded as a holy man, and it was agreed that the marriage should take place when the girl had grown up. Eight years later, in 1892, when Shirinbanoo was fourteen, the marriage took place.

It was a happy and successful marriage. When he became engaged Sheriarji turned his attention to earning a living. He first worked as a gardener, then took charge of an estate, and afterwards opened a tea-shop. He also began to educate himself; learned to read and write his own Persian language, also Arabic, Gujarati, and Marathi. He became a singer and a poet, writing hymns used by the Zoroastrian community. His wife, Shirinbanoo, was 'as intelligent as she is fair', says one who knew her then; she also understood four languages. They went to live in Poona, 119 miles by rail from Bombay, about 1,850 feet above the sea. This is an important city, a cultural and educational centre, once the Mahratha capital. It had for long been the seat of the government of Bombay, and the British cantonment, east of the old city, had an area of four and a quarter square miles. The city is at the conjunction of the Mutha and Nula rivers. It was a Brahmin stronghold with a large number of temples mostly small, though some have historic

interest. A large part of the old city was, and still is, squalid. Shirinbanoo's first child, Jamshedji, was born there in 1893; he died in 1926. The second child was Merwan, three other sons followed, Jal, Behram and Ardeshir, and two daughters, Freni and Mani, the last born in 1918. Freni died at the age of six.

Merwan was born at five o'clock in the morning on 25 February 1894, and according to the astrologers under auspices that indicated his destiny as a Master. There were no marvels associated with his nativity. His was an ordinary birth. His name soon became Meher, by which he is now known. Meher was brought by his mother from the David Sassoon Hospital to No. 816 Butler Moholla (the name was changed to Meher Moholla by the Cantonment Board in 1940), a house his father had bought and repaired. The house is small, thirty feet long and twenty feet wide, containing two rooms of equal size, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a garret. It was in this house that Meher passed his childhood, except for a period of two years when he lived with his parents and brothers in a flat in the Bhagwandas Chawl. Then when Mani was born they moved back to Butler Moholla, to a larger house opposite, No. 765, where Jal, Behram and the latter's family still live.

The childhood of Meher was happy. Those who knew him say that he was active and mischievous, noted for gentleness and unselfishness. His favourite haunts were Moslem burial grounds and the neighbourhood of the Parsi tower of silence, where he would sometimes sit for hours alone. He was a lover of beauty and took pleasure in music and poetry. At school he was methodical and punctual and a rapid learner. He was alert and brisk, a quick walker, and a fast runner. He delighted in sports, excelling in cricket and hockey.

Meher received the education of a middle-class boy. When five years old he was taken to the Dastur Girls' School, where he learned to read and write the Gujarati language and the rudiments of arithmetic. At the age of nine he was sent to the Camp Government English School, where he remained five years. Then he went to St Vincent's High School (Roman Catholic), considered the best school in Poona. From that school he matriculated in 1911 at the age of seventeen.

The greatest education institution in the Deccan at the time was the Deccan College (where W. Bain and Sir Edwin Arnold had been professors), situated midway between Poona and Kirkee. It was one of the few colleges in India which permitted much freedom to students. Meher entered the college in 1911. His main interests were in literature, especially poetry; he read Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, and many other poets, English, Indian, and Persian, and had the faculty of

remembering almost everything he read. He had also the ordinary tastes of a boy for 'bloods': at the age of fifteen he wrote a story for his favourite, the London Union Jack, which was accepted and printed. His mind was not attracted to science, nor to mathematics, nor to history. The poet to whom he gave his heart was Khwaja Shams al-Din Muhammad, known as Hafiz, one of the greatest lyric poets of Persia, a Perfect Master of his time. Meher was not spiritually advanced when he read Hafiz, but was much enraptured by him. Under that influence Meher wrote poems himself in Gujarati, Urdu, Hindustani, and Persian, published under the nom de plume of 'Homa' in Sanj Vartman, one of the popular Gujarati newspapers of Bombay. He also wrote poems in English. He delighted in music and loved to sing. He was an eager conversationalist.

It seems that he had the sense of leadership. In quarrels he was called upon to settle the dispute, and other boys came to him for advice as a matter of course.

FIRST SPIRITUAL MASTER

So far as I can discover, Meher had shown no particular aptitude or ambition at college. He was high-spirited, eager and friendly, and passed his examinations with credit. But his studies were interrupted and the course of his life changed. One morning in the month of May 1913, when riding on a bicycle down Rao Saheb Kedari Road, he looked up and saw an old woman sitting under a neem tree. His eyes met hers, and she beckoned to him. He knew who the woman was, for she was a well-known character in the city, but he had had no thought of meeting her that day. He left his bicycle and went over to her; she arose and embraced him. Not a word was said. He remained sitting with her for a quarter of an hour, and then left her. That was the first meeting between Meher and Hazrat Babajan.

This remarkable woman was said to be at that time one hundred and twenty-two years old, but her actual date of birth is not known; it is supposed to have been about 1790, in that land of mountains, deserts, and stony plains, Baluchistan, to the west of India. She was a Muslim, and is said to have devoted herself to prayer and meditation from girl-hood. Little or nothing is known about the greater part of her life. It is said that when her parents would have forced her to marry she ran away on her wedding-day. After years in search of God she found a Master, who many years afterwards (at the age of sixty-five, it is said) made her perfect. Then she lived in the Punjab for a long period. It is certain that she was seen in Bombay in 1900, where she stayed for some

years, her favourite place of resort being the locality near Pydhowni. In 1903 she went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and it is not known when she returned to India; but for twenty-four years before her death, which took place in September 1931, she remained in Poona, having a seat, which was also her bed, under a neem tree in San Jan Mohammad St. Up to her last ten years there was no canopy over that seat, and she was exposed to all weathers, including the severe monsoon storms, except for the protection of the tree. Ten years before she died, however, Babajan predicted that a great storm with torrents of rain would overtake the city. The storm came suddenly, and people were taken by surprise in the streets; trees were uprooted and houses blown down. Babajan remained under her tree. Her devotees then decided that a shelter should be provided for her, and with great difficulty got permission to erect a small building, about eight feet by twenty-five feet, which included the trunk of the tree. Half the walls consisted of masonry and the other half of trellis; the roof was galvanized sheeting.

The Cantonment Board, until it was Indianized, did not welcome Babajan's presence because of interference with the traffic caused by her devotees, who sometimes gathered in large numbers. But she could not be dislodged. Pilgrims by the thousand used to visit her to kiss her hands or merely to look at her. She was recognized as a Hazrat (Muslim for Sadguru), and was heard to say that she was God, that she was the source of everything, and that everything was created by her. Babajan was sometimes attacked for making such statements, and I have met people who in their childhood used to throw stones at her, thinking her to be mad.

For twenty years before her death she did not take a bath, but her skin was said to be clean and healthy as if she had bathed daily. She was a small woman, with deep wrinkles, and her hair was completely white, but she retained full powers of sight and hearing and, though she spent most of her days lying on her bed, was as active and could walk as quickly as a girl. For some part of the day she used to sit under a banyan tree in the Bund garden looking over the river, to which she would be escorted by her Muslim devotees. The building where she lived and died and her body lies is now a shrine where devotees pay homage to her memory.

A Hindu proverb says that when the disciple is ready the Master must come. Thus Meher's meeting with Babajan that day in 1913 was no accident. He came when she beckoned him, and was thrilled by the embrace of the old woman. He was, he said, drawn to her as steel to a magnet. After that first meeting he visited her every night. They

seldom spoke. Their meetings were silent. He went on with his schooling.

One night in January 1914, when he made his usual visit, he kissed her hands and stood before her. Then she kissed him on his forehead, after which he stood there for a few moments, and went home. It was nearly eleven o'clock. He went at once to bed. In ten minutes he began to experience extraordinary thrills, as though he were receiving electric shocks; joy mingled with pain, and he lost his body consciousness.

The first person to discover Meher in this condition was his mother. She found him lying with wide-open, vacant eyes. She called to him, and he sat up. He could not speak. Thinking he was seriously ill, she made him lie down again. For three days he lay in this condition; his eyes were open, but he saw nothing. On the fourth day Meher began to move about and was slightly conscious of his body. So he remained for nearly nine months. He had no knowledge of his own actions, and what he did was in response to no prompting of his mind. He was totally unconscious of the world. If he seated himself, he would not get up until the lapse of several hours; if he walked, he would continue walking for a number of hours. One day he is said to have left his home in the hot sun during the afternoon and to have walked for fifteen miles without stopping, in the course of which he went from his home to the Bund Garden and back three times. Once he went to Kondwa, behind the Parsi tower of silence, and there lay down for three days. He had no food; he did not sleep; his parents thought his mind to be unhinged. He was given food, but gave it to the dogs, or, intending to give it away to beggars, put it in his drawers, where it went rotten and stank.

He was placed under medical treatment, given sleeping-draughts and morphia injections; but nothing had any effect. He was sent to Bombay to see if a change of environment would make any difference; but he remained the same. He stayed with his brother Jamshedji in Bombay for two months, and used to go to Chaupati in the mornings, sitting there for hours watching the waves; in the afternoons he would go to the Victoria Gardens, sitting always on one particular bench. Then he returned to Poona, spending most of his time in a small room in his father's house. In November 1914 he regained a little consciousness and behaved, it was said, 'as an automaton possessing intuition'. His eyes ceased to be vacant and life returned to them. He began to take food regularly, though in small amounts. He mixed little with the members of his family and seldom went out for walks. A month after this partial return

of consciousness his friend Khodadad Shirzad Irani brought to him a poor young man of Persian parentage named Behramji Ferdoonji Irani, who immediately became attached to him, and afterwards was one of his most intimate disciples. Meher offered to teach Behramji Persian, which was the first sign of his having regained consciousness. His parents were delighted and urged him to get regular work with the object of aiding his recovery, and when he refused they got additional pupils for him, but he declined to accept them. But he taught Behramji, who made rapid progress, though Meher himself was said to possess no more than a tenth of his normal consciousness. He taught automatically, not as a conscious teacher.

SECOND SPIRITUAL MASTER

At last there came a further development. During April 1915 Meher had the impulse to lead an itinerant life. He wandered only in the suburbs of Poona at first, but as the impulse grew he went further afield. One day he informed Behramji that he would shortly go to a distant place, and there lead the life of a monk under the guidance of a Sadguru. He told Behramji that after settling there he would invite him to join him, and that he (Behramji) would do well to accept the invitation. On the same day he left Poona by train; but to everybody's surprise returned the next day. He had intended to go to Raichur, but at Kedgaon, thirty-four miles from Poona, he decided to get out. About seven miles from Kedgaon station there lived Sadguru Narayan Maharaj, whom Meher had the impulse to meet. Meher called upon him, and this contact seems to have had importance, but Meher did not stay and returned to his home at Poona.

THIRD SPIRITUAL MASTER

Then Meher, with Behramji, went to Nagpur, where both of them paid a visit to Tajuddin Baba, about whom Babajan used to say, 'Taj is Khalifa' (meaning Taj is head of the Caliphs). Tajuddin Baba was a Muslim Hazrat. He had been a soldier in the service of the British Government, when he became God-realized and gave up the military calling and went to Nagpur. As soon as it was known that Tajuddin had become spiritually perfect, persons of all castes and creeds called upon him with a view to getting his blessing. When people troubled him by asking silly questions and by entreating him to fulfil their desires, he was much annoyed, and the requests became so unbearable that he determined to end them. What he did, in a most unusual way,

was to go naked one evening to a tennis court where Europeans were playing, and to behave like a madman. As a consequence he was sent to a lunatic asylum, where he seems to have lived for seventeen years, and even there people constantly called for his blessing. In the last year of his life the titular chief of Kampti, near Nagpur, paid him a visit. The chief was aware that Tajuddin Baba was a Sadguru, so he persuaded him to leave the asylum and to stay as a guest at his palace in Nagpur, where he would not be troubled. Tajuddin accepted the invitation, and passed the remaining months of his life in the palace. As usual with such men, he is reputed to have performed a number of miracles, one of which was to make a dead man alive. He died on 17 August 1925, at the age of sixty - four. At his funeral thirty thousand people were said to have been present.

FOURTH SPIRITUAL MASTER

From Nagpur Meher returned to Poona. After some weeks, in December, he again left in company with the same friend to call upon the famous Hazrat Sai Baba, of Shirdi, of whom something should be said. He can be traced only from his arrival at Shirdi, a village in the district of Ahmednagar in the Deccan, in the 'seventies of last century where he led the life of an itinerant monk. He begged not only for food but also for oil, for in the mosque he kept a lamp burning. When calm he was as gentle as a lamb, but when roused was liable to be exceedingly fierce. He seldom left the village throughout his life, and would sit with his disciples on the ground, smoking a pipe called a chellum, passing it around. When people came to him he would demand money if they appeared to possess any, and give it away to the poor standing near. Thousands of his devotees were Hindus, and, though he was a Muslim, they performed the ceremony of arti¹ in his honour. His greatest and most famous disciple was Upasni Maharaj, who was a Hindu. It was on 16 October 1918, that he died, at the supposed age of sixty-four. A stone slab in the mosque used to serve him as a pillow. One day in that year it was accidentally broken to pieces. Sai Baba, seeing the pieces, said that the breaking of the slab meant that it was to be the last day of his life: and it proved to be so. He appointed no successor.

¹ Arti is an act of devotion in which the devotees stand facing the Master: one of them holds a metal tray on which there are flowers, ember sticks, and camphor which is ignited: the tray is waved before the Master, while the devotees chant a hymn in his praise.

Sai Baba does not appear to have written anything. Among his collected sayings, which have been published, are 'I am Allah', 'I am Krishna'. 'All the universe is in me.' To his devotees he said 'Your servants' servant, I am. I am your debtor. I am purified by your darshan. It is grace on your part to have given me the sight of your feet. I am a worm in your excreta'.

On beholding the white head of Sai Baba, who was at the moment in procession, Meher prostrated himself on the road. When he arose Sai Baba looked at him and said, 'Parvardigar', which means 'God-Almighty-Sustainer'. Meher went at once with Behramji to the temple of Khandoba, where Upasni Maharaj was living under Sai Baba's guidance, naked and fasting. It was then the last month of the year 1915.

FIFTH SPIRITUAL MASTER

The part Upasni Maharaj played in Meher's life was decisive. Kashinath Govindrao Upasni was born on 15 May 1870, at Satana in the district of Nasik. His childhood was happy; he hated school and was wholly religious-minded. When scarcely twelve years of age he resolved to lead the itinerant life of a monk, but his father was much disturbed and persuaded him to return home. After some time his parents married him, but within a couple of years his girl-wife died. At sixteen he was married for the second time, but the marriage failed to remove his melancholy. His parents at last gave in to his wishes, and he went to Poona to resume the life of a sannyasin. He practised great austerities. At about twenty years old he shut himself up for one year in a cave on the top of a mountain near Nasik. Later he went back to his family when he lost first his father, then his grandfather, and lastly his wife. Six months after, his mother and uncle got him married for the third time; then he went with his wife to Poona and a number of other places. In Sangli there is the Shri Dattaguru temple in which Kashinath stayed as a monk for two and a half years. During this period his food was mainly the leaves of certain trees; he only occasionally partook of grains and fruits. Soon after he went to Satara, to practise as an Ayurvedic doctor, where he became well known. He got tired of medicine and when about thirty-four gave it up, and for a couple of years passed the greater part of each day in prayer and meditation.

Some time later he went to Rahuri, in the district of Ahmednagar, where Kulkarni Maharaj strongly requested him to pay a visit to Sai Baba, but Kashinath declined. 'Why should I go to a Muslim', said he

to his host; but some time later he went to Bombay to talk with Narayan Maharaj privately. The latter gave Kashinath a roll of betel-leaf telling him to masticate it thoroughly, and then observed: 'Today you have been so much painted as till now nobody was ever painted.' It was beyond Kashinath to grasp the significance of these words. After a short while he went to Shirdi to Sai Baba, his prejudice against him having melted away. After a short time Sai Baba made Kashinath, then about forty-two years old, God-realized, and afterwards brought him down to a little normal consciousness. Sai Baba told him to go to the Khandoba temple where he lived for four years. Possessed only of a little earthly consciousness, he sometimes acted as a madman. After four years Sai Baba brought him to the consciousness of the earthly world. Thus at forty-seven years of age Kashinath Govindrao Upasni now called Upasni Maharaj became a Perfect Master.

Soon after, Upasni Maharaj left Shirdi and after staying at a number of places went to Sakori, a village about nine miles from the Chitali railway station, where he stayed for the rest of his life. His living place was small, but he built a large and splendid temple near it. The temple was open to Hindus of low as well as high caste, and also to non-Hindus. He generally wore nothing save a loin-cloth, and his food was as simple as his clothing. His behaviour was often strange. When he died on 24 December 1941, at the age of seventy-one, his shrine became a holy place and Sakori is now a centre of pilgrimage.

The accusation was made against Upasni Maharaj that he sometimes not only vituperated but severely beat his followers. The charge can also be levelled against other Sadgurus. Upasni never asked for money, but when it was offered would take it; he lived in dust and filth.

When Upasni Maharaj saw Meher for the first time in the temple of Khandoba, as I have said, he flung a stone at him. This was to help to bring Meher down still further into gross consciousness, to awaken him to this world. The stone hit Meher's head with force, but he did not resent it. He said afterwards that it made him know that he was 'the Ancient One'. He stayed with Upasni for two days, then returned to Poona. From that day onwards Meher started to revisit Babajan, sitting with her every night for about an hour. On one occasion she pointed at him and declared, 'This child of mine will shake the world to a great upheaval.'

It is no wonder that the members of Meher's family considered him to be weak in the head, not in the least in a high spiritual state. Almost every day he would go to the Parsi tower of silence and sit there for hours, or to the jungle beyond, where he would sit knocking his

forehead against the stones: he wrapped a handkerchief about his head to hide the bruises so that his family were not aware of what was happening. He no longer felt an impulse to travel, but twice each month went to Sakori to visit Upasni Maharaj. He also wrote regularly to him, and the latter wrote to Meher. None of these letters has been preserved, but they are said to have been unintelligible.

As Meher appeared gradually to become normal his mother pressed upon him the desirability of adopting a profession or engaging in some business. He was then twenty-two years of age. Meher tried to do as his mother wished, and on three occasions found employment, but could remain at no work for long. He was compelled to play the role of a spiritual eccentric.

In 1916 he was given the job of manager of the Kan (Kavasji) Khatau theatrical company, and in that capacity went to Lahore. At that time he wrote a letter to his friend Behramji, in which he said: 'I am compelled to do even what I do not like, compelled to eat what I dislike, forced to put on clothes for which I have no liking.' While still holding this appointment he used to visit solitary places and continued to beat his head against stone walls. After two months the company was disbanded.

Meher returned to his home at Poona and took charge of his father's tea shop at Asurkhana, for the old man was sick and had to go to Bombay. Meher was not a successful shopkeeper, for he could not keep his mind on the business, and was cheated. On his return from Bombay the father applied for a licence to deal in toddy, and opened a shop in the locality of Kasba Peth. Meher looked after this shop for two hours every day, and made up his mind to open a toddy shop of his own in partnership with his friend Behramji, who secured a licence, so Meher and Behramji became partners. Meher worked in the shop from six in the morning until twelve o'clock at night, washing the bottles, sweeping the floor, and serving customers. The toddy is the sap of the palm tree, a cheap drink, not of strong alcoholic content. Meher, however, used to urge his customers, who were largely the poor of the city, to drink moderately, and often urged them to abstain. After a year of this Meher became merely a sleeping partner, and in the times of the Non-co-operation Movement the toddy shops were picketed as well as liquor shops, and Meher prevailed upon Behramji to dissolve their partnership and to close the shop.

During this time he resumed playing games, and used to entertain his friends in the evening. He hired a small room near the shop, and hung the walls with pictures of saints and prophets, including Babajan

and Upasni Maharaj. Ceremonies were performed every evening and twice a week between four and five o'clock in the morning.

One day in 1910, Meher shut himself up in an attic belonging to Behramji in the locality of Kamatipura. He had with him a bucket of refuse which he got from a sweeper of the public roads. He remained in the attic for thirty-six hours. When he came out he was smeared with dirt from head to foot, and thoroughly exhausted. Behramji took it upon himself to make him clean. Meher was impelled to do the most lowly work, hence the toddy shop and the dirt. We are reminded of the life of Saint Francis. He had experiences: on one occasion he realized that the universe was created for him, and he was alone in it. At another time, sitting near a pond at Sakori, he felt that the thoughts of others were entering his mind; he was so much disturbed that he sought relief by putting his head in the pond.

By the beginning of the following year, 1921, Meher was three-quarters normal; he could do ordinary acts, speak in a normal way, and understand what was said to him. In the month of July he went to Sakori and lived for six months with Upasni Maharaj. During that period he did not take a bath, nor did he lie down to rest, but walked continuously or sat upright; he took food, at first only once in two or three days. During the last month, however, he ate a great deal, taking four meals a day. He was looked after by the spiritual mother of Upasni Maharaj, who was then about fifty years old: she regarded it as her mission to serve Meher. He and Upasni Maharaj used to spend a number of hours together at night and every day, when none was allowed to approach them. Usually they sat silent. Sometimes Meher would sing.

At the end of December Meher was restored to full normal consciousness. Upasni Maharaj said to his disciples: 'I have given my charge to Meherwanji. He is the holder of my key.' Some time after, in the presence of a number of people, he said, 'This boy will move the world. Humanity at large will be benefited at his hands.' A few days later Upasni Maharaj sent for Gustadji Hansotia, one of his leading disciples, and said, 'I have made Meherwanji perfect. He is the Sadguru of this Age. Now you have to leave me and stick to him.' To Behramji he said, 'Your friend is God-realized; carry out every command and every desire of his'. One night Maharaj folded his hands and said, 'Meherwanji; you are adi-shakti (meaning primal power): you are Avatar'. Thus Meher became Meher Baba at the age of twenty-seven, and started upon his universal work.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS**1922-1931**

According to Hindu philosophy a Sadguru or Perfect Master is one who, while living on earth, has come into the full consciousness of God. He has passed through all the planes of consciousness and lives on earth and in heaven simultaneously.

After Meher Baba became conscious of being a Perfect Master he wrote from Sakori to Sadashiv Patel of Poona, desiring him to lease a small plot of ground there, if possible close by the temple of Chatarsinghi, and to build a small hut on it. He intimated that he intended to live in that hut, no longer in the house of his parents. At the beginning of 1922 he left Sakori for Bombay, where he stayed at the house of the late Munshi Shaikh Abdurrahim. In the house he took a bath for the first time for six months; he stayed for ten days. Afterwards, in the same month of January, he went to the hut built for him in Poona, on the Ferguson College Road, where he continued to live and several disciples gathered. The size of the hut was ten feet by six feet. Meher Baba spent his time daily in the following way. Early in the morning he took breakfast, brought by one of his disciples. At nine he would be visited by Hindu worshippers of the Bhoi caste, who follow the trade of fishing. These devotees would stay for about an hour chanting Hindu religious songs and playing Hindu musical instruments. At about half-past ten he left his hut and went to his mother's house for dinner, and after a rest would return to the hut for the remainder of the day. In the afternoon he would glance at the newspapers, and in the evening a number of his friends would come to him; they would entertain him with music or play games, afterwards he would present them with sweets in the Indian custom, then discourse on spiritual themes. At nine o' clock he would take supper, brought by another of his disciples, and from that hour till dawn no one was permitted to approach him except Behli J. Irani, whose duty it was to stay with him all night. No one was allowed even to loiter outside the hut.

Many stories are told of strange occurrences at this time. It is said that one evening four Irani youths came intending to confuse Meher Baba with questions and to beat him as a hypocrite. But when they saw him not one could open his mouth or do anything but look shamefaced. Baba reproached them with chicken-heartedness; they still could not say a word, but fell down at his feet and went away.

One evening Jamshed R. Irani, a maternal uncle of Behramji, thought he would like to know what happened in the hut from nine o'clock at night until dawn. So with a few friends he went to see for himself. He knew where the hut was, for he visited Baba almost daily; but when Jamshed and his friends got on the Ferguson College Road they could find no trace of the hut. They searched in vain, they declared, and had to return home. At seven o'clock Jamshed brought an offering of fruit and flowers and confessed the wrong he had done. Baba showed no displeasure.

When Baba retired it was the duty of Behli to keep watch. He was not permitted to go to sleep. One night, however, he did sleep for a short time, and on awakening found to his horror that Baba's bed was vacant. Behli was about to open the door of the hut, when weird figures appeared; for he had been forbidden to open the door at night whatever happened. Horrified, he sat down and wept, and went to sleep again. On awakening he found Baba in bed.

Another story is of an occasion when Behli was relieved by another disciple, Arjun Supekar. Arjun was instructed to sit outside the hut and not to permit anyone to approach it. At about one o'clock at night Baba called to him, 'Arjun, are you wide awake?' Arjun said that he was. 'Whatever may happen, don't be frightened', warned Baba. Then before very long Arjun was startled by seeing two men in white robes coming towards him. He could hardly speak, but managed to call out, 'Who are you?' Baba replied from the hut, saying 'What's the matter, Arjun?' The figures vanished on the instant, and Baba himself appeared.

During the first three months Baba used to go every Thursday evening to Kaspā Peth, where he would receive the devotion of his followers. Every Sunday he went on an excursion. One Sunday, in the midst of merrymaking, he ordered one of his disciples who had come with a bicycle to break it into pieces and throw them into the well, a stone's throw from the place where they were. Nobody could understand this, and Baba gave no explanation. When the party returned they found that Behli had accidentally fallen into the well near Baba's hut, and had escaped from being drowned. Baba said when

he was asked about the matter, 'Instead of allowing Behli to be drowned, I sank the bicycle in the well. It was a gross exchange.'

Stories of this kind gather around such men as Baba; what is to be noted is that they arose at so early a date, for I got them from an early diary.

Baba allowed the observance of Parsi, Hindu and Muslim holidays, for his growing number of disciples included all castes and creeds. One of the chief woman disciples was Gulmai Kaikhushroo Irani, wife of Khan Bahadur Kaikhushroo Sarosh Irani, a merchant of Ahmednagar. Gulmai was born in July 1882 at Parel, Bombay, of poor parents. She is said always to have been spiritually minded. In August 1919 she became a devotee of Upasni Maharaj, and of Meher Baba in March 1922. She had four children, and her two sons, Rustom and Adi, are among Meher Baba's closest disciples. Baba used to call her 'mother'; she died in August 1962.

THE FIRST ASHRAM

In May 1922 Baba made an important journey on foot, with forty-five followers, from Poona to Bombay. Of the followers twelve were Muslims, eleven Zoroastrians, and the remainder Hindus. The members of the party visited Babajan at midnight one after another before they started. On arrival in Bombay, he took a bungalow for one year on the Main Road, Dadar, which was named by Baba, Manzil-e-Meem (House of the Master). It was a house of fifteen rooms, and was never furnished, for on Baba's strict instructions any article of furniture was forbidden. The rules made by Baba for those who were with him were as follows:

1. Everyone should carefully follow the spiritual instruction given by the Master.
2. Everyone should maintain, or break off, as ordered by the Master, any special connection with anybody.
3. Everyone should totally abstain from all intoxicants and from sexual intercourse.
4. None should partake of fish, meat, or eggs under any circumstances.
5. All are bound to be in the Manzil from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.
6. There should not be any lapses on the part of anyone in the performance of his duty.
7. Under no circumstances, except when ordered, should any member of the party leave the Master, even if the whole world turns against him.

Meher Baba gave this warning: 'If anyone of these written orders is intentionally broken, I shall lock myself in my room, and during my self-imposed solitary confinement, which may last for a number of days, I shall not take any food.' Thus, he would punish himself.

Another order was that none should read or write without Baba's permission, whether in the Manzil or outside. If a disciple happened to read a signboard while passing through a street, he was considered to have broken this order! If a disciple wished to write a letter to anyone, he had to obtain Baba's permission, and the letter had to be shown to Baba when written. Should a disciple receive a letter, he had to take it first to Baba, who seldom gave permission for the letter to be read until he had first read it.

All orders had to be carried out promptly. If Baba called when a disciple was shaving, he had to stop and go as he was; he had to go even if taking a bath. Some orders appeared to have no meaning. For example, three disciples were told that whenever they were free from work they were to sit close by him, A on Baba's right hand, B on his left, and C opposite him. Whatever the place or circumstances, even if travelling by train, they were required to carry out this order.

Even though an order seemed to make the disciple ridiculous, it had to be obeyed without question. One order was that no disciple should talk with anyone who was not of the party living in the Manzil. The following further rules were made after the party was established:

1. The floor of every room should be scrubbed by its occupants at least once daily.
2. As far as possible, everyone should enter the hall or the first floor and the diningroom in bare feet.
3. Without putting on wooden sandals, none should go into any water-closet.
4. None should enter any room other than his own without the permission of one of its occupants.
5. Whenever the bell is tolled, all must assemble in the dining-room.
6. No one should exchange food or clothes with another.
7. Everybody should do full justice to his meals.
8. At the end of meals, everybody should remove his plates.
9. All should eat and drink in the posture of seating.
10. When anybody gets ill, he must as early as possible acquaint the Master with it.
11. Off duty, when anybody goes out, he should not take his purse with him.
12. While out on duty not more than two annas (2d.) should be spent on refreshment.

13. None should lay violent hands on another, even in self-defence. Wrestling and boxing are strictly prohibited.
14. Under no circumstances should anyone tell a lie or make use of violent language.
15. Unless and until the Master's permission is secured, none should visit his relations or friends.
16. Without the Master's permission none should leave the Manzil even for a while.
17. Shaving and hair-cutting are allowed only on Thursdays and Sundays in the mornmgs.
18. None should complain to the Master about another's breach of any of the Master's orders, except in specified cases.

All were required to retire at 9 p.m. and to get up at 4 a.m. It was one of the strictest orders that everyone should have a cold bath between four and five in the morning. These detailed orders to those who are near him have been characteristic of Baba to the present day, which is why I mention the matter at such length.

Baba occasionally ordered one or more of the party to fast for a day or two. Those who had to fast were not exempt from work; on the contrary they were given more work. Sometimes they were ordered to feed others, especially blind or lame beggars, whom they had to bring to the Manzil from various localities. On one occasion Baba ordered those who had to fast to find at least two hundred beggars for the purpose of feeding and clothing them. There is no dearth of beggars in Bombay; but Baba did not want the able-bodied, only those who were disabled, which made the task more difficult, for it was not always easy to induce them to go to the Manzil. When the two hundred beggars were brought they were fed, clothed, and bathed. Baba himself took part in serving them, garlanding some of them before their departure, to the astonishment of his disciples and the bewilderment of the beggars. On another occasion, when the entire party was kept on water only, no less than eight hundred beggars, able-bodied as well as disabled, were fed and clothed.

He occasionally went to the other extreme and compelled some disciples to overeat. On one occasion, at dinner-time, he selected half a dozen members of his party and commanded them to sit near him, when he served sweetmeats, chocolates, afterwards fresh and dried fruits - everything in liberal quantities. Their appetites were fully



The Melher Baba Country: A Diagrammatic Map

satisfied, but their joy turned to discomfort as soon as various cooked dishes were brought in, which Baba served to them extravagantly. As soon as the dishes became empty they were promptly filled. Then they entreated him not to compel them to eat more. Thereupon he gave

One hour every morning was devoted to meditation, and Hindu and Parsi disciples were required to attend their respective places of worship each day, while Muslim disciples went to the nearest mosque every Friday. Every disciple was required to work. Certain hours were set aside for games. On birthdays and holidays there were festivities.

Baba used suddenly to ask a disciple what thought he had in his mind, and, whatever the thought, he was required to express it. A meeting of the disciples was held daily, with Baba presiding, to discuss subjects of interest.

On the morning of 4 February 1923, Baba gave instructions that if on that day he got ill, or lost consciousness, or if anything else happened to his body, a physician should not be brought, even though he asked for medical treatment. Baba had been quite well, but in the evening he seemed to be brooding over something, and at nine o' clock he told his disciples not to go to bed but to play the game atya patya in the courtyard. He played with them, and in the course of the game injured his toe. Immediately he became violently ill, vomited, trembled, and for an hour appeared to be in agony; he declared that he would be glad to have his leg taken off if he could be relieved of the pain. Then suddenly he got better and became normal. In the meantime two disciples had gone for a bone-setter, but Baba refused to see him.

During this period Baba was active in work and play, and himself did much of the more disagreeable work of the house; but often he was unwell, and for a period of a week had a mysterious wound on one of his shoulders. For certain periods he fasted entirely.

Baba was at this time a ready and witty conversationalist and a good story-teller. He never gave public discourses, but in private could be highly eloquent. At the Manzil he gave many addresses to his disciples on spiritual and philosophical subjects, on the Eternal Existence, God realization, sanskaras and other matters.

One day a disciple informed him that a certain friend upbraided him for staying with Baba and tauntingly quoted a couplet of the Persian poet Jalalu'l-Din Rumi, the purport of which was that to reach heaven by following a neighbour was equivalent to going to hell. Whereupon Baba observed:

"Your friend's interpretation of the Maulana's couplet is correct and I heartily concur in the poet's opinion. But if his intention was to taunt you with following me, he made a fool of himself. You should have told him that the question of heaven or hell does not concern you at all, for as you have dedicated yourself to me, you have risen above it. You should have quoted the poet's couplet which says that those who are beggars at the door of a Perfect Master are not in need of either heaven or hell. Have I not held out to you the expectation of something far higher than the dream of Paradise? By following me, you will come to understand Truth or God and fathom the secret of the universe. It is impossible for anyone to obtain this knowledge without the help of a Perfect Master."

Baba then quoted one of the verses of Hafiz:

"Without the guidance of a Perfect Master, do not enter the path of love. I have failed hundreds of times while doing so by self-help."

Afterwards he quoted one of the couplets of Rumi:

"Rumi would never have become a Perfect Master had he not become the slave of Shams-eTabrez."

Continuing his discourse, Baba remarked that he, whose object is God, cares no more for heaven than hell, and then quoted another verse of Hafiz:

"Inasmuch as I want my beloved in both the worlds, what do I care for either heaven or hell and for damsels and slaves therein?"

Baba concluded by remarking:

"Your friend does not know his own mind. To say that the Prophet of Arabia will lead all Muslims to paradise is beggarliness that beggars description. He says that one must deserve heaven, but at the same time believes that his Prophet will lead him to heaven; even though he is not fit for it. His case is hopeless. To preach what one does not practise is hypocrisy in its worst form."

One day Baba said to one of the party, 'God bless you!' On hearing these words the disciple appeared to be much amused. On being asked as to the cause of his amusement, he replied, 'We generally find it very difficult to follow the drift of your utterances. Your words have a deeper meaning than appears on the surface.' Baba said:

"There are two kinds of knowledge, the worldly knowledge or knowledge relating to the material world, and divine knowledge or knowledge acquired after becoming one with God. Any person, after becoming spiritually perfect, when he deals with matters pertaining to this material world, reflects in his words and actions his secular attainments as much as the divinity that is in him, although he may not directly utilize either kind of knowledge. The deeds and utterances of such a person are invested with a sort of secrecy and grandeur, but this is often lost sight of by worldly people. A ruby in the hands of a rustic will not be appreciated by him, but in the hands of a jeweller will speak its value. The person who has become one with God is able to make the best use of his worldly knowledge without directly drawing upon it."

On the same day in the evening Baba delivered another discourse, in which, after remarking that the disposition of a person after his union with God remains the same, he said:

"Before he realized God, his anger, curses, and violent language did harm to himself since there was egoism in him. Remember that where egoism is there is no God; and where God is there is no egoism. The perfect saint's words and deeds in the divine state are free from egoism, but his disposition has not changed, despite the experience of Truth. However, you must bear in mind that when he gives vent to his wrath, the person with whom he is angry is much benefited."

Baba quoted some lines of Hafiz, in which the poet says:

"My mind used to crave after seeing various objects, but since the day on which I saw you, I have had no desire save that of seeing you."

On another occasion Baba said:

"The internal and external states are separated by a mental curtain. To be cleansed internally is so difficult that the ordinary person cannot do it. Without the help of a Master, it is impossible for most persons to have a pure heart. But one must do one's best to keep the external, i.e. the body, quite clean. The shariyat (external practice) of every religion enjoins the practice of cleanliness. By following all the rules of shariat closely and devoutly one will come across a Master. Until then, one must follow the tenets of one's creed. The observance of external

cleanliness brightens to a little extent the internal life, and one is certainly benefited by offering prayers and performing ceremonies."

Proceeding, Baba emphatically repeated that one must either follow one's creed or a Perfect Master, and what lies between the two is fraught with danger. By the middle course Baba meant, for instance, the practising of yoga exercises. He ended his discourse by asserting:

"When once the internal condition is cleansed through the favour of a Master, the external condition ceases to be important. You may know that many saints do not care for the cleanliness of their bodies and are found in dirty places."

One day Baba, noticing that two members of his party were very morose, quoted his favourite poet:

"O Hafiz! the sorrows as well as the pleasures of this world are ephemeral. Truth is beyond them. Therefore always be happy."

On the following day a disciple requested Baba to explain the statement of Swami Vivekananda that the only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice, and who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student's soul, see through the student's eyes, hear through the student's ears, and understand through his mind. In the course of his exposition Baba observed:

"A teacher who is a Master of Arts but who wishes to teach the alphabet to children, must of necessity bring himself down to their level. Then only will he be able to teach them and step by step bring them to his level. If he does not come down from the heights of his attainments to their level, then all his labour will end in nothing. Similarly a Perfect Master has to bring himself down to the level of his disciples so that he may be able to impart his knowledge to them. He has also to take into consideration the circumstances in which he finds himself before doing anything. Take the case of the Arabian Prophet. When he was harassed by his enemies and threatened with premature death, he actually fled from Mecca and took refuge in Medina, and by so doing he acted just as an ordinary man when confronted with such an emergency. *Majzoobs* cannot act like *Saliks* and *Sadgurus*, for they are so much drowned in the sea of Divinity that they have not the slightest

consciousness of their body. They cannot impart knowledge to others and show what Truth is."

On the same day in the evening Baba, in the course of a discourse on spiritual light, observed:

"There is, besides our two external eyes, one internal eye. This internal eye, which may be called the spiritual eye, really sees through the two external eyes, and is located between the two eyebrows. Saints see God with the internal eye and the world with the external eyes."

On one occasion Baba, seeing that a few of his disciples were dejected, made the following among other statements:

"One generally passes through three stages in the spiritual life. The first is burning enthusiasm, when the aspirant is imbued with the keen desire of seeing and experiencing the unknown. The second is disappointment, the third divine bliss. The second stage, in which you are at present, is very long. Since you cannot escape from it or remedy it, you must put up with it cheerfully. Don't leave me in any case."

At another time he said:

"Realization is the same for all. The differences among Prophets and Perfect Masters lie not in the power, but in the authority to use it. That which is given by a Perfect Master to his chargeman is not power, but the authority to use it. A Perfect Master, strictly speaking, gives nothing to anybody. He merely shows the treasure that is within him ...

"No Perfect Master has authority to use his power after dropping his corporeal frame. Mind you! he has the power, but not the authority to use it. Wherever you see the tomb of a Sadguru, rest assured that there his power is. But if a devotee is benefited by worshipping there, never for a moment believe that the Sadguru was the cause of his benefit. The devotee may merely be said to have utilized the power and thereby brought a blessing upon himself. A Sadguru can do good to others only so long as he lives in this gross world; after leaving his body he cannot make anybody cross a single plane, and cannot wipe out anybody's sanskaras; though to those of his followers who call upon his infinite existence, his infinite state renders help according to the devotion behind the call."

A disciple asked Baba why the Sadguru Gous Ali Shah Qalandar of Panipat acknowledged as many as nineteen saints as his masters, of whom eleven were Muslims and the rest Hindus. Baba replied:

"One gets God-realization at the hands of one Master, but for knowledge, which the Muslim Sufis call Irfan and the Hindu sages Dhyana, it may be necessary for him to approach more Masters than one. As a rule, he who makes his disciple one with God, also gives him knowledge, and restores his gross consciousness. The case of Qalandar was exceptional, but not more so than my case. Babajan made me realize God, but for knowledge I was driven to Upasni Maharaj, who took eight years to perform his duty to me. I called upon other Masters too, but they passed me on to Upasni Maharaj."

About this time Baba made an assertion in Urdu which, translated literally, meant:

It is better to die than to live, better to fear than to die, and better to do than to fill. The disciples could make neither head nor tail of this, and requested him to explain it. Whereupon he said:

"By living, I mean leading a worldly life; by dying becoming one with God; by fearing returning to gross consciousness after the unification with God; by filling, I mean filling the hearts of others by divine love, and by so doing making others spiritually perfect. The meaning of my saying therefore is, Better to be one with God than to lead a worldly life; better to return to gross consciousness after union with God than to remain unconscious and enjoy divine bliss; better to fill the hearts of others with divine love than to remain indifferent to humanity, and better to make others one with God than merely to fill their hearts with divine love."

After the party had been at the Manzil for two months Baba paid a visit to Sakori to see Upasni Maharaj. He took one disciple with him, and on his return sent the rest of his disciples on a visit there for two days. One day Baba said to his disciples: 'Time will come when my master, Maharaj, will begin to speak against me, will run me down, and will not only not acknowledge me as his equal, but will insinuate that I am a hypocrite.' The disciples were surprised, but received no explanation,

and Baba continued to send them to Sakori. But Baba himself did not go after the first visit, though repeatedly invited by Maharaj. He said, when asked the reason why he refused: 'My reluctance to go to the Maharaj is due to the aversion to the lightening of the burden of my spiritual agony by him. The burden that he would take from me he would have to bear, and I cannot allow myself to be the cause of his sufferings.' On a later occasion Baba said:

"My sufferings are twofold, since I am the chargeman of my Masters. Their charges are at present almost unbearable; knowing this, Maharaj wants me to go to him so that he may be able to lighten my burden. But as I know he will have to suffer terribly, I do not like to call upon him. On the other hand I am unable to bear cheerfully the intense spiritual pain ...

"The world is against spirituality, and so against me, as I have so often told you. Don't be hasty in forming opinions regarding my words and deeds. My words will prove to be true, but I alone know how, when, and where. You will not understand them, because to understand mystical statements, intuition is required."

At last, in the middle of October, Baba left the Manzil to visit Upasni Maharaj at Sakori. On his arrival he was welcomed with joy. Maharaj made his disciples do homage to Baba, and himself waited upon him. Baba stayed eighteen hours, and then returned to Bombay, going at once to bed. Afterwards he said that not since he had been at the Manzil had he taken such good rest as on that day.

Baba continued to send his disciples to Sakori, and Maharaj told them to obey Baba in everything; he said:

"Carry out all his orders and wishes. In doing so you may have to suffer, but you must bear every sort of suffering cheerfully. If your suffering seems beyond endurance, draw the attention of the Master to it, and he will help you. Put up with any discomfort, but do not let yourselves leave hold of him. Even though the whole world and myself included were on the other side you should stay on his side. "

At the end of February Baba's mother, Shirinbanoo, came to the Manzil with the news that Upasni Maharaj had begun to rail against him. Baba warned his disciples not to be misled by these attacks nor to form a bad opinion of Maharaj, and declared with force that he acknowledged him as one of his masters. Baba sent one of his most

intimate disciples to Maharaj, who had confined himself to a small wooden cabin; he reviled and denounced Baba, saying, "Your Master is not a saint, and I am no longer responsible for him."

Before he left Sakori, Baba's disciple asked Maharaj why he had shut himself up in the cabin. 'If it is for our sake', he went on, 'that you have imposed this suffering upon yourself, we don't want you to do it. On the contrary we should like to see you happy.' Maharaj then asked the disciple to break up the wooden cabin, which the disciple at once proceeded to do. Thereupon Maharaj reproached him angrily for what he had done. 'You told me to do so', the young man replied. 'Will you do whatever I ask you to do?' asked Maharaj. 'Yes', he was answered. 'Then bring that stone and throw it at my head with all your strength.' This the disciple refused to do, and Maharaj continued to abuse him and Baba until the young man went away. This reviling of one another by Sadgurus is not uncommon: more will be said about it later.

A few days prior to this event Babajan, who had not spoken of Baba from the day that he last visited her, asked one of her devotees for a photograph of Baba; when she received it she kissed it, and said, 'My darling son'.

Among the work done at the Manzil during this period was the preparation of a biography of Upasni Maharaj in the Urdu language, by two of Baba's disciples, which was published under the title of Garibonka Asra (Protector of the Poor). Baba also arranged for another biography to be written in the Marathi language by Nath Madhav, a well-known Marathi novelist, which was published immediately after leaving the Manzil.

During the Manzil period Baba made a number of visits with the disciples to places not far from the city. On two occasions he went for longer journeys; one was a trip to Ajmer, the capital of the isolated province of Ajmer-Marwar in Rajputana, now Rajasthan, a city of great antiquity. Here Baba was accompanied by seven disciples; he was unwell during the entire visit, and for three or four days he did not take food. The disciples were ordered to pay their respects at the tomb of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, who died in 1256. Khwaja Chisti is worshipped by both Muslims and Hindus. Leaving Ajmer, they went to Pushkar, a place of Hindu pilgrimage, where there is a sacred lake and a temple, the only temple in India dedicated to Brahma. Baba asked his disciples to behave there according to Hindu customs. He himself did not take part in any of the ceremonies.

A second trip was made with a few disciples to Malangadh, a hill at Kalyan. On the summit of the hill is the tomb of the Muslim Master,

Haji Malangshah. Baba told the disciples to climb the hill to pay homage, which they did. The climb was a severe one, and they were exhausted; but he would not allow anyone to drink until they had reached Kalyan station, fourteen miles away!

From the time Baba first arrived at the Manzil the house was besieged by those who wanted to see him; but during the whole of the period he saw with occasional exceptions none but a few friends and relatives of his disciples.

On the last day of March 1923 he made an announcement to the following effect:

I now intend to bring the Manzil stay to an end. I propose to go with only a few of you to Ahmednagar. I shall have to send most of you to your homes. Do not worry at all. I shall allow those of you who will have to leave me to join me again. The separation will only be temporary. But remember that henceforth discipline will be more strict and the mode of living more simple. Whatever I may ask you to do you will have to do. Do not think of joining me at all if you are going to be ashamed to do menial work. You may have to do the work of masons, of coolies; in short, any kind of manual work. Therefore think well before you resolve to join me again.

As the house had been taken on lease for a year, it had been expected that the party would remain together for another two months. But, as we shall see, one of the characteristics of Baba is the sudden change of decisions and the alteration of plans without warning. The disciples who were sent home were ordered, among other things, to avoid fish, flesh and eggs, and always to eat sufficient.

The visit to Ahmednagar followed with the remaining few disciples. This city, founded by Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri, son of a Brahman of Vijayanagar in 1490, has played an important part in the history of the Deccan. It was for over a hundred years the capital of the Nizam Shahi kings, and possesses some of the best examples of Muslim architecture. It was taken by the Mahrattas in 1760 and captured by Arthur Wellesley in 1803 in the Mahratta war. Baba stayed in a house belonging to one of his followers near the Zendi Gate. At the end of April he paid a visit to the Happy Valley, thirteen miles away, where it is believed that Rama with his faithful Laxman and loving Sita lived for some time. During the three days' stay at the Government dak bungalow in the Happy Valley, Baba celebrated the fifty-third birthday of Upasni Maharaj. He ordered those with him to abstain from food completely,

but to cook a large quantity of food and distribute it to the poor of the village. In the evening the arti ceremony of the Maharaj was performed, attended by a number of the villagers. Afterwards Baba returned to Ahmednagar.

Next day he visited Arangaon, about five miles from Ahmednagar railway station, where there is the tomb of Buaji Bua, a Hindu saint who is said to have entered his grave when alive. Arangaon is a small sixteenth-century walled town now in complete ruin inhabited by poor peasants; there was a military camp near to it during the first world war, which had fallen into a state of dilapidation. These buildings had a few years earlier been purchased by Adi's father, Kaikhushroo Sarosh Irani, in the course of his business. To the amazement of his disciples, Baba said he would like to stay there, and asked them to clear out the refuse and thorns around the building once used as the post office and to make it habitable. They started on the work next day; Baba remained there for four days, and then returned to Ahmednagar. This was his first contact with the place that afterwards became Meherabad.

During the course of the stay in the camp Baba summoned his disciples, and said:

"After taking full counsel with yourselves, I want all of you to make a choice from three proposals which I make to you. The first is that you stay with me, but if you do so, you will have to carry out all my commands. Life with me will not be a bed of roses; for spiritual reasons, I may have to subject you to many a hardship. No servants are going to attend upon you. You will have to do whatever manual work I ask you to do. If you cannot see your way to live in my company under these conditions, then by all means you may separate from me. After separating from me you may either break off all connection with me or not. But if you wish to continue, you will have to carry out a few orders of mine, particularly orders regarding your residence and occupations. Think well and clearly before coming to a decision."

We shall see that demands of great severity were to be constantly made upon close disciples; the closer they were, the more severe the demands. None wished to break off the connection with Baba entirely. Thirteen decided to live in his company, the rest to separate from him for some time but to act according to his orders. The thirteen who decided to live with him were Behramji F. Irani, Gustadji Hansotia, Jal (Baba's second brother), Adi K. Irani, Aga Baidul, Rustom K. Irani, Babu Ubale, Ramju, Pendu, Padri, Slamson, a Zoroastrian who was nicknamed Nervous, and another Muslim.

On the day after going to Ahmednagar, in the morning before breakfast Baba left, asking the thirteen to follow him. After going a little distance he informed them that he intended to take them not to Arangaon but somewhere else. They wondered what he meant. A mile and a half farther on they found themselves crossing the dry bed of the Sina River. Within an hour they came near the station dharamshala, which is under the control of the local district board, and in which anybody except the mad and criminals can take shelter. Baba decided to put up at this public inn for a couple of days or so. When the disciples were having supper Baba said to them that from that time he would abstain from all solid foods for several days, and for two months thereafter he lived only on liquid food.

On 14 May, Baba, with the members of his party, returned on foot to the Arangaon camp, where they occupied the building which some of them had repaired only a few days back. The sojourn proved to be of eleven days only. During this short period the disciples entirely repaired a building which had been occupied as an officers' mess, and made it fit for habitation, so Baba and his disciples moved there. The big hall was occupied by the disciples, and a room at the south-east corner by Baba. On the same day, just before going to bed, Baba said that he had resolved to leave in a few days with a view to making an extensive tour of India, and perhaps of adjoining countries. The result was that the preparations for farming were brought to an end and the repairs to the camp ceased. On 25 May everything was cleared, and the party left in the afternoon.

This was the first of the long journeys Baba was afterwards so constantly to make, and is worth relating in some detail because it was a model for so many more. On the 27th they stopped at Agra, and Baba visited the Taj Mahal. Next day they went to Mathura and bathed in the sacred river Jumna, next morning setting off for Karachi, via Delhi, which was reached by the 31 st. At Karachi they stayed for a week, then went to Quetta, the principal city of Baluchistan, on 7 June, arriving there the day after. Once more the plans were changed, and instead of going into Persia as was intended, Baba decided to go to Kashmir by train, and to walk to Bombay. Special preparations were made for this journey, which was to be done by all the party in kafnis, or ascetics' robes. All this time Baba had been taking nothing but liquid; the other members of the party while in Quetta practised partial or complete fasts for twentyfour or thirty-two hours. On 24 June they were ready to start, but Baba decided to go to Calcutta instead of Kashmir, and to walk from there to Bombay; but before they left he

made another decision, to start to walk from Ahmedabad instead. He allowed some of the party to go to Gujarat and to start their walk from there. On the 26th Baba left by train for Ahmedabad, arriving there on the 29th.

The walk from Ahmedabad started at 2.30 a.m. on 1 July. The instructions to all were to repeat in a low voice the name of God in their respective religions whilst walking throughout the journey. Baba was at the head of the party, carrying his blanket, etc., across his shoulders in the same way as the rest. They reached Bareja by sunset the first day, putting up at the dharamashala.

At 4 a.m. the next morning they started off again, but by that afternoon most of the party were exhausted, partly through the burdens they had to carry and partly because their food and drink were strictly rationed, and Baba agreed that they could take the train for Broach, which was reached early in the morning of 3 July. Continuing the journey on foot, thirty-eight miles was walked that day, Ankleshwar being reached in the evening. During the day, which was very hot, Baba instructed all the members of the party to throw the Mogul cape which each one was wearing into the river, where they stuck in the mud; soon afterwards they had to cross the river, when some of the party got caught in the mud and were much alarmed, for they had difficulty in extracting themselves; but none suffered any injury. Early next morning the party left by train for Surat, arriving there at 6 a.m., and walked again for the rest of the day another thirty-eight miles. The following day twenty-four miles were covered, arriving at Navsari in the early evening. All this seems incredible but I am assured that it is true. It was remarked on the journey that when the rest of the party was exhausted and on the point of breaking down, Baba was fresh and in the best of spirits, but when only a short distance had been done and the party was not overtired, he did not look up to the mark. Baba decided next day to go on to Nasik and to stay there for three months. Nasik was reached on the 7th, and next day, after a bungalow had been secured, Baba changed his plans again and settled to return to Arangaon the following day. Two days later he said that instead of occupying themselves with duties at the camp it would be better for members of the party to return to Bombay and to get work there. Indeed, he laid it down as a condition that each of them must find some work: if nothing else offered, to engage himself as an ordinary coolie. That day, the first for a long period, Baba took a meal of grains.

During this time the disciples in Bombay had been living at the

building used as an office for book publishing, much to the annoyance of the landlord, and on 2 September Baba decided to take living accommodation elsewhere. This was arranged the same evening, but the next morning he left the new rooms and took others in a new building opposite the Kohinoor mills; but hardly had that been settled before he gave instructions for other rooms to be searched for, which were found in Irani (now Tafti) Mansion No.6, on the street joining the Central Railway, Dadar station entrance, crossing the present Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Road. There the party stayed for six weeks, and on 19 October, the office in Bombay having been closed, the party packed up and set off on foot for Sakori, taking their belongings on a bullock cart. Eleven days later they reached Bableshwar, ten miles from Sakori, and there Baba decided to remain with one disciple, sending the others on to Sakori to pay their respects to Upasni Maharaj. Next day, they set off to Sakori. Upasni Maharaj had converted a portion of his hut into a small wooden cage in which he had placed himself for the past ten months. By Baba's orders the members of the party had fasted since the previous evening, and were given tea. They returned to Bableshwar the same evening. Next morning all went off by motor lorry to Ahmednagar, putting up at the Khushru quarters.

There arrangements for the visit to Persia were discussed, and Baba said that he would take eleven disciples with him at the beginning of February. When they set off he gave definite instructions to various members of the *mandali*¹ (as these close disciples began to be called who lived with Baba under his orders), and decided that the others should pass the time at or near Karachi. That city was reached on 14 November, and a bungalow was taken for the stay. A week later, however, Baba decided to go back to Bombay by sea, and the journey was started next day. While at Karachi a letter had been received from one of the disciples who had been sent to Bombay to obtain the visas from the Persian Consul to the effect that the latter would not grant the visas unless the members of the party presented themselves to him in person: all except Baba, who, said the Consul, had already come to him in his office to say that 'he will send his passport with his man for him to endorse.' Baba, however, had not been in Bombay for a month and a half.

Bombay was reached on 24 November and Baba announced that he would pass some time in seclusion in the neighbourhood of Lonavla, taking only two disciples with him. The party was therefore broken

¹ ~~Mandali is a Sanskrit word meaning~~ a group or company: as with other words, Baba gives to it his own meaning.

up, and Baba did not stay in Lonavla; he returned to Poona, and until the end of the year moved about the country fasting, most of the time in seclusion. From 1 December he observed a thirty-four hours' fast every two days, increasing the fast to forty hours towards the end of the month, taking no food or drink; during the non-fasting period of the forty-eight hours he took faral - liquid and fruit, no grain. On 31 December he sent for one of his disciples to meet him at Lonavla station and to bring him a bottle of freshly made cocoa in milk, and this was done. Baba then went to Bombay.

These constant movements and changes of plans are recorded, meaningless as they seem, for they have a pattern, and seem to be an integral part of Meher Baba's strange working; in the hardships involved Baba himself fully shared.

FIRST VISIT TO PERSIA

During the greater part of January 1924 Baba maintained his fasts, and at the end of the month the passports were got for the tour to Persia. On 2 February he sent his disciples to visit Narayan Maharaj, who was at that time in Bombay. Next day Baba received a letter that

Babajan was ill. Eleven days later the news came that Upasni Maharaj had left his cage on the 12th, and Baba ordered a fast for twenty-four hours. It was decided to celebrate Baba's thirtieth birthday on the 19th, and to start for Persia on the 22nd. This was done, Baba taking eight disciples with him. One member of the party was ill with fever, and by the time Bushire was reached several more were ill, and the day after landing another collapsed with fever. Baba decided to return to India, leaving two disciples to proceed into the interior of Persia. The same day passages were taken on the cargo steamer Bariora. As usual, Baba and his company travelled in the lowest class. Baba's disciple Adi says of the journey:

The steamer was found to have limited accommodation for passengers, as it was full of fowl, cows, goats, donkeys, and horses, besides a large number of uncivilized Arabs. The behaviour of the latter was primitive in the extreme. Except for killing goats and fowls in dozens for their meals, and eating them lustily, they did not seem to find any other object in existence. Some of them would even sit for necessities just where they cooked their food. As for manners, one of them kicked away Nervous' bedding while the deck was being washed, though the kicker was at the time on good terms with the party.

By the second week in March the party was back again in Karachi. There it was decided to go to Nepal, but at Raxaul, the frontier station, admission into Nepal was refused, and the party went to Kabir's tomb at Maghar. About fifty poor were fed here, and the surplus stores that had been collected for the Persian tour were distributed to the needy. During the stay a quarrel occurred among some sadhus, when Baba intervened and gave them a discourse on 'How to behave when one tries the life of a sadhu'. The party went on to Cawnpore, where Baba dismissed them, remaining alone and arriving back at Arangaon at the end of March.

MEHERABAD

At Arangaon in March 1924 Baba called his disciples to him in the old camp, and they began to settle down once more. A severe discipline was observed. All had to get up at 5 a.m. From 6 to 7 a.m. each had to say prayers by himself according to his respective faith. Between 7 and 8 a.m. there was breakfast, consisting of tea without milk and a few almonds, the latter only for those who were weak. From eight o'clock work started, which consisted of repairing the dilapidated buildings, erecting a new room for Baba, gardening, etc. At eleven, baths could be taken, then a meal consisting of rice and dal, and clothes had to be washed; afterwards rest. At three o'clock all got together to sing the special bhajan (devotional song) composed by Baba. From four-thirty to six work proceeded once more. Then the supper of wheat-bread and potatoes was prepared. In the evening there was a lecture by Baba or music, and all retired at ten o'clock. Frequently there were games, and sometimes the villagers came in large numbers.

Meherabad, as the place now began to be called-'abad' meaning 'flourishing'-was to become Baba's permanent headquarters. The military camp constructed during the first world war was on both sides of the highway about six miles south of Ahmednagar, and adjacent to the railway which runs from Dhond junction to Ahmednagar station. Kaikhushroo Sarosh Irani, who had already bought the buildings, now negotiated for the purchase of the land, including the water-reservoir on the hill to the east. At this date most of the buildings had been removed, those that remained being so poor as to be hardly worth removing. To get them into a usable state was no light task for the mandali.

At one time in these early days disagreeableness developed between two of the disciples because of one's request for a prayer carpet and the other's refusal. So when all were sitting around Baba in the evening he

asked the injured man whether his anger against the other had subsided. He replied in the negative. Baba called him near, and explained:

"No matter how harshly the opposing party treats you, always be calm. Always, however much you are found fault with or are blamed or have high words said to you, bear all with patience. This is real bravery and courage. Man can make a whole army yield to him, but he cannot overcome his own wrath."

Reverting to Christ's humility, Baba continued:

"There are three things that keep one from God. They are kam, krodh, and kanchan, i.e. lust, anger, and greed. Lust and greed may be overcome, but the control of the temper is the hardest of all. If you overcome these three enemies, you are a vali (saint), a person who controls kam, krodh, and kanchan."

One afternoon Baba went to the Happy Valley with four disciples. There in the beautiful and historic surroundings, he was in a very serene mood, and the following is Adi's version of what happened:

"At this time (after taking tea) Baba appears as if deeply absorbed. He breaks into an ecstasy, saying, 'If you realize but a minute particle of that Knowledge, you will derive inexpressible bliss. Every external object will impart to you happiness, every substance will tell you its story in Knowledge. This whole universe which now appears as misery will shine forth as heaven. The Perfect Master moulds only one chargeman like himself. To him he entrusts everything. He makes him his sole heir. The chargeman distributes this inherited treasure among his Circle.¹ According to their respective abilities, the treasure, i.e. Realization and power are distributed at the appointed time - then the Master of the chargeman expires. It may be that the Master keeps up his external body while internally he expires; in some instances, the Master's external body fails before his internal expiration takes place."

On 7 May 1924, Baba locked himself in the small square building at Meherabad that had been specially built for him, roughly but strong, made insect-proof with wire nets over the few ventilators. The room

¹ This reference to the Circle is the first I have found. It is worth noting that the idea of the Circle was much in the mandali's mind for a very long time, and there was a good deal of speculation about it. On one occasion Baba made a long statement going into detail, to which I refer in the second Part of this book. It is interesting however to record that the mandali gradually over the years ceased to take an active interest in the idea, so that today it is not mentioned at all.

was prepared with great haste to enable him to remain in seclusion for months without food. Before locking himself in, he took food, three and even four times a day. It was first arranged that after entering the room he would not speak even a single word and would give important orders in writing. But in the evening he talked a little from the room. He said that his health had been very much pulled down in one day, not because of the fast but because of spiritual working. He continued to have only liquids, - tea, curd, curry, and water. After a week Baba left the room and took some dal, and gave a discourse on 'Reaching Truth'. A few days later he went back into the room for a further five days. At the end of May he decided to leave Arangaon and go to Bombay en route for Quetta, not far from the Afghanistan border. On 2 June the camp was deserted.

During the stay at Quetta one of the disciples became seriously ill with typhoid fever. Baba visited the patient constantly, but said that the case was hopeless. Nevertheless nothing was spared to aid the sufferer. Several of the party were instructed to look after the sick man, and Baba went back to Karachi, leaving instructions for the burial of the man and pointing out the place in the cemetery where he was to be buried. He also ordered that immediately after the burial the members of the party were to go to the cinema. Soon after Baba left the man died. At the end of July he returned to Bombay, and the disciples were dispersed, Baba intending to take long solitary journeys.

There is no record available for the rest of this year; but in January 1925 Baba was at Meherabad again with the intention of staying there for a long period. Within a few weeks of settling down the number of the mandali members began to increase, and many of those who had been let off in Bombay at the end of the previous July returned, and others who had been sent to certain places were recalled. There were also many newcomers, and after a while the number increased to forty. In addition, some older members of the mandali came back to stay for short periods.

Meherabad began to grow, a school, hospital and dispensary were set up and an ashram for lepers and the destitute. The building was done by the mandali with very little hired help. Hundreds of people came regularly to Baba for darshan, and many Mahar and Mang boys - of the untouchable class - came daily for singing and prayers - also for the sweets that were distributed. On 21 March the 'Meher Charitable Hospital and Dispensary' was opened, under the charge of a qualified medical officer, to supply medical attendance without charge to all without respect to class or creed. The formal opening was

performed by Rustamji. The work of the hospital was divided among the members of the mandali. During the two years in which the hospital was open, there were nearly seven thousand out-patients and not less than five hundred in-patients.

At the end of March the Hazrat Babajan school was opened to impart free primary education to the village boys and girls of all classes and creeds, mostly untouchables. Free boarding and clothing were also provided. The school started with about twenty boys, and grew to one hundred and fifty boys and girls. The boys' and girls' schools were separate. At first the untouchables were taught apart, but after a few months all were taught together. The vernacular Marathi was taught to the girls, who had a woman teacher; the boys were also taught English.

During April and May the colony grew continually; the newcomers belonging to all religions. On one occasion Baba with the school teachers and others of the mandali were washing about thirty boys attending the untouchable section of the school, a process which took about three and a half hours, for they were undeniably filthy. During the bathing some Brahmin visitors came for Baba's blessing, and as they bowed to him Baba said, 'I am bathing untouchable boys. It is no use thus having darshan unless you are prepared to do the work I do.' They felt the force of his words, and joined Baba and the others in bathing the boys. This washing of untouchable boys was constantly done. Baba played cricket and football with the boys and made a practice of giving personal supervision to their feeding and general conduct. Bathing was part of the daily routine.

The birthday of Upasni Maharaj was celebrated on 10 May. From eight o'clock in the morning crowds of people began to appear from the surrounding villages. They were supplied with food, and throughout the day dramatic recitals, lectures, and songs, chants and music were provided by devotees and others who had come to help Baba to entertain the company. A special procession of untouchables came from Arangaon. To conclude the festivities there were fireworks and an open-air film show. Baba received some thousands of people, and retired to his hut at 2 a.m. the next day.

A *darshan* was held by Baba every Thursday, in which devotees from many miles around paid their respects in their various ways - the Hindus prostrating themselves at Baba's feet and placing their foreheads on his toe, the Muslims kissing his hand, others joining their hands and putting them to their foreheads in obeisance, and so on. Visitors came from early morning until late at night. The fasts and

feasts of various religions were kept, though Baba used to point out that they had nothing to do with spirituality, nor did he advocate them with that object; he said, however, that followers of any religion should observe the rules and customs of their religion.

This was the beginning of the darshans (or presence of himself) that became such an important element in Baba's outward work. They started as it seemed spontaneously. Meherabad differed altogether from the Manzil in Bombay in the matter of visitors. At Bombay visitors were avoided, while at Meherabad the contrary rule was observed. There was no restriction upon people of any caste or creed coming to Baba.

After only a couple of months so many people came that Baba could hardly attend to his morning bath. What with all the people from Ahmednagar, out-station visitors, and the villagers from the surrounding district, the encampment looked like a small country fair, with the many tea, flower and fruit stalls that were set up! The number of daily visitors was between two and three hundred and on Sundays, Thursdays, and holidays Meherabad became a place of festival and pilgrimage. Without checking these activities and without slackening his work, which included cleaning the camp and the latrines, Baba used to talk to those visitors who chanced to meet him. Yet the rush became so great that it was impossible for all to get even a look at him. Different disciples were deputed to hear what the visitors had to ask, and it was found that at least fifty out of a hundred had come to seek blessings for offspring and help in securing employment and financial gain!

THE SILENCE BEGINS

On 4 June 1925, Baba announced that he would soon remain silent not speaking for a year, and he asked that all should remain attached to him during that time. On the 26th he said that he would not speak to visitors from 1 July, but would confine his speech to the devotees, giving final instructions before becoming silent for a long period. On 8 July Baba held a meeting of all the disciples, when for about an hour he explained the duties of each during his approaching silence. The next day he summoned the parents and guardians of the boys in the school to gain their cooperation while he remained silent, and to allow their boys to stay at the school. This was the last day on which he was to speak, and in the evening he delivered a lecture on the necessity of living for others and on using one's body for the sake of others. He explained the meaning of his silence, which was undertaken partly

because of heavy spiritual working in view of the coming death of Babajan, and partly because of the disturbances, wars, and disasters which were coming to the world and to India in particular. After these disasters, he said, there would be a period of peace and tranquillity. Baba retired at ten-thirty that night after giving his final instructions. Next morning, Friday, 10 July, he left his hut at five o'clock as usual, and greeted everybody by means of signs and by writing on a slate, making enquiries as to health, sleep, food, etc. He was busy as usual during the day looking after the affairs of the school and colony. Thus did the period of silence begin, which was originally for a year but has lasted unbroken until this day.

The number of *mandali* increased so much that a new building had to be erected, which was used from 4 September. The arrangement of the new building was such that each was allotted a separate space in which to sleep and for his belongings. A central position was set aside for Baba's own seat. The post office verandah was extended and turned into a general store. One of the mandali was appointed as storekeeper. Store requisition forms were printed, and even a piece of soap could not be got without going through the formalities, thus, for disciplinary purposes, a check was placed on the disposal of all kinds of supplies, including the most necessary articles!

On the 20th of the same month a commodious dharamshala was constructed near the water well to provide shelter for the large number of poor and helpless and many sick persons who had begun to be attracted to Baba from far and near. By the end of the year there were many more such huts and sheds spread over the place, sheltering lepers, male and female destitutes separately, and the families of those serving in the colony in different capacities. The largest of these structures built at the end of the first year was the Sai Durbar, a hall of corrugated iron about ninety by forty feet, built near the school premises for visitors and ceremonial occasions. At one end a stage was erected with a small plain wooden cabin for Baba, with space for one man only to lie down in it.

For the first eight months Baba lived most of the time in the jhopdi (hut) built during the earlier period. Another seat was made for him under a neem tree along the main road. On a portion of this seat, or platform, a large wooden table was turned into a small cupboard-like cabin. From 11 October Baba began to retire for the night in the new cabin, and from 17 November the platform became Baba's central seat both at night and day. These still remain to be seen. On the 10th of the same month a dhooni (fireplace) was lighted near the seat at eleven

o'clock at night, with due ceremony, by the mandali under Baba's instructions, and a significant phenomenon was witnessed on that occasion. There was a great scarcity of rain, so that a local famine was certain. Without any previous signs an hour or so after the fire had been lighted it began to rain very heavily. For nearly fifteen hours the rain continued, reviving the dying crops, and a serious famine was averted.

The rush of visitors reached its zenith on Baba's thirty-second birthday. On that day it is reported that no less than twenty thousand people struggled to see him from early dawn to midnight, and the chief work on that day for the mandali was to maintain a cordon round Baba wherever he went to avoid his being pushed over by the wild rush of the enthusiastic crowds. No wonder that after that memorable birthday Baba said that the visitors must now be stopped. From that day the fair-like surroundings were got rid of; and the visitors became less and less until within little more than a month the numbers came down from hundreds to a few scores only.

On 3 May, Baba went up the hill beyond the railway line and kept himself in the old water tank premises for seven days at a stretch, aloof from everybody. After that he began to come down in the daytime and mixed with the mandali, but retired for the night over the hill. This was continued for nearly two months, and thus the whole of the Meherabad area was brought into use in one way or the other.

At the start of the silence Baba used to write for hours daily the special 'book' which is believed to be his message to the world. This writing was done diligently for about one year and has been kept completely secret. At times during this period Baba was observed sitting writing in the school at night when all the rest were sleeping. The change of different seats at secluded spots, particularly in the 'rank' over the hill, and Baba's remaining aloof for days together, were largely due to this work. His general method was to take a bath early, and then to write from six o'clock in the morning behind closed doors. This and other work used to produce distinct marks of exhaustion. Once he had a severe attack of fever for nearly a week. At times he was massaged with oil, to continue the work immediately after.

From the beginning the mandali was cosmopolitan in its composition. Men with faiths poles apart, temperaments as wide, social status no less dissimilar, of every language and from every country, were included in it. The first European Christian was Lewis Charles Nelhams, aged about thirty-five, who came from Poona and joined the mandali on 20 June 1925. He could speak Hindustani and Marathi.

On 23 July he worked as Baba's personal attendant for a day in the absence of one of the regular attendants, and on the 27th of the month died. He had contracted a slight wound on his leg only a few days before, but in spite of prompt medical treatment the limb became septic. On the 26th Baba was at his bedside, and said that Nelhams would be completely free of all pain by the following morning! The last remains of this first European devotee were given burial in the Christian graveyard at Ahmednagar.

Baba did not take any food or drink that day, but did his normal duties as usual. During the usual after-supper divine discussion that evening Baba was understood to have conveyed 'By dying, Nelhams has done away with his gross body, but his mind is still living, and very soon this mind will take another suitable gross medium and again come into contact with me. Those souls who are liberated have their egoistic minds annihilated, while those who take birth again retain their minds, and those souls who after liberation return to normal consciousness have universal minds.'

About a month later a Hindu young man of nineteen years of age appeared in a very peculiar state. He understood some words, but besides smiling broadly could not otherwise express himself. Baba at first glanced at him, led him to the hospital, arranged for his stay, and asked those in charge to look after him as if he were a patient with an unsound mind. He added, 'He is not mad, but a spiritually advanced person dazed on the path; he is in the third plane'. He was given in charge of a member of the mandali, who was instructed to look after the young man's daily needs, which he did for years. After some time he began to be known as Mustan (the over-powered). There was not much change in him afterwards. Physically he became leaner, and mentally seemed to have gained a very slight addition to his intelligence, being able to understand more words, and at times tried to talk. To the observer he seemed a strange automaton. Ask him with signs to clasp his hands, and he kept on doing so until asked to stop! Similarly if a ball were given to him and he started playing with it, he went on playing for hours and had to be stopped. Generally he was quiet and inoffensive, but at times became angry when his fragile body seemed charged with energy: men four times Mustan's weight found it difficult to keep him in hand. He died on 12 February 1935. This man may be regarded as the first of the masts with whom Baba was soon to do much work.

After another month there was another interesting addition to the company. One evening a Mahratha of twenty-three years of age

named Rama Bhiwa appeared. He came from Karanje near Kopargaon, and on requesting his father to allow him to learn to read the *Doyaneshwari*¹ was refused on the plea that he was sufficiently grown up to do the hereditary agricultural work. On this the young man left the parental roof and went away on foot; when he arrived at Meherabad he was found to have only a few annas and handfuls of baked rice and grain. His clothes were in rags. Baba admitted him and renamed him Bholaram. The same evening, after the bhajan, Baba personally taught Bholaram, through signs, the ABC of Marathi.

Once a Muslim fakir from Ajmere came for Baba's darshan, and pretended great asceticism. Baba asked him to observe a complete fast the following day, perform 'Namaz' for the five times, and to repeat 5,001 times the name of Allah. The next day the 'fakir' found the prayers, fast, and repetition to be foreign to his easy method of getting unearned money and food, and beat a silent retreat.

There was a sadhu who desired to see God, and for that purpose agreed to stay with Baba and to remain under his instruction for a year, when Baba promised to put him on the path to his goal. But within twenty-four hours the sadhu began to grumble about one thing and another. Baba conveyed to him that God was not a 'cheap fruit' to be had for the asking, but demanded superhuman patience! So the sadhu went away.

One day an old Hindu man and his wife came soliciting financial aid to enable them to go to Kashi (Benares), the holy place of pilgrimage. Baba told them that Kashi was there at Meherabad through his presence, and advised them to remain at Meherabad for fifteen days instead. They could not accept what Baba said, so were given money and sent away.

To another seeker after truth Baba offered the usual terms to people who came with lofty ideals but low determination, that of staying for a year in the small hut under the neem trees near the dhooni, taking food but once a day, and remaining silent throughout the prescribed period. The man readily accepted the terms, but hardly fifteen minutes had elapsed when Baba asked him through signs what he was thinking about. 'I wish I were in Shirdi', said the man; eventually he was sent away to Sai Baba's shrine at Shirdi.

A yogi-like man speaking broken English came asking for divine guidance. Baba advised him to stay at Meherabad, and added the following peculiar sentence to the instructions: 'matla, chatla, ghotla, vatla, satla, chotla, and potla', which are the necessities for the life of a

¹ A fourteenth-century commentary in Marathi on the *Bhagwat-gita*.

sadhu—the begging bowl, water pot, the rod, the long braided hair, and the bundle. This man went on with the instructions for nearly ten days, at the end of which he declared himself unwilling to stay any longer. It was found that his complaint was about the food.

Together with such people there was always a number of true ascetics and aspirants who came in an unpretentious manner, and with most of them Baba generally 'talked' in seclusion. One ascetic was reported as having gone to Pandharpur from Ahmednagar rolling all the way in the dust. When Gonde-Bua of Khandesh, a well-known ascetic of that district, came he was not allowed an interview. Baba sent him word that 'male visitors were not allowed that day', and he went quietly away after hearing the message. Persons of this type were observed to be very humble.

About this time a yogi, who had a large following and lived about fifty miles from Ahmednagar, came to see Baba with the object of testing him. Baba did not usually see people of this sort, nor answer their questions; on this occasion, however, he was in the mood to allow the man to be brought to him. The yogi was given a slate on which to write his questions, and while he wrote Baba also wrote on another slate, finishing his writing before the yogi had completed his. When the yogi's slate was handed to Baba he put it aside without looking at it, and handed his own slate to the yogi: it contained the answers to the questions. The yogi got up, prostrated himself in the Hindu manner, and said 'I am sorry.'

Since October the year before, Baba had again begun to observe fasts. The word 'fasting' is not to be taken in its literal sense, for Baba has said that he never keeps fasts. That is, he does not stop food although able to eat it, for during periods when he does not take food he is unable to eat. His physical system at such times is not in a position to accept food for various spiritual reasons, though the suffering and weakness caused by abstention is felt as acutely as by any man. For six days Baba abstained from solid food from 11 to 17 October 1925, when he took only a few sips of milk or tea or dal soup occasionally. After this six days' fasting Baba began to eat irregularly and scantily.

At times he would take a few morsels of food after an interval of hours, or days, or remain only on liquids. Up to 26 March 1926, he was fasting in this manner off and on. Even when not fasting he would take very little food, and that at odd hours. From 17 June 1926, Baba started on regular fasts. He took one meal every twenty-four hours in the afternoon up to 11 July; from 10 to 22 July, for ten days, he remained on liquids.

From 23 July 1926, for nearly four months Baba remained on one meal a day only. During this period he used to eat and drink in the evening. At first he declared that this fasting programme would be carried to the extreme of stopping all food for months together, and that at the end of the coming February he would remain even without water. But this, for reasons unknown, was not done.

An explanation by Baba for those prolonged fasts was their connection with the remaining sanskaras of disciples. The food taken by Baba during the intervals between the fasts was little. His constant change of plans with regard to fasting may be noted. For example, on 1 September 1926, he asked the mandali to prepare his last meal prior to an expected long fast. This was complied with, and for eight days Baba remained on liquids. On 9 September, in the evening, he suddenly declared his willingness to take food provided the mandali managed to prepare certain dishes within seventeen minutes! There was a rush to fulfil this desire; someone had to go begging in the village for certain ingredients, and they succeeded in getting ready the required food in time. Baba took a few morsels, but neither began his long fast nor took to normal eating; he continued taking one meal a day.

Again on 19 October the mandali had to provide the supposed last meal, which, however, did not prove to be such. On this occasion sufficient time was allowed. The meal was taken by all sitting in the *Sai Durbar*, Baba personally serving the mandali. Baba himself took a little food, but it was not, as expected, the last meal prior to the continuous long fast under contemplation.

Until the day he left Meherabad, Baba went on fasting or eating very irregularly. On the last week of the stay he remained on water for some days.

Baba's bathing of untouchable boys has already been mentioned. Throughout the two years, twice, thrice, and sometimes four times a week, he bathed all the schoolboys including the untouchables with his own hands. In the first month, when the number of boys was only thirty or forty, he did this work single-handed, and was three or four hours at it. Even after allowing the mandali to join him in this duty when the numbers increased, Baba continued to work himself. For the last six months of the stay Baba made it a rule to wash with his own hands the dirty clothes of five boys of the school every day.

From 4 July 1925, he began to grind grain for an hour or so daily. At times, in addition to a certain fixed quantity, he used to make up the deficit in the daily requirement of flour in the colony by sitting at the grinder alone or with one or two of the mandali.

In addition to these labours, Baba frequently took part in other tasks with the mandali. When the work of fitting a new mechanical water-lifter over the well was begun those working at it were instructed to finish it that very evening, in contrast to their usual dilatory way of going about things. 'Either get the new arrangement working today or throw it away for good', was Baba's stern order. This had its effect, and, after strenuous labour, the party managed to bring the lifter into action by nine o' clock that night. In the same way the mason was also told that day to finish the refixing of the old lifter in a new position, but instead of working extra hours he slipped away to Ahmednagar at his usual time, leaving the work unfinished. When Baba came to know of it he called some of the mandali and with their help completed the mason's work himself.

Once when the school director was absent from duty because of ill-health Baba took charge and looked after the boys' clothing, feeding, studies, and so on throughout the day.

At the end of every month the wages to be paid to labourers and other workers were generally distributed by the mandali in Baba's presence, when he impressed upon them with signs and writings to be careful, hardworking, and honest in their duties. It should be noted that Baba had not touched money since the period of silence started, a practice continued to this day except for money given to masts and the poor.

With his fastings and work, Baba freely took part in all sorts of games and sports either with the boys or the mandali.

Just as the boys were attracted towards Baba, their parents and guardians were never left alone. Baba's dynamic activity was directed to improving their lot, too. Villagers of all castes always receive attention from him for their moral, religious, and social benefit, and those belonging to the untouchables come in for his special consideration. When he found that some of the untouchable boys' parents were in very poor condition he promised a monthly supply of food.

When Baba and about sixteen members of the mandali were invited for dinner at the Arangaon police 'patel's' house, covers for the untouchables and non-Hindus were laid outside, and for Baba and the rest inside the house. Baba dined outside the house. After the dinner an untouchable requested Baba to visit his dharamshala. He not only complied with this, but visited every Mahar house in the village!

On another occasion, when the Mahars invited Baba and the mandali to tea in the village, he and the non-Maratha mandali took tea with the untouchables, although separate arrangements were ready. This time

Baba and party were conducted in an enthusiastic procession headed by a wild medley of village music.

Baba's relations with the people in the village deserve further mention. One evening two goats were run over by a passing goods train. Baba at once sent someone from the mandali to find them. One was dead and the other badly injured. Baba instructed the latter to be removed immediately to the hospital and attended to. After some time the goat crushed to death was reported to have been taken away by some village Mahars, apparently to make a meal. As soon as Baba came to know of this he set out himself and overtook them at their door. Not only were they made to throw away the carcass, but Baba caused them to take oaths not to eat such things again under any circumstances. These Mahars were then brought to Meherabad and fed.

At the end of the first year, when drill was introduced among the schoolboys, the Mahars got it into their heads that their children were being prepared to be sent away to war. Consequently, a number of parents and guardians appeared before Baba on 3 April 1926, requesting that their children be sent home for the night. It did not take long for Baba to convince them of the hollowness of their fears, so that they were satisfied and asked for the boys to remain as usual. However, he insisted on their removal. The matter was discussed for the whole day. The villagers again and again prayed to be pardoned. Baba at last granted them pardon on condition that those who had had the 'fears' should fast for three days. This was agreed to; on the third day of the fast Baba went to the village and brought those who were fasting to the colony and got them served with milk and jowari bread. On the day following this, in commemoration of the occasion, the whole village was entertained to a dinner.

But the Arangaon villagers were not the only people who attracted Baba's attention. In fact, people from all parts of the countryside received this kind of detailed personal consideration in one way or another.

On 27 February 1926, after having had his bath and made inquiry after the mandali and his usual round of inspections, Baba was given the post at about twelve o'clock. A telegram from his father was found to convey the news of the sudden death of Baba's eldest brother, Jamshedji. Baba immediately sent for the mandali, and when all had assembled the telegram was read to them. Jamshedji had been a healthy, cheerful man of thirty-five, much liked, and all were greatly pained. Baba appeared unconcerned at the news. He showed not even the faintest signs of grief or emotion. On the contrary, when he

'spoke' on the subject he discussed it matter-of-factly and in the vein of occasional explanations and discourses. First of all, he remarked that in spite of his repeated advice to the contrary, Jamshedji persisted in going away from Meherabad, and now, he said, he is really gone! Then the mandali were asked if they felt any grief, and all replying in the affirmative, Baba said their grief was hypocrisy and selfishness. At this someone said: 'But from a worldly point of view, everyone must feel it.' 'But why?' asked Baba. 'That is where the mistake is made. It is all false.' 'Was he not your brother? Is he not dead?' persisted another, to whom Baba replied, 'He was indeed my brother, but he is not dead. On the contrary, he is resting within myself.' 'But how', asked a third member of the mandali, 'are we to know and appreciate that?' 'From believing those who know the secrets of life and death', concluded Baba.

Answering many more such questions, Baba dwelt at length on 'Death and the Cry Over it', the gist of which is reproduced:

Death is common to all. It is a necessary step forward towards life. The soul changes into a new abode, and thus death means no more than changing your coat. Or it may be compared with sleep. The difference between death and sleep is that, after the first, one wakes up again in a new body, while in the latter one becomes conscious of the same body. Worldly people do not go into hysterics after one who goes to sleep at night, because they expect to see him awake again. Then why not exercise the same indifference when he sleeps the sleep of death, since he is bound to wake up again sooner or later in a new body? Thus the selfishness of not being able to satisfy their minds in the absence of the sight of their dear ones makes them weep, not so much the death itself.

After the death of a person, a cry is raised from all sides. 'My beloved father is dead.' 'The source of my life is gone.' 'The light of my eye is dimmed.' 'where is my sweetheart?' 'My supporter has disappeared.' But in spite of the display of grief and pain, the 'my and mine' remain uppermost rather than consideration of the welfare of the one who has passed away.

The sword of death has been swinging right and left since the beginning of man's history. Every day I see hundreds and thousands of my brothers dying without feeling anything, and Jamshed's death is no exception to that. All admit that death is the unavoidable end, and though the fact is universally acknowledged and experienced, yet at the time of its happening people start crying. That is either madness or weakness of mind! But Jamshed is not dead. If he were really dead

all should rejoice over it, since it means Real Life! Although you find me moving about amongst you, playing with you and in fact doing all that a supposed living man does, I am really dead!

I am living because I am dead! Die all of you in the real sense so that you may live ever after!

After this 'lecture' Baba selected a party to go to Poona to condole with the family according to the way of the world; and after their departure he performed his daily duties as unconcerned as ever, and instructed all to attend to their own duties. The usual sports were also played, with a tea-party with sweets in the evening; this being an example of how to behave under such circumstances and how to take death at its true worth.

Between the months of May and June 1926, during his stay over the hill, Baba remained unshaven for nearly two months, contrary to his usual custom.

On one occasion it was rumoured that Baba had died, and a great crowd of people gathered. Then he declared with signs that for a long time he would not leave his body, although he would not retain his physical connection with the world after ninety years at the most!

During this period reports from Baba's devotees at Poona and Sakori showed how Babajan and Maharaj remembered him in touching words. Babajan was also frequently reported to be resting her head on Baba's photo and shedding tears of love. While at times visitors from Sakori said they were sent to Meherabad by Upasni Maharaj, who told them, 'What is here? Go to Meher.' Similarly, many visitors came to Baba under Narayan Maharaj's personal direction. When Mr Angal, pleader of Ahmednagar, had been to see Narayan Maharaj in May 1926 he casually remarked in Maharaj's presence that he went to Meher Baba occasionally, upon which Narayan Maharaj told him, 'I and he are one. You see me while serving him. He is a Sat-Purush. He has been to me in the past.'

Once when Baba had gone for a walk a serpent was found near the women's quarters in his absence and was killed. Upon his return the body of the reptile was shown to him, and the one who did so lifted it up in his hands; Baba immediately asked him through signs to drop it and to wash his hands twenty-four times!

THE MANDALI

The conditions laid down for the mandali have already been described and the extent to which they are required to give immediate response

to Baba's orders, and a few further remarks upon the severity of their lives may be made.

From 25 January 1925, their food consisted of simply cooked dal and rice twice a day for four months. Then for about ten months they had dal and rice for dinner and potato and jowari bread for supper. For another four months, between 1 April and 27 July 1926, milk and milk tea and jowari bread for supper, and dal and rice for dinner. The richest breakfast meant milk, tea, and plain bread, but after 21 May 1926, the milk was abolished in favour of weak, milkless tea. For four months from 5 August 1926, there was milkless tea and jowari bread in the morning for breakfast and the same for supper. The dal and rice for dinner were ordered to be prepared spiceless.

From 17 October 1925, for about four months, some of them had to keep fasts every Sunday for twenty-four hours, while the whole mandali did so every Thursday during that period. Besides these weekly fasts, a few had to remain completely on a few cups of milk. From 19 June 1926, the system of one of the mandali remaining on fast for nineteen hours with Baba every day by turns was the rule.

There were twenty-four-hour fasts for all on some important days, such as the death of Hazrat Tajuddin of Nagpur, Baba's silence anniversary, and so on.

All were made to work to the utmost according to their capabilities. There was comparatively little paid labour. As far as possible, Baba saw that the mandali members did every kind of work; hard labour and easy work were carried out to the letter and spirit of the order, as performing the service of humanity in its true meaning. They had not only to serve the poor and destitute, but were brought to the same level as those they served in the matter of living and food; thus the mandali could fully appreciate the needs and feelings of those served. The work was not done haphazardly, but with the greatest promptitude, enthusiasm, and exactness in every detail.

Every now and then the mandali were specially exhorted by Baba to be attentive and alive to their respective duties. The following is a summary of what was on one such occasion conveyed to them:

Without making the Circle settled, I am not going to leave Meherabad. But do not compel me to do so earlier through inattention to my instructions. I ask you all not to leave me till I speak. Even if I seem to scold you or show displeasure and disgust, don't leave your duties under any circumstances. Beware of lustful thoughts and actions and impulses of temper and anger. Follow my words; it is for your own

good. The contact of a saint, the service of humanity, and the repetition of God's name, these three combined are the highest possible yogas and religious practices! If this much is done, all the religions are observed completely. While serving the sufferers and disabled people in the dharamshala and hospital, consider everyone of them to be myself. Serve them heartily and you will be serving me thereby

He fixed the routine of the duties of compounder, nurse, sweeper, watchman, cook, manager, storekeeper, accountant, teacher, reporter, writer, singer, water-carrier, and what not; some had to play the part of barber and trim the hair of the school children. Then there was the boys' bathing, and the daily grinding of com with Baba.

Sometimes the hospital patients were given warm baths by the mandali. From 4 July 1925, to 7 July 1926, for one year, most of them had to do a certain amount of work over and above their normal duties every morning for some hours. For the first four or five months, until paid washerwomen were engaged, some had the daily task of washing the dirty clothes of the thirty or forty boys in the school.

These extra duties included the occasional cow-dung spreading over the grounds of the different premises wherever there was no Shahabad stone flooring; the place came in for regular overhauling every Thursday. On these days it was the rule for all to get out their belongings and lend a hand in the spreading work. New well-digging also provided some hard work. One day, owing to a misunderstanding, some of the mandali were without work and idled away the time. When this was noticed by Baba he prepared a list of work to be done:

1. The ground around the school to be made level.
2. Cow-dung to be spread in the whole of the mandap.
3. Bathe the hospital patients with hot water.
4. Wash the whole of the hospital and dispensary floors.

A letter from one of the out-station mandali to Baba was once read before all. The writer said that so long as Baba did not forgive him for his faults he had decided to leave off eating, thus observing a fast, and added that now he was not in a hurry to receive the pardon for which he had so frequently but unsuccessfully written. Baba at once instructed someone to send a telegraphic pardon and an order to break the fast, for when serving a Master one is not permitted to make orders for oneself.

By the end of the first year a committee was formed in connection with the management of the domestic affairs of the steadily growing

colony, and Baba granted privileges and powers to the office-bearers. The name Circle Committee was given to this new local self government of Meherabad. A chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, sixteen members, and two peons were duly elected from amongst the mandali by themselves. After that to the end of the stay the Circle Committee regularly met and conducted useful work.

Baba made it a rule to hear five pages of the Bible read every day for some months by one of his Indian Christian devotees, when he would explain the significance of what was read.

On one occasion, when Baba and party had been to the village of Walki for a day out, the mandali were instructed to go begging. Baba and a few remained seated under a tree at the outskirts of the village, while the rest of the party divided into groups and entered the village by various entrances. The usually quiet village was amazed to see so many queer beggars in decent dress. Some gave food; some, taking it to be a joke, asked the beggars to clear out, and a few went to the length of abusing and taunting them. However, the beggars collected as much as they required and returned to Baba. The different kinds of food were made into one mixture by Baba and distributed by him. Very soon the identity of the beggars and the fact that Baba was present spread in the village, and a large number of people ran out for his darshan.

In the month of September 1926 for some days it was made a rule for some of the mandali to deliver lectures and sing kirtans (hymns) on religious and spiritual subjects by turns every night after supper.

From the time of the formation of the mandali, although all were treated equally by Baba irrespective of religion and caste, and all mixed freely together, yet in the matter of food Baba at first respected the Hindu members' susceptibilities. The latter always cooked for themselves and had their meals separately. Once a controversy was raised whether to do away with this food restriction. The non-Hindus vigorously pressed for its abolition, and the Hindus with equal force insisted upon its retention. For days hot discussion took place, Baba biding his time. In the end, finding the Hindus sensitive on the point, Baba supported them, and the matter was dropped. Eventually he brought about what he wished in his own way, for when all paid labour was dispensed with, the question of separate cooking was again raised. Baba suggested that the Hindus should go on with their separate arrangements, but that they must do the work themselves; this they hesitated to do, and were found to favour a common kitchen.

On close questioning it was found that they merely feared public opinion not only for themselves but for Baba, as people might think

badly of him were his Hindu mandali not to observe a principal condition of their religion. When Baba learned of this he said: 'You people, become anxious for me when I appoint you a Kazi (a judge), not before!' and permitted the restrictions to be abolished from that time. So from 5 November 1926, all the mandali, Hindus and non-Hindus, took their food together. From that date also there were no restrictions about cooks, and non-Hindus were appointed to the kitchen.

In October, however, the prospect of the Meherabad colony coming to an end appeared. A special meeting of the mandali was called, and Baba seriously put to the members the question of winding up affairs; later on the decision to do so was come to. The hospital and other inmates were informed to prepare for the place closing down. The paid staff was given notice. The parents and guardians of the boys were sent word to arrange for their removal, unless they were willing to leave their boys unconditionally in Baba's charge. For the rest of the mandali a visit to Persia with Baba was intended, and preliminary arrangements were made for that visit.

As will be seen, Baba went away for ten days to Lonavla and for three weeks to Bombay, and then came back to Meherabad and resettled there! But in November nothing of the sort was guessed at, the Meherabad stay was brought to an end, and everything connected with it was dissolved. Many were the reasons given by Baba for this. He said that when one has to erect a big building a temporary scaffolding is raised up, and when the building is completed the scaffolding is removed. 'The school, hospital, etc., were but scaffoldings for my working. What have I to do with works which are done by municipalities? Hence, when my work is finished, I have no need of scaffoldings.'

None of the residents at the colony was thrown adrift as a result of the upheaval. At first the mandali felt keenly the prospect of many helpless and homeless people, as many as four hundred, being left to their fate; but it was found that Baba had considered everyone and had provided suitable relief where required.

Save the original premises, the post office and the mess quarters, and Baba's zhopdi, all the structures were brought to the ground within a week by Baba's command.

On 25 November Baba and his party left Meherabad for Lonavla by motor lorries, leaving the Arangaon encampment desolate and silent. The party arrived at Lonavla and stayed at a bungalow near Walwan. He prepared new rules for their stay. He also told them, referring to

his 'book', that during his seclusion at Meherabad he had written a great many pages of notes which would afterwards be expanded into volumes. At one of the meetings before Meherabad was vacated Baba had said in the course of a discourse spoken on the alphabet board:

There is no importance in worldly affairs; for a Realized One the world is less important than a dream. A poetic genius such as Shakespeare had no more than a shadow of true existence and bliss. The real state of God is that of sound sleep, to attain to God Realization means to enjoy that sleep while remaining fully conscious at the same time. This state cannot be described and can hardly be told of. Hafiz says: 'This world is nothing plus nothing.'

On 5 December the party went by train to Bombay, where they stayed at Santa Cruz. Here news was received that great crowds were visiting Babajan, and that she, who had for years not moved from her seat under the tree, was taking drives around the city and spending much time sitting near the Bund gardens. Baba remarked that these were signs that she was near to leaving her gross body.

Many people came to visit Baba at Santa Cruz, where the news was received that Arjun, who had been head of the school, died at Lonavla on 22 December. Baba said: 'It was good that he died. Two or three days prior to his end he was seeing me in my true form, and now he is with me.' The next day Baba surprised everyone by saying that he proposed to return to Meherabad. This was the last place to which any of his company expected him to go after its almost complete demolition a month earlier. On 24 December the stay at Bombay came to an end and the party left by train for Ahmednagar, arriving at Meherabad on the morning of the 25th. The first news they received was that Dr Karkal, who had been in charge of the hospital and had set up in practice at Ahmednagar, had died that day of pneumonia.

NO MORE WRITING

By 31 December a school for the village boys was reopened at a bungalow on the outskirts of Arangaon. There were forty pupils, some of the older boys being sent to schools at Ahmednagar at Baba's expense. On 1 January 1927, Baba said that he would cease to write as well as to speak, and added that when his writing or speaking would be resumed was not certain. The next day, 2 January, he entered upon the period of non-writing, and started to use an alphabet board to convey what he had to say. He took no food that day.

Baba 'spoke' regularly in the evenings on spiritual matters. He impressed upon them all to meditate daily upon God with heart and soul:

Think of one thing only-God-and remain in a fixed position throughout the meditation, without change. Let the name of the Lord alone be on your lips. If your mind begins to wander, don't stop trying to concentrate upon him. Strive to reach the aim, and you will see me in my true form and experience many spiritual blessings.



Meher Baba's signature: his only writing since 1927: see p. 83

One day Baba said that it was Sai Baba who controlled the Great War of 1914-18; though he seemed to be doing nothing, sitting in an out-of-the-way place, Shirdi, near Sakori-in the same Ahmednagar district - unknown to the world at large. There was a long discussion among the members of the mandali about the war in China and the sending of Indian troops there. Baba said that if the hostilities in China did not soon come to an end, the British people would be the greatest sufferers. This was one of his unusual comments on political affairs.

Thursdays were set aside for visitors as before, and large numbers came bringing food and sweets to Baba. One day there came a yogi from the village of Rahuri who attracted much attention. He was said to be three hundred years old; others said that he had been living for fourteen hundred years, changing his body whenever necessary through his yogic powers! What was known for certain was that he was well known in the district as an ascetic. He remained for long periods without food and water, and according to his own statements lived 'on air'. He demonstrated to the mandali his control over breathing. He seemed to have no other aim than to serve animals, and to all visitors who came to see him he offered food prepared by himself. He lived upon gifts and collections, and Baba presented him with twenty rupees.

From 1 February to the 6th Baba kept a complete fast, taking food only on the sixth day. During this time he remained shut up for hours in his hut and went for solitary walks. The erection of a new building in which to reopen a boarding school was debated among the mandali; Baba insisted that the staff must be unpaid, being provided only with

food, housing, and clothing. His object in establishing the school was to give the boys the benefit of close contact with himself, and to mould their characters in an ideal form. He therefore wanted teachers whose one aim was to serve his spiritual ends, and to pay them, he said, would nullify their service from a spiritual point of view. Service for money was not spiritual service, he said. This was argued about by the mandali, it being thought that good teaching could not be got in such a way, and Baba appeared to acquiesce in their viewpoint.

One day in February a party of Indian Christians paid a visit to Baba to enlist his sympathy and help in opening a new missionary college at Ahmednagar. After some talk Baba abruptly asked them if they were Christians. Of course they were, was the reply. 'What was the command of Jesus?' asked he. 'Was it not to leave all and follow him?' To this the visitors assented. 'Have you done that?' asked Baba. 'Have you given up lust and greed?' At this the visitors appeared uncomfortable, though obviously impressed. They then left, asking him to visit them at their institution in the city.

A few days before his birthday Baba instructed one of the company to collect together from the neighbouring villages one hundred and fifty diseased and disabled persons, particularly those suffering from skin complaints, for him to bathe, clothe, and feed on that day. When he was told that it might not be possible to find one hundred and fifty such people in the time he agreed that the number could be made up with poor boys. On 18 February Baba's thirty-third birthday was celebrated. The camp was gaily decorated, and Baba himself served the mandali with a special breakfast at six o'clock of rava (a sweet dish) and tea with milk. Visitors began to appear at seven. Baba's ceremonial bath was at nine o'clock, and an hour later there was a spiritual discourse by one of the devotees.

At the end of the discourse the cradle ceremony took place: a small decorated cradle containing the portraits of Baba, Babajan, and Upasni Maharaj was swung in turn by all present, while a special prayer was sung and flowers were thrown on the cradle. Baba then took his seat under a tree by the roadside and distributed rava and sweetmeats to the boys and girls of the school. After the meal at midday there was singing and other music, and late in the afternoon a singer from Bombay entertained the company. At five-thirty there was a palanquin procession; but Baba refused to sit in the palanquin and walked beside it, his photograph being put inside. The procession went out of the camp and proceeded up the hill; there Baba sat down and the ladies recited a special prayer. After which the ladies returned to their own quarters,

and the rest of the company with Baba indulged in games and bhajan. On the return Baba took his seat in the palanquin, and the procession went on with cheers, another prayer being recited on arrival at the camp. Then followed supper, and at nine-thirty all retired for the night.

The day after Baba said that he would speak within five days. He sent for the mandali, and asked them which was the largest gaol in India. Some thought Ahmedabad, others Poona, others Bombay, others elsewhere. Baba smiled, and said the largest gaol on earth was their bodies.

On another occasion, in March, Baba gave a discourse on the value of repeating God's name verbally. These discourses were made, of course, by means of the alphabet board. He did not, in fact, break his silence as on 19 February he said he would. Baba enjoined upon all to repeat God's name regularly and conscientiously:

"Concentrate your mind on the repetition alone, and breathe regularly while doing so. Inhale and exhale the breath slowly and repeat the name of God as you breathe. Let other thoughts come - they will come - but always strive to drive them away,¹ but keep the mind cool and steady. Once you have gained a liking for this exercise, you will never drop it but find pleasure in the duty."

At the end of the month Baba spoke on life after death. He said:

"What the astral body of an ordinary man sees and experiences after death, the yogis see and experience during physical life. Four days after death the astral body rises up to gain pleasure or pain according to its good or bad actions in physical life. When the store of virtue (poonya) and vice (paap) is exhausted, the soul, in accordance with the faint impress of the sanskaras, takes another gross body, that is, is reborn in the physical world, which process goes on until the soul is freed from the chains of birth and death.

"Rarely, yogis of the fourth plane misuse their spiritual powers and are reborn in the stone state and have to go through the whole process of gross evolution before again getting the human form: otherwise no human being experiences a fall in the evolution of forms. The human form is the best of all physical forms; it is the only form in which God can be realized, and until God is realized the soul must continue with births and deaths."

¹ In some instances Baba advises people never to check stray thoughts or to drive them away. Let them come as they will, is the instruction, but not be carried away by them.

"The 'sanskaras' originated from the moment the individual 'drop' came out of the 'Creator Point' of the Infinite Ocean of Reality to be conscious and to gain knowledge of Self. All subsequent forms and births are necessary for consciousness and self-knowledge. Sanskaras are created continually, until they become so thick that they remain about a man whether he is alive or dead: they must be separated from him before he can realize God, for until they are gone the 'drop' forgets its original mission and is conscious only of the motion given to it by the sanskaras. A man does not realize God until all sanskaras are wiped away, but to wipe them away is very difficult."

On another occasion, while some were sitting around him, Baba conveyed hints as to his spiritual working.

"The troubles of the world are due to thinking. Soon I shall take this thinking upon myself, when my health will, most probably, be seriously affected. This is essential for my future working which will affect the whole world.

"It is the duty of Perfect Masters to give an onward push to the subtle universe; but the Head has also to prepare the Circle and to make the members realize God as well as to give an onward push to the gross universe. When they - the Perfect Masters - give such a push, they have to work for it; they have to come down from the state of Eternal Bliss, which is symbolized in the human body at the top of the head, and take their position in the Brahmand, symbolized between the eyebrows. This point is also called the junction between the Upper Bliss state and the lower human form, from which we can see the whole of the lower parts of the body - equivalent to seeing the entire chain of past lives and forms, which one has to pass through before God-realization.

"A duty is placed upon some few of the God-realized ones to come down to the junction and bring up those in the world who are worthy to be taken up, that is, worthy to be God-realized, because of their preparedness and spiritual connection. But such preparedness does not come easily. It requires ages upon ages of suffering and sacrifice and deep connection with a God-realized one. It is after ages of suffering that one is deemed worthy of being admitted into a Circle for God-realization. God-realization means the destruction of all sanskaras, the 'stopped' state of the mind, the end of all thinking. This is very difficult; for if the mind tries to stop thinking it tends towards the sound sleep state, that is, the unconscious. Even great yogis are unable

to attain to this 'stopped' state of mind for good; they can at the most stop thinking during meditation, concentration, or samadhi, and even this creates new sanskaras; no sooner have they come down from the samadhi state than their minds start to work and the store of past undestroyed sanskaras gets added to. Hafiz has likened the body to a pot, the smoke of the fire to the soul, and sanskaras to a large stone on the top of the pot. 'For all its attempts', he says, 'the smoke never succeeds in throwing off the stone.' For that, a sage must come and lift it away. Similarly, a bird may try to open its cage from the inside, but the door will never be opened till help comes from the outside. In short, those who desire to gain spiritual benefit must be brave and patient."

One day at the beginning of April Baba went on a visit to a house in the city. It was the occasion of the Hindu New Year holiday, and after the distribution of sweets among the schoolboys and the recitation of special prayers he set off at 10 a.m. As soon as he had arrived Baba asked for dinner; but it was not ready, so he asked for tea, and that could not be got ready either. He then appeared to be grieved, and made as if to return to Meherabad at once. At the repeated entreaties of the host and his family Baba agreed to remain, and within half an hour tea was served.¹

By this time a number of people from adjoining houses had gathered to pay their respects to Baba, including many ladies. He then gave a discourse on the 'Duty of a Woman' for about an hour. In this discourse Baba referred to Babajan's early life. The moral of her life, said Baba, was that the things of this world are destroyed sooner or later, ending in nothing: aspire only to the things of the spirit.

When dinner was served at one house, places were set separately for the untouchables in the same room; Baba wished to sit with them, but at the entreaty of the host and some of the mandali he was induced to sit with the others, though a look of displeasure on his face cast a gloom upon the assembly.

One evening a devotee from Poona and his family came to pay respects to Baba, as they were about to make a visit to Kolhapur. The devotee's wife, before they left, asked Baba to give permission for one of the family to take tea at Kolhapur should they be pressed to do so, for Baba had given an order that the family should not take tea at all. Baba granted the permission. Later he said to the devotee: 'It is a

¹ This action of asking for food at unusual and inconvenient hours is not uncommon.

mistake to ask for a change in an order once given. An order remains an order until withdrawn by me of my own accord. It should be observed at any cost. My words must never be broken. If I am asked for anything to be done contrary to an order I have given, I do not refuse; but the effect of the order is lost.' A few days later a young mother came to see Baba with her sick child. Baba managed to get out of her that she had not been following his instructions: the result was that both she and her child were suffering. He reminded her that once before she had failed to do what he had said, and had become seriously ill. Afterwards Baba pointed out to the mandali that it was better not to ask for advice than to ask for it and not to act upon it. If the advice is given, it must be acted upon.

Once, when speaking on the subject of sanskaras, Baba remarked that small children, owing to their innocence, were out of the influence of sanskaras, and were therefore susceptible to spiritual training and could be led easily to the Path to Reality

He constantly found fault with the way in which the school for the village boys was being conducted, and on several occasions discussions took place as to the possibility of more suitable members of the mandali being found than Dhake and Chanji, who were the principal and vice-principal respectively, to take charge of it. No better men came forward, however, for everyone thought twice before accepting such responsibilities, it being no easy matter to give satisfaction to Baba. To find fault, and apparently to be dissatisfied with every display of energy and ability, is his method of training. He said on one occasion:

"Neither praise nor blame should distract you from the path of your duty. Leave aside all other considerations; if your conscience tells you that you have discharged the duty properly, that is enough. Your conscience is the best judge. It is human to err, and there must be mistakes, you can only do your best. Always be in time, look after your work personally, do not leave anything to others, and then if mistakes happen they will be overlooked and pardoned. Even if I speak to you harshly about such mistakes do not take what I say to heart."

The school had been removed from the bungalow near the village to Meherabad, where there was accommodation for the boys. Later on, the girls' school, which had also been established in the village, was brought to Meherabad.

Once Baba rebuked one of the disciples for late rising. He said:

"Spiritual aspirants should get up very early. If you get up late, there is not much difference between you and the worldly-minded. The early hours of the morning-from three to six-are best for meditation. Five or six hours' sleep are quite sufficient for you. Those whom I have asked to meditate regularly must go to bed at nine and get up at three o'clock."

THE MEHER ASHRAM

After several months' discussion it was at last decided to open a boarding school for boys at Meherabad to be known as the Meher Ashram, with the object of providing ideal secular and spiritual education. The boys were to have no contact with anyone outside or with the mandali except those appointed to take charge of the ashram. Rustomji was put in charge. Baba said that he wanted boys of all classes and creeds, and that the education imparted would prove a step towards the political salvation of India. Thus, besides spiritual progress, there would be material advancement. One aim of the teaching would be that the boys should have no prejudice against any particular religion, which is the cause of much strife. Baba went on to say that some Indian leaders who advocate nationalism make fine speeches but lack toleration.

On 1 May 1927, the Meher Ashram was opened in temporary premises on the outskirts of Arangaon. No attempt was made to organize anything beyond a ceremony typical of Indian village life. There was a procession headed by Baba, and the various village bands played their favourite tunes. A prayer was recited, and all were served with sweets and tea. The school was removed on 30 June to Meherabad in the premises on the hill. Ten boys were the first admitted: four Brahmins, three Mahars (untouchables), and three Maharathas. They were provided with plain round black caps, khaki shirts and drawers, sandals, and a tweed coat: each had a steel trunk, towel, handkerchiefs, blanket, rugs, bedspread, and pillow. The meals provided were: breakfast, tea and wheatbread; dinner, dal rice and a vegetable dish; supper, two vegetable dishes and wheatbread. Baba spent two hours at the school every day, inspecting the work that was done.

On 17 July a Persian section of the school was opened with fourteen boys from Persia: two Muslims and twelve Zoroastrians. From September onwards Baba spent more time at the school, and classes for spiritual teaching were started. He began to join the boys at play and frequently took meals with them. On 2 November he made an order that the boys were not to speak to anyone apart from themselves and

the teachers and staff of the school, and eight days later he began a fast, taking nothing but milk or weak tea. This fast continued for five months. During November Baba devoted two hours each evening to teaching the boys himself, using of course the alphabet board. This continued until 20 December, when Baba confined himself to a small double hut near the school, which had been built by his orders about five months earlier. The hut was about six feet in length and four feet wide, and consisted of two rooms, one above the other. He remained in seclusion in this place until 28 February 1928, the following year. He received visitors and others in the upper room, which was approached by an outside staircase. The day on which he went into seclusion Baba gave orders that 'All the boys in the Institution must not be touched with the hand by anyone, including the class teachers and the school and ashram authorities'.

From this time onwards certain of the boys manifested emotional tendencies, devoting themselves to meditation which often led to periods of weeping. In the New Year this practice of weeping spread to the whole school and after a time disorganized the work of the classes. At the beginning of February Baba gave orders that the classes were to be strictly conducted, though he did not otherwise check the displays of emotion. Rumours as to what was happening in the school reached the parents, some of whom were disturbed, and several of the boys were taken away, including a favourite pupil, Aga Ali. On the day after this boy was removed by his father Baba left his retirement on the hill and went into Meherabad below, returning to his hut. Two of the disciples desired to go after Ali and his father to induce the latter to permit the boy to return, and Baba gave his consent, saying that unless Ali returned within seven days the school would be closed. On the sixth day the two envoys came back from Bombay, unsuccessful, but Baba bade them try again. Next day Ali returned; he had escaped from his father the previous evening, had caught the Madras mail train, and got off at Ahmednagar. Soon after his arrival there came a message from Bombay to say that Ali's father was willing for the boy to return to school; but he did not know of the boy's escape, and in the evening he turned up with the intention of bringing his son home again. Efforts were made to dissuade him, which succeeded by the following morning, and the father went back alone, having signed a document agreeing to his son remaining at the school.

In March the school was divided into two sections, the ordinary section where the boys pursued the normal studies, and the 'Prem (Love) Ashram', the special section of the school for chosen boys,

where the boys spent much of their time in meditation, though their studies were not neglected. On 1 April Babajan paid a visit to the school, to see 'The place of my child'. She came without warning, and her stay at the school during that day was a great event. A fortnight later, 15 April, Baba ended his fast, which had lasted for five months and fifteen days, and took some food.

At the beginning of May it was suggested by a visitor that there was a site near Poona which would make an ideal place for the ashram, and Baba immediately said that he would see the land, which, however, he did not like. The day that he made this trip was the occasion of a second visit of Babajan to the school. When Baba returned he said that this second visit made it necessary that the ashram should be removed, and another site being proposed at the village of Toka, which is midway between Ahmednagar and Aurangabad - a site which Baba liked - he gave instructions for the removal, which was completed within fifteen days, and on 3 June the mandali and ashram were transferred to Toka.

The change in the location of the school brought Ali's father on the scene again, but he was soon satisfied, though not for long, for in August he returned with the request, 'I want to take Ali with me'. After fruitlessly discussing the matter for two days the father resorted to law to upset the agreement under which his son was at school, and Ali was handed over to his father. At the same time several other boys were taken away by their parents. During this period an increasing number of boys were engaged in meditation, getting up at early hours of the morning for the purpose, and Baba suspended all the regulations of the school so far as they affected the boys' relations with himself and allowed them to come to him at any time. He spent many hours with them, taking part in their games.

From 10 September Baba resumed fasting, and on the 23rd he and the boys included in the Prem-Ashram took up new quarters which had been erected, Baba occupying a room built of lime and bricks having three windows and a door and measuring seven feet by seven feet. The other building for the boys consisted of thirty-two rooms, each seven feet by four feet, with a special verandah for Baba.

Twenty days after he had been taken home Ali made a further attempt to return to the school. He got as far as Ahmednagar, when he was recognized by one of his father's friends and brought back to Bombay. He made another attempt on 4 October, which was successful. Baba was now continuing to fast, but was serving meals to the boys in the Prem-Ashram and was holding classes two, sometimes three, and at other times four a day, when he 'discoursed' to them

on Love, on God, and on the Spiritual Path. He would also be with them during their lessons, and in the intervals he would have them to sit near him and sacred songs would be played on the gramophone. When the weather got colder in November, Baba decided that Toka was too inclement for the boys and ordered that the ashram and school should be removed back to Meherabad. At this date the number of boys was 102, of whom 49 were Hindus, 20 Muslims, 32 Zoroastrians, and 1 Christian. All the boys, except those in the Prem-Ashram, were given a vacation and sent home during the removal. As soon as this decision had been come to, the father of Ali took away his son for the third time.

Within three weeks new huts had been constructed on the old site at Meherabad, and the boys were invited to return, which the majority did; but instead of Ali there came his father in search of the boy, who had been placed in a school at Bombay, from which he had disappeared. Ali was not found at Meherabad, but his father was persuaded to allow him to stay if he did turn up. On the following day Ali arrived. Another boy, Ahmed Muhammad, who had been taken away by his parents in August from Toka, also decided to return, and leaving home without money or food he found his way back on foot, taking six days.

A change in the curriculum was made, an English course being substituted for matriculation, and the school was renamed Hazrat Babajan English School. Baba continued to give most of his time to the Prem-Ashram boys. To teach humility, for a period of one month he cleaned the boys' latrines, allowing only his younger brother to help him. But the days of the school were numbered.

During the summer of this year, 1928, Rustom K. Irani was sent to England to endeavour to get Western boys to enter the school; but he encountered unexpected difficulties, for no one could understand why free education in India should be offered to English children, and when these difficulties arose Baba sent him a cable telling him to return at once. The outcome of this visit was, however, that three English people who had come into contact with Rustom set out for India to stay with Baba, and arrived at Meherabad in June, where they remained, living under Baba's direction, until 2 January of next year.

In the middle of October sadhu Christian Leik, a Russian, who had lived much in England and America and was on his third pilgrimage to India, came to Baba. Leik was a spiritually minded man, a disciple of Ramakrishna; he used the name 'sadhu' out of respect for sadhu Sundar Singh, the Indian Christian mystic and teacher, who visited

Europe and America in 1920, and under whose influence Leik felt He came to Baba from the Himalayas, where he had been warned against Baba; but when he saw him he knew at once, he said, that Baba was his Master and that all his past experiences were for the sake of leading him there. Baba told Leik to maintain silence, and he stayed at Meherabad.

The first number of the Meher Message appeared on the first of the month of January 1929. It contained forty pages, with articles by the editor, Kaikhushru Jamshedji Dastur, the motto on the cover being 'Majesty in Servitude'. There were extracts from Baba's writings, extracts from the editor's diary, and other contributions. Baba was referred to by the editor as 'His Holiness', and Dastur described himself as 'The Disciple of his Divine Majesty', which was objected to by the mandali; but the editor would not listen to them, and Baba, as usual, was indifferent to such matters.

The three English visitors left in January to establish a centre for Baba in England. During this month Baba repeated what he had frequently said before, that a devastating war would surely break out and that he would then manifest himself to the world. On one occasion, when reference was made to those who attack him, Baba said, 'They should not be hated. They too are unconsciously serving my cause. Just as you are keeping connection with me, so are they often thinking of me.'

One day Baba said that he proposed to close the ashram for two months and go on a walking tour. The boy Ali was for the fourth time taken away on 13 January. It was immediately afterwards that Baba spoke about closing the ashram, and his decision was at once put into effect, so that on the 16th Baba was ready to start on his tour. The boys were sent home, being told that Baba would ask them to return as soon as possible. He took with him twenty disciples, but returned to everyone's surprise within ten days. The day after his return, 28 January, the birthday of Babajan was celebrated. Baba sent some of the disciples to the homes of some of the boys to learn how they were progressing.

Baba's birthday was celebrated in February as usual. By his request it was kept as quiet as possible, but from early morning until midnight devotees came to pay their respects. In the morning he served tea to the disciples. At eight o'clock he went in a carriage drawn by two disciples to the village temple, where there were about two hundred Hindus of both sexes who made their devotions to him. Baba was dressed in the robe of Krishna, and a special service was performed in his honour. Afterwards he returned to the camp, when his feet were washed by the

devotees, several hundred taking part. Afterwards Baba took a bath and was garlanded, when a lecture was given by a Hindu devotee. In the afternoon there was music and singing, and in the evening, bhajan, acting, and fireworks.

On 21 February Baba announced that he would not receive any visitors. The ashram was formally reopened on the following day. A few days later, during a visit to the Happy Valley, five of the disciples climbed the hill named Manjer Subha. They went, without asking Baba, by the most difficult way and on returning got into difficulties; but remembering Baba they asked for his help and got safely down. The incident would not be worth recording except as an illustration of Baba's methods. When the five returned they were asked by the others what they had been doing, for Baba had been reprimanding them severely. When a disciple is in danger Baba sometimes rebukes him in his absence, and at the same time sends internal help.

In April 1929 Baba was invited to Panchgani, a town in the hills about a hundred and fifty miles from Meherabad and a favourite resort of Bombay. He went with a few mandali as the guest of the principal of the Hindu High School, who was an ardent devotee. During his stay almost all the boys came to see him. He liked the school and its surroundings, and inquired if it were possible for a cave to be constructed on one of the hills of the Western Ghat mountain range, since he desired to retire in seclusion for a certain period. Instructions were given to dig a cave fifteen feet deep within a month. One of Baba's close disciples who lived there got to work, and with the help of some of the mandali and some paid labourers a cave was dug on the spot selected by Baba overlooking the Tiger Valley, at nearly 4,000 feet.

This retirement, Baba explained, was important for his future working, and he selected twelve to take a particular part in it. One was to sit in a hut near the cave, in seclusion, and four others were kept with him in two huts, one above, the other below, to keep strict watch night and day by turns, to allow nobody to come within a radius of about two hundred yards. The other seven were sent to Meherabad to remain there in seclusion in places detailed to them. All the twelve had to fast, taking only a glass of milk twice a day, while Baba remained on water and very weak tea, which was taken to him by Chhagan, who was specially appointed to this duty. None of those on watch duty had to go near him except Chhagan, the one who had to take tea and water to Baba, and that too only when called by him, which he did by clapping his hands. Those on watch duty had to keep at a distance of about fifty feet on the right side, where a hut was erected for two of

them. The other hut was some fifty feet above, so that the two watch-men staying there could see a longer distance to warn people from approaching near. A third small hut was erected on the left side of Baba at an equal distance of fifty feet, where one disciple, Vishnu, was kept in seclusion.

The news of Baba's retirement in the cave and fasting spread, and people living in different places far and near voluntarily kept fast with the Master, living on milk, but doing their worldly duties the while.

This strict system of seclusion and fasting by Baba and mandali simultaneously lasted for twelve days unbroken. Then Baba told some to break the fast, some were given orders to do so after a month, and a few after two or three months. The orders for seclusion also varied, to some after fifteen days, to others after a month, and to a few after two or three months.

The Tiger Valley, as its name indicates, is a haunt of tigers and leopards, the latter being often found in the jungle and crossing fields and even public roads. One evening the people of the place from which Chhagan used to bring milk every day saw a leopard two minutes after he had left with the milk following the same track. As for the mandali on watch duty, they had no weapons except a bamboo stick, which Baba told everyone to keep at hand. Their only safeguard from any possible attack by tigers at night was a hurricane lamp kept outside each of the huts. The door of the hut was not locked from the inside, but kept slightly open a few inches to enable the man on duty to see outside, who, if anything appeared, had to arouse his sleeping companion and warn the inmates of the other hut.

The watch duty was to be done eight hours daily, four hours during daytime and four at night alternately, and was no pleasant task. For although this particular spot was not at all frequented, the rumour that Meher Baba had retired there in a cave brought people in numbers, especially during the morning and evening hours, some out of curiosity, but many with a desire for darshan. The watchers had a hard task to stop them, for the visitors came sometimes in groups of fifty, and often they had to be severe, much against their will, and many a time actually to beg them not to misunderstand. It was by no right that people were induced to go away, but by humble requests and explanations mildly and gently given.

This was the season when the climate there was very cool compared with the heat in the surrounding country, and many visitors had come to the hills for the season. Some young men tried to get a glimpse of

Baba from a dangerous corner on a rock on the other side. It was a very risky spot, but Baba's watchers had no orders to shout aloud, only to speak in a very low voice when necessary. Otherwise to carry on conversation by signs.

A fortnight passed thus, when one night suddenly at eight o'clock Baba called them to arrange immediately to leave, silently and without informing anyone. There is no railway there, and cars are not allowed to cross the mountain ghats after a certain hour in the evening, even if cars could be had, which was out of the question in such a place as Panchgani. There was nothing to do but to walk down to Wai, the town at the foot of the hill some miles away; after much trouble, and for the sake of the luggage and bedding, a bullock-cart was got after difficulty, and at midnight they removed their things from their huts in the pitch-dark.

Baba wanted to walk, and they all came down the ghats on foot, with baggage in their hands and on their heads; and thus after four hours' climbing down over dangerous ground they arrived at Wai, where they rested in the dak bungalow till morning, and at 10 a.m. were off in a bus for Meherabad.

The devotees of Baba at Panchgani were informed of Baba's silent departure in a note written from Wai, with his usual final instructions not to worry about it, as it was for no fault or negligence on their part, but for his own reasons.

Baba's fast and seclusion continued after returning to Meherabad for about three months. The mandali continued to fast too - but not for so long. Some were released after a month, and some later.

It may be noted that it was to the same cave that Baba afterwards sent two of his mandali to retire in seclusion at different periods. Behramji, for twenty-one days on a very severe fast, to remain only on water; after these twenty-one days, when he was ordered to come out, he was instructed to fast nineteen days more, but was allowed to drink milk during this period. So that in all he fasted for forty days. The other member sent to this cave for a longer period was K. Pleader, who had been observing silence and fasting for some years, living only on milk, and was during all these years locked in a small room, at different places in Nasik and Meherabad, with orders not even to read or write. He had not seen Baba five times in five years. At the cave he had to continue fasting, but was allowed to take fruit in addition to milk. Even after being called out of the cave he was ordered to continue the silence and fast simultaneously, but was later given permission to move about, which he utilized in visiting quiet places in the

mountains, and retirement at the resting-place of a saint or a Master. Pleader had been at Baba's orders to Mount Abu, Rishikesh, and Badrinarayan on the Himalayas, both places of great religious importance to millions of Hindus. The cave in the Tiger Valley is still in existence and is shown to visitors.

Later on Baba made a tour to Nasik, Hardwar, Rishikesh, Delhi, Quetta, and Bombay, and in search of a place of retirement he visited various other places, returning to Meherabad at the end of May. These very long distances were covered on foot, by bus, and by train. He had been fasting the last seven days of the tour and continued to fast for five days more. At the end of the fast he consented to receive visitors again.

On 7 June the fifty-ninth birthday of Upasni Maharaj was celebrated, though the actual date was 25 May. Over twelve hundred people came to Baba, and he distributed sweets. About two hundred people washed Baba's feet. There was a special Hindu service in the village temple, with singing in the afternoon, and the day passed as on Baba's birthday except that the name of Maharaj was in everybody's mouth. Many Parsees were present on this occasion.

Baba made another tour on 10 July, this time in a bus with about twelve of the mandali, returning on 28 August. Everywhere he went his presence created a sensation. He visited Nasik, Khalghat, Gwalior, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Srinagar, Harvan, and Dhulia.

During this tour to Kashmir Baba expressed his desire to retire in seclusion in an isolated spot. A suitable place was searched for, first by the mandali according to his instructions, and then with him accompanying them. He decided to stay at the small village of Harvan, about twelve miles north of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir State. It was very quiet, with beautiful surroundings and an atmosphere suited to their purpose. Immediately after Baba's arrival at Harvan the people of the village and surrounding places came to see him and paid their homage and respects. The majority were poor, and Baba ordered a public feast to be given to all before he went into seclusion. Two small houses were hired at the foot of the hills, and after an arduous survey a spot was selected on the side of a hill for Baba. Srinagar itself is more than 5,200 feet above sea-level, and Harvan is still higher, so that the height of the spot may be roughly estimated at 6,000 feet. Here a small hut was built with a room with just sufficient space for a man to lie down and no more, the roof jutting out on two sides to form a shelter for two of the mandali, who were ordered to stay there and keep watch. The villagers, under a devoted Muslim, helped in the erection of the

hut, which was completed in three days. After giving necessary instructions to the mandali Baba retired and locked himself in the small cabin-like room. He fasted during the entire period, taking only water, which was passed to him through a small window at the side at a certain hour daily when he knocked from inside; he received the water without being seen by anybody.

The two keeping watch outside were Gustadji and Behramji, who were allowed to take milk and fruit twice a day. Behramji was also ordered to abstain from speaking during the period. Gustadji had already been observing silence since 1927. Two members of the mandali staying in the village were to come up twice a day with fresh water for Baba and milk and fruit for the other two, each by tum, one in the morning and one in the evening. During their stay near the hut they too had to observe complete silence, and to communicate when necessary with the two outside by signs. They were not to make any noise and to do everything very quietly.

Chanji was placed on night duty, to keep watch while the other two slept. The night watcher was strictly ordered to sit outside Baba's cabin and not to move under any circumstances. A stick was given to him to keep away scorpions, snakes, and small animals, and a fire was to be kept burning all night to scare wild animals. The place had many tigers, bears, wolves, and other beasts.

The watchers found it frightening to keep watch through the pitch-dark nights, with the howls and cries of wild animals, the occasional roar of tigers reaching their ears and the pad pad of prowlers. Chanji confessed that he was nervous, and admitted that he might fail. But Baba cheered him with the encouraging message, 'Am I not with you, so near, just one step away?' He was, indeed; but what of the door locked from the inside, and the other two asleep?' Chanji thought.

The return to Meherabad was as usual without warning. One day Baba came down from the hut, unknown to anybody except the mandali. He wished no one to know so that he could leave the place quickly and undisturbed. Had the villagers known, they would have flocked around him, which he wished to avoid.

The chief characteristic of the return was that Baba and his disciples did not take shelter during the day or even at night, throughout the entire journey, under any roof, but took shelter in the open under trees, in woods, or by the side of a river or stream. They drove during the day from early morning until late at night (sometimes till midnight), stopping only for the morning meal which they cooked themselves and ate under the shelter of trees, where they rested too during

the night, even when it rained. Many a day they had no time to wash even in the early morning, but had to wrap up their bedding and drive again till about 10 a.m., when it got too hot; then they would stop for a meal and ablutions. Thus they returned to Meherabad. We get here an example of Baba's way of training his disciples: they are given in rapid succession experiences of comfort and hardship - often in the same day. As I will explain later, these seclusions were not for Baba's own sake but belonged to his methods of inner working; the same is to be said of the physical hardships he undertook in travelling.

SECOND VISIT TO PERSIA

Immediately on his return Baba declared that it was necessary for him to visit some part of Persia, and a new tour started on 2 September. He first went to Bombay, and the news of his arrival brought some thousands of people to pay their respects, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and hundreds of Parsees. Baba gave instructions to many devotees. Some difficulties arose over Baba's passport, because having given up writing he could not complete the passport form with his signature, and the passport authorities would not accept his thumbmark, which was Baba's usual way at that time of signing documents. The Persian Consul, however, even without his signature, offered to issue a Persian passport, which as a Persian subject he was entitled to have. This Baba accepted, and the passport was issued. Eventually, as a British-born subject, Baba took a British passport.

Baba left Bombay by the steamship *Versowa* on 20 September. A great crowd came to see him off, including many Parsee ladies, and he was garlanded with flowers. He travelled third class on the open deck, much to the surprise of the captain and officers of the ship.

Before leaving Bombay a Parsee merchant came aboard and saw hundreds of people gathered round Baba's seat, which was on a hatch on the deck. He had heard of Baba but had not seen him before. He knew one of Baba's devotees, and asked: 'How can a saintly person travel on the deck? I will arrange a nice cabin for him in the upper class.' The devotee explained: 'It is all right. He always travels lowest class.' The Parsee smiled, and approached Baba. 'This is no place for one of your dignity. I will arrange for you in a better place, suitable to your position. Pray permit me.' Baba told him that he was happy where he was: 'A fakir's place is always with the poorest.' But the man could not see him so uncomfortably accommodated, and insisted on doing something about it. He caught hold of the devotee he knew and

took him to the captain, whom he knew very well, to arrange that Baba and his party got everything they wanted, offering to pay for it. The captain promised to do all he could and requested the devotee to let him know of anything that Baba desired.

The captain and the chief officer came daily to inquire if Baba wanted anything, but he desired nothing during the entire voyage but a bath, which was arranged in the second class.

Baba's identity was not disclosed, and he saw no one except a Muslim member of the crew, working in the engine-room, who used to come and stand for minutes in a corner opposite him with tears in his eyes. He did not utter a word, nor did Baba say anything to him for five days, but on the last day Baba called him near and gave him his handkerchief. Tears again fell from the man's eyes in appreciation of the gift.

At Karachi the mayor of the city and the embarkation officer of the shipping company were among those who came to see Baba on board. He stayed till late at night at the house of a disciple, and was taken back to the ship next morning by the mayor.

The chief features of this visit to Persia were: (a) the unexpected and very hearty welcome with which he was received at many places by rich and poor alike: and (b) the sufferings which he and his party experienced, due to difficulties in travel over expanses of sandy desert where, in addition to the scarcity of food and water, which could not be had for days, there was constant danger from bandits who abound in the greater part of Luristan through which the party had to pass. The places visited were Mohamerah, Dezful, Khurramabad, Malayar, Ispahan, Yezd, Kerman, Bam, and Duzdab.

Although this tour, like the others, was kept strictly private, very few devotees being informed, people came from all parts of the country, among them men of high position, including Government and military officers. They came suddenly to desire 'a mulakat with the buzoorg' (the honour of meeting with the holy being). They considered his presence in their country to be a mark of great fortune and hope for its redemption, which they believed to rest in the hands of the Masters of Perfection. They were disappointed not to be allowed to hail him in public. Many wished Reza Shah to meet him, and offered to arrange it, but though Baba appreciated their love and devotion he would not allow any demonstration.

Baba stayed in Yezd four days. The town flocked to him, and he had a busy time 'talking' to people individually and collectively. Muslims who never have a photo of any saint, not even of their prophet, asked

to have one of Baba to pin on their breasts in memory of his visit. Four receptions were given in his honour: one of the finance members of the Persian Government came especially to greet him, and speeches were delivered by many prominent citizens of the town.

An important leader of the Baha'is (who believe in Abdu'l Baha and follow the faith proclaimed by him) came by aeroplane from Shiraz with the object of seeing Baba and challenging him with questions; but the moment he saw Baba and felt his touch he forgot his challenge and questions. He wept, and falling prostrate at Baba's feet cried, 'You are God!' Then he rushed out to proclaim to others, 'I have seen God!' All who heard him were much astonished.

At Bam, where Baba had put up in a quiet rest-house on the outskirts of the town, a man in military uniform with several stripes on his chest walked up to the gate and asked for admission to see the Holy Master whom he heard had just arrived. He was told by one of Baba's party that there was no such person there. But the officer would not believe it, and insisted, very respectfully however, that the Holy One be informed that 'a beggar had arrived, asking for alms from him'. When informed of this Baba allowed him to be admitted, so in marched the officer with his hands folded reverently on his chest. He saluted Baba at first in Persian military style, then laid down his sword and fell on his knees to kiss with reverence the hand which Baba offered. Asked who he was, he replied, 'Your humble slave!' 'What is your rank?' was Baba's next inquiry. 'Nothing, beside your Holiness!' 'I mean your military rank', explained Baba. 'A general of the Persian Army.' Baba patted him on the back. 'To die in the service of one's country is great indeed, but to die in the service of God is greater', said Baba on the board. 'Indeed, Holy Master, I understand, and I implore your grace and help in my aspiration towards divinity.' 'I will help you', said Baba. With closed eyes the military man bowed low in gratitude, and said: 'If I may be permitted, I would say, dear Master, that although I belong to the army, I humbly believe that the salvation of this country lies not in its military power but in its spiritual rebirth through an understanding of life, brought about by the benign grace of great buzoorgs of your exalted dignity, and I humbly pray on behalf of my country for the great gift of your grace on this unfortunate country and its ignorant people.' 'That is why you see me here', was Baba's reply. 'That is the country's great privilege; may your blessings redeem the land of Iran!' Having said that, the officer retired from Baba's presence moving backward step by step with his face towards Baba.

Another incident is worth recording. As is the rule in every country, visitors to Persia are required to furnish particulars as to their name, occupation, relations, position in life, etc. A military police officer of high rank came one evening, in full dress with numerous marks of distinction on his uniform, to inquire for the particulars of the party. He was given the required information, but with Baba's identity concealed under his family name, Merwan Sheheriarji Irani. After his inquiries had been answered the officer asked to see Arbab Merwan (Mr Merwan), the leader of the party, formally. He was told that it could not be done, since the gentleman (meaning Baba) did not wish to see visitors. But the officer insisted, pretending that it was in his official capacity that he wanted to see the gentleman. With equal insistence he was refused. The member of the party who was talking with the officer felt all the while that there was something behind the request of the officer. He was therefore not surprised when the latter gave up his official attitude and said, 'I want to see Hazrat Meher Baba!' He further explained, by way of apology, that he had to assume an official attitude against his will, and because he was told that Baba would see no one. He was allowed to see Baba, and left happy.

In the street opposite to the place in which Baba put up in Bam there was the seat of a buzoorg, whom the local people followed and held in great reverence. When Baba came out of the gate to go for an evening walk with the mandali the buzoorg got up from his seat as a mark of respect for Baba, whom he seemed to know. He told all who came to him thereafter that there was in their midst 'the Emperor of all fakirs', so that the people were amazed, and there was again a rush to have a glance at Baba.

Among those to whom the buzoorg spoke about Baba and asked to visit him was a dervish, who came to ask for his grace. Baba explained something to him, at which he said, 'In the thirty years of my dervish I could not understand what renunciation really meant; but you have explained it to me now, I understand!' and without further discussion he paid his respects and went away.

The main outlets of Persia to India are by sea, by its three ports of Bushire, Bandar Abbas, and Mohamerah. The only one by land is via Duzdab, but very few who visit Persia go by that route, since it is difficult to get across the desert between Bam and Duzdab. Many a caravan has perished there, buried in the sands. Therefore some members of Baba's party wondered why he took the land route to Bam and Duzdab when there were easier and safer routes by sea. Even the manager of the bus service, which on rare occasions operated through

the desert, expressed his surprise and warned the party about the risks they were undertaking, telling them that 'Going across this route is inviting death'. But when they insisted he promised to arrange it, though reluctantly. The route is mainly used for the transport of goods from Persia to the surrounding countries, and is not meant for passenger traffic. He promised to give them one of the most expert drivers, thoroughly conversant with the perils of the crossing, and a good mechanic.

Baba had given definite instructions to reserve a bus exclusively for the party, with not a single article belonging to anyone else. This was promised, and all arrangements were made to start next day.

Before starting, however, Baba sent some of the party to see that his instructions had been carried out. The driver put in two bags of almond shells, saying that they were very light, which they were. Baba did not like him breaking his promise, but though he was displeased he did not say anything, and the bus left Bam at about 4 p.m. The mandali felt from Baba's request being ignored that 'something' was ahead. The next halt was to be after two hours, in a rest-house where the party could stay for the night, proceeding next morning. Although the bus was practically new and in sound condition, fitted with new tyres, two tyres burst within the first hour, to the amazement of the driver. After mending the last tyre, and with still some miles to go, suddenly something went wrong with the radiator, steam puffed out of the cap though water had only recently been put in. On inspection all parts of the engine were found to be in good condition. The driver almost scratched off his ear trying to find out why the radiator got so hot without any apparent reason. He poured in fresh water and started again, but after a few minutes the radiator again began to get overheated. Stopping the engine the driver once more examined every part carefully, and at last discovered a crack at the bottom of the radiator. It was the last thing he had expected. He could not proceed very far with the bus in this condition, so he drove slowly and carefully to the resting-place, which was reached in safety. He tried the whole night to mend the cracked radiator, but in vain. Tired, he went to rest in the morning, and tried again and again for two days. The resting-house was in a very small village, where it was impossible to get any material, but he managed to repair it at last. He mixed some powder with the white of an egg, making it into a paste through which the water could not come. All wondered how he had done it. The man's skill and perseverance were remarkable: he repeatedly uttered: 'Ya, Allah, I never had such an experience before!' He started the engine after the

radiator was filled with water. It ran smoothly for a few minutes, then the water began to ooze again.

He was utterly broken, and in this moment of despair the recollection of 'something' he had up till now failed to realize came to him. He rushed to the room where Baba was sitting. He met Kaikhushru Afsari (of Baba's mandali), and cried to him, 'Brother, I realize now why and how it all happened. It is all so clear. I broke my promise to your Master, and this is the result of my ignorance and folly! How can I ask for his mercy and pardon now? I feel so miserable and ashamed to show my face to him. Won't you plead for me, please? Afsari understood; and as he realized his mistake and had suffered so much the driver was taken to Baba, who not only forgave him, but advised him: 'Never disregard the word of a buzoorg. And never break a promise, and be true to your word, to whomsoever given.' He was instructed to return to Bam in the same bus, driving slowly and carefully, and to bring another immediately. It seemed impossible to drive with its leaking radiator over such rough and rugged roads across the desert; but Baba told him not to worry, that he would see that he reached Bam safely, provided he followed his instructions and drove slowly. It looked hopeless, but he agreed to venture on the four hours' journey back, now that he knew who Baba was. He reached Bam without mishap and sent another bus with another driver, not venturing to come back himself.

All this meant a delay of three days in an isolated desert place, though Baba kept himself and the others busy one way or the other. What they thought was this: that the driver had suffered, and in suffering had learned a lesson and an unforgettable experience; but how much Baba had suffered to teach such a lesson, he alone knew!

Immediately on the arrival of the new bus the party started again. There were eighteen, of whom two were ill and had to lie down, and they had over a hundred packages of luggage of all sizes. They had great difficulty in keeping intact the khujas (earthenware pots) which had been filled with water to use in the desert, where no water could be had for days. It was not long before trouble began once more. They were held up at several places, the wheels of the bus sticking in the sand. They were tired, and there was hardly sufficient sitting-space; they had to remain in the same uncomfortable position for hours without changing until compelled by sheer helplessness to do so.

The driver expected to finish the journey in six days at the earliest under the heavy load he had to carry. He got tired and nervous. After a few hours on the first day he said he could not drive-complaining

of pains all over the body-and asked for rest. But Baba persuaded and pushed him on and on, patting him on the back with his hand, and at times even directing him when, in a dejected mood, the driver would miss the track. So it went on for two more days, after which they came in sight of their destination - the town of Duzdab, which was to be their abode for three days - three days of trouble still to come!

The driver could not believe his eyes when he saw in the distance the outlines of Duzdab. He had crossed the desert for years, and even under the best conditions had never completed the journey in less than five full days. Sometimes it had taken him ten to twelve. No wonder he felt surprised, for at times during the journey he was afraid he had lost the way, as he could not clearly distinguish the road and surroundings.

Duzdab was the frontier station on the border of the territories of the Persian and British Governments. Another drama of troubles was enacted here in connection with their passports. Baba warned them from the moment they arrived that it would take much time to get the visas, hence they were told to make all haste; otherwise, he said, if detained now and the next train was missed, they would not be allowed to cross the frontier and would be kept in Persia, perhaps for months. There were two trains only, on Thursday and Sunday every week, leaving Duzdab for Quetta, the British frontier station in Baluchistan. They had arrived in Duzdab on Wednesday afternoon, so it seemed impossible to go by the train leaving the next morning at ten, as to get the visas took several days, after stringent cross-questionings and inquiries into references. The composition of the party was cosmopolitan; six Persians and five British Indians (two Parsees, two Hindus, and one Moslem). The Persian members of the party thought that to obtain visas from both the Persian and British Consulates would be managed easily and that there would be no trouble. But Baba repeatedly warned them that he knew there would be much trouble, hence they should make all possible haste and let not a moment be wasted. 'We must leave here by the train on Sunday', he said. They soon found that all their haste could not stir the Persian Consulate office to act quickly, and it was on Saturday noon, after three days, that they got their visas! But they had still to cope with the difficult task of getting the visas from the British Consulate, whose office closed at 1 p.m. on Saturday. It seemed hopeless to expect to pass through the process of cross examination of over a dozen men within an hour. But Baba expects the impossible. They knew it, and that is why two of them-Afsari and

Chanji-started for the British Consulate, believing that they had Baba's help.

The officer's questions and the evasive replies they felt bound to give him to avoid declaring Baba's identity, their hesitation in disclosing Baba's name and the details of the occupations of the members of the party, and their object in touring like tramps (as it appeared to him), tended to make him suspicious. He became exceedingly exacting, and sent them away. Baba, however, insisted, even sending the two men to the officer's private residence after the office was closed, not once but three times within a few hours. Why the officer endured this badgering and did not throw them out they could not imagine. They hesitated, in spite of Baba's order, to go to the house the fourth time at the hour of nine in the evening. It was then that Baba provided them with evidence of their incapability to serve him, and took them severely to task in spite of the devotion they had displayed. It was not, they thought, a question of duty to be performed but of following his instructions to the letter or doing the same duty in the way of the world. Their preference for the way of the world was due to the desire that Baba's identity should not be disclosed and his name brought into disrepute, which they were afraid might happen. While they hesitated to go to the British Consul for the fourth time with the message that Baba wanted conveyed to him, Baba was plainly unhappy. Then there appeared at the door a Persian who wished to see Baba. He was the only one whom Baba met on this occasion in Duzdab. He was kept waiting, as Baba wished to see no one; the man repeated he wanted to see Baba on a very urgent matter. He was then taken to Baba, and the following conversation took place: 'What brings you here now?' was Baba's first question to him. 'I bring a letter for your, sir.' 'A letter for me?' 'Not exactly for you, sir, but addressed to the British Consul on your behalf.' 'Who brought it?' 'Your devoted slave, sir.' 'From?' 'The Governor of Duzdab. , 'What about?' asked Baba. 'To allow you and your party to pass across the frontier without hindrance by the tomorrow morning train.' 'Shabash!' (Well done!), said Baba, and beckoning him patted him on the shoulder and laid his hand on the head bent before him.

A profound silence prevailed for a few moments, none uttering a word but everyone feeling the tense atmosphere. The man had indeed worked wonders! He was an 'outsider', while they, members of his mandali, could do so little. They felt the sting! Baba threw a significant glance at them all, and after a moment's pause his fingers ran on the board, to say:

Here is a typical example of what love can do. Look at this man ... a poor merchant in this place, with no great influence, yet he managed to approach the highest government official here ... This is no small work and service! All this he did unasked and of his own accord and without even telling us a word about it. Such service, so selflessly and spontaneously done, with no hope of a reward except my blessing, must succeed, and he did succeed. Why? Because of the love which inspired him to do it, and for the sake of the love he put into it to make it a success. He deserves my blessing. He is blessed and now look at these two who have lived with me for years, they hesitated and thought a thousand thoughts and plans as to how to do it best! All right now, you two, give up your worrying, and go with this man to the British Consul and give him the letter.

They acted accordingly, and in the biting cold, which made them shiver to the bone, unaccustomed to the climate, they delivered the letter. After a restless night they got up at four in the morning and started packing in preparation to go to the station, as they were ordered to do the night before, and to wait there for the visas rather than in the rest-house and make a rush at the last moment. They were to call at the office at 8 a.m., when, the Consul had said, he would give his final reply after thinking over the matter during the night. They went and waited at the entrance from seven-thirty in the cold wind.

The Consul had been annoyed, but the four visits to his house and the explanations given him, as instructed by Baba, had the desired effect, and he considered their case to be a special one. Although he could not ignore the Governor's letter, they feared it might offend rather than persuade him, and they saw that he did feel a bit put out, probably disliking the dictatorial tone of the letter. He came to the office at eight o'clock (on Sunday, which was unusual), sat down at his table, resting his head in his hands as if in a dilemma. Here was a request by a party of over a dozen men of different classes (a party of ascetics, as he believed) desiring to cross over the Persian frontier into British India. If he made a mistake and they were proved to be political agitators, communists in disguise (and communists were rampant), how could he explain what he had done? So he was eventually informed of Baba's identity as a Master and of the others as his disciples, and he felt he could not detain them any longer for further inquiries. He took the risk, and after a few minutes' deliberation, sitting in the same position with his head in his hands, he called for his clerk and instructed him to prepare the visas immediately, so that they might proceed by the

train leaving in an hour. When they bade him goodbye he answered in a very low voice without raising his head. And again, when he was thanked for the special consideration he had given them, he replied shortly, 'It is all right', and went away immediately. Six months later, when Chanji happened to go to the British Consulate at Bombay about the passport of one of Baba's mandali, the first question he was asked was: 'Has your Master returned to India?' And when he replied: 'Yes, six months ago', the question was asked, 'Then he has started signing, which he refused to do before?' 'No!' 'I cannot believe that!' exclaimed the official. 'Why, he could not have entered British territory without a visa from a British Consul!' And the visa could not be had until Baba signed the application himself, which he had refused to do. The officer was astonished. 'He is a Master!' was the reply Chanji gave him, but he could not believe what was said. After a moment he added, 'From what port did he leave Persia?' 'He came by the land route via Duzbab', Chanji replied. The officer could not believe his ears. Then he smiled slowly and began nodding his head, as if he had unravelled a mystery. 'Oh, I see! He came via Duzbab! I believe now that he is a Master, and Perfect too! ...' This officer knew about Baba, being acquainted in his official capacity with much information about Baba's activities. This incident seemed to convince him. He was the only Government official in the Bombay Presidency who was conversant with Baba's passport before going to Persia, and knew well how difficult it was for Baba to enter India again or any British territory without a visa from the British Consulate in Persia. And at all ports in Persia the Consulate officers had been informed. But Baba no doubt knew it. That is why he preferred the difficult land route and avoided the three main ports of Persia.

After his return from Persia, Baba made his headquarters at Nasik, about 120 miles northeast of Bombay, a Hindu holy place, on the banks of the river Godavari. After a time he returned to Meherabad, where he gave permission to his disciples to resume the arti ceremony, which they performed daily at six o'clock in the morning or in the evening unless there were reasons to the contrary.

On 29 October 1929, Christian Leik, who had joined Baba's ashram a little more than a year before, died at Meherabad in his fifty-ninth year. He had been ordered by Baba in the previous April, prior to the visit to Panchgani, to travel throughout India as an itinerant monk, resuming an earlier practice; everywhere he went he had spoken about his Master. He returned on 21 October, emaciated and ill, and died eight days later, his heart 'filled with boundless joy'.

Next year, after visits to Bombay and elsewhere, the thirty-sixth

birthday was celebrated at Nasik, with a large attendance of Hindu, Parsee, Muslim, and Christian devotees from an early hour. From nine to ten-thirty the devotees washed Baba's feet, then he was presented with sweetmeats and flowers; at eleven-thirty there was a speech given in his honour; afterwards the arti ceremony, followed by the distribution of sweetmeats. The celebrations continued until the evening.

At the end of February, Baba left Nasik for South India with a party of fourteen to visit Poona, Kolhapur, Belgaum, Dharwar, and Hubli. They went on to Madras with the object of opening the Meher Ashram at Madras-Saidapet on 2 March, and to meet devotees in the south. He stayed one day visiting many people and institutions, and attended a large public meeting. Afterwards Baba went to the Nilgris via Mysore, then the ancient city of Bijapur, returning to Nasik on 12 March. Towards the end of March he visited Sholapur to attend the marriage of a son of one of his devotees, and at the beginning of April returned to Meherabad, staying there for six days, afterwards visiting Kolhapur and other places.

In June Baba went to Kashmir again, privately this time, by train, and, save for intermittent returns to Nasik, the rest of the year was spent in visits to many places where stays of a few days were made. On 22 November an English journalist paid a visit to Baba at Meherabad for two days. He then went for a tour accompanied by Swami Prajnananda, an Englishman, and during the first part by Baba's brother Jal. Baba returned to Nasik, and at the end of the month went to Delhi, where his health broke down, which was no wonder after the continual journeyings. He returned to Ahmednagar on 23 December, and went to Nasik on 30 December.

The December 1930 number of the Meher Message contained the following editorial statement:

'HIS DIVINE MAJESTY'

The use of this phrase has caused so much unnecessary heart-burnings and has given needless offence to so many persons that we have decided to drop it from our next number ... at least for some time.

It appears from the pages of the magazine that the controversy between the editor and other disciples had been developing, for the expression of excessive devotion was objected to, everything being acerbated by the activities of the editor in connection with Indian politics, for Baba and his disciples take no part in politics.

Part I Chapter 3

THE PERIOD OF WORLD TRAVEL

1931-1939

There opens a new period. Hitherto, except for visits to Persia, Baba had not gone outside India. He was now about to enter upon a period of travels around the world. In the course of these journeys, of which I propose to give an account, Baba authorized a number of 'messages', which were written by disciples on 'outlines' provided by him on his alphabet board: specimens of these messages will be found in these pages. I also quote verbatim from the diaries of those who were with him on certain of these journeys, for they have the value of first-hand records.

An English journalist who had already been to see Baba returned to Nasik and stayed until 8 February 1931.¹

At the end of March, Baba went to the Himalayas, and in May went again to Persia. This visit was private, and only a few people saw him. He attended a place of holy pilgrimage to which people from all parts came to pay homage. One day at this place Baba was walking with three of his disciples when they were followed by two women. When they returned to the house Baba asked the women, who were prostitutes, to enter. He then took off the covering he had over his head and made them sit near him while he talked to them and occasionally caressed their faces. The women cried and said they would no longer do what they were accustomed to do. Then they went away.

FIRST VISIT TO THE WEST 1931

On 1 September, Baba sailed from Karachi on the Rajputana with three of his disciples for England. On the Rajputana there was also Mahatma Gandhi on his way to the Indian Round Table Conference. Jamshed Mehta had wired to Gandhi that he should meet Baba. So

¹ He was H. Raphael Hirsch. An account of his visit to Baba is given in *A Search in Secret India*, by 'Paul Brunton'. (Rider & Co., n.d. The book was published in 1933.)

Gandhi came to Baba's cabin with his secretary, Mahadeo Desai. Dadachanji and the two others were in the cabin. Gandhi said he had come to see Baba because of the telegram; he would not have come of his own accord, and would stay for five minutes. The meeting lasted for three hours. The next day Gandhi came again. He said, 'Baba, it is now time for you to speak and to let the world hear. I feel within me that you are something great; I did not feel the same when I visited Upasni Maharaj.' Baba asked 'Why?' Gandhi said, 'When I went to Upasni Maharaj he was wearing a piece of rag around his loins. he removed it and showed his private parts and said "You may be a great man; what is that to me? Why have you come here?" 'Baba answered, 'Now you really know that I am great, with the authority of that greatness I tell you that Maharaj was a Perfect Master'. Gandhi replied, 'No, Baba, I do not understand it at all'. He came a third time and said he would like to spend one night in Baba's cabin. Too much was made of this meeting by the Press, though the encounter had its own significance.

Baba kept almost entirely to his cabin during the voyage. He was met at Marseilles on 11 September by two English friends and went by train to Paris, arriving in London the following day, staying the night at a house in Kensington. He then went to stay in Devonshire. On this occasion I met him for the first time. I had no idea who he was, but as soon as my eyes met his I had the strong impression that I knew him already. To say that we became friends at once would be common-place, for it is hardly possible for anyone to meet Baba without accepting his friendship, so fully and unambiguously is it offered. My intimacy with him was firmly established and has remained undisturbed for more than thirty years. It was this recognition that has made possible what I am writing in these pages. I do not say that I have always understood him; but neither then nor at any time since has he, himself, or anything he has done aroused any doubt in my mind. On this first occasion I was with him for the greater part of the ten days in the small house at Coombe Martin; afterwards he returned to London, where a number of people were brought to see him. One of them wrote as follows:

I met Shri Meher Baba for the first time on a Saturday night at a performance of White Horse Inn at the Coliseum, about 26 September 1931; in the box were Baba, three of his Indian disciples, and four English people.

I sat next to Baba, but he took very little notice of me. I was shy and

nervous, and felt as if someone had taken a hammer and knocked me on the head. I hardly looked at him; I heard people talking but felt dazed and far away; at the end I put out my hand and took his and looked mutely at him; he nodded his head and I was told that I was to come the next day to Kensington. During that week I went about like one in a dream; I was stunned with the wonder of Baba, nothing else existed for me. I saw him every day, and from then I had absolute and implicit trust and faith in him; I asked no questions, I wanted nothing from him. I gave my life into his keeping and knew my search was at an end. I took my mother, my brother, and my younger sister to see him; they were impressed, and my sister felt specially drawn to him and also became one of his followers.

What this writer says was characteristic of love at first sight.

A number of journalists and others saw Baba, and reports of interviews, mostly sensational in character, appeared in various newspapers. He went to a Promenade Concert, to several theatres, to the Zoological Gardens, to several museums, and to the Unknown Warrior's grave at Westminster Abbey.

On 2 October Baba left England for Constantinople, where he stayed for nine days, thence to Milan and Genoa whence he sailed to America on the Roma for New York. A strange incident occurred on the Roma before landing. The immigration officer, being dissatisfied with the replies given by the English disciple who was acting for the party, detained Baba and the rest for further scrutiny for about two hours. He seemed to suspect that there was something suspicious about the 'silence' and the alphabet board. He even tried to read the alphabet board himself, until he got tired. He then remarked: 'You', pointing to Baba, 'come to America to teach our people with this board ... How foolish! ... Who gave you the idea?' And he insisted that someone in New York should stand surety. As this was a private visit, nobody knew of Baba's arrival, except two or three people who had come to the docks to receive him, and were held up at the gangway not being allowed to go aboard. It was a peculiar situation; but Baba was serenely calm, and meekly submitted to all he was made to go through.

Then an officer apparently belonging to the ship appeared and asked the immigration officer why the party was detained when everyone else had landed. The immigration officer explained that he was not satisfied with their papers and replies. 'What's wrong with them?' asked the ship's officer. 'These people seem to be quite respectable. What's the idea in detaining them?' 'I am not satisfied and want a

guarantee on their behalf', said the immigration officer, who was offended at the interference. 'I don't see any reason for your behaviour', said the ship's officer. 'I want you to permit them to land immediately.'

Irritated at his tone, the immigration officer retorted, 'But there is no one to guarantee who they are'.

'Well, they must have some references.'

The members of the party explained that they had very good references.

'There you are. They have references!' And then he said, 'If you still want a guarantee, I stand guarantee'. The officer continued, 'I am just going, and I want you to finish the permits for them to land by then'. His commanding tone led the party to believe that he was someone of importance; anyhow, his words had immediate effect. The immigration officer sat down at his table, murmuring all the while, made out the landing cards, and they were permitted to go. Chanji, who told me the story, went in search of the officer who had helped them to thank him, but he says that he could not be found, and who he was remains a mystery.

Baba stayed in America for one month, three weeks at Harmon on the Hudson River and one week in New York City, paying a visit of one day to Boston. While at Harmon he went to the prison of Sing Sing; it was in the evening, and the car stopped outside the main entrance. Baba said to those with him, 'I will show you how I work', and after a pause added, 'In this prison there is a man who is my agent; he does good work for me; I shall free him when I speak.'

He left America on the Bremen on 6 December, and arrived in Paris on the 11th, leaving Marseilles for India on the 18th by the Narkunda. He arrived in Bombay on 2 January, where he was met by a large number of devotees.

Baba's method at the interviews in England and America was almost invariably the same with all who came to him. He would sit in a room with one or more of his Indian disciples with the alphabet board on his knees. A disciple would tell Baba the name of the person, whom Baba would then motion to sit near him. He would look at the visitor and smile. He would ask no questions. Usually he touched the hand or caressed the arm of the visitor, saying on his board, which was read by the disciple, 'I like you and will help you'. If the visitor had nothing to say, which was frequently so, the interview would end in a minute or two with a smile from Baba. If the visitor had any questions to ask, Baba would answer them on the board. Interviews seldom lasted more than from three to five minutes. Baba usually got up at six o' clock, had

breakfast at seven-thirty, and was ready for visitors at nine o' clock. In the evenings he would listen to music or play games, and occasionally he would ask one or other of the company, 'Are you happy?'

The July-August-September number of the Meher Message, issued when Baba was in Europe, appeared with the announcement that from January 1932 the name of the magazine would be the Mystic Review. In 'My Heart-to-Heart Talk' the editor said that he had been 'face to face with great difficulties', and confessed that 'if he had made mistakes, he had done so honestly'; in the October number he declared in another 'My Heart-to-Heart Talk' that with great pain he now considered Meher Baba 'to be a charlatan'. He went on to say, 'I still love Meher Baba', but apologized to the critics of Baba for having denounced them.

I record this incident because the magazine was associated with Baba, and the behaviour of the editor seems to require some accounting for; the explanation is the simple one of the defection of a disciple. The significant thing is that Baba remained unconcerned. He had allowed the editor to do what he pleased, as he always does, and having expressed his own wishes he left the matter to the one concerned. Baba can sometimes be persuaded to do what he does not wish to do to please a disciple, but the results are never what the disciple expects, and if a disciple wishes greatly to follow a particular course of action, Baba usually does not stand in the way. This, indeed, forms an important element in his method.

FIRST WORLD TOUR, 1932

On 16 January 1932, Baba left Bombay for Nasik. A second visit was arranged to the West at the invitation of some of his English followers, and he left India on 24 March by the Conte Rosso, accompanied by six Indian disciples, including his two brothers Behram and Adi, arriving at Venice on 4 April, where he was met, reaching Dover two days later, whence he was taken by car to a private house at Kensington. There, every day from nine o'clock onwards, people came to see him, and he allowed a film company to take him in the garden 'speaking' from his alphabet board.

Baba went to the country house of one of his English friends, and visited Kew Gardens, the British Museum, and a number of theatres and cinemas. A children's party was arranged at the house, and occasionally in the evenings there was music. Many Press representatives came for interviews. I invited James Douglas, editor of the

Sunday Express, to see him and an account of the interview was published in that paper on 10 April:

I had prepared a questionnaire with the help of Sir Denison Ross, the Oriental scholar. It was designed to trap the teacher, but he smilingly threaded his way through it without stumbling. His mastery of dialectic is consummate. It was quite Socratic in its ease.

He frequently put questions to me which startled me by their penetration. But he never evaded a direct question. His simplicity is very subtle.

'I am a Persian', he said. 'I was born in Poona, but my father and mother were Persians.' He is above races and religions. He is universal. He is one with God, and God is everywhere in everyone.

'Do you know Gandhi?' I asked.

'Yes I met him in the steamship *Rajputana*. He is not as far advanced as I am. He asked me to help him. But I will not help him until he abandons politics. I have no politics.'¹

'Are you a Mahatma?' I asked. He smiled.

'What is a Mahatma?' he replied. 'I know the truth. You live in London. You know it, I know.'

'Are you divine?' He smiled.

'I am one with God. I live in Him, like Buddha, like Christ, like Krishna. They know Him as I know Him. All men can know Him.'

'Have you solved the problem of evil?'

'There is no evil', he said. 'There are only degrees of good.'

'The world is perplexed with disaster. Is there any way out of the world crisis?'

'Yes.'

'How long will it last?'

'Only another year. Then there will be recovery and deliverance.'

'Christ's mission was accomplished in three years. How long will your mission last?' 'Thirty-three years,' he replied.

'What is your secret?' I asked.

'The elimination of the ego,' he replied.

Then I put my questionnaire.

"Have you a Scripture, a Bible, a Koran, an inspired book?"

¹ Baba's actual words were: 'I saw him on the steamer *Rajaputana*. He is a good man and a great soul. I will not help him until he abandons politics. I have no politics.'

'No, I teach. I am a teacher.'¹

'Do you believe in Buddha and the Eight-Fold Path?'

'Yes. All religion is ascent by stages to perfect union with God.' 'What God do you believe in?'

'There is only one God for all men.'

'What religion is nearest to yours?' 'All religions are revelations of God.'

'Is there a future life?'

'Yes. The soul does not die. It goes on from life to life till it is merged in God.'

'Nirvana?'

'Yes. But not loss of the self.'

'Does the self survive?'

'Yes. But it is merged in God. The soul is not the brain. It functions the brain. The brain is its instrument.'

'Who has sent you to save mankind?'

'I know. It is my whole life. My ecstasy is continuous. It is unbroken.' '

Do you sleep much?'

The Sadguru smiled. He held up three fingers. 'Three hours', said the interpreter.

'Are you married?' He smiled in wonder. 'Sex for me does not exist.'

'Is God a Person or a Power?'

'God is both personal and impersonal. He is in art, in literature, everything.'

'Are you a Pantheist?'

'No', he smiled. 'When you know God it is plain. The self is one with him at the height experience.'

'Why am I not happy?'

'You have not grown out of self', he smiled.

He had said he would give me a minute, but the minute had lasted an hour.

'You are lucky', said a disciple. 'He likes you ... ' He is serenely certain that he can redeem mankind.

I wonder.

Baba's 'message' was made public. As it was his first direct message to the West it must be given in some fullness; the reader should bear in mind, however, that it was written by a Western disciple:

¹ Baba's actual words were 'I awaken'.

"I am not come to establish any cult, society, or organization - nor to establish a new religion. The Religion I shall give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many.

"The Book which I shall make people read is the book of the heart, which holds the key to the mystery of life. As for ritual, I shall teach humanity to discriminate, express, and live rather than observe it. I shall bring about a blending of the head and the heart. Societies and organizations have never succeeded in bringing truth nearer. Realization of Truth is solely the concern of the individual.

"Every being is a point from which a start could be made towards the limitless ocean of Love, Bliss, Knowledge, and Goodness already within him. No spiritual Master brings religion to the world in the form which it eventually assumes. His very presence is a blessing and radiates spirituality. He imparts it to others by personal contact. Religions are an effort to commemorate the association with a great spiritual Master, and to preserve his atmosphere and influence. It is like an archaeologist trying to preserve things which only resuscitate the past. The living spirit being absent, religions or organizations gradually lose their force

"The West looks at things from the standpoint of reason and is sceptical about what baffles it. This form of understanding is developed by reading, hearing, experiment, and logic. These create an illusion of real knowledge.

"In the highest state one feels in harmony with everyone and everything, and realizes divinity in every phase of life, and is able to impart happiness to others. Here one attends to all duties and material affairs, and yet feels mentally detached from the world. This is true renunciation and understanding.

"I intend to bring about a great spiritual revival in the near future, utilizing the tremendous amount of energy possessed by the West for the purpose. Such a spiritual outpouring as I visualize usually takes place at the beginning or end of a cycle, and only a perfect one who has reached the Christ state of consciousness can make a universal appeal. My work will embrace everything - it will permeate every phase of life New values and significance will be attached to problems which appear to baffle solution at the moment.

"The benefits to different nations and countries when I bring about the spiritual upheaval will be largely determined by the amount of energy each possesses. The greater the energy - however misapplied - the greater the response.

"The Master diverts the current into the right channel. It will be one

of my greatest miracles to bring together and blend the realistic West with the idealistic East; the West at the zenith of its material and intellectual attainment and the East at the height of its spiritual manifestation in the shape of a Perfect Master will meet without shaming or looking down upon each other. I repeat-materialism and spirituality must go hand in hand ...

"I have become one with the infinite source of everything. This is the state of Christ consciousness. If people call me Messiah, Saviour, or Redeemer it does not affect me. Terms and names do not matter in the state of Christ consciousness that I eternally enjoy and towards which I will lead all who come to me. When I speak, my original message will be delivered to the world and will have to be accepted.

"People must not come to me merely for help in their physical infirmities or for material purposes. I shall perform miracles when the time and situation demand and not to satisfy mere idle curiosity. Spiritual healing is by far the greatest healing, and this is what I intend. The highest is latent in everyone, but has to be manifest."

On 17 April Baba went by car to Devonshire, returning to London on the 24th. He at once left for Switzerland with a few disciples. In Lugano, Baba reminded especially his Western devotees that one of his ways of working was to welcome, invite, or even to create 'opposition'. He explained that opposition helped rather than hindered his work, and at times he created it, if not naturally aroused, for certain work. He added that such an occasion was coming soon, when many of his devotees would be shocked. About a week later letters were received from England to say that a defamatory article had been published in a London paper about Baba, and that his friends had written replies to the editor of the paper repudiating what had been said. Baba immediately ordered all further action to cease; for, he said, it was no fault to say things against him; the opposition was desired. He stayed at Lugano until 7 May, when he left for Paris, afterwards returning to London on 10 May, where he stayed four days, leaving Southampton on the 19th by the Bremen for New York, travelling second class.

While he was at Lugano Baba's father died in a Bombay hospital at the age of seventy-four. Baba had not seen him for two years.

Baba arrived in New York amid a blare of publicity, and stayed for four days at the house of an American friend. During that time he gave a message, prepared for him by one of his English disciples, in which he repeated what he had said in London, and went on:

"America represents the synthesis of the white races, and hence

forms the best foundation for the spiritual upheaval I shall bring about in the near future.

"America has tremendous energy, but most of this energy is misdirected. I intend to divert it into spiritual and creative channels.

"I am now going to California for a few days. From there I must go to the Far East for one day for spiritual reasons, but I will be back in California by the end of June and will speak on 29 June. But if I should be delayed, I will return on 12 July and will speak on 13 July.

"My work and aims are intensely practical. It is not practical to overemphasize the material at the cost of the spiritual. It is not practical to have spiritual ideals without putting them into practice. But to realize the ideal in daily life, to give beautiful and adequate form to the living spirit, to make Brotherhood a fact, not merely a theory, as at present - this is being practical in the truest sense of the word.

"My work will arouse great enthusiasm and a certain amount of opposition-that is inevitable. But spiritual work is strengthened by opposition, and so it will be with mine. It is like shooting an arrow from a bow - the more you pull the bow-string towards you, the swifter the arrow speeds to its goal."

It should be noted that the above, like all the statements or messages or talks given by Baba, was not written or spoken by him. Sometimes Baba dictated statements on his alphabet board; more often he would allow others who wanted on their own initiative to do so to prepare statements in his name, which he would have read to him, and would indicate his assent or otherwise; but in the main he would permit people to say what they wished. That was not because of carelessness on his part, for no one is more punctilious on every matter of detail than Baba, but because he allows people to express themselves as they wish: he respects freewill in others. This does mean, however, that these statements are to be received with some caution. I have more to say about this effect of Baba's silence later on.

After an extremely busy time, when he saw people all day and was present at a large reception in his honour, Baba went to Harmon, after four days to Chicago, and so to Hollywood, where he remained for six days, seeing many people including a number of film stars, the visit being a 'meteoric advent that crashed the front-page headlines of every paper in the land'. At the Paramount studios Baba was received by some of the directors and shown the place at work. On one of the sets Tallulah Bankhead, Gary Cooper, and Charles Laughton were playing, and one of Baba's disciples who had known Miss Bankhead and

Mr Laughton in London introduced them to him. They then visited the Metro-Goldwyn and Fox studios. That evening Miss Bankhead visited Baba, and the next day Baba attended a reception in his honour by Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Mary had a 'talk' with Baba for about forty minutes. The next day he visited the Paramount studios again and met Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette Macdonald, who were working on *Love Me To-Night*, and von Stomberg and Marlene Dietrich, then playing in *The Blonde Venus*. Marlene Dietrich was off-hand, but von Stomberg got on well with Baba. That afternoon he had tea with Ernest Lubitsch, and in the evening there was a reception of about a thousand people.

A message to California was issued on Baba's behalf and another message to Hollywood. The latter said:

"Since arriving in America, I have been asked many times what solution have I brought for the social problems now confronting you - what did I have to offer that would solve the problems of unemployment, prohibition, crime, that would eliminate the strife between individuals and nations, and pour a healing balm of peace upon a troubled world.

"The answer has been so simple that it has been difficult to grasp.

"The root of all our difficulties, individual and social, is self-interest. It is this, for example, which causes corruptible politicians to accept bribes and betray the interests of those whom they have been elected to serve; which causes bootleggers to break, for their own profit, a law, designed, whether wisely or not, to help the nation as a whole; which causes people to connive, for their own pleasure, at the breaking of that law, thus causing disrespect for law in general, and increasing crime tremendously; which causes the exploitation of the great masses of humanity by individuals or groups of individuals seeking personal gain; which impedes the progress of civilization by shelving inventions which would contribute to the welfare of humanity at large, simply because their use would mean the scrapping of present inferior equipment; which, when people are starving, causes the wanton destruction of large quantities of food, simply in order to maintain market prices; which causes the hoarding of large sums of gold, when the welfare of the world demands its circulation...."

"But the elimination of self-interest, even granting a sincere desire on the part of the individual to accomplish it, is not so easy, and is never completely achieved except by the aid of a Perfect Master. For self-interest springs from a false idea of the true nature of the Self, and

this idea must be eradicated, and the Truth experienced, before the elimination of self-interest is possible.

"I intend, when I speak, to reveal the One Supreme Self which is in all. This accomplished, the idea of the Self as a limited, separate entity will disappear, and with it will vanish self interest...

"It has been asked why I have remained silent for seven years, communicating only by means of an alphabet board, and why I intend to break my silence shortly, and it might be asked, in view of what has just been stated, what relation my speaking will have to the transformation of human consciousness...."

"When the God-Man speaks, Truth is more powerfully manifested than when he uses either sight or touch to convey it. For that reason Avatars usually observe a period of silence lasting for several years, breaking it to speak only when they wish to manifest the Truth to the entire universe. So, when I speak, I shall manifest the Divine Will, and world-wide transformation of consciousness will take place."

Baba had said that he would speak at Hollywood on 13 July, and now said that it was first necessary for him to visit China. He left by the Monterey for Honolulu on 4 June. Before leaving he was invited to see Marie Dressler at her house, where he stayed some time, and then gave numerous instructions to those of his American and English disciples who had accompanied him thus far and were told to return home. The stay at Honolulu was for two days, when Baba said that he did not intend to return to California. He arranged for his English secretary to return to Los Angeles, and thence back to Europe.

Baba sailed in the Empress of Japan to Shanghai, which was reached on 22 June, where he was met by an English disciple, a Professor at Nanking University. The following is from his account of this visit:

Immediately we had had tea Baba said that he wished to go round the city and mix with the Chinese crowds. I had had very little experience of Baba's ways and was still rather awkward in his presence. I took them along the Bund, and from the French settlement by tram through the British to the war-stricken districts near the North station, thinking it would interest them. Not at all. There were not enough people. We took a tram back and saw Nanking Road, the now brightly lit Chinese stores, Chungking Road, racecourse, along Tibet Road. The streets were densely packed with long-gowned clerks and short-coated coolies, endless rickshawpullers with cheerful faces and poverty-stricken appearances beseeching us to ride not walk; the

narrow streets were hung with paper lanterns and waving banners. Baba was delighted as we threaded the narrow, perfumed alleys, and the Chinese turned to stare at us in a not too friendly manner. Baba was delighted and liked them. After dinner we drove round the three cities-French, British, and the fringe of the Chinese city with its gay lights, restaurants, hotels, and haunts.

On Thursday, the 23rd, Baba saw some visitors Then began a frantic tour of all the steamship agents to hook passages for eight or nine people to India and Europe. Until closing-time Chanji and I were harried off our feet trying to do the impossible. At 5 p.m. we two were in rickshaws returning along the Bund towards the hotel; I was exhausted and said in vexation to Chanji that it was a pity that Baba did not know his own mind, and that I was tired of all this fussing ...

I was called into Baba's room and ticked off by him. If I worried like this it was no use my working for him. That evening after dinner we walked behind the racecourse, then took rickshaws-seven in a row-and went to the Cathay cinema in French town about 9.30 p.m. We were due at the station at 11 p.m., and I was on tenterhooks because I knew Baba would run it too close. We motored to the station and arrived as the train was due out. The hotel porter was struggling with loads of unnecessary luggage as usual. Baba asked me if we could rush the train or not. I said 'Yes'. We tried, the boys struggled into the crowded second-class carriages, full of Chinese, sitting up all the night, three of us got into sleeping berths, and the capable porter squeezed in all our luggage as the train was moving. For me it was a horrid job.

Next morning 24 June we were met at Nanking by my servants. In my minute house we were nine persons. After breakfast I took Baba up the battlemented city wall, and there we walked along to the left, where at the foot of the sixty-foot wall was the great lake, to the right the city, and ahead the Purple Mountain.

In the afternoon a Frenchman whom we hoped would be interested came out with us, and in his car and another hired car we motored up the mountain, then right across the hill-sides, finally jumping down the stoney, slippery descent to the water temple, thence to the Sun Yat Sen memorial, and home by car. Baba loved the rough walking and led the way across country like a scout leader.

That evening we sat in Baba's room and listened to music.

On Sunday we went to the national cinema in the Chinese city, we also drove through the swarming Chinese lanes, so narrow that the car almost touched the walls on either side, the open shops that display a hundred handicrafts and trades, to the temple of Confucius. The

Chinese coming Buddha is called Milo Fu - I had in the house a statue in lacquer, which I gave to Baba.

We left by train for Shanghai. My servants all came to the station and asked to say goodbye to Baba. Baba left Shanghai on the Kaiser-i-Hind, and I sailed for Dairen six days later.

He had sent a message to his friends in America saying that he would not come. This change of plan caused much dismay among those who had been expecting him in Hollywood, and gave a shock from which not all recovered; for the expected event had been much publicized. However, this was an example of Baba's way of working. I discuss it later.

Marseilles was reached on 28 July, thus making a second visit to Europe on the world tour, and the party went to Santa Margherita, Italy, where they were met by others from England and a holiday of three weeks was enjoyed in Baba's company. The following is an account by one who took part:

These Italian days with Baba were very happy times. Warm sun, blue sea, a wonderful coast line, and behind the hotel green hills and shaded walks through vineyards and forests. In the morning we trooped down to the rocks, bathed, dived, splashed, or basked in the sun, Baba in our midst. Though he used to swim much in India, he had special reasons for not swimming now. He would paddle in the water, and twice allowed us to row him in a little boat while we swam around. Twice he went out in a sailing boat, also in a motor-boat to San Fruttuoso.

Baba's room led out on to a private balcony When we swam before breakfast we would see his white-clad figure watching us. Often at night we would sit there listening to music on the gramophone, Indian and Persian songs which he would explain to us, Spanish dances and Paul Robeson's negro spirituals. On the terrace we would act charades, or get up entertainments. Under the name of Thomas, Baba would take dancing lessons with one of us who was a skilled dancing instructor. Thus, and in innumerable ways, Baba entered into our lives as playmate, friend, child, and father.

Some nights we would watch his working; he would ask to play loris, a card game, while or before he worked. The apparent holiday was interspersed with sudden conflicts among us of temperament, jealousies, and difficult moods that temporarily obscured the sun. Many lessons were quietly taught.

There were from eleven to thirteen of us in the party; we looked forward to days of rest and pleasure.

The second day Baba said that he had a great spiritual work to perform. A cave connected with Saint Francis was to be found at Assisi. There he would fast undisturbed for twenty-four hours. I was told to leave on the first of August to make arrangements. It was my first stay in Italy and I was ignorant of the Italian language. I took a heavy rucksack because a mountain cave would be cold, and after a tiresome journey via Florence and Perugia, I arrived at 3.30 p.m. August the second, at Assisi. The station is in the valley and one and a half miles from the walled city

On my arrival I knew nothing about Assisi or the district. I discovered the names of buildings and places later. I took a room. I visited the great church, found a Roman Catholic priest who could speak English, and explained that I wished to meditate in a cave associated with St Francis. He seemed surprised and when he found that I was a Protestant could not see his way to help me.

Practically all the places known to be associated with St Francis, and many apocryphal places, have been covered by churches, monasteries, and monuments. Like other places of pilgrimage, Assisi had been commercialized. I had not foreseen this difficulty and was rather depressed.

Bearing in mind the plan of the city, I walked through its entire length until I came out of the Porta Nuova. I decided to cut across country and up the steep mountain slopes. It was already 5 p.m. I struck the Carceri road, it was steep and dusty and I was tired. I did not know of the monastery's existence.

The beautiful Umbrian landscape unfolded. To the right lay the valley of Spoleto. Cornfields, and the rows of gnarled olive trees were left behind, the mountain slopes became steeper and wilder. I looked for caves along the route and could see none. I turned into a narrow, thickly-wooded gorge, passed beneath an arch, decorated with religious paintings, and, deciding to trespass further, came to a group of small stone buildings and rang a bell. A monk in a brown habit let me in. A minute monastery in a grove of ilex trees clung like a swallow's nest to the side of a narrow ravine. In the small courtyard was a well; on two sides were buildings - a refectory, and a chapel built over the cave of St Francis. On the other side ran a low stone parapet still warm from the setting sun. It commanded a beautiful view of the distant valley framed by the dark sides of the ravine. I talked in French to the guide-monk - it was no longer a monastery but a show-place for tourists and pilgrims.

Deep in the rock was a little cave (small because St Francis was very small in stature) where he used to meditate, with a coffin-shaped hollow in which he slept. It could be of no use to Baba because tourists might come to look round at any moment; another cave nearby was worse, it was by the road and even more exposed. I felt disappointed and tired. It seemed as if I should fail Baba. I walked back as it was now getting dark.

Talking to a lady in the hotel in English and with the Carceri guide-monk in French, I familiarized them with my interest in St Francis and gleaned information. There was a police regulation about strangers having to sleep in a recognized hotel to be considered; the monk expostulated with me when I said I wanted to meditate for four hours. 'It was dangerous even for monks to meditate so long, and you might become insane. I was able to convince him of my sincere interest. Then I learnt that when St Francis longed to draw apart from the multitude, he and four companions would meditate separately on the slopes of Monte Subasio

I explored the neighbourhood and found a ruined shelter - an overhanging eave of rock on the side of a hill. In front of this indented rock was a rough stone wall, but the roof timbers and tiles had fallen down long ago; the gnarled roots of a tree clung to the rock above, with no protection from the rain.

Tall trees growing at a lower level also hid it from passers-by in the opposite side of the gorge. It was dirty, full of broken tiles, damp rubbish, and leaves. I had to excavate it, tear down bushes to hide its entrance, and finally find a new path down the hillside so that none could see us enter it.

My instructions were to meditate in the selected place for four hours each day, to fast partially, and on the day preceding Baba's arrival to meditate for eight hours. I was thus able to test whether it was so far off the beaten track as to be secure from interruption for the twenty-four hours required for Baba, and also by my daily visits to the Monastery to prepare the way. It was not ideal but I could find no other.

The hotel became accustomed to my long absences. I lit a small fire to drive away insects and to make the cave drier, but had to be careful. Never have I found meditation so difficult as during those daily periods - contrary thoughts, the darkening hours, the encircling trees, dampness, cold, and depression. What should I do if the police or some stranger found me seated like an Indian yogi on an Italian hillside?

I always find it hard to remember very clearly Baba's instructions, my eye and my mind are so busy following his fingers on the board. At the time they may seem clear, but they usually lack detail or provision for the miscarriage of plans. The picture is outlined in a few swift strokes, and it is taken for granted that there will be no obstacles.

I felt quite ill and very depressed as the time drew near on Friday, when I had to meditate in the cave for eight hours. I trudged up the dirty road in the heat of the sun, carrying in my rucksack the various articles required, water-bottles, a raincoat, blankets, matches, paper candles, flashlight, sticks of incense to drive away insects, a meta stove to make tea for Baba during his fast, an umbrella in case of rain. I borrowed a thick rug from the monk. I pulled down some green saplings to block the path, to close the entrance, and to put in place of the roof.

On Saturday, the fifth day of my stay in Assisi, Baba was due to arrive by car at 2 p.m. This would enable him to finish his fast by 4 p.m. on Sunday. I felt ill and depressed. I stood at my window to watch the car come up the road from the station. Every sound seemed to herald his arrival in the hot sleepy afternoon. Three p.m. and no car came. I felt disheartened, because he is nearly always punctual, and I had received none of the customary wires.

They arrived at Assisi three hours late, at 5 p.m.

I had explained both at the hotel and to the monk that on my last day I should like to meditate for a longer period. After a wash and a meal at 6.30 p.m. our programme was arranged.

We motored part of the way up the hill to save time. I then led the party down a hidden path to the cave, which we reached at 7.30 p.m. Baba would rest in the cave during the entire fast, and none was to go near him or to look. At all costs we were to keep intruders away. If he required anything to drink it was to be put just outside the entrance. Chanji and I were to sit outside and guard the cave all night till 10 a.m., and then Kaka and Quentin would relieve us. But at 4.30 we were to return and at 5.30 p.m. eat together, when Baba's fast was concluded. The leafy saplings hid the entrance to the cave and blocked the path leading to it.

At 8.40 p.m. Kaka and Quentin left us to walk back to the hotel. Chanji and I shivered and sat at a little distance from the cave. He told me of the watching at a cave at Panchgani. Strange thoughts and questions - how little we really understood the nature of Baba's work. His body was there in the cave, but where was he? Sleep weighed so heavy on our eyelids. Could we not keep watch for a little time? Surely

St Francis must be present too. Might not his meditations seven hundred years ago have prepared this holy place?

Cold, sleepy, tired. About midnight we made a cup of tea on the meta stove and put it beside the entrance. Colder; and then light filtered gradually through the trees. At 9 a.m. we were relieved by the others, and walked home to sleep.

At 4.30 p.m. we returned carrying food. Baba came out, as his work was accomplished sooner than he expected. We had a very happy meal, seated round a wooden plank on the floor like children at a picnic. At 5.30 p.m. Baba had called us into the cave and explained some further plans to us; we still felt rather awed. We carefully collected some mementoes, cleared up all traces of our occupation, burned paper and rubbish, and returned the blanket and some bottles for water to the monk who had been so kind.

Baba, though content, with his work accomplished, was in great pain; we had to support him during our descent from the mountain, one on either side of Baba we would run together down the steep path. It seemed as if the jolting and physical exercise helped to bring him down to earth. He looked like someone dazed, suffering from a severe headache.

Climbing up through the dark ilex trees, we came on to the road. We stood on a quarry mound and looked across the valley, purple shadows and distant lights twinkling, and above the line of hills the afterglow of a golden sunset. Baba, despite his pain (once we had to lay him down by the roadside), was entranced by the beauty of the Umbrian landscape. St Francis must have often walked this road and enjoyed this scene. The feeling that we had assisted at a great spiritual work (though we did not understand it), Baba's presence and suffering, and the setting made our descent from the mountain memorable.

Leaving the bare hill-side, we walked down. The stars came out. Baba had often to stop and rest...

Here I interpolate the record of one of the watchers who relieved the writer of the above account at 9 a.m.

We went to hear Mass in the crypt of the San Francesco which was a wonderful and impressive beginning to a memorable day.

Afterwards we shouldered our rucksacks and toiled up the hill towards Carceri. As the sun rose it grew hotter and hotter and we were glad to reach the shade of the woods where we found the other two. They returned to Assisi and we settled down to our vigil. The woods

were now alive with birds whose song was deafening - as if in memory of St Francis they seemed to throng around us - butterflies and moths lit on our hands. The sun rose higher and even in the deep shade the heat was great.

At midday I heard sounds from inside the cave, and forgetting not to look I saw through the leaves of the saplings Baba standing with his eyes shut and facing the sun - he made strange humming sounds; not daring to look again I lay quiet. At one o'clock he clapped his hands, we lifted the branches from the entrance - taking the board he spelt out directions, telling Kaka to go to Assisi and telling the other two to be with him at 5.30 p.m.; I was to call him at 5.30 p.m.: Baba had a dazed look in his eyes and there was no sign of recognition. No one disturbed the peace of the woods, but from time to time peasants called to each other or sang snatches of song.

The others arrived, and at 5.30 I called Baba without touching him. He spelt out on the board, 'How fortunate you are to be the first to speak to me after all this'. He seemed to have great difficulty in coming down from his recent state of consciousness, and it was a great struggle for him to return to the normal. He called us all into the cave and we sat around him. (He would pause from time to time to pass his hand over his forehead as if he suffered from a severe headache, and then continue.) He began to give us certain instructions and tell us what plans had been decided on for future work. After nearly an hour's talk, we broke our fast at 6.30 p.m.

On the 18th Baba and the party went to Venice, where he gave a discourse on the spiritual significance of St Mark's; on the 20th he sailed in the *Ausonia* for Alexandria, the English disciples returning home, one to Florence, others to China. A stay of five days was made in Egypt, Baba visiting the Pyramids and the Coptic church at Cairo.

What interest he has in the Pyramids he kept to himself, but he said that the Coptic Church contained a cave where Joseph and Mary stayed on their flight from Herod: to visit this cave was his object in going to Egypt. The custodian of the church made some difficulty about opening the cave, but Baba insisted, and he spent some time there. Bombay was reached at the beginning of September, and Baba went straight to Nasik.

FOURTH VISIT TO EUROPE, 1932-1933.

In the early winter Baba sent certain of his disciples to travel through Germany, Austria, Italy, and Hungary, and others to China and

America. Earlier in the year he had sent two Indian disciples to Australia and New Zealand. On 21 November 1932, he sailed for Europe on the Conte Verde. He sent a message to India on this voyage, which read as follows:

"India is a spiritual country. It possesses the most fortunate and unique position in the world of being the land of saints and spiritual masters, since ages. Therefore the spiritual atmosphere of India must be kept up even at the cost of being in bondage and materially unhappy.

"It does not matter how much India suffers, as long as its spiritual power is retained. Moreover, the result of its present suffering will be freedom and happiness.

"It is only after experiencing bondage and misery that the true value of freedom and happiness is really appreciated.

"But to bring this suffering to an earlier end, there must be love for friend and foe, goodwill, patience, and forbearance. Also, India should try to remedy its own defects, instead of clamouring at the faults of others. The hatred between the leading communities, and their petty yet disastrous quarrels and fights, must cease-and the freedom and happiness of India are ensured.

"The world will soon realize that neither cults, creeds, dogmas, religious ceremonies, lectures, and sermons, on the one hand, nor, on the other hand, ardent seeking for material welfare or physical pleasures, can ever bring about real happiness-but that only selfless love and universal brotherhood can do it."

Baba arrived at Venice on 2 December, and after visiting Milan and Paris reached London on 6 December, where he stayed at a Knightsbridge hotel until the 14th, seeing a large number of people; he then left for Switzerland, sailing from Genoa on the 17th by the Esperia for Egypt, where he remained until 3 January the following year.

After a visit to the Pyramids, Baba left Port Said on 3 January by the Baloeran with the intention of going to Ceylon, which was reached on the 12th. He stayed in Colombo until the 30th of the month. While there he went with three of his disciples for a short stay at Bandarawela in the hills. One day he expressed a desire to find a place where he could retire into seclusion for twenty-four hours, in the same manner as he had done at Assisi. The party walked up by a narrow path to a Buddhist temple. The novice who was looking after the temple was not anxious to allow them to enter, so they descended some steps into

a small courtyard adjoining the temple. A door opened, and an old man came out who appeared to be at least one hundred years old. He seemed to recognize Baba, and communicated with him by signs. Baba also talked by signs, telling him that he wished to retire into a room for twentyfour hours without being disturbed. The old man understood, and ordered the novice to open the temple and to show Baba the room adjoining, which Baba used. The return to Nasik took place on 6 February.

Arrangements were completed for a party of English disciples, women and girls, to visit India, with the intention afterwards of going on to China and California. On 24 March 1933, six of the girls accompanied by one man disciple, who had previously acted as Baba's English secretary, left London; they were met in Paris by three other girls, and on the 27th they sailed from Genoa in the *Victoria*. Bombay was reached on 8 April, where the party was met by several Indian disciples, including two women. They were driven to a hotel, where there were others to meet them. Then they were taken to meet Baba, who had with him Mani, his sister, Gulmai, his spiritual mother, and the mothers, wives, and sisters of other disciples.

A diary kept by Kitty Davy of the girls' visit to India reads as follows:

Needless to say, those of us who had parents or close relations found them to be displeased at our plans, they could not approve of what we were doing, but that did not keep any of us back. What a feeling it must be to be free to decide one's own life and plans! It wastes so much energy, doing things in the face of so much opposition.

The voyage was interesting, pleasant, and uneventful. We broke the journey at Port Said and Aden, and some went to a dance. Baba had sent us definite orders not to sun-bathe when on the Red Sea, and about taking plenty of iced lemonade, etc. Until leaving London we had been allowed to eat fish. Not one detail did he leave us to settle. He thought out everything beforehand. We kept our plans very much to ourselves-and it was not till the last night that they leaked out. This I think was the cause of so much trouble with the Press later. We got up one show on the boat for the band as we had danced most evenings in the second-class saloon.

At Bombay we were met by many disciples. We had to decide on the spot about luggage, as all heavy stuff was to go direct to Colombo and there we were to pick it up on our way to Japan. They were rather horrified at all our luggage, but it was for six months, and though

wardrobe trunks are very large, and not practicable for travelling, we had been advised to buy them; a trunk for furs we left to be sent direct to America.

Baba was staying about twenty-five miles outside Bombay at Kandevely, with a group of twelve Indian women disciples. I think the men were staying elsewhere.

At 2 p.m. the car arrived at the hotel to take us to him. Imagine our excitement! We put on our summer clothes and our best - the only occasion on which we ever wore our best clothes: nearly all we had was unsuitable as it turned out.

It was a pleasant drive, seeing the gardens and looking down from over Bombay harbour. The rest of the journey was a little dull and uninteresting, on the flat all the time. At last we arrived. We were shown into a large salon upstairs leading on to a balcony, two rooms leading out from left to right. We made for the right and found the girls with many saris lying around on beds and on the floor, and Dolly lying rather ill on the bed, but no Baba. In the other room Baba was awaiting us. I got there first, slipping as usual on the floor-and falling, for Baba to save me in time.

The women were delighted and charming, and made us all feel at home and happy. First we took off our European clothes and dressed in gorgeous saris, each choosing what she felt suited her best. We sat together in the centre of the room. After an hour we had to change again into our own things as downstairs there had already been assembled, for two hours or more, a large group of people coming to pay their respects to Baba - people of all ages, men, women, children, each with a garland of flowers.

At the appointed hour Baba came downstairs with us all, except Mehera and the sick lady. He sat on a sofa dressed in his white robe-and the rest of us about the room, some on chairs, some on the floor. It was a wonderful scene: men, women, and children. To some Baba gave advice and help, to others just his blessing. Most, I believe, came for help rather than just out of love. I suppose about a hundred. When the last had gone, Baba retired upstairs.

Towards eight o' clock the men motored us back to Bombay, and we were glad to get to bed. The next afternoon we spent a short time with Baba. We had that morning got our Chinese visas and brought them to Baba to see. I don't remember very clearly about this afternoon. Norina tried to comfort the Indian women, who were already feeling sad at Baba's leaving them. Some of us seemed very tired and slept. There were many private interviews and much business discussed, and

we talked freely with the Indian women, trying to get to know them better. Baba was leaving Sunday morning early for Bhandardara.

Chanji and one or two of the other men remained to see us off early on Monday at 6 a.m. for Igatpuri, whence we went by car to Bhandardara a most lovely spot. First we crossed one of the biggest viaducts in the world. We lost our way and had to ask the direction as we drew near. After crossing the viaduct we passed Lake Arthur on the right and came to two gates. We then found ourselves in a wonderful garden, with bright-coloured flowers, trees, etc., and a low-built bungalow. At the back were mountains. It was a dream - and we felt so happy, miles away from everyone. It was a perfect two or three days.

After the three days allowed they went to Agra, spending one night on the train, and the second day there they received a shock:

Baba called me to him this second day and said that it might be necessary for us to return home after our tour. Would we go, and obey all his instructions? He said the men would remain with him. He continued that he had money put aside for such an emergency and would later tell us what his instructions would be. I never saw him quite so unhappy as when he said this. After lunch some of us, Delia, Margaret, Norina, and I, were told the same story, and all, of course, said they would obey his will, whatever it was. Minta was not told till we got to Srinagar, and the others at Murree.

The tour was continued to Rawalpindi, Murree and Kashmir, every detail planned by Baba; travelling by train and hired buses. Returning they went straight to their ship at Bombay, Baba leaving them at the docks but taking no notice of them, nor they of him. The diary ends:

On the voyage we met several very charming people. We preferred to keep our plans to ourselves, but this was not to be. Before leaving Bombay we saw a Daily Mirror with a fullpage account of our visit to the East - to follow a Hindu Master, etc. etc., describing each of us separately and our addresses in London. Think of our dismay! But worse was to follow. Second day out came cables from London newspapers, with prepaid replies to know why we were returning, were we being deported, or were we disillusioned, or was money short? At Marseilles, more fuss. A dozen reporters came on the boat and I being appointed spokesman they all came to my cabin. I found them polite; afterwards the articles in the French papers were more truthful and

far better than those of the English newspapers. The latter were out for sensational news and another Rasputin story. In spite of all precautions, some of us got photographed, and one pressman was clever enough to board the taxi that two of the group had taken and accompanied them to a hairdresser in Marseilles.

On their arrival at Marseilles Norina and Elizabeth returned to America, the others came home to England.

FIFTH VISIT TO THE WEST, 1933

Baba remained at Nasik until 4 June, when he went to Bombay, and on the 12th sailed from Bombay for Europe in the Victoria, accompanied by Chanji, Kaka, Adi, and Pendu. The ship arrived at Genoa on the 24th, where Baba was met by a number of his English and American friends, including those who had returned from India, and a villa was taken at Portofino, though there was not room for all the party, some staying in the village. Each member of the party had his or her own special job, either looking after the villa, or typing, writing letters, translating, and so on. A visit to Rome was made on the 7th; the account of this visit by one who took part in it is as follows:

On Friday at 8.15 a.m. we arrived in Rome and went to the Elysee Hotel. The ladies slept on one floor and the men near to Baba's room on the upper floor.

After breakfast we went to Saint Peter's. Baba wore a small beret to hide his flowing hair, walking in the midst of our party he was able to enter the church without taking it off. He walked up the church and stood in the centre beneath the dome, there he turned to the four quarters and made a sign. Then along the left aisle; he would not allow us to linger; he turned and walked rapidly back to the West door. (Near was the famous Michelangelo statue of the Madonna and dead Christ. The model for Norina's face in *The Miracle*.) The forecourt is truly magnificent. Inside it is too ornate, and there is little spiritual atmosphere. We then visited the Capitoline Hill, the Forum, and the Coliseum. Baba went inside for a few minutes. We drove round Mussolini's office twice.

That afternoon, after seeing some visitors, Baba went to a famous cafe - Aragno al Corso - a central point of Rome and much traffic passes by. Our tables were on the pavement, we ate rolls, cakes, and lemon-water ices. Baba watched the people and talked with Margaret

and Norina, who were sitting either side of him. Suddenly he was absent.. Some of the party did not recognize the change and continued to chatter to him.

People stared at Baba while we were seated at the cafe. We then walked along to a variety and cinema show (White Shadows, a very good film, Baba liked the Hawaiian dancing). The theatre had a circular roof which rolled away when the variety turns were on. Swallows flew over the circular opening, the blue sky and fresh air were delightful. Baba worked as usual during much of the show. That night we went early to bed. Baba had work to do throughout the night. The next morning he told us that his work had been achieved more quickly than he anticipated. Therefore we were to return to Santa Margherita that afternoon.

Before leaving the villa Baba had given strict instructions that no one was to come to the house for meals, except for tea, 'Not even the Archangel Gabriel'. A wire came to Rome asking, 'Can X come to lunch today?' Baba, on receipt of the wire, remarked, 'Not even the Archangel Gabriel, and yet they ask'. He did not wire. This led to a curious sequel on our return.

After breakfast we again drove round the city, this time in two cars - the Lateran, the holy staircase (Baba stayed in the car), the many fountains of Rome, to the Vatican Museum and galleries. A little tired, we sat in the Sistine Chapel. Pendu asked Baba many questions about popes, cardinals, and artists. Baba did not wish it. He said that 'This place, today, has really been blessed'. The horizontally-placed mirror that reflects Michelangelo's frescoed ceiling showed a full-length picture of God, His outstretched finger touching the hand of Adam, and communicating the spark of life to Adam. In the Vatican we positively raced through the galleries ... Baba does not seem to wish that we should give our minds to the beauties of Art, he tantalizes us with the spectacles and wonders of Rome, Venice, Paris, Madrid, London, Agra, Kashmire, China, and America, but the moment we turn aside to look he whisks us away.

It was very hot after lunch and most Romans disappear to sleep. Norina had arranged for a string of visitors. Unfortunately, being Romans, they arrived late. Baba said he would not see the latecomers, it was with great difficulty that some of them got into Baba's room after their appointed times.

Anita had asked for a certain reproduction of a picture from Rome. Half an hour before we were due to leave Baba himself went with Kitty and Minta to buy this picture for her. When our taxis reached the

station the driver became very insolent, took advantage of our being foreigners, and charged a ridiculous price. Fortunately Tina understood Italian and warned us it was exorbitant. A policeman came to the scene and took our part, a just price was paid (of course our luggage was great), and we went on the platform. Another upset thus marked our departure from Rome. Baba did not like Rome and was happy to be on the train leaving the city. We all had coffee on the platform and the journey was a happy one until we reached Santa Margherita at 11.45 p.m. No one met us and Baba looked tired. We had to hire another car because it took some time (and might be too late) for Elizabeth to get her car from the garage at midnight. On arrival at the foot of the hill on which the villa stood, again no one to help us carry the bags the very steep half-mile. Baba went straight to his bedroom.

An incident that took place at Portofino on 10 July is worth recording in Kitty Davy's words:

After tea, fifteen or sixteen of us went for a walk with Baba along the cliffs. He took us down a rather dangerous cliff to the sea. Some lagged behind, despite Baba's repeated calls to keep together. Several fell out by the wayside, their shoes, their dresses, or their nerves were not sufficient to enable them to slide down a steep incline to the sea. Baba, two girls and two men only, reached the shore. Instead of returning the way we came, Baba tried to climb back another way. The others returned home along the top path. (We did not realize just how dangerous and steep it was.) Nimble and light-footed, Baba climbed up the smooth rocky surfaces - what could we do but follow? When we had ascended half-way, we dare not look back or contemplate return. Baba was very gentle with the two girls, and always helped them over difficult places. By this time we had grasped the idea that it might be a symbolic adventure, so we went forward confident in Baba.

We were stuck. Baba and S. tried several paths and climbs. Above was a sheer surface of rock and thin trees, and round to the right was a precipice that fell almost perpendicularly from a great height into the sea. We searched for the main path, which we hoped to rejoin, though we did not realize it was more than 150 feet above us. S. crept round corners, climbed up stone cliffs, hung on to the roots of bushes, his heart beating like a piston.

He half expected that a miracle would happen or that Baba would suddenly find a simple way out. After thirty minutes or more of futile efforts S. noticed a very steep cleft that seemed to have been used as a

tip for earth and rubbish, it provided a very insecure footing, and fifteen feet up it was blocked by a very large boulder, so smooth that it offered neither foothold nor grips for the hand. It seemed the only possible way out.

Baba, wiry, lightly-built, and nimble, climbed first, scattering a little earth behind him. He clapped his hands as a signal for us to follow and disappeared from view. S. followed, but stuck on the boulder for some anxious minutes, the two girls and the other youth were waiting below. Above was a very steep gully, perhaps forty feet deep, filled with loose earth, rusty bits of metal, broken glass; a foot moved meant the descent upon the girls below of stones, possibly a small avalanche of rubbish and earth. A final wriggle and S. got past the boulder. By hanging on to the roots of bushes he could crouch on the loose earth, but he could not manage the remaining forty feet. Baba had completely disappeared. The youth who weighed five stone or less came next, a slight hand grip, and he was past the boulder.

Baba's last signal had been 'Come up'. S. told Vivienne to follow on. She stuck on the boulder, her strength slowly ebbed. We shouted for help to Baba, and heard no response. Had he left us in the lurch? Was it a test? or had he relied on S. to see the girls through the difficult place? S. thought of heroic things he ought to do but could not do. He himself was gradually slipping downwards. Any desperate move meant a torrent of earth into V's face. She hung suspended there for ten or fifteen minutes, possibly longer; it seemed an age. Two fingers of her right hand clinging to a small hole in the rock, her body in the smooth boulder, and her left knee wedged in the rock at the side.

The others had returned to the house. They were surprised that after two hours we had not yet returned. Meanwhile, Baba had left the gully, mounted still higher up the cliff and was clapping his hands to attract attention. We were a mile or more away from the house. No one heard him. But an Italian boy, Tino, who worked on the estate, met a priest who told him of the clapping. He ran to Baba, understood his signs to fetch ropes, and rushed back to the house kitchen. Kaka, Adi, and Pendu, who were then cooking our evening meal, left their pots burning and ran.

A loosening of Vivienne's hold meant a fall of fifteen to twenty feet on top of the other girl, and then a roll down 300 feet into the sea.

S. could just touch her hand, but was unable, his right hand having to cling to a bush, to exercise sufficient force or to increase his reach, to help her up. It had been possible with the youth, who was less than half her weight. .. At length shouts were heard from the top.

Pendu appeared with ropes and a rescue party. Baba, evidently rather pleased at the spice of danger, came down the gully. Even he found it very difficult to keep his footing on this loose earth. S. bent down a long-stemmed bush, and held its root end firmly with his right hand and while Baba's right hand held the other end of the bush he bent to pull Vivienne up over the boulder.

Pendu, who is very muscular and active, took the rope down to Anita, who was still standing below. By means of the rope we all climbed to safety, and our little adventure was over. Baba was as happy as a schoolboy who had found a way to rifle some difficult birds nest.

I have described this at length because it illustrates several things, Baba's love of sport and his fearlessness in danger. The curious situations into which he puts people; the use of ordinary means rather than of strange or occult processes.

To celebrate the event, Baba called us all into the library, retold the story and gave us each with his own hands a sip of Italian wine. The Italian servants (who were present and knew the danger) wept with joy. Baba was very pleased, and said that he had done a great work through this adventure. The energies set loose, the feelings aroused, and the courage displayed were utilized by him for his spiritual work. Thus happily ended that day.

On 24 July Baba sailed by the Conte Verde for Bombay.

SIXTH VISIT TO THE WEST, 1933

Soon, however, he was to come to Europe again, this time with the intention of going to America. He had received an invitation to address the World Congress of Faiths to meet at Chicago in October. He sailed on 25 September by the Conte Verde and reached London on 9 October, where he stayed for thirteen days, seeing many visitors every day. An entertainment was arranged for him at the 'Q' Theatre, and he visited a number of theatres and cinemas. He also visited a disciple who lived in Kent.

The intention of going to America was not fulfilled. Instead, on 22 October Baba left for Spain, staying for a night at Avila, the birth-place of Saint Teresa, and remaining in Madrid for a week, afterwards going to Barcelona, thence to Marseilles. In Madrid Baba visited a bullfight. The following is extracted from Kitty Davy's diary of this visit:

Baba looked from the windows at villages ... more like India

than any other European country. He was happy to be in Spain. At 6 p.m. we reached Avila.

This was to be our last meal for twenty-four hours. Baba had very special work to do here, and during our fast we were not to touch him, though we went together for a walk over the hills with him. Shortly before noon the next day we crossed the square and entered the cathedral. Tall grey walls, straight columns of stone supported a high, vaulted roof decorated with gold; the side aisles were like dark tunnels owing to the absence of windows; the nave was arched by a stone rib supporting on high a superb crucifix which was illuminated by shafts of light descending from clerestory windows ... we were very exalted, the spiritual atmosphere was not unlike that of Saint Mark's at Venice, or at Assisi. As we left, Baba directed that four silver coins should be given to the sacristan.

We then walked through the city, to visit the shrine of Saint Teresa, built on the side of her former home. The city is small and soon we were outside the crenelated walls; the terrace on which we stood commanded the plain and exposed the hills to our view. Baba pointed to a hill behind the town and said we should walk there. Climbing up a dusty donkey track we looked back at Avila. The brilliant sun shone on its encircling walls while many bastions threw dark shadows, steep cobbled streets led up to the cathedral-crowned summit. Long ago, before the cathedral was built, Baba had been there, he said, and we were now looking for the place on the hill where he used to sit. .. As a remembrance we picked some of the fragrant herbs. On our return we broke the fast and enjoyed a feast of fruits, tea, and wine.

Baba was so happy at Avila. There are in Europe, he explained, as in other countries, holy places, particularly connected with great spiritual working. The four centres are Saint Mark's at Venice, a place on the Ligurian coast in Italy, Assisi, and Avila. We had now visited them all. They were holy ground from which sprang the saints-we thought of Saint Francis, Saint Teresa, and Saint John of the Cross. One of us was ordered to return to Avila in ten days and to visit this particular place every day for seven days'.

We reached Madrid at 10.30 p.m. on the evening of the 24th, and went to the hotel that had been chosen by Baba. The next morning he could not get the hot bath he required. The whole party was rushed up and down the stairs, expostulating with the staff. Many promises. In Spain dinner is eaten at 10 p.m.; they go to bed at midnight or later. Things are put off till tomorrow, and they get up late. Once more D. felt responsible, worried, and guilty. We went to complain to the

travel bureau about all our discomforts en route, and got little satisfaction. The food was not as Baba wished it. It was not a holiday atmosphere for anyone.

He wished to come in contact with the masses. All day we walked along the crowded streets of Madrid until our feet were tired. It is a beautiful city, the air is clear, bracing, and cool. A brilliant sun poured down, and the people lounged in the streets. Dark-skinned, polite, and unhurried, there was none of that fret and tension that we find in the industrialized cities of Europe. Sumptuous public buildings and avenues contrasted with very poorly clad people in the streets. In this respect not unlike Moscow. Baba particularly loved to stand in the central square, Puerta del Sol, the Gate of the Sun, among the crowds. Every day and several times a day he came here. Sometimes as we walked, despite his normal appearance, European clothes, and Spanish beret which concealed his hair, they would turn and stare at him as if drawn by something they could not understand.

That night we went to a cabaret, a rather low-class dance hall; along the side tables were seated many Mary Magdalenes, and on the stage appeared some wonderful Spanish dancers. Many of the party were anxious to see the old national dances; they were happy. Baba's presence at such a place might seem shocking, but then we have little conception of the scope of his work.

The next morning we ran to the hot-water taps. We had been promised boiling water and hoped that our fingers would register an increase of temperature. Tragedy. Baba's displeasure once more fell on the head of D. He could not work here, he would leave for Marseilles. So this was our holiday!

Why should one who was without desires make so much fuss about such trivial matters as hot baths and food? As he himself had chosen the hotel, why blame others who do not claim to be all-knowing? We went to look for another hotel, frantic cablegrams and long-distance 'phone calls; we found another hotel. Strange to relate, we found that the travel bureau had chosen the very hotel that Baba himself had rejected. We moved to the Hotel Londres; it was ideal and Baba's room overlooked the Gate of the Sun.

Baba explained to D.: he had faults, egoism, and weaknesses, these scenes were manufactured to stir up the feelings, and according to the way in which we bore them Baba could work on our characters and in some way use the energies and emotions liberated for spiritual work. If D. had refused to be taken in and had exploded and said that it was an unnecessary fuss, 'If you want to go to Marseilles, go', Baba would

have had to find another way of stirring the feelings. It was part of the great game. The sun shone once more.

Baba was now happy. We walked miles; we visited the Prado Art Gallery where he was pleased to see preoccupation with the life of Jesus and the saints: El Greco, Velasquez, Goya once again we had that sensation of Time rolled away as Baba looked at the pictures of the past. At the Theatre Espanol we saw Argentina dance.

Our visit to the royal palace was marred by an incident that tells against us. When we were about to enter the royal apartments, Baba was stopped because he would not take off his hat, as he did not wish to expose his long hair and arouse the curiosity of strangers. He expects us to know without asking. So when some asked if they should stay with him or go quickly round without him, he said 'Go'. Three went and ran round the tedious state rooms; when they returned they discovered that they had done wrong to leave Baba to wait outside.

The Hotel Londres was wonderful. But Baba complained that there was not enough garlic and pepper in the food. It was Norina's department; before every meal-time she would be in a state of suspense, rushing up and down three flights of steps, into the kitchen, talking to the staff in a mixture of tongues. The hotel people must have thought us crazy, but were still very kind. In this way did Baba stir N. 's feelings. Of course, he always said when he played these jokes on us, 'Don't worry, don't be upset'. It is as if someone stuck a pin into you and said, 'Don't mind, I am not hurting you'. N. stood it all wonderfully. But for the last four days of our stay every dish was smothered in garlic; apart from this the food was wonderful.

Night after night we went to the cinema, the decision and bookings were Tod's job. One evening we visited a theatre in the working-class quarter, beforehand we walked through the poor streets and Baba was happy. A third-rate, bare-backed musical comedy, sitting in the front stalls there was no escaping its implications. Finally its utter boredom was relieved by a pleasant scene in which they sang those long plaintive folk-songs that betray the influence of the Moors. Baba liked these. Then he went to a highbrow German Ufa film about submarines; unfortunately we had to sit in the second row. This enabled Baba to stir up the feelings of Tod, how he would not let Baba see the films he liked: he had got bad seats, he was sent to change them-a difficult task when the house is crowded and you can't speak Spanish.

Baba spoke to each of us about the special work we were to do when we returned to London. The sun shone day after day. The last three mornings we walked down from the plateau on which Madrid is built,

crossed the River Manzanares, and climbed the opposite hill to the beautiful moors and park.

During our journey to Spain some of the party had mentioned a desire to see a bull-fight, others were not in favour of it. Our last Sunday a bull-fight was held in the afternoon at the Hippodrome. Baba told us to book seats. As the first bull came in one of the ladies began to clutch her neighbour's arm and shriek every time there was a possibility of anything happening. One of the Indian boys began to look very green. Baba was bored and thought it childish. After the second bull was killed we left, that is before the real entertainment had begun. Baba said that his work was accomplished there so it was unnecessary to stay longer.

We left Madrid on the 31st and arrived at Barcelona on 1 November early in the morning. That day Madrid had sent a special delegate to authorize Catalonia to administer its own laws, and this was the day, the hour, and the place. There was a great procession of all the notables of the district and Baba looked from the upper balustrade as they marched in state up the Gothic staircase. It was the seal on the new federal State ... This was one more example of coincidence. None of us knew that this ceremony was to take place. With our guide we then took the bus to the summit of Mount Tibidabo (1,700 feet). From the terrace the view is magnificent.

In the centre of Barcelona is the magnificent Plaza de Cataluna, much traffic, and many people. There among the crowd we sat in a café (as in Rome), then we walked along the thronged streets while dusk passed and the city lights were lit. Always masses of people, little they knew who walked in their midst. His work done, we went to the station and left at 7 p.m. on 2 November. We arrived at Marseilles the next morning at 7 a.m. Enid from Milan and Otto from Zurich were there to meet us. To the Hotel Bristol for bath and breakfast, then Baba had private conversations with each. We were so happy and conscious of an exceptional flow of love and power so great and marked that we all felt overjoyed and lifted up for days afterwards. At noon we were on the Viceroy of India, together in his cabin we sat in silence at his feet, our hearts too full to speak. The cabin was full of silence, outside on the dock someone played on a concertina.

On 2 November Baba left for India, arriving on the 14th. He went to Nasik, and at the end of the month moved his headquarters back to Meherabad. There he remained practically in seclusion for some months, receiving visitors only on Thursdays for three hours in the morning.

SEVENTH VISIT TO THE WEST, 1934

He paid a visit to Bangalore and to the Nandi Hills in April. On the way he stayed for some days at Bombay, seeing a number of people, but he left quietly by the Madras express, travelling third class as usual, taking the usual paraphernalia included in all Baba's journeys - cooking utensils, buckets, lamps, etc. He returned at the beginning of May.

On 9 June Baba left India by the Mongolia for Marseilles. This was a tourist-class ship, and some difficulty was experienced in arranging for Baba to have his meals in his cabin according to his custom. He reached Marseilles on the 22nd, where he was met by several English and American disciples. He stayed in Paris three days, receiving many visitors and discussing the arrangements for a film he desired to have made. He arrived in London on 26 June, and went to a private house at Hampstead. There he stayed for six days, afterwards going to Zurich, where he remained for ten days, many people coming to see him; he spent one day on the mountain, Fallenfluh, near the Mythen of Schwyz. He specially wished to be there, for it is the heart of Switzerland, overlooking the state in which the federation was founded seven hundred years ago. He sat in a hollow on the northern side of the mountain, where the rock falls sheer, and the lakes of Lucerne and Ing can be seen. The seclusion lasted for two hours, no one being allowed within some distance.

While at Zurich, Baba was visited by Gabriel Pascal. The film he wished to have made on his work had been discussed by Norina Matchabelli and others with Pascal in Paris. He had been got seriously interested in the project but found he could make no headway with the ladies who had put it to him. Being a highly impatient man, he fell out with them so seriously that when he heard Baba was to visit Paris he determined to tell him that his (Pascal's) time was being wasted. However, he missed Baba in Paris, but decided to follow him to Zurich to have the matter out. Pascal was in one of his characteristic tempers throughout the journey and had reached boiling point when he arrived at Baba's hotel and demanded to be shown up at once to his room. He had heralded his arrival by a long telegram. He entered the room, determined to denounce Baba and his friends, but as he crossed the floor to where Baba was seated, and strode up to the softly smiling Baba, his anger melted away. There was no violent explosion, he looked at Baba in silence, then said 'What do you wish me to do?' Baba bade him be seated, touched his hand, and talked about his work. Reference was made to the film, but Pascal had nothing to say, neither

had Baba, except that it could wait; some time it must be done. They had a quiet talk, then Pascal went away, happier than he had ever been. 'I was at once his devoted servant', said Pascal who told me the whole story himself. 'Anything he wishes me to do I will do. I shall make the film. It will be my life's supreme task. But I shall not need a script. I shall go out with my men, one day, into the jungle, and there we shall start on the film. It will be made on the spot. I shall show how God lives with men.'

The film was never made, of course. Pascal soon afterwards came to England and embarked on the brief and hectic career in the film industry in the course of which he made his mark. He was one of the most dynamic men I have ever met, a man of genius, but, lacking in self-discipline, lost his head. Though he did not lose contact with Baba he drifted away without meaning to do so; his end in New York was pitiful.

Baba sailed from Marseilles on the 20th on the Strathanaver for India, arriving at Bombay on 2 August.

SECOND WORLD TOUR, 1934-1935.

Baba made his eighth visit to Europe in November, when he sailed on the 15th on the Tascania, arriving in London on the 30th. This was the night of the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, and the party drove through the crowded streets past Buckingham Palace, through Hyde Park and the West End. During the few days he was visited by many people. He left for America on 5 December by the Majestic, arriving in New York on the 12th, where he stayed for two days, afterwards going to Hollywood, which was reached on the 18th. He was returning to Hollywood after two and a half years, and there were many people waiting to see him; but his visit was kept as quiet as possible, he devoting most of his time to interviews in connection with the projected film. But the making of the film was abandoned next year, for a film of this kind could not be made under the prevailing conditions of film production.

On 18 January 1935, Baba left Hollywood for Vancouver, whence he sailed by the Empress of Canada for India; the ship was one day later than schedule, and Baba had to embark within four hours, arriving at Hong Kong on 2 February, which he left the same day by the Japanese ship Fushimi Maru for Colombo, reached on the 13th. Baba travelled by the land route to Ahmednagar, via Madras, and by the 16th was back at Meherabad, where his birthday was not celebrated as usual at his express wish.

I have to make reference at this point to two books published in London, both of which had wide circulations, in which lengthy accounts of Baba were given. The journalist who had visited him in 1931 had published *A Search in Secret India* in 1933. It contains a chapter entitled 'I meet a Messiah'. The writer describes how he approached Baba, who, he says, was sitting in a cave; he was smoking a cigarette and had to be asked to put it out, he also records. His account of the 'so-called Messiah' was as follows, 'his forehead ... is so low as to appear less than average height, and it is so receding as to make me wonder', which makes one wonder, too, if he were describing the right man. He said that Baba promised him 'wonderful spiritual experiences'. When the writer, then known as Raphael Hirsch, came to see me in London some time after his visit he said he had no doubt Baba was false, as he, Raphael Hirsch, had asked him to perform a miracle but Baba could not.

Another rather more serious work appeared this year, 1935, by Rom Landau, entitled *God is My Adventure*. The author had heard of Baba from the interview with James Douglas mentioned on an earlier page: and says that he went to see him a few weeks after at a house in Lancaster Gate. His account is a more sympathetic, more detailed and better written book than the other, but, while there is a good deal of common sense in what he says, Landau was clearly unable to make anything of Baba, beyond saying that, 'In a world in which there is a Steiner there must also be room for a Shri Meher Baba'. Baba remained a mystery to him, as he does to those who look at him with preconceived ideas.

Baba began making arrangements for going into seclusion for one year. For a period of four months, from March to June, instructions were given with regard to the mandali living at Meherabad and the hundreds of other people who were dependent upon him. During this period he travelled unceasingly to Ahmednagar, Nasik, Poona, Bombay, Madras, and other places where his followers lived.

He had become very frail, for not only had the long journey to and from California tired him, but on the voyage from Hong Kong to Colombo he had entered upon a fast, living only upon milk. He continued the fast for a month after reaching Meherabad. He was also doing without much sleep during the whole of this time. For a few days he went to a quiet place near Igatpuri, about thirty miles from Nasik, at the Ghoti dak-bungalow in the mountains, but in three days he was back again in Nasik.

Baba selected another place of retirement after making those nearest to him gather information about many of the mountainous places and

hill stations. He insisted on the most thorough inquiries being made, usually wanting to know details that had been overlooked or regarded as unnecessary. He was saying that he would go to the north-east, towards the Himalayas, but until the last moment he would give no further indication of his intentions beyond the remark that he would stop at another place for a short time en route.

He selected two of the mandali to accompany him. One of these companions had not spoken for seven years, conveying his ideas by means of signs and gestures, using also an alphabet of finger-signs, which he had himself invented, which was so ingenious that only a few of the mandali could read it. The other was a man of tough physique, accustomed to an abstemious life and able to stand hardships. The two were given detailed and repeated instructions as to what was expected of them. A third companion was also selected at the last moment to accompany the others for a certain distance.

The party of three with Baba came back to Bombay on 7 June and left at once. Only one person knew the details of the route and the destination. None of the devotees in Bombay or elsewhere was allowed to know of his destination, except that he was going to the Himalayas. They started by rail in the lowest class, and in the heat of summer, towards the Abu mountains. Next day they arrived at the Abu road station and reached the hill station in the late evening. The party put up at the rest-house, and in the morning set out to find a suitable place in which Baba could retire in seclusion.

Mount Abu-home of the gods-is about one hundred and fifteen miles from Ahmedabad and seventeen miles from the railway. Its highest peak, Guru Sikhar-the hermit's peak-is about 5,600 feet. The climate is healthy, the scenery magnificent, and the mountain range contains many ancient monuments. Baba decided to stay on the hill Ambika, called the Mother of Abu, where there is a small white-washed temple. There is a beautiful little cave on this hill, carved to form a small room, with a small hut near. This is one of many caves in the neighbourhood in which ascetics and sadhus have meditated for generations past. They are thus considered to be holy places. It seems that this particular cave had been used by one of Baba's devotees, who was ordered to go there, so that the name of Baba was well known, and the keeper of the temple was overjoyed to hear that someone had come from Baba. Baba stayed there disguised as one of his own disciples, and saw nobody. The place was not an easy one in which to live, for the winds were strong and cold and the water contained much salt and was hard to digest; Baba continued to live on milk.

After about six weeks Baba declared to his three companions-for the third still remained with them-that the work for which he had gone there was finished, and that he would leave immediately to start work again elsewhere. The news startled his hearers, and, after discussing with them where he should go, Baba surprised them still further by saying that he would return to Meherabad.

It should be noted that before leaving Meherabad Baba had given instructions that a new cabin should be prepared for him, as the old one had almost collapsed. This was to be a wooden cabin in an isolated corner on the hill.

The return was kept secret, and the journey started immediately, Baba with one companion travelling for most of the way second class to be in as much seclusion as possible, the other two travelling third class as usual. He passed through Bombay unknown to anybody, and left the train at Dhond, fifty miles from Ahmednagar, travelling the remaining distance by car so that he should not be recognized. Thus he returned to Meherabad, where, he said, the foundations for great spiritual work had already been laid.

Baba then went into seclusion, seeing very few people.

In February 1936 Baba was in Madras on his birthday; before he left Meherabad he had given strict instructions that there was to be no observance of the birthday by anyone. This happened for the second year in succession. On the actual day of the anniversary his Master, Upasni Maharaj, went to Ahmednagar to the house of one of his own disciples, and as usual went to the special room kept for his visits where there was a photograph of Baba. To the surprise of all he went up to the photograph and said to Gulmai 'Meher is my loving child. Tell him that I have been here on his birthday and waved his arti myself.' Then he performed the ceremony. A remarkable incident, considered to be the reason why Baba did not allow others to observe the occasion; for it is said that what a Master does he does for all.

A new phase of Baba's work was now about to open. He went into seclusion at Rahuri, a town twenty-three miles from Meherabad on the road between Ahmednagar and Nasik, and while there arranged for a trust to be created to take charge of the various ashrams in different parts of India and to look after the persons and families dependent upon him. A new property was also purchased at Nasik, with the object of providing an ashram for Western disciples.

Baba took with him to Rahuri a few selected members of the mandali, and there he gathered together a number of mad or mast (spiritually intoxicated) people, upon whom he waited with his own

hands, feeding, bathing, and clothing them. These people were all indigent. They were accommodated in special huts, about six at a time. Baba intended to have as many as fifty. Life in Rahuri was very simple, and the work of looking after these people exacting, for they would ordinarily be regarded as human derelicts. Except for his attention to these people, Baba remained in strict seclusion; no interviews were granted, and no darshan allowed. The next chapter of this book is devoted to this work.

NINTH VISIT TO THE WEST, 1936

In the middle of October he set out on another visit to the West. As the visit was for a short time only, he with two disciples travelled by air from Karachi to Baghdad, intending to go thence by train; but a breakdown occurred on the line, and Baba had to stay two days at Baghdad. There he got together a crowd of crippled and diseased beggars and fed them. The journey was resumed, though with great discomfort, for the railway service was disorganized, and the party arrived in London on 3 November, Baba being very exhausted, for after his long period of fasts and seclusion he was extremely weak and his two companions were much concerned about his health. The day after his arrival in London he appeared as well as ever, and, staying only three days, he went to Zurich and Paris, afterwards joining the Viceroy of India at Marseilles, getting back to India before the end of the month. The visit was strictly private.

Baba's object had been to arrange for disciples from England and America to go to the new ashram at Nasik. The first party left at the beginning of December. 'I want them with me', he said, 'because the time is at hand for me to do much work, and I want them to share my work.'

Five women and one man went from the United States, four women and two men from England; they were afterwards joined by three others from America. There at the ashram, five miles from the old town of Nasik, they spent Christmas. They were in a comfortable house, belonging to one of Baba's disciples, the only time in India where both men and women shared the same buildings and garden. They were each, individually, required to make two promises, to live harmoniously together, and to stay for five years. They were to spend three months, from January to March, at Nasik, the next three months at Meherabad, in preparation for future work. For a certain time everyone was required to write down his or her thoughts during

meditation, then tear up the paper having shown it to no one; the following day they had to write down their dreams, showing what they had written to Baba only. He said that he would explain the dreams, only some of which had significance. The birthday was celebrated on 18 February, and the day before ten thousand poor people were given grain and cloth, Baba touching their feet. For ten days prior to this Baba was fasting, taking only two cups of tea and two of milk each day; this was shared in, a day at a time, by those with him. It was on 17 and 19 February that voting took place throughout India under the new constitution.

Baba left them, at first, much to themselves, except they were not to go outside the ashram gardens, though he took them on a number of excursions. After three weeks they went to the mad ashram at Rahuri, where Baba talked about these men and his work with them. At Meherabad they met the mandali in the buildings by the main road, and the six Eastern women who lived in the buildings on the hill. Among the women was Baba's sister, Mani, two others who had been with Baba since ten or twelve years of age, and three older women.

To all Baba gave specific duties with a time-table for each one for meditating, writing, or some other work, and times of games and music. There were at first discourses every day, but nothing was made habitual, for there were constant changes and surprises. The most radical surprise of all was when the visit was brought to an end at the end of July, nothing more being said of the five years. Most of the party were then sent home to Europe. During the last two months very little had been seen of Baba as he was busy with the mad.

TENTH VISIT TO THE WEST, 1937

It was at Baba's wish that all who could do so were to go to Cannes, on the French Riviera, where they were to be joined by a number of the Eastern women, and himself. A villa was taken for the Western men, another for the women, a third for Baba. Many people came to see Baba, including a film director, friend of one of the Western devotees, who was to prepare a programme of spiritual and educational films, which were discussed at great length. Everyone was kept very busy and ready at any moment for Baba's orders. In September a trip was made by Baba to Paris for three days when he took only the Eastern women in two cars driven by Western women.

The visit came to an end in October when Baba returned to India with the Eastern followers and three of the Western women, Norina,

Rano and Kitty on the Circassia on her maiden voyage to Bombay. The others went home. Baba and his party went at once to Meherabad, in two sections, where they remained for some weeks afterwards going to Navsari, in Baroda State, as guests of the Desai family. There they were for a few days, when they left for Nagpur, capital of the former Central Provinces, where Baba had a great reception, thousands of people coming for a sight of the Master.

There was much talk about the coming war and what they should do when it started. At the time of the Munich pact Baba said, 'The British Premier is now the hero of the day. A good man but an old man. War there will be. This is as certain as anything. War or no war, it is all the same.' On September 30, 1938, the day of the pact, he said:

"There will be war, whether it starts in February or November or December. Something will happen which will make them all forget their promises, and that, too, from quite a fresh point, Poland or Russia. So five months' preparation for war and for my manifestation. When war is in full progress, then I will speak. If it begins in February I might speak in July.

"There will be talk of world-peace. Spiritually, both war and peace are nothing; but externally war is the most dreadful thing, and unless it were absolutely necessary for the spiritual upheaval, I should never allow the war to be."

For some time past Baba had been saying that he proposed to establish an International Spiritual Centre, with more to follow. With this in view he went with members of the mandali and others, including the Western women, to Panchgani; afterwards he made journeys to Bangalore in Mysore and Belgaum in Hyderabad, with the object of finding sites for the purpose. With the support of the Maharaja of Mysore Baba decided to start the first centre at Byramangala, some twenty-two miles from Bangalore.

The idea was that the centre should accommodate two thousand people of all religions, with six departments: The Spiritual Academy with the aim of preparation for international harmony; The House of Advanced Souls, for practical mysticism; The Abode of the Saints, for those who would teach the ignorant of the reality of God; The Mast Department for the God-intoxicated; The Department of Meditation, for those who wished to practise prolonged meditation under guidance; The Resting Place for the Afflicted, for the care and alleviation of suffering of all kinds.

The most detailed preparations were made. A plan of the entire

centre was drawn up, and Baba laid down precisely what was to be done, a trust was to be formed, nine trustees were appointed, how the money was to be raised was considered and how it was to be expended, and building was started. The main responsibility was laid upon Princess Norina and Elizabeth Patterson who spent most of their time there, and were the centre of immense activity for a long period, during which the second world war started. On 17 December 1939, the foundation stone was laid by Baba in the presence of Sir Mirza Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, and other public men of the state. There were many thousands of people present. By June of the following year two blocks of the centre were well in hand. There had been much going to and fro between Bangalore and Meherabad. Then suddenly Baba brought his people back from the place and the entire scheme was dropped, though he had declared that he would open twelve other centres in India before he spoke.

In the interval, an additional storey had been made to the building occupied by the Eastern women on the Meherabad hill, where the Western women lived in curtained cubicles. Also a hospital for women had been opened with a female doctor in charge, with Nadine Tolstoy as matron, who had arrived with Irene Billo from Zurich. The experience of living together with restricted privacy and limited movements, with concentration on tasks given to each of them by Baba, often apparently meaningless, led in the course of months to considerable difficulties and conflicts. There were disagreements and sharp quarrels, often jealousy, for the Western women were all of strong individuality.

Baba permitted these discords to develop; he would then confront those involved with the situation, make them face the issue, and, without compromise or easing over the troubles, bring them together in love. He insisted on harmony, though he provoked differences. It was an experience, often repeated, that those who passed through never forgot. He gave them many talks on life as a game: it is like playing chess, he said. 'I take interest in two things', he said (8 June 1939), 'the mad and money, how to get it, how to spend it, it is my great game of chess; it is all the same to me, playing ping-pong, dogs, children, resting.' There were talks on the Gita. He said:

"Had not Krishna brought about that war he would not have given the Gita; because everyone was in the mood to fight. Had he said, Don't fight, nobody would have listened to him. When he said, Fight! he brought the real meaning of Truth into the world.

"The world is now going back to a barbarous state. What Krishna teaches in the Gita goes deep, he does not say anything in a roundabout way. He says you can become God. If you love me, follow me, there is no other way."

Somebody asked, 'Is it right to go to war?' Baba replied:

"Go to war if called and you can't avoid it, but don't fight for killing. You just help and kill detached, or be killed without fear or anger towards the killer. Very few can do so. Why do I want war? To straighten things for spiritual advancement."

The war started the following September, when Baba was actively engaged in his great work among the 'mad'.

Part I, Chapter 4

THE 'MASTS' OF INDIA

1939-1949

'The fire of love is very terrible indeed and masts present a challenge to God, the Beloved.'

I now come to an important aspect of Baba's work, which has no parallel so far as I know in the life of any other man. Reference has already been made to his work with the mentally unbalanced and disordered, and he was soon to devote himself entirely to it. The Universal Spiritual Centres referred to in the last chapter were hardly mentioned; instead, the work that had started in August 1936 was intensified and continued (with some interruptions) until August 1949, a period of thirteen years. Of its importance there can be no doubt, because of the time over which it was spread and because of the persistence and great hardship with which it was carried out; also there is great significance in the fact that it took place during those years of intense upheaval in the world, before, during and after the second great war. In the same period India achieved independence and passed through great trials.

I shall find it necessary in telling the story to go back a few years, and, indeed, in the course of the narrative there will be some moving backwards and forwards for a simple account cannot be given of a highly complex affair. The first stages of the work at Rahuri lasted for eight months, until the end of April 1937. Temporary buildings had been erected there, as already mentioned, with a hut for Baba, and a dispensary where not only the mad but sick people from all over the countryside were treated freely. Pleader went out to scour the district for men who could be brought to the ashram, and Baidul was in charge. During this period Baba rose at 4 a.m. and retired at midnight. He served the mad, cleaned out their latrines (work done only by untouchables), and each day sat with some of them in seclusion. All the men when they arrived were restless, some wanted to leave at

once; only after Baba had given them a bath with his own hands did they become composed and lose the wish to go. They had liberty to do what they pleased, except that they were not permitted to leave the ashram gardens. Whatever they asked for they were given, and they were well fed.

It is necessary to say something in more detail about these men, ordinarily described as mad, as some, indeed, were. In the West they are mostly treated in mental hospitals, or, at any rate, classed among the mentally unfit and regarded with little respect. There are, as I have said, those who are simply mentally deficient, and at first Rahuri contained mostly such men. But Baba began to concentrate upon certain selected men who, though mentally unbalanced or disordered, were not simply insane, though often behaving as the worst examples of feeble-mindedness; they were regarded by him as being in a particular spiritual condition. 'Such persons', says Baba, 'are not mad in the ordinary sense; they are desperately in love with God, and are known as "masts".' The word mast, pronounced 'must', seems to be Baba's own; it is probably derived from masri, a Persian or Urdu word meaning 'overpowered'; or as Dr Donkin says (the best authority on this subject) it may come from a Sufi term, literally translated as mast-Allah.

To describe these masts in any satisfactory way is impossible if only because anything that is said about madness, or what appears to be madness, presents difficulty. Who are the mad, and what is it to be mad? 'There is no real pathology of mental disorders', says an eminent authority. The men Baba calls masts are not defective in the physiological sense though psychically unbalanced. They suffer from nothing that can be called a disease. They are in a state of mental and physical disorder because their minds are overcome by strong spiritual energies that are far too much for them, forcing them to renounce the world, normal human habits and customs, and civilized society, and to live in a condition of chaos. They are psychological cases beyond the reach of psychoanalysis, because their condition is too advanced and obscure for any known procedures. Their minds are in some way shattered and their brains cannot fully function. Only a spiritual Master, says Baba, who is aware of the divine spirit that possesses them, which causes them to be unfit for normal society, can be of any help to them, and even his help reaches them with difficulty as they are virtually shut off from human contact. They are in the world but not of it. In Baba's terms they are 'God-intoxicated souls'. They are not to be described as seekers after God who have lost their way, but as

those who have become blinded on their way: not lost souls, but those who have become held up by the mystery of love, so that they have become fools and outcasts for God. They are overcome 'by an agonizing love for God', says Baba, and are 'drowned in their ecstasy': only love can reach them.

Dr Donkin says that while one cannot tell whether a man is a mast or not without Baba saying so, a quality of masts is that however eccentric they may be they make one feel unmistakably happy in their company, also that animals almost always live in sympathy with them.

These 'mad' are described by Baba as in various spiritual states, some elementary, some very advanced. He calls them: God-merged, God-intoxicated, God-absorbed, God-communed, and God-mad, and is able to discriminate among them. How he does so is described in detail in Dr Donkin's *The Wayfarers*, printed in Bombay, and published in Ahmednagar by Adi K. Irani in 1948, before the work ended, the later stages being covered by two supplements issued the following year. This volume of 405 pages, with many maps and photographs, and its supplements of 15 and 57 pages respectively, is a book of first importance. There is nothing equivalent to it in the entire literature of the East. Painstaking and detailed, it is at the same time delightful reading. All the mast journeys are recorded, also the work among sadhus, fakirs, and the poor, with descriptions of the principal masts.

I cannot pretend to give anything like a full account of this work, for which the reader will have to consult the above mentioned book. In what follows I depend largely upon it. The masts are in various stages of involution of consciousness and may be found on any of the 'planes'. They include those who are totally unconscious of physical life, those who are dimly conscious of it, and those who are, at times, more or less fully aware of their surroundings and of what they are doing; among them are various types of yogis, saliks, sadhus, and others, the genuine ones, of course. The God-merged and God-mad are the important masts, being the most advanced; they are of three main types. (1) Those whose minds become unbalanced through unceasing dwelling upon thoughts about God so that they neglect all normal human requirements. (2) Those whose minds become unbalanced by sudden contact with a highly advanced spiritual being. (3) Those who seek spiritual experience and meet a crisis from which they do not recover. What characterizes all is concentration upon the love of God.

Although the *masts* contacted by Baba were usually only men, there are women who have the same characteristics, known as *mastani*, and

some women were brought to Baba from time to time and treated in the same manner as the men. What these contacts meant Baba explained as follows in April 1946. He placed the entire matter on a very wide basis and said there may be two specific reasons:

- (1) To integrate and divert the innate forces of nature from the various units of spiritual human dynamos into one spiritual channel of regeneration of the good and sublime in man. This may be done with the conscious knowledge of those whom Baba contacts. The process may demand a period of remorseful transformation or partial destruction of the world.
- (2) To elevate or sublimate the different types of struggling, careworn and care-free human beings to the quickening of the Spirit, unconscious though the process may be to those whom he contacts.

Those who accompanied Baba throughout this work observed his determination, and the concentration with which he devoted himself to the work, and his behaviour generally, though they were often not allowed to look at him while working. His practice was to feed them sometimes (masts always), to give them a metal coin, and as often as possible to sit with individual masts in seclusion, never with them in groups. Baba does not touch money at any time, except when he gives it symbolically in this way. He always uses metal coins, indicating that metal is a particular means of contact. This involved the carrying of heavy bags of coin by the members of the mandali accompanying him. Money was not usually given to faqirs and sadhus, only occasionally. Baba would touch their feet with his hands, then touch his own forehead. All this done openly.

It seems that these extensive tours were planned in advance, though on what method is not known. He would go to a place with three or four of the mandali and on arrival instruct certain of them to visit particular cities or districts to enquire about likely persons, to meet them, always without mentioning Baba's name, then to report back to him. He would then be brought to the man and after his work with him would be taken to another. At the start Baba may have said that a number of masts, say, twenty-five, were to be found; but after, say seventeen had been seen he would say his work was completed, and no more would be seen at that time. This seems to have been predetermined by him in some way. When *masts* were to be contacted,

either Baidul, Kaka or Eruch were employed, either alone or together, but many of the mandali have participated in this work in one way or another.

That this was arduous work for all involved need hardly be said. It meant long journeys, sometimes by train, more often on foot, over sand, through jungle, over mountains, riding on camels, mules, and asses, in bullock carts and tongas, without wasting a moment. Every instruction by Baba had to be complied with to the last detail. When the disciple returned the journey had to be made again with Baba. Dr Donkin says:

After two or three days of work from dawn to dusk with little or no food, and after two or three nights with little or no sleep, the world simply becomes unreal, and one lives a kind of reflex life in which the parts of one's body move and work; but the zest of living, and the sense of well-being, dependent, one supposes, upon a nervous system refreshed by sleep, and upon tissues nourished by adequate food, are simply no longer there ... and this tempo of work goes on and on, Baba ever spurring those with him to the very limits of their powers.

(The Wayfarers, p.162.)

This strenuous effort and hardship in which Baba shared to the full, demanding nothing of his mandali that he did not surpass, went on month after month, year after year, with periods of recuperation at Meherabad, and intervals of more or less prolonged fast and seclusion for Baba.

We are intended to understand that masts are important to Baba, not only because only he can help them, but, because of their spiritual state, by helping them in their own development he is helping mankind in general through them. They are channels of spiritual impulse of the greatest value. Sympathetic response from these men demands very careful handling and full respect for their whims and vagaries. If it meant only that Baba should touch them physically the work would have been far less exacting, but much more had to be done. As a mast is in a state of emotional upheaval, he swerves and swings mentally and often physically. His fervour of God-love raises him in feverish protest: he disapproves of the very existence of God hidden in humanity and struggles for redemption from his own self-created misery. If he is naive, he reacts in passive resistance by evading contact with anyone, so that actual contact by Baba is carried out in hurried and speedy movements; the process is rather like drawing out the entire being of

the *mast* to weld it into humanized and harmonized action. It is said to be too baffling a sight to see and too complicated to describe or imagine.

After Baba's return to Meherabad in November 1937, he gave unremitting attention to the mad-cum-mast-ashram for weeks at a time, interrupted by tours to various places. His birthday celebrated at Meherabad in February 1938 was made notable by the calling for two days of a number of women from all over India where they were accommodated on the hill, each bringing her own bedding roll. The women had their food together except the main meal, which all had down the hill, where a large pandal was erected, and people of all castes sat together. A large number of poor from the surrounding countryside also came. A performance of a drama based on the classical tale of Raja Gopichand was performed on 25 September, all the parts being played by the mad; their words, cues, gestures and stage action had all been instilled into their disorganized minds under the remarkable Pleader's direction and Baidul's care, and they came to take surprising interest in their roles. The number of mad and masts at that time was about forty.

After the performance, it seems that part of Baba's work had been completed, half the men were sent back to their homes, and in December 1938 he left Meherabad on a motor tour, taking the mast, Muhammad, with him. The ashram was looked after by Baidul. On this tour Baba started to contact advanced masts, a task of very great difficulty. He was accompanied by over twenty Western and Eastern women disciples in a specially designed bus large enough to hold a bedding-roll for each of the party and other luggage, including cooking equipment for stop-overs in dak bungalows along the route. Fifteen large towns were visited and many villages. The bus was driven by Elizabeth Patterson, who had had experience of driving Red Cross ambulances. A number of the men disciples went ahead by train and saw to accommodation in the large towns and made inquiries concerning the location of masts in out of the way places. The tour continued to Hyderabad, over the hills to Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Benares, Cawnpore, Agra, Delhi, then on to Jaipur, Ajmer, Pushkar, Ujjain and lasted for five months, until May 1939.

On this tour many holy places were visited and numerous masts contacted. Midway between Jubbulpore and Benares at Katni, Baba stayed in the apartment occupied by Upasni Maharaj a short time before. At Benares, he explained that, since times of old, there had been numbers of *rishis* (great souls) and *tapaswis* (ascetics) who lived there for years. Rama, Krishna, and Buddha had been there during certain

periods of their lives. It is due to these highly evolved souls and Masters of their age that the place is surcharged with spiritual atmosphere. At Sarnath, a few miles away, Buddha had his first centre with his disciples, it was then woods. Baba contacted certain types of spiritually dazed souls and other persons in beggarly attire in the city. At Agra the disciples experienced seeing the Taj with him, and at Allahabad Baba got out alone and looked upon the junction of the two rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna.

A day was given to visiting places connected with the life of Krishna: Muttra, where he was born, and Brindaban, which is the scene of his childhood, where he drew the gopies and cowherds with the melody of his flute. As Baba and his disciples approached the river at Brindaban, a youngish man wearing what resembled a fool's cap, sat on a wall playing a flute; when he noticed Baba he stopped and in a loud voice cried out 'Here comes the Flute Player', which is another name for Krishna. He didn't want money, he didn't want anything, he just ran ahead with dancing steps and flute, a short distance in front of Baba. The guide, thinking he was being annoying, tried to drive the man away with a stick. Baba said 'Let him be'. Some stern-faced priests near a temple looked scornfully. He followed playing and crying 'Krishna is here! Krishna is here!' Just before returning to the bus, extraordinary greetings or signals went on between Baba and the man, an unmistakable recognition. Later Baba informed his party that he had come for this man, who was a highly evolved soul. Such 'fools of God' take this guise so that the world should pass them by, so Baba said.

Outside Delhi a visit was paid to the tomb of Nizamuddin, a great Muhammadan saint. It was there in a cell-like chamber that a man who resembled a prophet with noble countenance stood in the darkened doorway with light shining upon his face. For a moment in silence the man and Baba gazed at one another and transcendence seemed to radiate from the man's eyes. Later Baba said that he was on the fifth plane of consciousness and did spiritual work in connection with his own.

The party were to stay in Delhi for ten days in some comfort at a hotel, but after a day or two Baba said he could not do his work there, so they were off to an unspecified destination. This proved to be Ajmer, on the Aravalli Hills, a place of pilgrimage. To a small house taken by Baba, masts were brought, whom he bathed, shaved and fed as usual. He had earlier said 'The last two birthdays I bowed down to the poor, this birthday will be quite different, I shall bow and be

bowed down to by different beings, so I must be free from butter, bread and shoes'. This illustrates Baba's method of ending a serious remark with a joke. On his birthday about twenty men described as 'a few moderate masts, the majority mad, and a handful of destitute beggars' were bathed and fed, and during this work which lasted until two o'clock, all fasted. Everywhere the same routine was followed; the mandali would go out to find the masts who were received as always, Baba then sitting with some of them in silence. Most of the men were kept for a day or two only. Among those whom he received at one place was an old woman, known as Khala Masi, a highly advanced mastani who had been brought from Seoni, about seventy-five miles away.

He did not go back to Meherabad until May, as related at the end of the last chapter, when the women returned with him. He made constant reference to the threatening war at the end of June 1939 saying in the course of talks reported by Irene Billo:

People want war - either a bloody war - worse than the last affecting every part of the world, even America and Persia, or economic war throughout the world, which would be worse than a bloody war. This will result in internal revolution. Germany fighting with Germany and killing Hitler. Italy fighting with Italy and killing Mussolini and so on. Better would it be to have war. If not, everywhere there will be civil revolution.

Do you know what happened in the French revolution? It will be like that everywhere.

The 'No God-No Religion' campaign is flourishing and the 'God and Religion' campaign is low. Russia, France, Italy and Germany are internally and unconsciously becoming 'NonGod' believers. So also are Persia, Turkey and India.

Germany believes Hitler to be its Saviour, Italy Mussolini as its Saviour. What about Russia?

Can you believe how horrible it will be when war starts? London, Paris, Berlin - in a few days like a desert. Women and children - all will suffer. It is complete chaos. Here we are safe and I bear the sufferings of all.

For some weeks he gave attention to the mad and mast ashram, and in July returned to Bangalore, and the men from Meherabad were brought there. They were in a large house, beside which in the garden a small building was erected for Baba himself so that he could fast and remain

in seclusion as he required. He had a special ashram made for the masts only, and gave careful instructions to Kaka and Eruch to gather together a nucleus of advanced masts, detailing how they were to approach them, not on any account to say that Meher Baba had sent them. After some weeks of great effort they contacted a number of masts, without success, and returned confessing their failure. Baba thereupon set out himself, with the same men and two others, going over the ground again. He had more success and among the masts he gathered was Chatti Baba, of whom something will be said later.

I have no note of what Baba said when the second world war broke out. He made reference to it on 17 December 1939, in a message at the laying of the foundation stone of the centre of Byramangala, when he said that the war had engulfed all departments of life, and self-preservation enhanced by fear was aggressively active under various guises:

"Exclusiveness is parading as nationalism; self-interest is known as economics; fanaticism is synonymous with religion; libertinism is looked upon as social and moral freedom; and exploitation is termed politics.

"This instinct of self-preservation is legitimate and natural in the lower order of life in the scale of evolution; but when it expresses itself through man it makes of him nothing more than a talking animal.... "

"Is it anyone's fault if he finds himself on the right side of things or on the wrong side? No. Every human being has come to serve and achieve a definite purpose, and by playing his part he works out his own salvation...."

"In the divine scheme, individuals or peoples when instead of progressing higher are about to lapse into bestiality it is suffering that rehabilitates them. "

There is a note in Dr Donkin's diary on 19 February 1940, which contains a description of Baba at this time:

He was looking radiantly noble with hair let down for once. He was a fine sight His phenomenal strength of character and sort of mysterious spiritual beauty were astonishing as he sat on his couch. Baba's face in repose has a fusion of spiritual bliss and serenity yet such sadness which gives it grandeur. His face really surpasses all experience of nature in its hold on the beholder, and in its rapid changes of mood.

Between 11 and 20 March all at Meherabad had been made to fast

because, said Baba, a matter of great importance in the war was about to take place. Indeed, it was so, for preparations were in hand for the great campaigns of Germany in Europe, when the Low Countries were over-run, France was laid low, and the British evacuated from Dunkirk.

Baba returned to Meherabad in April 1940, the mad and mast men following by train with the mandali, and in May he went into seclusion on the hill, where he brought the masts, leaving the mad in huts near the village below. He immediately restarted work with the masts, for the first few days coming to bathe them at five-thirty in the morning, then coming earlier each day until he eventually reached half-past midnight when the morning's work would start! This was at a time of great stress in the war, and the urgency of those months was repeated in this faraway activity of a very different kind. Apart from this work he was in strict seclusion.

Then a visit was paid to Goa for a month. A party of forty left in a number of cars, travelling through the jungle with many mishaps. They were to keep Baba's name secret. Among the places visited were Shimoga, Amboli, Belgaum, Sakharpa and Mahabaleshwar.

Reaching Old Goa, the old man who showed them St Francis Xavier's tomb spoke English and talked a great deal, particularly about plays he had written. All the time he was glancing at Baba. Afterwards Baba said the old man would leave the next day; he was said to be one of Baba's spiritual 'agents' and the talk about plays had inner meaning, he was speaking to Baba. The next day Elizabeth Patterson met the old man who said that he must leave at once; he felt he must get to a cold country for he felt he was all on fire, he didn't know if it was his beard! Baba said he had much work to do on the island. Kaka and Baba's brother Jal were sent to find a mast. One evening Baba gave a discourse on prayer, and another evening on poise. All became very fit from the good food and sea bathing.

He sent Norina (Princess Matchabelli) to see the Governor about buying an off-shore island that could be seen from where they sat with him on the shore; he said it had spiritual significance. The Governor received Norina kindly, and said it was not for sale as it belonged to the government. The party, still in the blue bus, were back at Meherabad by the beginning of May.

News had been received on the morning of 3 May that Baba's first disciple, Behramji, had been killed riding on a motor-cycle in Poona. As usual Baba showed no emotion. Two days later a fast was ordered in memory of Behramji's deep spiritual connection with Baba.

A seven day festival was ordered to celebrate the birthday of Upasni Maharaj, the first time anything of the kind had been done. Baba said that Upasni would not see another birthday. About this time Baba said that he, himself, would die on 29 May. That was the day the Belgians capitulated to the Germans. He said he would go to Russia himself in the following August, via Persia.

On 3 June he issued the following message:

"During these 10 days of my seclusion, I shall decide definitely the length of time this war will last, and exactly when it will end.

"Before I speak and before peace reigns, there must be a real World War in which India will be involved 100 per cent, and places under Muslim rule such as Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt will also be entrapped, while Italy, Russia and America will play a very active part.

"If this war prolongs in the above-mentioned manner, I shall speak in August 1941; in which case, for a year (from August 1940 to August 1941) I shall, with certain of my male and female disciples, go to stay on the boundary of Russia and India, or on some island across the ocean. If the war does not prolong, then I shall think it over as to whether to go to the boundary or to go somewhere else.

"My speaking is largely connected with the World War and Peace. Peace does not mean Truce. Truce does not necessarily have to happen. Truce will not make me speak.

"Before the end of the World War, when Peace is just on the point of appearing, I shall speak.

"I shall speak just before Permanent Peace."

An unexpected visit was made to Calcutta early in June when Baba met Karim Baba, a sixth plane *jalali mast*. He then returned, and the following month went to Ranchi, on the granite plateau of central Bihar, about 200 miles north-west of Calcutta, 2,000 feet above the sea, a bleak and sombre place. There Karim Baba was brought, and with three masts from Meherabad and a few of the mandali they stayed for three weeks.

This important *mast* calls for some description. The mandali named him 'the tiger man'. When Baba first contacted him he was sitting on the pavement in Calcutta with his back against a wall, a large, heavy man, clad in the filthiest of clothes, surrounded by old tins and rubbish. About his throat were skeins of steel wire, and about his ankles, toes and wrists were wrapped old rags. His nails were uncut and his hair and beard thick, black, dirty and matted. Despite the filth of his body

his superb face and eyes 'that shone like burnished swords', made him arresting. He was said to have sat at that spot for six years, exposed to sun, rain and wind. When Baba reached Ranchi, he sent A. S. Baria, known as Kaka, who had been with him when he first contacted Karim Baba a few weeks earlier, to bring the latter from Calcutta to Ranchi. Karim Baba made no response except to laugh when asked to leave. Kaka, however, was undismayed, being used to the whims of masts and ready to cope with any difficulty. He went away and bought a new kafni, or tunic, and lungi, or loin cloth, interested two Muslims in a nearby restaurant to help him, and engaged a victoria cab to stand by a little way off. When he invited Karim Baba to exchange his rags for the new tunic and lungi, the mast got up without a word and allowed himself to be clothed in the street. By this time a small crowd had gathered, for Karim Baba was a well known and respected holy man. Although Kaka feared that the crowd might have resented the removal of their saint, they merely looked on, astonished, while he was persuaded to walk to the cab. Karim Baba would at first only sit on the step, but after a while was got to sit on the floor, for he would not occupy the seat, and was taken to the railway station. There Kaka found a third-class compartment and installed his prize, getting one of his Muslim assistants to buy the railway tickets, settle his bills and bring his bags. Just before the train moved Karim Baba spoke for the first time, saying, 'Tikat-nikal gaya aur gari chhuti' (the ticket is taken and the train has started). Soon Karim Baba became restless and put one leg out of the window, saying nothing. Kaka was puzzled but decided that the mast wanted to visit the toilet. This was in fact so, and when he had relieved himself 'picked out three or four coins of one or two annas, and an odd copper piece, from his ordure, washed them thoroughly under the tap, tossed them in his mouth, and swallowed them.' It afterwards appeared that this was a regular practice of his. They arrived at Ranchi without further incident, and contrary to his usual custom Baba did not bathe the mast. Dr Donkin says:

"In Ranchi, Karim Baba was lodged in a special little room, and Baba would go several times a day to feed him, and sit alone with him. Karim Baba was usually silent, but from time to time he would utter some short phrase with the sudden vigour of a lid blowing off a boiling kettle...he used to laugh and sing when Baba sat with him, and one would sometimes wake up at an odd, unknown hour in the dead of the night, and hear him singing sweetly and gently to himself. It moved

one strangely to hear so sweet a voice when one knew his external aspect to be so formidable, and one felt it to be a revelation of the radiance of his inner nature."

(*The Wayfarers*, p.177)

At the end of July 1940 Baba and his party returned to Meherabad and the masts from Ranchi were installed on the hill. A special hut with a bamboo lattice screen was made for Karim Baba. After two weeks Baba said his work with the mast was over, and Kaka was instructed to take him back to his pavement in Calcutta. There was a dispensary close by the spot occupied by the mast and the doctor in charge undertook to feed him regularly, sufficient money being left with him for the purpose. On subsequent visits to Calcutta, Baba did not see Karim Baba again. The ashram including the mad ashram was gradually disbanded thereafter, only Muhammad and the mast named Chatti Baba remained.

This *mast*, Chatti Baba, had been contacted when Baba was at Bangalore and had refused Kaka and Eruch's invitation, so that Baba himself had to go for him, as already narrated. Three of the mandali set out in two taxis to the place where Chatti Baba was usually to be found, about five miles from the city of Negapatam. At first he refused their invitation, but after some time was induced to enter one of the taxis and was brought to their hotel. There he was given food and agreed to go with Baba to Bangalore. On the way the party had to stay for the night at a dharmashala; and during the night Chatti Baba walked for miles away and only with difficulty was induced to return. When he got back Baba gave him a bath with fifty buckets of water in the Indian fashion, a practice continued daily for a long time. There were other incidents before the party reached Bangalore. There Chatti Baba was lodged and the routine of bathing and feeding was established. When called to be bathed he usually refused, saying he was not well, often abusing those who came for him; but if Baba went he would smile happily and after a little hesitation would follow him to the bathroom. As always, Baba was particular that all the whims of the mast should be respected. Chatti Baba refused to lie on a bed but chose to sit and sleep on the ground and to spend hours sitting alone in an alley of weeds behind his hut. Another eccentricity was the refusal to have his hair dried after a bath. Instead he would sit on the ground and toss handfuls of earth over his head. Baba had tried to persuade Chatti Baba to sit alone with him and after many refusals he one day agreed. Dr Donkin says:

"The two were closeted in silence in Baba's room for about two hours, and at the end of the period, Eruch, hearing Baba's movements to open the door, got up and released the clasp from the outside. Chatti Baba then emerged and brushed past him on his way to his own room. As he went past, Eruch says that he felt a palpable excruciating shock pass through his body, similar, he says, to an electric shock. There are many traditions in India about the danger of interrupting saints in a transcendental state of consciousness...."

(*The Wayfarers*, p.62.)

This no doubt explains why Baba never allowed others to be present when he sat alone with *masts*.

Chatti Baba was taken back to Meherabad in May 1940. He was literate, but so far as anyone knew never read a newspaper, yet was aware of the suffering in the world caused by the war. On the night of 9 June, he suddenly became violent and burst from his room in frenzy and came to Baba's room declaring that his house had been destroyed and he had come for shelter to Baba. He was noisy, but Baba allowed him to stay with him, and he became quiet. Afterwards Baba explained that Chatti Baba had a spiritual connection with France and his despair was because of the overwhelming of France then taking place.

The Western and Eastern women were living together on Meherabad Hill, isolated, visited irregularly by Baba, but late in August he started visiting them twice a week, to their great comfort. Among them were Mehera, his sister Mani, his cousin Naja and Khorshed, all of whom had been with Baba since their teens, and the older Indian women Gulmai, Masi and Valu; there were four from America, Rano Gayley, Nadine Tolstoy, Norina Matchabelli and Elizabeth Patterson, with Irene Billo from Switzerland, Kitty Davy and Margaret Craske from England. It was a period of outer inaction, contrasting with the tours. All were under strict discipline within the walls of the ashram garden, rose at 5.30 a.m. and retired at 7 p.m.; they ate once a day. Baba gave instructions for all to read his Divine Theme, *The Journey of the Soul to the Over-Soul* for one hour each day, and to meditate at different periods. Each had specific duties, gardening, preparing the food, sewing, writing, and some looked after the animals Baba had taken an interest in.

At the beginning of November 1940 Baba with some of the mandali and the Western women, together with close Indian women disciples riding in the blue bus set out on a visit to Ceylon, where he went into seclusion in a small bungalow at Kandy. But knowledge of his presence

got about and many people came day by day to see him and had to be turned away. Otherwise he seems to have found the place ideal for his work, which he said he had completed, though it was thought they would stay there for several months. On 1 December to everyone's surprise they went back, though not to Meherabad, and visited a number of places.

On these journeys Chatti Baba accompanied Baba. In Ceylon, Chatti Baba said he would bathe Baba, and did so with ten or twelve buckets of water daily for a week. While they were travelling in India Chatti Baba became especially difficult and often used to say 'I won't stay, I must go. I am almost drowned, I must go!' In Jaipur, he used to sit all night, naked to the waist, in the open courtyard, in bitter January weather, crying loudly, 'It's cold, it's cold!' Afterwards in Quetta, where the weather was still colder, he would pour icy water on his bedding and sit in it. There were many other incidents related by Dr Donkin. At last in September 1941, while they were still on tour, Chatti Baba refused to stay any longer, he wept and told Baba it was time for him to go; so he went, after two years and the mandali deeply felt his absence.

In April 1941, a message had been sent on behalf of Baba to friends in Switzerland in which he stated:

"My manifestation and the public and universal breaking of my silence is now definitely fixed and declared to be on 15 February 1942."

In the previous September the mad ashram had been closed, the men being taken back to their homes. This was received by the mandali with some relief.

There is a gap for several years, Baba being almost completely in seclusion; they were the years when America came into the war, and when finally the great struggle was brought to an end. The following, however, can be recorded. In the spring of 1942 when Japan had thrust herself forward to the frontier of India, Baba issued a long message on the 'Spiritual Significance of the War' (March 1942) in which he said:

"War-effort will be justified or stand condemned not by the results which it produces, but by the ends by which it is inspired. The world has to face this war and go through its ordeal of fire, even at the cost of irreparable damage and unredeemable suffering; it is a necessary evil...."

"From the spiritual point of view of the last and the only truth, all souls are in their essence fundamentally one. War cannot create any real cleavage or division between the people who are fighting with each other. The people of the warring countries seem to be different merely by virtue of having different bodies and minds; but from the point of view of their souls, all differences are not only secondary but false. From the point of view of ultimate reality, it remains true that no soul is really at war with any other soul.

"In the hour of trial, let the thought of everyone be not for the limited self, but for others - not for the claims of the ego-life, but for the claims of the Divine Self which is equally in all. It is a mistake to ignore human suffering as merely a part of the illusory universe. Not by ignoring human suffering, but by treating it with Creative Love, is the Gateway opened for Life Eternal; and not through callous indifference, but through active and selfless service, is secured the attainment of that transcendental and illimitable Truth, which is at the heart of the illusory universe.

"Humanity has to emerge out of this dreadful war with spiritual integrity, with hearts free from the poison of malice or revenge, with minds disburdened of the blows given or received, with souls unscathed by suffering and filled with the spirit of unconditional surrender to the Divine Will. In spite of its attendant evils, this war plays its part in my mission of helping humanity to fulfil the divine plan on earth and to inherit the coming era of truth and love, of peace and universal brotherhood, of spiritual understanding and unbounded creativity."

He gave the following explicit instructions to all disciples:

"They should be above party politics and should bear malice and ill-will towards none.

"They should observe all the precautionary measures of war for civil population enforced by the Government of the day.

"They should continue as usual to discharge their special duties and work for my spiritual cause unless otherwise directed by me.

"They should stick to their posts and appointments anywhere in India, under any circumstances, unless ordered by the Government.

"They may undertake humanitarian and relief work of a nonsectarian character, without identifying themselves with any party or political organization, and strictly within the scope of time and leisure left over after the performance of spiritual duties enjoined by me.

"They should extend spiritual solace and comfort to the people within

the area of their contacts and influence with a view to counteracting the panicky state of their minds.

"Exceptional cases and circumstances, requiring readjustment of routine lives may be communicated to me...."

When Sir Stafford Cripps came to India bringing the British Government's offer to the Indian people of full independence after the war, Baba issued a message to the leaders of all political thought throughout India entitled 'Action and Inaction', and another on 'The Need for Creative Leadership in India', in which he said that if handled with creative leadership, the presence of conflicting elements in Indian life could be utilized for bringing into existence a rich world culture, which would not only rejuvenate and harmonize Indian life, but give a new tone to the life of the whole world. Rebellion against continued British rule increased, and during the succeeding years of great trial, further messages were issued from time to time, on unity, on the hidden treasure of the self, and other themes.

During 1943 Baba's mother died at her home. He was then at Mahabaleshwar; receiving the news at night, he went at once to Poona. Shirinbanoo was sixty-five. She had often stayed with the women mandali for weeks at a time. This place, Mahabaleshwar, which has already been mentioned, was to gain importance in Baba's work, for he often stayed there. A small town, 71 miles south of Poona, on the crest of the Western Ghats, at 4,000-5,000 feet, a favourite British-Indian hill station, with, however, an excessive rainfall.

Baba emerged from seclusion in April 1946 when a house was taken at Mahabaleshwar in the grounds of which a mast ashram was built, and majzoob-like or salik-like masts were searched for with little result; after some months of great toil, a few men of this type and other God-mad men, also some destitute old men, were collected, bathed and cleaned by Baba, and taken care of. With the God-mad, Baba would sit alone for long periods. Dr Donkin's record is detailed and remarkable. This continued until May the year after, when Baba, the mandali and masts moved to Satara, a small historic town, where an ashram was set up in a one-time military camp, and other masts were brought from far-away places. Among them was an important mast known as Chacha, about whom something must be said.

Chacha was a Pathan, whose real name was Nur Ali Shah. As were most *masts*, he was a Muslim, and Baba had first met him in February 1939 at Ajmer in the Aravilla Hills, where he had established a small mast ashram. Chacha lived in a squalid hovel near the shrine of

Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti in a state of filth. Kaka was sent to bring him to Baba, who gave him his first bath for thirty years, his clothes having to be cut away with scissors. He was then re-clothed and given the food he asked for; he then demanded a tonga, in which he seated himself telling Baba to sit beside him. Baba left him at his hovel, which he refused to allow to be cleaned. For about two weeks Baba went regularly at 3.30 a.m. to sit with Chacha for an hour each night. Three years later Baba went again to Ajmer and again sat with the mast each night. Another visit was made in July 1946. Then at the end of May 1947 Baidul was sent to Ajmer to bring Chacha to Satara, and with much difficulty did so. At Satara he sat for five weeks in the corner of a small room where Baba would spend most of his time giving him cups of tea and food. From these silent conferences Baba would emerge drenched in perspiration. Chacha refused to have a bath, and except for his tea-drinking would sit like a man dozing, his eyes half-open, unaware of the functions of his body. At the end of the first week in July Baba sent him back to Ajmer, where he went joyfully; arriving at his hovel with Baidul in a tonga he refused to alight, and had to be tipped out. While he was away it was said that people would come and weep in his hovel, so greatly was he missed.

The ashram at Satara was brought to an end. It was then August 1947, and a new series of tours started, when Baba left Satara for various places in Hyderabad. This princely state was mostly in a very primitive condition, with few good roads. The ruler was Muslim, the people almost entirely Hindu; at this time the Nizam had refused to accede to India and there was great political uneasiness. Baba visited many places and contacted a number of important masts, returning to Satara by the end of the month. Almost at once he moved to Meherabad, and in September was at Meherazad. A letter from Dr Donkin gives an indication of Baba's activities in September 1947:

On 24th, he gave darshan to local Satara people, I should think 300/400 came, and we got here on 27th by midday.

On the first or second day, Baba suddenly got ill, and had quite a smart attack of bronco-pneumonia, with a temperature for a few days. Nilu and I were very busy treating him.

I don't know whether there was any connection between this illness and the trouble in the Punjab, but it coincided with the worst days of the trouble up there. As well as being ill, he was in a terrible mood, digging and poking at everyone, and Nilu and I were very depressed for several days, being victims of this mood of his. On the

10th, he left for Pimpalgaon, and he is still there but is still not really fit.

On the 17th, he leaves for Surat, where there is a darshan programme for Parsis. From there he goes on a mast trip. He wants to go to Uttarkashi above Rishikesh, and he talked of going to a place which is about 11,000 feet up, and both Nilu and I have tried to dissuade him from this in view of his present bad health. I think and hope that we have succeeded.

On 15th I go to stay at Meherazad, where Mani will do the typing of what I have written for the mast book. Baba is talking of building something here at Meherabad soon, but none of us take this very seriously.

He also says that in six months, there will be ninety per cent chances of a war between Russia and U.S.A., but where England stands in this, he does not say. He also says of India that the present troubles will die down, but in a few months, they will burst out with renewed vigour. He is very anti-Russian these days, and describes Europe as being in the clutches of an Eagle, i.e. of Russia. I think the real world crisis is not far off; and I hope it will come soon, for the world's sake. That September he went into seclusion in a hut built on the summit of a small hill called Tembi about a mile from the house. Another hut was erected for a mast named Ali Shah, a great jamal-mast who was brought there in December, and for twelve days Baba sat three hours each morning with the mast.

In January 1948 it was announced that Baba would be engaged in important work for a period of forty days from 18 January until 25 February. He sent instructions to his adherents throughout the world covering the latter part of this period from 1 February to the 25th:

Obey one, or some, or all of the following orders, providing he or she can do so without jeopardizing household responsibilities, work or business.

- (1) to take a meal once only during each 24 hours, and tea or coffee twice only, water as needed;
- (2) observe silence;
- (3) with your own hands feed one poor man or woman each day, a different person each day;
- (4) abstain literally and absolutely from any sexual relations whatever;
- (5) meditate each day for one hour.

The instructions had to be acknowledged and before 1 February a letter sent to Baba himself saying which order or orders were intended to be carried out. Otherwise no one was to write to him or disturb him.

On 7 February in accordance with his announced programme Baba set out for Allahabad. On his way he stopped in Bombay where he contacted a family, all of whom, reports Dr Donkin, were masts. The family consisted of two brothers and seven sisters who lived together in a house near the shrine of Magdum Shah, in Bombay. There was another brother, the eldest, who looked after the others, though he did not live with them and was not a mast. All the seven sisters and two brothers were what Baba calls madar-masts, i.e., they were masts from birth. The sisters were able to prepare food for themselves and their brothers, one of whom shut himself in a room and saw no one; his sisters put his food outside. The other brother lived on the verandah, in filth, and was rather aggressive. Baba sat with him for five minutes. He also contacted a mast named Pathan Baba, who lived in the remains of a tent immediately behind a public convenience in Colaba, near the southern extremity of the city. This man Baba had wanted to come to Pimpalgaon but he refused, saying, 'I am always near him, let him be near me now'. Baba sat with him twice and gave him seven rupees.

He then went on to Allahabad where, every six years, a fair known as Andha Kumbh Mela takes place, which is largely a convocation of sadhus of different sects. Two days later Baba and his men went to the fair ground where it was estimated that from half a million to two million (the estimates varied!) people were gathered, with about thirty thousand sadhus. Starting at 7 a.m. he visited the various akhadas, where were the different sects of sadhus, entering each section alone for no one was to witness his contacts, and in three hours he completed the work, having, he said, touched the feet of 4,000 sadhus, among whom, he said, there were but seven advanced souls. It was the day of a new moon. He then contacted four masts in Allahabad itself and left that night. The next day the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed there in the waters where the two sacred rivers, the Jumna and the Ganges, meet.

Arriving in Bombay in the early morning of 11 February Baba went at once, without resting, to contact Umar Baba, 'the spiritual chargeman' of Bombay, 'a man of ferocious aspect, a sixth-plane mast, in a complete majzoob-state, and at times so violent that people fear to come near him', says Dr Donkin (*The Wayfarers*, p.385). He had succeeded Tipu Baba, whom Baba went to see thirty-three years earlier,

who had died in 1944. He was living in an old graveyard on Grant Road. Baba sat with him for some time. Three other masts were contacted and Baba went by car to Meherabad.

He had completed the first and second phases of his plan and started on the third and final phase, which was to distribute grain and cloth (one and a half yards of cloth and eight pounds of jawar) to poor people in the Ahmednagar district. This was done between 17 and 24 February. He washed their feet as well as distributing the prasad, and to some people, when they arrived after the distribution was over on each occasion a small sum of money was given. At one village named Visapur, where he was to meet a thousand people at a refugee camp, the news had got around that their feet were to be washed by a saint - for Baba's identity was being kept secret. They refused, saying they should wash his feet, so that nothing was done there except that Baba made a contribution to the camp funds. The distribution intended for the refugees was made on 7 March at a town called Vambori, where Baba washed the feet of nearly six hundred men and women. Altogether well over 4,000 poor people were so contacted.

After these labours another mast tour was embarked upon, if possible even more strenuous than any that had gone before. Baba set out for the Himalayas, taking with him Gustadji, Baidul, Kaka, Eruch and Chhagan, on 29 March arriving in Calcutta the next day. The first thing he did was to take a train for Dacca, capital of the newly formed Eastern Pakistan; when they reached Ranaghat Junction, however, he told them to get out and take the next train back to Calcutta. No explanation was offered. Two days were spent in Calcutta contacting masts, and on the evening of 1 April they went by train to Hardwar, arriving there the next day, masts were contacted and provisions were purchased for the long mountain trek which was to follow. They left on 4 April for Rishikesh by bus, where nine Nepalese coolies were engaged for the baggage. Baba and his party travelled by bus to Tehri Garhwal, the coolies coming on foot as they knew a quick way. From Tehri, which was reached that evening, they were all to go forty miles by foot over rough mountainous country. They rested for a day, then on 7 April at 5.30 a.m. Baba, his five men and the nine coolies set out for Uttar Kashi, where they arrived, tired out and their feet blistered, two days later. At once, next day, Baba's mast contacts started. There were not only masts but sadhus, saints, initiates and adepts, altogether about fifty-nine men. The names and descriptions of most of them are given by Dr Donkin. The return journey to Tehri started on 13 April and was completed on the 16th, when the coolies

were discharged. The morning after they left for Delhi, the next day going to Agra where Baba contacted masts and others. They then returned to Rusi's house at Ahmednagar.

Early in May Baba announced that he would be engaged in a special type of spiritual work during the two months from 21 May to 19 July 1948, and that during that period he was not to be disturbed unnecessarily, either by correspondence or interviews except when asked for by him. A circular sent to his followers in India and throughout the world, read as follows:

All disciples, devotees and followers (both men and women) should carry out anyone but not more than one from the following instructions during the period of one month from 21st June 1948 to 20th July 1948 (both dates inclusive), because spiritually this is a period of crisis.

1. To observe silence. No sound to be produced by mouth at all.
2. Fast with one meal and tea or coffee once only during 24 hours. Tea or coffee should be prepared in the usual manner, i.e. with milk, water and sugar. Water (but not aerated or mineral water) may be taken freely. The times of the meal as well as of tea or coffee may be fixed according to individual convenience and they may also be changed.
3. Feed one poor person every day with your own hands, morsel after morsel. The same person should not be fed again during this period.
4. To repeat every day orally (and not merely mentally) one hundred thousand times any one Divine name cherished by you, the same name to be repeated every day. This need not be done at one stretch.
5. (a) Do not touch money. Do not even carry it yourself.
 (b) Do not touch members of the opposite sex. This need not apply to children under 7 years.
 (c) Do not hit anyone under any circumstances, even in jest. (d) Do not insult or abuse even when provoked.

Only one from the above five orders may be followed, but it should be followed literally, faithfully and without any compromise.

Those who accepted these orders were asked to notify Baba before the end of May.

He issued an invitation to Delia De Leon in England and Jean Adriel in America to come to him from the middle of July for a period of three weeks. On landing at Bombay they were told that Baba would not see them until 10 August. They were warmly received at Meherabad when they heard that he would see them a week later when the fast

ended. They found that four of the women there were repeating the divine name 100,000 times a day; it took them fifteen hours the first day, after that ten. Baba came on the 22 July, and sent them to his new centre at Pimpalgaon on 20 August. He told them he had done seven years with boys, seven years with men, and seven years with women and would now concentrate on his universal work. They were told a story of how Muhammad, the mast, one day insisted without ceasing that Baba should produce his wife, of whom no one had heard before. At last, to humour him, Baba got a woman from the village to dress up as an awful old hag and presented her to Muhammad as his wife, which quickly cured him. Baba kept them busy over the entire period of three months when the two women went home.

The new centre at Pimpalgaon became Baba's personal headquarters henceforward. Eighteen miles from Meherabad, Pimpalgaon is a small village in a green valley. The house, to which Kaka has given the name 'Meherazad', had been built for the engineers engaged in supervising the construction of a reservoir. In the house Baba's close Indian women disciples live: each has a room of her own, and on the second floor there was a room for Baba. The mandali, when they are there, have extremely simple quarters in huts built on one side of a bare compound, with one tree and a stone seat: they have no comforts whatever, in contrast to the women.

Very soon Baba was away once more. In the first week of June he set out on a short tour of Gujarat, reaching Baroda on 8 June where two great masts contacted the year before were seen again. They visited Nadiad and Ahmedabad and were back again in Ahmednagar. Two weeks later they were off to Nasirabad, Jalgaon and Kalyan, then to Bombay and back to Ahmednagar by 12 July. Contacts were made in all these places.

A tour to south India started the second week in August when Baba was to be found in Madras contacting masts. He was there two days, then to Trichinopoly, Tiruvallur, Arantangi, Tiruppur and back to Madras on 16 August. He then returned to Ahmednagar, and in September moved to the new centre, Meherazad.

When November came he was off to the peninsula of Kathiawar, a large area once containing as many as 222 states, but by now amalgamated under the name of Saurashtra. They went first to Junagarh, an old city, a former capital, once residence of the Nawab. There Baba contacted a mast, Munga Sain Mastan, and Baba went in seclusion on Datar Hill. On 12 November he was in Delhi, making contacts, leaving for Ajmer the following day. They visited Baroda, Cambay,

Viramgam and other places, reaching Rajkot on 19 November, where he contacted 150 poor people, and Ahmedabad on 21 November, where he contacted 140 sadhus. At all these places masts were contacted. Then back in Meherazad before the end of the year.

The series of mast tours lasted, with intervals, for nearly nine years, from December 1940 covering over 75,000 miles. On these tours, the object was to contact masts of every kind in all parts of India; they were seldom brought to Baba, he went to them, and no ashrams were maintained. In addition to masts, Baba sought out sadhus, who are spiritually advanced but are rarely God-conscious, and faqirs, who practise forms of yoga and among whom are many pretenders. His main concern, however, was with *masts*.

There is a question to be dealt with before the subject is left. Why are masts so often found in filth, sometimes living in latrines? Baba's answer is:

"When the mind does not pay attention to the body, the body naturally survives and looks after itself... a sort of automatic attraction takes place which causes a man who is indifferent to cleanliness to be attracted to ... dirty surroundings. He does not purposely choose an unclean place, but tends to gravitate towards it for he is himself quite indifferent to either cleanliness or dirt. This dirtiness does not affect their health'."

(The Wayfarers, p.34)

An example of this was one of the last masts to be contacted, named Keshav. He lived in a public urinal near the railway station in Poona, and was a revered figure in that city. Dr Donkin says that many of those who respected him tried in vain to get him to live in their houses. He chose to live in filth because of the self-sufficiency of his God-intoxication, not because he was insane, though from the normal point of view he was utterly mad. With some persuasion Keshav was got to leave his urinal to be brought to Baba's bungalow in the city. When invited to be given a hot bath by Baba he vehemently refused. 'I am like your son', he said, 'I won't let you touch my feet.' He demanded that the jeep should take him away, and Baba agreed to this being done. For an hour Baba and his men stood around the jeep when he had got into it, trying to induce him to allow Baba to wash his feet. At last he agreed to Baba pouring water on his feet as he sat there. Keshav then became immediately docile and let Baba do with him as he wished. Baba fed him, and Keshav asked for a coat and one rupee, which Baba

gave him, and for a time sat with him in the jeep. Finally he was taken back to his urinal. Baba said that Keshav was a good *mast*, 75 per cent *jalali*, a type of *mast* who always lives in squalor, restless and hot-tempered, and 25 per *jamali*, a type of *mast*, always mild tempered, who never abuses others, and who like the other type continually moves his fingers and toes. He died some weeks after this incident.

Before this took place, on New Year's Day that year, 1949, Baba sent from Meherazad a circular to all his devotees and followers giving warning of a great personal disaster to himself, saying that the *mandali* will be faced by real tests and trials and that only a few disciples might endure them. He said:

"All men and women who believe in me should observe silence for one full month in July 1949. All disciples and devotees to be more engrossed in God than in Maya by being less selfish and more sacrificing.

"The year 1949 marks an artificial end to an artificial beginning and the real beginning to the real end.

"Although I am in everyone and in everything and my work is for the spiritual awakening of all mankind, I am always aloof from politics of any kind. My disciples and devotees should continue as before to abstain from taking part in political activities or discussions."

Baba was extremely busy during the months after the issue of this circular until he went into retirement in June. For four months he was in Mt. Abu, Rajasthan, on *mast* tours, working so strenuously that it told upon his health. This marked the virtual end of the work I have been describing, of which I have given only a sketchy account. At this time he had the bearing of one who had succeeded in a great campaign. There was great peace about him, his gaze penetrating and glowing, his mien alert, his hair short and manageable, with a pigtail.

THE GREAT SECLUSION

There have been many periods of seclusion in Baba's life, some for long periods, but the seclusion upon which he was now to start was regarded by him as 'The Great Seclusion' because of the work to be accomplished. He had been referring to it months beforehand, telling the *mandali* to be alert and watchful about every action. It was work of preparation, in which he was to be actively averse to the buried past and carefree of the unborn future.

The seclusion took place at Meherazad. Baba selected a small space

occupied on three sides by the buildings, the fourth side being closed with bamboo matting. In this space the body of the motor bus, already referred to, was mounted on empty oil drums, fixed in brick and lime. There he spent forty days, from 22 June until 31 July 1949. The daily routine was carefully detailed, with time-tables, duty charts, and instructions for emergencies. All, with a few exceptions for practical reasons, were ordered to observe silence and to fast, including Kaka who was to wait upon Baba in the enclosure, being called by a bell.

On the 21 June Baba called the mandali and his local disciples at 7 a.m. to participate in what he called the purification ceremony, which consisted of recitations from the sacred books, Baba freely commenting upon each recitation. He said:

"These are all different approaches to the one Truth, God, and the purpose of each book is the same. These approaches are of two kinds, direct and indirect, or personal and impersonal; but the same end is reached by either way. What can be received in a flash by spiritual experience takes ages to grasp by the mind. I have reasons of my own for this seclusion. It should not be looked upon as a time of meditation, for I am free in every way; but I am going to get myself bound voluntarily. I shall intensify my silence and will not allow the least sound from my mouth."

He entered the cabin at 5.35 p.m. the following day. Quiet had to be maintained by everyone. Kaka would be called at any hour of the day or night, if only to be told that no disturbance of any kind should take place. He was relieved for short periods from time to time by two other watchmen. Kaka was also observing silence. Baba normally sleeps for an hour or an hour and a half each night, but this time so far as the watchers could tell he slept for no more than a few minutes at a time, for they would hear constant noises and footsteps from the cabin.

The seclusion was interrupted on 26 June when twenty-one poor people were sent for, who were allowed to go into the enclosure one at a time, when Baba washed their feet and presented them with ten rupees each. On 29 June seven mad and mast men were fetched, to have their hair clipped, to be bathed and clothed by him and presented with a packet of sweets.

For the first eight days Baba took tea once, coffee once, and food once. From 1 July he took only honey, water and milkless tea, but the small diet, alternating with complete fasts, was raised from time to

time. From that date, too, Kaka was given more relief, for the strain upon him was evident, and some of the mandali took on the task. Baba said afterwards that 'No one except God and myself knows what I went through during those nine days' - he was referring to the first nine days of the month. After that period he would send messages to various people and had passages from the sacred books and the Christian mystics read to him. On the 16 July Baba went to Poona for eight days, but no one was allowed to see him go. From the 25 July onward the fast was intensified. At 7 a.m. on 1 August he 'stepped out' of the seclusion.

All the local people who had kept silence and fasting during the period were invited to be present at Meherazad before seven o' clock in the morning before breakfast. They were forbidden to fold hands, bow to Baba, or utter any word. He appeared exactly on the hour in the picture of health and radiance, instead of what might have been expected from the privations he had suffered. The following prayer was then said in English, Marathi, Gujarati and Urdu:

"May God whom the Muslims call Allah, whom the Zoroastrians call Ahurmazd, whom the Hindus call Ishwar Paramatman, and whom many others call by many other names, may he whose union the lovers seek in self-annihilation, whom the seers see as the only Reality, and whom the knowers know as their own real self, may this Supreme Conscious Being, this conscious Soul of souls, who eternally manifests as Avatar and Perfect Master, may he through his all merciful act bestow on us his grace, and may he solve our difficulties by the end of this year, and may he according to Baba's circular of 1949 finish everything by the end of the year, to enable Baba to break his silence in the beginning of the next year, to speak the one and the last Word of all-embracing Divinity."

At the end Baba distributed rava to all present with which the general fast was finished. The announcement of the New Life was then made and to that phase of Baba's story we now come.

Part I, Chapter 5

THE NEW LIFE OF HELPLESSNESS AND HOPELESSNESS

1949-1952

From January 1949 onwards, signs of a new trend had become more and more evident. Among the remarks that were noted up to the time Baba left for Mount Abu on 15 February were the following:

"I do not feel like caring for anything that remains or anything that goes This year is to be cared for this year. I will finish once and for all the existing arrangements by December, perhaps earlier in June, maybe by March. An immediate reduction of fifty per cent must be made in all expenses. From July you will begin to see and hear things for yourselves. Ninety per cent of the mandali will have to leave me and only ten per cent will remain. I have no trust left in or for anyone including myself. ... All are pardoned by me and God will also pardon me, but henceforth no pardon will be possible You people have been with me for so many years and I am therefore responsible for your continued weaknesses but I do not want to take advantage of your weaknesses. I am therefore warning you not to succumb to them and avoid everything being lost during 1949."

Before leaving, Baba instructed the mandali to keep themselves completely aloof from the opposite sex to the extent of avoiding even a formal handshake, or any conversation with each other except between nearest relatives or when dealing with outsiders in the course of duty. He called Princess Norina Matchabelli and Elizabeth Patterson to a private interview, when they were given instructions to prepare a centre in the United States in anticipation of his visiting the continent. A large area of land had already been secured at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; they left at once for New York from Bombay by air.

There was much activity throughout the year. Arrangements were made for the mandali to meet Baba every day at Meherabad at appointed hours from 15 August onwards to deliberate upon the changes

consequent upon the New Life Baba was to decide for himself, and for those who would elect to keep company with him, or who would choose to remain under his guidance. 'Stick to me like a leech and try not to miss anything that I say to anyone during these days', was the order he gave to Faram, who started to make shorthand notes, to the results of which this account is partly indebted.

In addition to his usual insistence upon discipline and thoroughness, Baba was especially earnest in the matter of the mandali's attendance at these meetings, the attention to be paid by each of them to all he said and did, and above all to the seriousness and finality to be attached to his plans and intentions. 'However busy you may be, do not fail to be present all the time . . . I shall not be available afterwards ... there will be no more chances such as this ... I will need no further work to be done by anyone May God help all who may take anything lightly or allow themselves to be misled by their own individual fads and fancies', were some of the warnings Baba made very gravely to those around him.

Immediately on his arrival on the 15 August, the first day of the meeting at Meherabad, Baba embraced Gustadji and Kaikobad and entered the hall in the new quarters of the ashram. It was nearly 7:15 a.m. but some of the members were absent. Only when Baba was satisfied that this was due to a bona-fide mistake did he permit the proceedings to start, but a warning was given to them to be present punctually at 7 the following morning, to enable all to follow Baba's words which were mostly in Gujarati. Ramju and Vishnu were asked to translate there and then in English and Marathi what Adi Senior and others read from the alphabet board. This is what he said:

"Listen and pay full attention to all that I am going to tell you. Whatever we are going to discuss and decide these days is to be made known to all plainly, exactly and truthfully. Today we shall have a general talk about the basis on which we have to make the ultimate arrangements and adjustments to facilitate the final decision or decisions that have to be arrived at. There are three points I have already decided upon definitely about myself. What I want from you is to help me to help all to adjust themselves as best they can to fall in with my decisions in one way or another. These three points are - (1) I shall be absolutely helpless in the true and literal sense of the word on account of some personal disaster to me; before that happens after October 1st, I want to make what arrangements are possible for the mandali under the limited means at our disposal, because I shall then stop looking

into the material affairs of anyone. (2) I shall allow only such persons to remain near me who are completely ready to carry out the conditions that will be laid down by me for that purpose. I shall be beyond the reach of all others. (3) Meherabad and Meherazad ashrams will be disbanded as I am going to wipe them off my map.

"I thank God that the time for which I have been waiting so long has arrived at last. The whole world will know how and to what extent I become helpless, and I shall come to know as to how far the mandali will go with me. And that is the gist of all that we have to discuss and decide about."

From the very first day of the meetings, Baba made vigorous approach to questions of the disposal of movable and immovable properties, and provision for dependent families and those who might not be able to remain with him in the future. 'I have no cash', said he, 'except an amount which is kept aside for a certain work. Everything I possess including ashram buildings, fields and houses, etc., both here (Ahmednagar, Arangaon and Pimpalgaon) and elsewhere, and all furniture, cars, power-plants, cattle, chattels and in fact everything that belongs to me, is to be disposed of. Nothing is to remain as my property and in my name except the Meherabad Hill premises on which the tomb of my bodily remains has already been built, and all should always remember that when I leave my body it has to be buried there.' According to a dictation from Baba, Ghani then offered a prayer as follows: 'Oh God, may Baba not give up his body soon', and all present said, 'Amen'. Baba then continued as follows:

All the proceeds from the sale of my properties are to be used in paying off promised sums and to provide for the immediate needs of those whom I have myself made to depend upon me. Nothing is required for me and those who will go with me. The question about spiritual benefits does not arise. That in turn depends upon the question whether I am or am not perfect. No one will be left out spiritually if I am perfect. As it is, we have so to say one rupee in hand against ten rupees to be spent at the least to provide for the minimum requirements of all concerned. Be absolutely honest in giving your opinions, answers and suggestions. Keep sentiment apart. Don't be vague. Say exactly what you think and how you feel. You should not say 'Baba, your will'. Only a few of us are here to arrive at the decisions that concern many of us. The women mandali will also be disbanded. Whatever we decide is therefore to be followed by the women mandali and will

affect everyone who is connected with me. I am going to decide everything within these ten days. Do not get misled on account of my apparently eccentric habits up to now. For example, I have definitely decided to give up Meherazad in October, yet I have given instructions to Padri to fix the lighting as early as he can. That is because of my custom of maintaining an old order of things up to the moment that I start upon anything new. It may be madness, it may be method, but that has been my habit. Now I am also going to put an end to my habits and customs. Therefore when I say the 'end' it will mean nothing but an end. Do not remain any more under the impression that it will be otherwise. I want to be absolutely free from everything and everybody. There will be no compromise now about anything. I am becoming ghutt (hardened), naffat (callous) and penniless. Remember the proverb Nanga-se-Khuda bhi darta hai (even God is afraid of the 'naked').

A deadline of 15 October was fixed for the disposal of everything and for the completion of all arrangements. These included the cancellation of Baba's last will made in favour of the mandali in 1940, as well as the cancellation of the wills in favour of Baba by the men mandali members. These were torn up one by one by Baba with his own hands in the presence of the respective executants, each of whom was given back the torn pieces to be kept as souvenirs. The Meher Publications as a firm was also dissolved and all copyrights were declared to remain with the respective authors.

Sarosh, Meherjee and Nariman, foremost amongst those who have rendered invaluable service to Baba, appeared to be the most concerned over these decisions. Sarosh was the first to offer to undertake the sole responsibility of maintaining indefinitely all the men and women mandali now staying with Baba. Baba smiled, showing he was very happy to hear this, but told Sarosh 'You have missed the whole point. Can't you see that the expected proceeds of all my properties have been earmarked for those not going with me? The question of the maintenance of those who will remain with me after 15 October is neither provided for nor is to be provided for. I and those who are going with me are going to suffer. We are going to start without any protection. We shall have to go a-begging.'

Meherjee and Nariman accepted the responsibility of the Meherabad and Meherazad ashrams, lands, buildings, etc. This was sheer sacrifice on their part, because when Baba advised them not to hesitate to re-sell the properties when they received good offers, Nariman said

'If there were any question of selling, we should not have involved ourselves'. Baba replied, 'These properties are now yours, not mine. I can have no objection to your keeping them or selling them'.

On the third day (17 August) Baba offered the following alternatives to the men mandali:

1. Those who will find themselves able to fulfil the conditions I lay down, and accept the same, will go with me.
2. Those who cannot accompany me will have to earn their living, and, if they can, spare out of their earnings to give to the dependent families, and continue to carry out the orders already given by me or any other orders that I may give them.
3. Those who can neither go with me nor can support others and carry out my orders will have to go their own way.

Before discussing anything further, Baba asked Ghani to offer a prayer:

May God give good buddhi (sense) to the mandali and full shuddhi (discrimination) to Baba.

The alternatives given to the women mandali the day before were as follows:

1. If any has some member of her family who can provide for her financially, she can stay in Meherabad Hill quarters; but there would be no members of the men mandali to help in any way at all.
2. They can work for their living and put anything that can be spared for families that have been so far depending on Baba.
3. They can do what they like and have nothing more to do with Baba.
4. They can leave everything to Baba and do exactly as Baba says accepting with full faith whatever decisions he makes for them.

Baba explained that the offer to the women of making the decision for them himself would under no circumstances apply to the men - each of whom would have to decide for himself. 'But in either case', said Baba, 'each person, man or woman, will have to affirm sole responsibility on oath before God in my presence for his or her respective decision whether arrived at directly or through me.'

Baba's repeated prayers to God and the responsibility to be borne as before him by each and every one and under all circumstances was brought to a climax on the 18 August. On his arrival that day at 6:50 a.m. Baba asked Donkin, Khaksaheb, Kaikobad and Kalemama

to be ready with their respective Bible, Quran, Avesta and Gita, after taking a bath in case any of them had missed it that morning. He then made them stand on his right. Kaikobad was the first to perform *Kusti* and to read the usual prayer audibly for five minutes. Donkin then read from the Bible the Crucifixion of Jesus from the Gospel of St Matthew. Khaksaheb offered *namas* and silently performed two *Raquat of Nafil*. Kalemama ended the prayers by repeating seven *Shlokas* of the 10th *Adhyaya* from the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Each time the particular prayer ended Baba took the respective scriptures on his knees, one by one, and rested his fingers on each book. He then held the four holy books spreading them on an adjoining table with his hands. His prayer-mouthpiece, Ghani, was then asked by Baba to cover the four Divine Messages with both of his hands and to offer a prayer, which Ghani read according to a dictation from Baba over the alphabet board as follows:

"May God help Baba to definitely make this step, which he is taking to give up everything and to go away, irrevocable, so that from 16 October when he enters the new life, there will be no turning back."

This was the first prayer for help ever before heard from Baba to God during the past twenty-eight years, and the mandali was so taken aback and confused that no one could think of saying, Amen!

Baba occasionally gave sharp pin-pricks of chastisement to the mandali as well as praise, and later that day he eulogized Ali Akbar for his devotion, which proved too much for the poor fellow. Although he knew quite well that Baba had made it a strict rule not to allow anyone under any circumstances to touch his feet, take his darshan or even to offer him namaskars (fold hands in salute), Ali Akbar, who happened to be sitting near Baba's chair at that moment, could not help stretching out his hands, unnoticed by anyone, and touching Baba's feet. Instantly the atmosphere became charged as Baba went grave, and the mandali became speechless. Expecting to witness an expression of strong displeasure, they saw him make Ali Akbar stand before him; then suddenly Baba got up from his chair, went near Ali Akbar and bent himself down to touch Ali Akbar's feet. No one clearly remembers what followed except that there was an immediate scream and Ali Akbar was seen to jump clean off his feet, and had to be saved by those around him from falling down. It was also observed that Baba was carrying one of his own arms, indicating that he also had received some injury, but without paying any attention to what had taken place Baba once more bent down and touched Ali Akbar's feet.

It was found that Ali Akbar's fall had been borne by Baba's right hand the fingers of which had to be in a sling for a number of days. When the immediate excitements subsided Baba told Ali Akbar that he was pardoned and should not any more dwell upon the incident or blame himself. Addressing all those present Baba said 'Carrying out my orders is the all important thing; compared to that there is no importance at all in my falling at your feet. How would it be possible for you to accompany me if you were not fully prepared to completely fulfil the conditions? Possibly, one of them may be that the first thing to be done one morning would be for the mandali to spit on my face or that every morning I shall be touching your feet! Then addressing Ali Akbar particularly, Baba asked him if he would accept the conditions? 'That', replied Ali Akbar, 'is a question of going to pieces.' 'No', said Baba, 'it is not that. It is only a question of carrying out the conditions.' He then suddenly asked him to twist his (Baba's) ears. This time, it was with a smile that Ali Akbar carried out the command. Then someone else in excess of enthusiasm raised his hand to say that he was also ready to twist Baba's ears; Baba smiled and said, 'I only asked Ali Akbar to do that, but if any of you feel like giving vent to your pent-up feelings to settle old scores with me, I shall not mind at all to have my ears twisted this day by any of you without any fear of my displeasure'. Amidst the laughter that followed, Baba added that 'twisting my ears is easy but carrying out my orders is difficult'.

Those going with Baba were expected to be prepared to look upon themselves as already dead in the sense that the dead have no more material connections or concern with anything or anyone. 'I am going to see', said Baba, 'who is out to die for no reason by going with me.'

While inviting the mandali's wholehearted co-operation, they were warned again and again to discard all fads, fancies, notions and vagueness, particularly in respect of spiritual leanings and beliefs, and were asked to look upon the prospect of going with Baba without expectation of any reward whatever. Explaining further, Baba said:

It is not merely a question of hardships and difficulties such as those encountered in past trips. The most difficult thing now is the need to control emotions and feelings and to have absolute readiness for split-second obedience to whatever I ask you to do or not to do. I do not expect anyone of you to be free from your respective reactions of good or bad impulses such as anger, displeasure, likes and dislikes, but I expect you not to give any direct or indirect expression to feelings and reactions. I shall be free in every way and you will be bound in every

respect. I shall live amongst you as one of you like a brother. I may even fall at your feet and ask you to spit upon me. That is why I have been saying that the conditions will be such that very few would remain with me to the end. But at all times and under all circumstances you must continue to look upon me as your Master and to obey me implicitly. Scrupulous care must be taken by those going with me to avoid creating any occasion or situation by word or deed whether directly or indirectly that may be capable of inviting or encouraging any homage or reverence to be paid to me or to any of you by anyone. If by any chance any respect or homage happens to be paid unsolicited to anyone, that action of respect or homage must instantly be met with an identical action on the spot by the mandali concerned, except when I happen to touch the mandali's feet or fall at their feet or salute them. Above all, I shall no more be taking care of anyone's health or have any concern with anyone's moods and likes or dislikes as I have been doing so far. Under all these circumstances those of you who really succeed in remaining with me to the end will become worthy to be worshipped by me. I shall therefore be glad to have as many more of the mandali as can go with me, but looking to the difficulties ahead and to the conditions I have in mind to lay down in order to meet all likely situations and circumstances, I have my own doubts if five would be able to remain to the end even if 500 were to accompany me.

According to the points given to them by Baba, Donkin and Ghani drafted the conditions. Before these were completed Baba, on 21 August, offered the following prayer at about 10:30 that morning:

"May it please God to give his absolute strength to Baba to adhere to everything that is in his conditions to the very end.

"He continued to dwell upon the gravity and finality involved under the New Life and the irrevocable and unchangeable nature of the conditions:

"There is going to be no change in the decisions that I have taken, or in my helplessness. That fact has been made permanent by the oath-taking ceremony performed through the four mandali members the other day. I was very glad to receive the injuries on my hand that had rested upon the religious books. That ought to be an eye-opener for the mandali that those who go with me will have to face suffering."

Baba also kept on expressing his doubts as to the ultimate number of those who would be able to stick to him to the last:

"It is all the more surprising that those of you who should know and understand best keep on asking questions that betray a very poor appreciation of the full implications of the nature of the New Life. The other day Chhagan asked me if he should accompany me or adopt the alternative? Ghani also could not help saying that I will *nibhav* him (help him to stick to me). The fact is that I shall not be responsible for anyone. I shall bear no responsibility even for Gustadji, although he will be the only one whom I shall try to keep with me because Upasni Maharaj had transferred him to me, but that will also depend upon the fact that Gustadji will continue to listen to me, otherwise there will be goodbye also for him."

In the course of further discussions Baba pointed to his injured fingers in the sling, and said, 'This, plus my complete silence and the things I have to do, can better be left to your imagination than described. If later on, the other arm is paralyzed it would mean that I should be almost helpless physically. In that case, those who remain with me may have to live and subsist on water only, because according to one of the conditions when food is received or obtained by anyone, it is to be brought to me, and cannot be eaten unless I distribute it myself.' Later, Baba said that no one below and above the ages of twenty-five and sixty would have any place in the new programme. As the days went by, the field of the prospective companions of Baba in the New Life began to be narrowed more and more. Instead of extending a general invitation, Baba later said that the conditions would be posted only to those persons whom he would select. When the list of those who had in the past given an undertaking to follow Baba's instructions at the cost of their lives was gone through by him only thirty-two names were selected out of a total of 1,200.

On 25 August, Baba gave special attention to the women on the hill. Some of the men mandali were called and he informed them as follows:

"It was left for me to decide about the women, unlike the men mandali who are to decide for themselves. We first decided that no one from the mandali was to stay at Meherabad or up on the hill. I have since made an exception about lower Meherabad. A few of the men mandali are to stay there for one year and some of them can also stay there permanently. Now some of the women are to stay on the hill. Before giving my decision, I allowed the ladies to give me their own suggestions, one of which was that Kaikobad's family and Mansari be allowed to stay. I approved of the idea and these five persons may now stay subject to the understanding: (1) Not to expect ever to see or meet me

again or that I should ever again return to the hill. (2) To abide by all the conditions laid down for their staying on the hill."

It was also made clear once again that the individual responsibility for the women mandali, including Mehera, was their own before God, and each of them had agreed to assume the full responsibility for themselves before God. He decided that four only of the women mandali were to go with him on the 16th of October and arrangements were made for the others. He gave each individually her special order, the work each was to do to support herself, what she was to do with the money earned, and so forth. They were to understand that though separated physically, they were sharing Baba's New Life by living the life he had chosen for them, by not keeping money or buying or accepting new things, or going to cinemas, and only accepting food, shelter, and toilet necessities. They were to give up hope a hundred per cent wholeheartedly and sincerely of ever seeing or meeting him again. By giving up hope entirely and carrying out his orders they would be sharing his New Life. All trouble was from hoping: where there was no hope there can follow no disappointment, he said. Each was to hold herself responsible for whatever might happen to her. Baba then told each woman to wash her face and hands and to take the oath of responsibility before the Impersonal God in the presence of Baba, which each did in turn.

All the costlier personal belongings, jewellery, etc., were surrendered by the women to be disposed of. A collection amounting to about 10,000 rupees in cash and kind was later made by the poorer women devotees of Baba in Bombay merely on hearsay. Some of the contributors were reported to have given all they possessed. Baba accepted the whole, as a gift, and then arranged that all the contributions were to be returned as *prasad* from him. On August 31st everyone was instructed to be ready in the hall at 8 a.m. after taking a bath and putting on clean clothes. The hall was washed thoroughly in the early hours and all were forbidden to enter before the appointed hour. Arrangements were also made for the selected thirty-two visitors. At exactly 8 o'clock Baba was the first to enter the hall and asked the mandali to follow him.

For a few minutes Baba stood at the opposite end of his seat in the hall and asked Padri to walk to and fro before him, 'I don't mind a cat to cross my path but I do not want any man to come in my way'. After taking his seat and making sure that all who were expected to be present were there and that there would be no disturbance or intrusion from anyone, Baba first briefly explained the purport of the gathering.

The mandali were then asked to recite audibly the passages from the *Avesta*, *Bible*, *Quran* and *Bhagavad gita*. Baba said that he first of all wanted to invoke the forgiveness of God for himself, for the mandali and for all through the Zoroastrian, Hindu, Christian and Islamic approaches to God. At the end of the recitations and referring to Khak's *qiraat* (melodious recitation of *Quran*), Baba remarked that if God cannot be moved with such words, he must be either deaf or dead. Baba also said that this was the last ceremony: 'Henceforth there will be no ceremonies at all'.

Ramju was asked to give a brief narration for the benefit of the visitors about the plans and arrangements being made to wind up everything to start the New Life. After that Don read out rapidly the conditions in English with a few interjections from Baba emphasizing the main significance and implications involved. Baba then declared that after taking the oath a copy of the conditions would be given to everyone, and that each should study the contents thoroughly and return the respective copies within 4 hours with an unequivocal and plain 'Yes' or 'No'.

The text of Baba's last oath was then read out solemnly by Donkin at a signal from Baba. Baba rose for the first time from his seat and remained standing for a while facing the wall in front of the scriptures and with his back to the mandali. The oath was as follows:

"Before God, the Absolute, whom those who have realized know as their own Self and whom believers believe to be All-pervading, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-loving and All-merciful - before this Infinite Existence, Baba, on behalf of himself and his followers, asks forgiveness for all mental, physical and moral weaknesses called sins, and for all lies and false dealings, and for all impure and selfish actions.

"Before this Infinite God who ever was, ever is, and ever will be, Baba decides today on the New Life that he and those who accompany him will enter from 16 October 1949, and lead on till the end. This New Life will be based absolutely on all that has been dictated by Baba in the circular of conditions; and Baba invokes God to make him stand by it as firmly and steadfastly as his companions in his New Life are required to do."

After that, Baba once again warned them all that his decision and the decisions that others would arrive at that day were irrevocable and binding for all time: he then had the following read out:

"I forgive each and every disciple, devotee, and follower, all his

weaknesses, and any disobedience on his part up till now. And on behalf of myself I forgive myself for any pain, injustice, or wrong that I may have done any of them.

"I want you all to understand once and for all that I am completely serious about this New Life. Although you have stood by me faithfully and lovingly all these past years, with perfect faith and sincerity in spite of receiving nothing from me, and although you all might be prepared to lay down your lives for me, yet there is the possibility that your and my habit of understanding and misunderstanding each other during the last so many years might mislead you into not taking this most seriously. Therefore I want you all to go through this circular word by word most carefully before you decide. It would be best if you accompany me and abide by all orders and conditions completely. But although your faith, love and service for me have been greater than mine would have been for my own Master, yet these conditions might prove your undoing. So unless you are ready to live the life of complete satyanashi and absolute obedience, it would be better to stay behind and obey instructions that will be given to you. But all this is by way of statement of facts and confessions. The decision is entirely to be made by you and you alone. May God give you the required strength.

"I want you to understand that I will not deliberately do anything that will force those that go with me to leave me. I shall also, to some extent, make you relax your resolution to abide by your oath one hundred per cent. Eventually all the conditions will be applied one hundred per cent to all who come with me, and I shall abide fully by my oath.

"Between now (this day of decision) and 15 October, I will overcome the momentum of my past activities by concentrating and intensifying my work of masts, poor, seclusion and fast, for which no record should be kept, except the men's activities, which will end on 7 September.

"During this period you can ask me anything you like, so long as it does not affect the circular and your decision.

"From today until the 15 October I will live the usual life that I have been living."

The mandali and others were then allowed to take their meal though Baba said he would not eat until he had the replies from each of the recipients of the conditions.

Within three hours, all the decisions were in Baba's hands; there were many surprises. Baba expressed surprise at the 'No' given by

Padri. He said that he would have very much liked Padri to go with him and felt sorry at this negative decision, but added that he was also glad, because Padri happened to be, what Baba called, one of the four 'pillars' of Meherabad, who were Vishnu, Pendu, Adi Sr. and Padri. 'In case the three "pillars". said Baba, 'who are going with me fall down, at least one will be left in reserve.' Amongst those who had said 'No' Baba particularly referred to Gadekar and Deshmukh. For the former Baba said 'May God always keep Gadekar in my heart', and of the latter he added 'Deshmukh will always be near and dear to me'. The gathering then became divided into three groups, the 'Yes-wallas', 'No-wallas' and the 'Arrangement-wallas' .

The general instructions given to the 'No-wallas' were to continue their lives as they were living so far. All the 'Yes-wallas' were required to be present at Meherabad between the 1 and 5 October completely ready and prepared to turn their backs for all time on their existing life and affairs.

Until 31 August Baba said more than once that he did not know himself where he was going. From September he began to unfold the details. He insisted upon those who had decided to go with him to behave in the spirit of the conditions although a literal observance was not expected until 16 October. Explaining, Baba said:

"I am trying my best to help you so that all may be able to stick to me to the end. There is absolutely no question of any tests or trials. What is there left for tests and trials after all the years you have been with me? It is a fact that the New Life is going to be very difficult, hard, exacting and in certain respects disastrous. It will be foolish of anyone to assume that I shall purposely create any situation that may compel anyone to leave me. Once we start on the New Life, everyone will have to bear the consequences of his weaknesses if not checked and controlled in the way expected. Although I have made it clear that I shall bear no responsibility of any kind for anyone, still as already stated, I desire that those who have said 'yes' remain with me to the end and by way of helping them concretely I have decided to look upon the first 2-1/2 months' stay at Belgaum as preliminary training for the ultimate way of life of complete renunciation."

When a reference was made about some money to be carried by Kaka, Baba said they had to make provision for the two animals in the party and that after the first of January 1950, no one should expect a single pie to be spent under any circumstances except for fodder for the animals and for absolutely unavoidable repairs to the caravan to be

taken for the women. Baba continued to enjoy games and to hear jokes in the intervals between the meetings and the activities connected with the new plan. He once said, 'Thank God, we can still laugh'.

Everything was worked out to the last detail. Exactly what each person was to take with him or her was laid down. The equipment was specified. No one was to communicate with others outside or to receive letters or telegrams. What money was to be taken and how it was to be used were defined with the utmost explicitness. The first two and a half months were to be 'easy,' during which, however, all were to abide strictly by the conditions.

As the day approached excitement increased. No one knew what was to come. Baba gave personal attention to the preparations: all were to retire at 7 o' clock on the evening before; on the morning of 16 October they were to awaken at 2 a.m., bathe and dress, with an extra set of clothing, take tea at 3 a.m. with no bread, and start on foot from Meherabad going to the railway crossing near the station at Ahmednagar, where they were to be met by Baba and the four selected Indian women. As the monsoon continued, the rain very heavy, it was decided at the last moment that the men from Meherabad should be taken by bus to the railway crossing. They met there at 4:15 a.m. Baba and the ladies were to walk in front, the men behind. Before starting he asked everyone to stand behind him and to touch the ground in silence with him for one minute, then with raised hands all uttered the prayer, 'Oh God, make this New Life for all of us a success and joy eternal'.

The twenty companions of Baba, as he wished them to be called, for the New Life were four women: Mehera J. Irani, Mani S. Irani, Meheru R. Irani, and Dr. Goher R. Irani; and sixteen men: Adi K. Irani, Dr William Donkin, Gustadji N. Hansotia, Dr. Nilkanth Godse (Nilu), Dr. A. Ghani Munsiff, A. R. Irani (Pendur), Sadashiv Shelke (Patel), Vishnu N. Deorukkhar, Murli R. Kale, Anna Jakkal, Babadas Dharmare, Daulat Singh, A. S. Baria (Kaka), R. B. Baiduliyan (Agabaidul), Ali Akbar, Eruch B. Jessawala.

They set out in the heavy rain with the intention of walking to Ghodnadi, a distance of 32 miles, but the weather was so bad that after a while Baba decided they should proceed in the station bus driven by Savak Damania, and two cars in which were Sarosh and Baba's brother Adi, who had been following because of the weather. They reached Supa at 6 a.m. the following morning, when the bus and cars returned, and the party put up at a dak bungalow, Baba and the women occupying the house, the men the garage and a room adjoining the kitchen.

An explanation of what was to be done during the next two months was then given by Baba and the duties of each were defined:

"The period from 16 to 26 October will be that of relaxation; 25 October to 20 December at Belgaum will be the period of training; 21 to 31 December will be a vacuum period. From 1 January 1950 onward will be a hundred per cent hopelessness and helplessness, which even the gods will envy."

It was decided to stay there for two days, Baba being in a good mood, sitting with the companions most of the time, joking and gesticulating with them. On the second morning Baba said he had slept soundly except that he had been awakened by someone violently knocking on the door. He got up, but as he was sleeping on an improvised bed on the dining table, he fell and had a severe shaking. Eruch and he could not discover how the disturbance had occurred.

Then they walked from Supa to Ghodnadi, a distance of sixteen miles, where Baba gave the order that because of the rain the journey to Belgaum would be made by bus. They reached Belgaum, at a suburb called Thalakwadi, where they arrived in the afternoon of 20 October. Accommodation was in hutments on land that had been dedicated to Baba, which he had previously ordered to be transferred back to the original owner.

As usual, the earlier programme was changed. Baba decided that they should stay only until 20 November when the training would be mainly physical labour, afterwards continued at Benares, where it would comprise begging until 10 December, the last period of training until the end of the year taking place on the way to Hardwar. On the morning of 25 October Baba called the companions to ask each individually to say what difficulties if any they were having. Adi then declared with some heat that he had his doubts about Baba's intentions. At this Baba gave them all the opportunity to reconsider whether to go on or return. 'God knows', he said, 'I had even to tell Mehera yesterday for the last time that she at least, of all people, should keep happy and cheerful under the most extreme and trying circumstances.' He went on to say, 'the moods and irritability of my most intimate friends and companions will compel me to discard them. Before you decide for the last time, I will first help you with your difficulties. I will try to satisfy you, and then you can make up your minds.' He then turned suddenly to Daulat Singh and asked him to slap his (Baba's) face. Daulat Singh did so unhesitatingly and Baba was pleased that he had not failed him. He then told all to stand before him and he touched

the feet of each with his hands. He then had private interviews with them all and each affirmed his decision to go with Baba. He then said to them that Adi had had a misunderstanding, which had been removed. 'I have asked him to keep his mood and mind under control to the very end. Adi feels satisfied. I have promised him nothing.'

Next day Baba gave more instructions. They were not to read the papers or to talk politics, to eat clean food, to keep in good health, to co-operate with and to look after each other. Sadashiv Patel and Babadas were given instructions to go to Benares to find a suitable place for twenty days' stay from 25 November. There was only 500 rupees available; they were to find someone who for that sum would feed the party for the period without conditions or obligations.

Daulat Singh, who had slapped Baba, was worried about his personal affairs and wanted to return home for a time. The day after this was reported to Baba he told the companion, before all the others, to go back to his old life. 'I send you without any fault on your part, and your not having failed me in the least', he said. Explicit instructions were given to him as to his behaviour on return. Baba told them all, for the first time, that he had left one thousand rupees with Meherjee for each of the companions 'in case I die and for those whom I send back without any fault'. He gave a chit for money to Daulat Singh, who then bade adieu to Baba and the companions.

During this period Baba took to sweeping, washing utensils, helping in the kitchen, and carrying loads generally, and continued to give instructions and explanations of the life before them. On one occasion during the course of discussion, when there were some angry remarks, Baba asked Nilu and Ghani to pinch his (Baba's) ears. On 31 October Dr. Ghani wrote in Hindustani a song, which Baba approved: a free English version is as follows:

SONG OF THE NEW LI FE

Listen to the silent words of Meher Baba;
The life of all lovers of God is in these words.
You who are serious to follow the New Life
Will renounce your ephemeral existence.

We have taken to this life in which we rely only upon God;
Our will is strengthened by our oath.
We merrily sing the song of hopelessness;
We invite all calamities and difficulties.

We neither wail over lost hopes, nor complain about promises,
 Or covet honour, or shun disgrace.
 Back-biting is ended and we do not fear anyone;
 This is the tenor of our New Life.

No confusion in the mind now, neither are any ties left;
 Pride, anger, lust and greed are sloughed off.
 No religion for any of us, nor care for physical and mental aims.
 The Sheikh and the Brahmin are now in the same boat.

There is for us all no small or great.
 Neither disciple, master, nor Godhood exist.
 Brotherliness is the link,
 And our common enjoyment of suffering.

This world or the next, hell or heaven, we are no longer concerned
 with.

Shaktis and siddhis, occultism and miracles, we are no longer
 plagued with.

All false impressions have been purged from the mind;
 Now we live in the active present.

Dear ones, take seriously the words of Baba.
 Although now I am on the same level with you,
 Yet all orders from me, good, bad, or extraordinary,
 You should carry out immediately, leaving the result to God.

'Even if the heavens fall,
 Do not let go the hand of Truth;
 Let not despair or disappointment ravage and destroy the garden
 of your life;

You beautify it by contentment and self-sufficiency.

'Even though your heart be cut to bits, let a smile be on your lips.
 Here I divulge to you a truth:
 Hidden in your empty hands is treasure untold;
 Your beggarly life is the envy of kings.

'God exists indeed, and true are the Prophets,
 Every cycle has an Avatar, and every moment a wali.
 For us, however, it is only hopelessness and helplessness,
 How else can I describe to you what our New Life is?'

Baba's talks went on day after day, for every detail was gone into.

Asked one day why he had taken to the New Life and was there any need for it, he replied, 'There is no explanation.' The word *satyanashi*, which he used in connection with the New Life came up for discussion, and alternatives were suggested such as renunciation, *khanakharaki* and *barbadi*, but he said:

"These words have a spiritual meaning and this life of ours has nothing to do with spirituality.

"There is a world of difference between renunciation and *satyanashi*. Renunciation can be practiced by anyone and has a quality related to the one who practices it. But *satyanashi* cannot be practiced. It is not of anyone's seeking. It comes and cannot be resisted."

People in the neighbourhood came to know about Baba staying there and sought his darshan and wanted to know about him. But the companions were instructed to say nothing, nor to refer to Baba as the guru or Master or to themselves as disciples, nor were any spiritual explanations to be given.

Baba and the companions left from Belgaum railway station on the afternoon of 12 November traveling via Poona, Bombay and Moghalsarai, arriving at Benares (now called Varanasi) on the early morning of 15 November. When they changed trains at Poona, two of Baba's disciples happened to be on the platform; but looked away, did not speak to any of the party, and walked away at once.

At Moghalsarai when another change of trains was made Baba, by some misunderstanding, was left alone with the luggage for some time, which caused him to flare up at the companions; at which Baba asked them to pinch his ears and slap him.

On arrival at Benares in the early morning it was bitterly cold and Baba was told that certain friends had been waiting at the station for nearly two hours for darshan. This was contrary to Baba's orders and those concerned were asked to leave at once. The house taken for Baba and his party was an old and spacious building with a large garden. Baba and the women were put on the first floor, while the men occupied the verandah, with a small room for Donkin. Although much trouble had been taken in connection with the visit by local people, for some reason the place had not been thoroughly cleaned, and the companions had to set about sweeping up, Baba taking a hand. They were all, however, under much better conditions than they had yet experienced, the two families responsible for the arrangements taking endless trouble. None of them, however, was allowed to set foot in the house, which, as they were to look after the cooking, meant some difficulty;

but the meals were prepared outside. Baba at once put extra work on these friends (Drs. Nath and Khare and their families), by asking for the purchase of two cows and two she-donkeys. The idea was to stay for twenty-five days, but this was reduced to seventeen. On the second day, 17 November, the companions were given fourteen rupees each for shoes and five for gloves, which they were ordered to purchase, any balance remaining to be given away. Only for this purpose were they allowed to touch money. Baba said to them:

"From today onwards be over-cautious. I shall no longer correct and help. If you are not cautious and alert, then you are doomed. I am trying to keep my mood."

The duties of each were laid down in detail. Three days were allowed for visiting the ghats and the city, on 24 November begging was to start, Baba introducing the ordeal by taking part himself. He was bare-headed and barefooted, wearing a white kafni, with an ochre satchel on his left arm, and a cotton bag, and a brass bowl. The companions were similarly attired. They were to go in pairs, and were given strict instructions as to what they were to say - to women, Mai Biksha dijiye (Mother, give alms), and to men, Bhai Bhiksha dijiye (brother, give alms). Whatever they received they were to come away immediately; if refused, to go at once to the next door. They were to accept nothing but solid food, raw or cooked, and liquid food. If a coin was put in the bag they were to ask for it to be taken out, if that was refused, the bag was to be emptied on the ground. Not to beg of acquaintances, was another order. Not to beg at shops, only private houses. As soon as both companions have received bhiksha they were to return at once to Baba.

In the evening before saying goodnight Baba asked Dr Ghani to repeat in sing-song some lines, a rough translation of which reads:

Old life has passed in different ways;
Today also has passed somehow;
Tomorrow be damned! Who cares?

On the morning when the begging was to start, Baba made Dr. Ghani read the following prayer:

"Today 24 November is a significant day for me in the New Life. I ask the most merciful God to forgive me and my companions for any shortcomings and any conscious and unconscious mistakes

done singly or wholly or towards each other, or personally or impersonally, relating to the conditions or otherwise, as also for any lustful, greedy or old life thoughts or desires.

"I ask God to give full strength to me and to my companions to stick to the oaths and conditions one hundred per cent, because he - the All-Knowing - knows that from 1 January 1950, there can be no compromise whatsoever for me and my companions in relation to our oaths and conditions.

"I forgive you my companions, and ask you all to forgive me and I ask God to forgive us all, not merely by way of ceremony but as a whole-hearted pardon."

After the first two days when Baba participated, the begging was continued by the companions until 30 November. Benares is a city in which beggars are innumerable, but Baba and his companions aroused much curiosity, which nothing was done to satisfy. Only the men took part. It was a strange, often unpleasant, experience with many incidents. Some of the party, including the women, got ill with 'flu.

On 1 December the party moved to Samnath, about six miles north of Benares, associated with the memory of Gautama Buddha, where they stayed in two small bungalows. There the camel, camel-cart, two cows, two donkeys, and a white horse were delivered, with a caravan, bullocks and cart. The adding of these animals increased the problems of the companions. Before leaving Benares, however, Baba decided that the extra clothing, trunks, etc., they had brought with them, belonging to the old life were to be left behind. He said: 'When leaving Meherabad on 16 October we were comparatively speaking "light weight," at Benares we have become "feather-weight," and after 1 January, who knows (I don't promise), we might become "air-weight".'

The notable event at Samnath was a visit to a subterranean passage in the ruins where Baba and his companions sat down one morning almost naked in langote, in bitter cold weather, where they repeated mentally for fifteen minutes the following prayer:

"God give me strength to follow the conditions one hundred per cent. God help me to speak the truth and not to lie under any circumstances. God help me to control anger, and to keep away from lustful and greedy desires. God help me to be just, fair, honest and kind towards my companions and those who come into contact with me."

After the prayer Baba stood at the entrance to the passage bidding

them to don their clothes and each to hand to him the paper containing the prayer when he shook hands warmly. His face wore a great glow of happiness. Outside he called upon them to say loudly seven time *Ho-gaya* (finished), Baba joining in by lifting up his right hand.

They left on 12 December; before doing so, as they were short of money, Baba suggested they all except Don, Pendu and Adi, should surrender their wrist watches to be sold, which was done. They started out on foot, except for the women, and must have presented a strange cavalcade, even in India, but none of the questions asked by the crowds that gathered in the villages and towns through which they passed, were answered, except that they were on their way to Hardwar. Some of the animals gave a great deal of trouble. After the first day, Dr. Ghani was ordered to ride with the driver on the women's caravan, because of his health; to offset that privilege he was made, with a companion, to beg at every halting place in the nearby town or village.

Jaunpur (about thirty-six miles from Benares) was reached on the evening of 15 December where stay was made at a place called Kai Bagh, two miles from the town. The cows and camel were disposed of, because of the difficulties they caused. On 18 December Baba put before the men the question of devoting to the needs of the New Life the 1,000 rupees left with Meherjee by him for each on their return; anyone who did not wish to do so could leave at once "faultlessly." All without exception agreed. At this Baba re-defined the begging instructions: without asking for any particular kind of food they could request and persuade, even by spiritual or moral talks, but were not to suggest they possessed any spiritual merit, and no mention was to be made of Baba; they could beg from acquaintances; cotton and woolen clothing could be accepted, but not money, shoes, hats, pens, watches, jewels, etc.; no animal was to be accepted; fuel, accommodation and conveyance to be accepted if offered, but not be asked for.

When some visitors came for darshan, having knowledge of Baba, he turned away, saying, 'I am pleased to have your darshan.' One morning Baba told the companions that just as it was said that after death there is a period of a few days before the spirit get established in its new sphere, so with them there would be a vacuum between the old life and the new. This period would be between 22 and 31 December, when begging would be suspended and there could be complete relaxation.

They left on 22 December by train arriving at Moradabad, where they stayed at a place called Ram-leela. There they were in some

comfort and all arrangements were made for the New Life to be started in real earnest. They left on 1 January 1950, walking more than fifty miles to Hardwar. This ancient town on the banks of the Ganges, where what is thought to be the footprint of Vishnu is venerated, is a famous place of pilgrimage.

They stayed only a few days and went on a further thirty or so miles to Dehra Dun, the centre of country especially sacred to Siva. Baba and his companions reached there on 12 January and stayed at a small village called Manjri Mafi. After a few days Baba put before the companions several alternative plans for carrying on the New Life, each carrying with it 'responsibility before God' and 'no spiritual benefit'. After much discussion, when individual opinions were freely expressed and weighed and the collective opinion was arrived at, the results were that eight of the companions, Nilu, Pendu, Baidul, Eruch, Murli, Vishnu, Patel and Ali Akbar chose to follow all the original conditions. Four chose to lead the new Life at their own homes, to do their own work, not to stay at Meherabad or Meherazad; the conditions were set out in detail and were to be strictly kept; they were Dr. Ghani, Adi, Jakkal, and Babadas. Dr. Donkin chose to work as a doctor, keeping the conditions; Kaka, who was ill, and Gustadji, too old to work independently, chose to join Donkin. They all re-affirmed their original oath made in August at Meherabad; on 25 January the four who were to leave did so, first embracing Baba.

The duties of those who stayed with Baba were then re-arranged and a search was made for a bungalow at Dehra Dun for Dr. Donkin's medical practice, the animals to be sold to enable this to be done. In the evening several of Baba's close followers who were not in the New Life came to see him, but were not allowed his darshan. Some days later Donkin went to Bombay for medical equipment and to carry out other duties laid upon him by Baba. He returned on 10 February and left on the 13 February to set up his dispensary in Dehra Dun. Sadashij Patel was allowed to leave the same day under strict orders from Baba to see various people in connection with his own affairs.

There was some talk about a visit to the United States of America by Baba in the coming July. He said he would go, if invited, continuing his New Life, that is to say, 'no master, no disciple, no blessings, no grace, no receptions and no interviews'.

One day early in March Baba got angry with Vishnu because he was five minutes late, thus disobeying a strict order, whereupon Vishnu was told to slap Baba's face in the presence of others. Next day Baba told the companions to wash their own feet, when he placed his head

on their feet asking their pardon for his anger. He then said, 'During the period between 16 October and 1 March I have committed consciously and deliberately one big mistake and I want the companions to kick me so that God forgives me'. He made the companions kick him. He did not explain what the mistake was. He did, however, urge them all to keep honestly the conditions and to be alert throughout every twenty-four hours. As usual Baba swept his own hut, cleaned his own utensils and washed his own clothes. During this period they all had one meal a day. On 3 March Baba and seven companions went to Motichur for ten days. On the 9th they went to Rishikesh where he contacted sadhus, saints, and mahatmas in their huts and caves, a work continued the following day; altogether the number of contacts amounted to one hundred and thirty-five, indicating very heavy work. On the way to Rishikesh they came across a yogi who was proceeding to Laxman Zula, a distance of about six miles, by completely prostrating his body on the ground after every step. He was practically naked, his body covered with dust and sweat. Baba bowed down to his feet and then placed the man's head on his own feet.

After they had returned to Manjri Mafi, Baba found that Vishnu and Dr. Nilu had disobeyed by bringing water for drinking from outside, instead of using the well in the compound; they were ordered to rub their noses on the ground, which they did, without a word in self-defence or any explanation of their action. This was in accordance with the injunction laid upon them under which a companion could not argue about or defend or explain his actions unless asked by Baba to do so.

Dr. Donkin was worried about his practice, with insufficient equipment and supplies, but Baba told him not to be concerned. A spell of very cold weather had started, with thunder and heavy showers. The companions recorded that 'the floor of our hut is not yet dry in spite of frequent changes of grass under our bedding'. Baba continued his work at Motichur, Hardwar, Saat Sarover, and other places, sometimes with one or more of the companions, and continued to contact sadhus, saints and mahatmas. He explained that these contacts were different from those made in the old life. There was now no special work to be done with them, and no distinctions between them or between masts and mad were made. He contacted them to take their darshan, which had significance for him, but he did not explain what it was, except that it had 'nothing to do with spirituality'. Large numbers of these men were contacted and the work was extremely exacting for all who took part, especially, of course, for Baba himself. By 19 March he was

feeling the strain, when the total number of contacted men had reached 1,325. He said that the bad weather and everything else was unhelpful, but he did not care about difficulties or inconveniences so far as his work was concerned. As always, however, Baba enquired carefully about the health of everyone else daily.

A circular was prepared on 21 March and ordered to be sent out to 350 special friends for a contribution to a fund for 35,000 rupees to repay Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff, one of the companions who was continuing the New Life away from Baba, in recognition of property given to Baba in the old life, which sum Ghani felt himself bound to make good. This, said the circular, was to be treated as 'our "old life" a burden to be removed in the New Life'. The money was to be sent to Ramju who was to hand it over. 'I want everyone to understand that this is a special case concerning a New Life companion and the first and last of its kind for me in the New Life', explained Baba; as will be seen it proved to be not the last.

Baba went away again the next day, as usual with four companions, to Hardwar to make further contacts. The rain was very heavy. They contacted 225 sadhus and returned to Motichur, going out again with the same object the next day and the next, in fact daily until 5 April, when they returned to Manjri Mafi. The weather alternated between bright and sunny, and stormy with heavy rains. The work ended on 7 April. By that time 4,510 mahatmas, sadhus, and saints had been contacted.

From 7 April there is no record. Certain companions (the Temporary Restricted Group) went to Delhi where they 'started a business'. They were recalled by 24 May. Donkin gave up his practice at Dehra Dun.

Towards the end of May Baba put to the companions the methods of carrying out the labour phase of the New Life. All ten companions decided to accept the proposal of life-long service to Baba, and to obey him as a servant obeys his master; he could order them to do any kind of work he chose, expecting nothing in return from him; all consequent hardships were to be accepted; should Baba be dissatisfied with any servant-companion he could dismiss him, though the one dismissed would still be bound by the conditions of the New Life. This unanimous decision was taken on 24 May by Eruch, Pendu, Bariakaka, Baidul, Donkin, Nilu, Vishnu, Murli, Gustadji, and Ali Akbar, also Kaikobad Dastur, who was not permitted to be included in the servant-companions; he had previously been in the New Life at home.

Eruch was sent on 27 May to find suitable accommodation for the party in the Deccan. He was accompanied in the search by Baba's brother, Jal. A place with an equable climate was to be found near a moderately large town, with mountains and a river. Very strict and detailed instructions were given, and the place had to be ready for occupation by the end of June. When the time came, Baba, however, chose to stay at Satara until the end of the monsoon, later on at Mahabaleshwar. They left Dehra Dun on 16 June. After arrival at Satara, Ali Akbar was put on independent work and left for Bombay.

On 21 July Baba addressed a circular to his disciples in the West asking them to provide the sum of 50,000 rupees to be paid to certain disciples and followers of the old life to get them out of difficulties that had arisen. Dr. William Donkin was given the task of collecting this money; he went away at once to do so and succeeded in his task.

A message was issued on 25 July 1950:

"On this the most eventful day of my New Life, I send salutations to all my old life men and women disciples and devotees, and to all my New Life companions. I ask the most merciful God to forgive us all our shortcomings, failures and weaknesses, to help the old life disciples and devotees, to keep firm in their faith and their love and their understanding of God and his divine manifestations, and to give strength to the New Life companions to abide by truth and the following of the New Life conditions honestly and faithfully."

They were then at Mahabaleshwar.

In the middle of September Baba decided that after twelve months' experience, individual weaknesses and laxity in obedience were in future not to be tolerated. As always when others were at fault he admitted his own weakness in not fulfilling the conditions in the right spirit; his personal weakness in surrendering to his feelings for the companions had resulted in compromising his original oath at Meherabad. The companions were to be free on 16 October, to give them another chance of continuing the New Life or becoming once again the disciple of the Old Life. He declared:

"This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honor nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing;

by those who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward; who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred per cent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

"This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.

"The old life as well as New Life disciples were invited to Mahabaleshwar on 16 October. They were told that a collection would be made at the meeting for the work among masts and the poor, and that after that date Baba would not receive money from anyone. About two hundred attended, together with the New Life companions. They had to be ready by 7 a.m., having bathed. Baba took his seat and declared that he and all in the New Life had stepped into the old life for four hours until 11 a.m. He asked God's forgiveness for not being able to live the New Life as he wanted; he forgave all the New Life companions for not being able to act up to the New Life conditions, and asked the companions to forgive him, which they did."

Then Dr. Donkin read 'Baba's Sermon' which concluded:

"Let us not hope, because the Knowledge of God is beyond hoping and wanting. Let us not reason, because this Knowledge cannot be comprehended. Let us not doubt, because this Knowledge is the certainty of certainties. Let us not live the life of the senses, because the lusty, greedy, false, impure mind cannot reach this Knowledge. Let us love God as the Soul of our Souls, for in the height of this Love lies this Knowledge."

A Hindu version was also read, and with his own hands Baba distributed a copy of the 'Sermon' to all present. He then saluted the old life disciples and devotees, and accepted the contributions to his mast and poor work to start on 21 October. As all who attended had been asked the evening before to make a list of any difficulties they had found in carrying out orders and to give it to Baba, a few lists were handed in and Baba gave his replies. A message was read in English and Hindi in which he invited his companions to reconsider their decision to join him in his New Life; to rejoin as his servants, or to go away and become his old life disciples, or to be entirely free and to lead independent lives in the world. He asked them to decide that day and made the conditions very clear. He said:

"My old life places me on the altar of Absolute Godhood and Divine Perfection. My New Life makes me take the stand of a humble Servant of God and his people. In my New Life, Perfect Divinity is replaced by Perfect Humility. In my New Life, I am the Seeker, the Lover, and the Friend. Both these aspects - Perfect Divinity and Perfect Humility - have been by God's will and both are everlastingly linked with God's eternal life. Anyone may believe me to be whatever he likes, but none may ask for my blessings, miracles, or any rewards of any kind. My New Life is eternal. Those other than my servants in my New Life, whoever and wherever they may be, who desire to live the life, are free to do so in the spirit of it independently."

There followed a recess of half an hour, afterwards they gathered again and the doors were closed. Baba then left the meeting to take the oath of the New Life and returned in a white kafni, carrying an ochre coloured satchel in his hand. He declared having re-entered the New Life. He then asked all who had originally said Yes to the New Life to make their decisions. They were as follows: the old life: Adi, Dr. Daulat Singh (on Baba's order), Anna Jakkal (but allowed to stay with Baba as an ordinary servant, to be sent away when Baba desired), Ali Akbar (as advised by Baba), Pandoba, Kishan Singh, Bal Nattu, Dr Ghani; the New Life servant-companions, Pendu, Vishnu, Eruch, Dr Nilu, Dr Donkin, Kaka Baria, Aga Baidul, Gustadji, Murli Kale, Kaikobad Dastur.

Baba then asked God to give him strength to live his New Life fully and completely. The four prayers were uttered, after which the Song of the New Life and a prayer song were sung by a qawali specially called for the occasion. Baba left his chair, and shaved and washed a mast. Finally he embraced all present and they went away.

On 21 October Baba left with Eruch, Gustadji, Baidul and Pendu, for his mast, sadhu, saint and poor work, which was continued unceasingly. The states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Bombay were visited, also Nepal. His name was not mentioned to anyone on this extensive tour, he being referred to as the 'elder brother'. The money that had been collected (about 23,566 rupees = £1,813), was distributed to poor individuals and families in sums from five to five hundred rupees. Before any money was given, Baba washed the feet of the recipient, bowing down and placing his head upon his feet and the following lines were said by one of the companions:

"My brother says this money has been given to you by loving hearts.

The receiver should not feel it as charity or feel under any obligation whatsoever. He should consider it to be a gift of love."

When a mast was contacted Baba bowed down and asked for his blessing, then he was offered a few rupees, with one of the companions saying: 'May God fulfil his (Baba's) spiritual objective. Pray for it'

They made first the long journey to Patna, where there had been serious floods, and sums of money were given to families in a number of villages that had suffered severely, and about two hundred individuals were given small sums too. Then to Janakpur, a place of pilgrimage in Nepal. On the way to Calcutta they stopped at a small town named Colgon, where Baba contacted a mast who insisted that Baba and his companions should stay with him as his 'guests'; this they were unable to do, but the mast insisted and created a scene on the railway station, in which the local people joined. It is unusual for Baba to resist the whims of a mast, but he did so on this occasion. At Calcutta they rested for a few days, having been away for eleven nights during which they had had little more sleep than an hour each. At the Dakshineshwar temple near Calcutta Baba sat begging for a time. At the same place he begged from house to house, but many people were reluctant to give to him because his four companions were dressed in ordinary clothes, so that the company presented a queer sight.

They next went to Cuttack, thence to Madras and on to Hyderabad. In Hyderabad they stayed for nine days. When in search for poor people, Baba was told of a man who had inherited several million rupees, but had extravagantly lost the whole of his money and was living in a hovel with his wife and was now a sick man. Baba found him out, washed his feet as usual, and gave him 300 rupees, which caused the man to collapse. Baba stayed with him until he recovered consciousness. They went on to Kolhapur and Miraj; in the latter place Baba again sat begging. Thence to Bombay, returning on 6 December to Mahabaleshwar. The tour was a strenuous one, covering something like 3,500 miles, mostly by train, partly on foot, and they were exhausted.

At the end of the month Baba said he would go into seclusion for about 100 days from 13 February 1951 at Mahabaleshwar. Before that he was to complete his work with masts, and the poor. So on 15 January he went with four companions to Hyderabad (Deccan) for four days, and on returning went to Bombay four days later staying there until 3 February, without going to Baroda as was intended; they got back to Mahabaleshwar on 7 February.

The day before the seclusion, Baba decided that the proposed visit to the West was not possible. He gave detailed instructions to the servant-companions.

The seclusion started with fasting for seven days and for the next thirty-three days taking one meal a day only. At the end of the first forty days Baba made a statement to the effect that the main work, which was very crucial and important, had been achieved. The remaining sixty days would not be very difficult and he would adjust his activities and place of work according to his convenience. He gave a warning that between 10 and 30 June 'God will out of his infinite wisdom and grace make me take a step which will bring about an extraordinarily revolutionary change in my life ... and all those directly or indirectly connected with me'. In a later 'elucidation' he said that he was totally unaware of the nature of the step he would be made to take. He would know what it was by the first week in June. He would then declare what it was that 'God will definitely determine within me', and from that day until 16 October would be a time of preparation, the step being taken then.

The old life disciples and devotees were called to Hyderabad (Deccan) from 21 June onwards, and on 28 June the following declaration was read out by Dr. Ghani:

"In the presence of God, and bearing in my heart all the Perfect Ones of all times as witness, I declare that, by the help and will of God, I will definitely take the step of Annihilation on 16 October of this year. God helped me to do the seclusion work of the 100 days to my entire satisfaction, and I feel absolutely confident that God will help me to attain to the old life Meherababa state by 16 February 1952, and to manifest universally.

"I want every one of you present here as witness to this declaration to fast for twenty-four hours on tea and water, on 16 October, beginning from 8 o'clock in the morning of that day."

Following the Declaration a Corollary, 'What God has determined', was also read by Dr. Ghani. The step, said Baba, was that of complete mental annihilation, and that he would 'in the natural course of events be facing physical annihilation as well, without my actually seeking it'. He warned everyone of what might happen if he did not attain this mental annihilation and he might still be alive. That, he said, 'would mean the end of all. Then, I should free everyone from having any direct connection with me, leaving it to them to lead any kind of life

they chose.' During the period he wished to be absolutely free, 'free to die and free to live'. He added:

"Anyone who wants to go through this dying process with me can join me; but I want everyone of you to understand fully the magnitude of the mental preparation needed to stand by such a decision. I want you to bear in mind the difficulties encountered and the start of the New Life in 1949, the obstacles in your way and the hindrances in mine, and I want no repetition of that. If you choose to accompany me from mere emotional impulse, it will prove disastrous. If you come with me it will actually be to face all kinds of untold difficulties and hardships that might include starvation, going without sleep, sickness, disability, and complete hopelessness and helplessness at their extreme heights. I shall have absolutely no responsibility and might have no concern whatever for anyone accompanying."

Twenty-one men offered to go with Baba of whom he selected eight for consideration, finally deciding to take five.

All devotees of Baba throughout the world were asked to observe complete silence for twenty-four hours starting 6 a.m. on 10 July. In August he gave instructions for a site to be found for him on a hill near Hyderabad (Deccan). It was to be secluded and he would stay there for the first forty days. He then proposed to go to Aurangabad, a distance of about 350 miles, which would be covered on foot, taking thirty to forty days. The place for the third and fourth stages was not settled. A statement was issued on 16 August:

"Baba never has had and never will have any concern with politics. He therefore desires that if any followers do political work they must never involve him or use his name in connection with it.

"Baba desires that all his old life followers should not yield to the temptations of pursuing selfish ends.

"Baba desires all his old life followers and all his New Life friends, brothers, sisters, and servants to kindle in their hearts the light of love for God."

On the evening of 20 August, Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff, who had been one of his intimate friends from the earliest years, died at Poona. Baba issued a special circular in which he said that of the many things he had had to renounce and to suffer in the New Life the passing of Ghani was one of the greatest. The statement concluded:

"And if it be God's will that I manifest universally by 16 February next year, may it be his will also that Ghani and every old life disciple who has passed away, will experience and enjoy that manifestation as if still in the physical body."

On the day for starting the four months work of manonash - as the period of annihilation of the mind was called - Baba issued a circular to say that he would spend 28 days on the secluded hill near Hyderabad, and the next 40 days would be spent walking with his six companions to the hill at Meherazad, spending the remaining 56 days there. At Meherazad he would be completely secluded from the house and garden. No one was to attempt to see him throughout this period. He concluded by saying that he 'wants everyone to note again that he is free from all fixed arrangements, and that during these four months he will act as he likes best for the achievement of manonash.'

From Meherazad on 24 December he issued a statement which read:

"Today in this New Life, knowing how unworthy I have been of the devotion, love and service of so many departed ones, I appeal in all humility to the most merciful and gracious God that he should bestow his grace upon each of these departed ones.

"I make this appeal more to myself than to God, so that I may remind myself of the physical absence of these dear ones. For I know that God who is Infinite and All-knowing, performs all things without our asking and bestows his grace without our intercession.

"Since the spirit is immortal, so those whose bodies have returned to the earth are still living in the spirit. And yet, today, I feel constrained to offer homage to the flame of sacred love, which is so dear to God, that burns in every loving heart; the same flame that burnt with different intensities in the hearts of all these departed ones.

"As an expression of this homage, and in memory of these dear ones and of many others, now departed, who graced my life by their love and service, I shall today make an offering of 124 rupees to a poor man of worthy character and shall bow down before him."

The names of 87 men and 37 women were then set out. The following invocation was spoken by one of the companions as Baba bowed down to the poor man at about 9 o' clock in the morning:

"O God, by bowing down to this man, I bow down to the departed ones."

That day Baba was full of weakness, experiencing utter hopelessness of spirit, mind and body. He felt himself utterly unworthy of the love, service and devotion of all those both in the East and the West who place their faith in him. He therefore had these words spoken for him when bowing down before a second poor man:

"O God, by bowing down to this man, I bow down to these living ones."

He asked all his followers throughout the world to repeat wholeheartedly for half an hour each day, from 29 December to 16 February 1952 any one of the names of God: Parsee: Ahuramazda; Irani: Yazdan; Muslim: Allah; Hindu: Parabrahma; Christian: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost; all other religions the name of God as used by them.

On the last day of the year when Baba's dhuni was lighted in the evening at 7 p.m., he had the following read out:

"Oh Source of Infinite Knowledge, Almighty God! You know that I did all that was humanly possible in this ordinary state, and I leave the result to your will and sanction. For its fulfilment may the moment, the hour, the day, the month, the year and the age be as you have decreed.

"From this moment you must guide me to declare in all truth by 16 February 1952 what you have decided.

"From now on I free myself from the external religious ceremonies that I have observed during the New Life and the manonash period."

He then dictated the following statement:

"The One All-pervading, All-comprehending, All-powerful God, who is the Self of our selves, and besides whom nothing is real, has helped me and guided me during the manonash period of my work, and now makes me to dictate to you the following:

"To try to understand with the mind that which the mind can never understand, is futile; and to try to express by sounds of language and in forms of words the transcendent state of the soul, is even more futile. All that can be said, and has been said, and will be said, by those who live and experience that state, is that when the false self is lost the Real Self is found; that the birth of the Real can follow only the death of the false; and that dying to ourselves - the true death which ends all dying - is the only way to perpetual life. This means that when the mind with

its, desires, cravings and longings, is completely consumed by the fire of Divine Love, then the infinite, indestructible, indivisible, eternal Self is manifested. This is manonash, the annihilation of the false, limited, miserable, ignorant, destructible 'I', to be replaced by the real 'I', the eternal possessor of Infinite Knowledge, Love, Power, Peace, Bliss and Glory, in its unchangeable existence.

"Manonash results in this glorious state in which plurality goes and Unity comes, ignorance goes and Knowledge comes, binding goes and Freedom comes. We are all in this shoreless Ocean of Infinite Knowledge, and yet are ignorant of it until the mind - which is the source of ignorance - vanishes for ever; for ignorance ceases to exist when the mind ceases to exist.

"Unless and until ignorance is removed and Knowledge is gained - the Knowledge whereby the Divine Life is experienced and lived - everything pertaining to the Spiritual is paradoxical.

"God, whom we do not see, we say is real; and the world, which we do see, we say is false. In experience, what exists for us does not really exist; and what does not exist for us, really exists.

"We must lose ourselves in order to find ourselves; thus loss itself is gain. We must die to self to live in God: thus death means Life.

"We must become completely void inside to be completely possessed by God: thus complete emptiness means absolute Fullness.

"We must become naked of selfhood by possessing nothing, so as to be absorbed in the infinity of God: thus nothing means Everything.

"For these last four months, according to ordinary human standards, and by ways and means known to me, I have tried my utmost for the achievement of manonash, and I can say in all truth that I feel satisfied with the work done. This satisfaction is due to the feeling I have, of having regained my old-life Meher Baba state - yet retaining my New Life ordinary state. I have regained the Knowledge, Strength and Greatness that I had in the Old Life, and retained the ignorance, weaknesses and humility of the New Life. This union of the old and the new life states has given birth to Life that is eternally old and new.

"Life for me now means:

- (1) Free and obligationless life.
- (2) Life of a Master in giving orders; and of a Servant in all humility.
- (3) The feeling of absolute conviction that we are all eternally One, Indivisible and Infinite in essence; and with it a feeling of separateness from the real Omnipresent Self, through ignorance.

(4) Life of God in essence; and of a man in action.

(5) Life of Strength born of inherent Knowledge of Oneness; and of weakness born of binding desires.

"My efforts for manonash have been positive, and the result will be positive. But the actual and concrete manifestation of this result I leave entirely to the Divine Sanction; where, how, and when the result will be, I leave entirely to the Divine Decree. It may be at any moment, hour, month, year or age. It may be in any part of the world - in the East or in the West, in the North or in the South - yet in effect it will embrace all four spheres. It may be under any and all circumstances.

"I feel that it will be a sudden coming and becoming of the essence of all Love, Unity, Realization, Revelation and Illumination, in its varying degrees, for me and for all connected with me.

"During my work of manonash the four companions who were with me, and also others who are near or away from me, have helped me to their utmost limit. Throughout my manonash period I have been absolutely helpless and full of weaknesses in my ordinary human state, and it can truly be said that God in his manifestation, and that the saints and the prayers of all those who love me, have accomplished for me the internal work of manonash, while the four companions have seen to its external aspect...."

He said that he intended to go to the West at the beginning of April; to lead a 'complicated free life' from 21 March, a 'full free life' from 10 July, and a 'fiery free life' from 15 November. All who wished to come to him could do so from 21 March:

"Although the manonash work is done fully and completely, and the results must and will definitely come one hundred per cent to my satisfaction, I now give freedom to all who are connected to me, to choose what manner of life they henceforth wish to live. They are free either to live with me and obey my orders or to live away from me and obey my orders; free either to lead the life I tell them to lead, or to lead their own lives in any way they please - i.e. completely free from orders of any kind from me. This includes the 'Arrangementwallas'-but, in their case, the only kind of freedom I cannot give them is freedom from the responsibility that they have shouldered to the end.

"No matter what the choice, everyone will share when the Real Freedom comes - at any moment - by the Grace of God."

The seclusion was completed on 16 February, when Baba had the following read out:

"O God: today being my first real birthday, my heart expresses that the declaration of the 'Life' by me was entirely yours and by your will.

"All my knowledge and my ignorance, all my strength and my weakness, all my freedom and my bondage are as you have desired and decreed.

"This life eternal will be lived by me in conformity with your will and every word of the declaration of the 'Life' will come to pass by your grace."

This was the culmination of the New Life in the absorption of the Old Life and the emergence of the Free Life. The New Life was the voluntary suspension of the state of Perfect Master to become a common man and a Perfect Seeker; in the four months' seclusion was effected the dissolution of the natural mind in its normal working, and its transformation in the divine or infinite mind, which is the intellect itself, the intuitive or creative mind. This had now been accomplished; thereafter, as Baba said himself, he was free. The significance of this important stage in Baba's life will be commented upon in Part II of this book.

Part I, Chapter 6

THE FREE LIFE

1952-1953

What emerged from manonash was named by Baba his 'Complicated Free Life', in which 'bindings were to dominate freedom'; this continued until 10 July 1952, when it was followed by the 'Full Free Life', in which 'freedom would dominate bindings'; on 15 November there started the 'Fiery Free Life', in which 'freedom and bindings would by the grace of God be merged into the Divine Life'.

To prepare for the Fiery Free Life, he sent Eruch and Pendu to visit places in India and Pakistan. He said:

"I am not concerned with reactions to me as an individual. They will be as various as there are individual temperaments. My sole concern in the Fiery Free Life, will be with the Divine Truth of my realization, which I should like to share with those who seek it. The consuming of freedom and bindings (which is characteristic of the Fiery Free Life) means that there is a complete blending of the God-state and the man-state, so that the one does not live through opposition to the other, and there can be no question of the one encroaching upon the other.

"Spiritual freedom is essentially a positive state of conscious enjoyment of divinity. It does not have to maintain itself through the overcoming of any bindings, for these are not bindings of the soul in its essence, but temporary bindings of the body and the mind, which can in no way curtail the Bliss, Power or Understanding of conscious Divinity. In other words, the binding, to which the soul seems to be subject, turns out to be no binding in its true essence. The binding is only illusory. After the annihilation of the limited mind, the infinite consciousness of the soul, with all its Knowledge, Power and Bliss, remains unaffected by any weaknesses or diseases to which the body may yield as a result of natural laws.

"The Perfect Ones, who retain normal consciousness and the body,

"I have no connection with politics. All religions are equal to me. And all castes and creeds are dear to me. But though I appreciate all 'isms', religions and political parties, for the many good things they seek to achieve, I do not and cannot belong to any of these 'isms', religions or political parties, for the absolute truth, while equally including them, transcends all of them and leaves no room for separative divisions, which are all equally false. The unity of all life is integral and indivisible. It remains unassailable and inviolable, in spite of all conceivable ideological differences.

I am approachable alike to the saint whom I adore
and to the sinner, whom I am for,
And equally through Sufism, Vedantism,
Christianity,
Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and other 'isms'
of every kind, and also directly through no
'ism' at all.

"Side by side with other activities of the Fiery Free Life, there will be one constant feature of that life, wherever it takes me. I shall bow down to the saints whom I adore, the masters whom I worship, and the poor, to whom I am wholeheartedly devoted. Nothing makes me more happy than opportunities to bow down to God in all these forms. I like bowing down to people rather than being bowed down to. To serve and worship God all around me is most at my heart.

"In the Fiery Free Life, all the frailties of the ego-life are completely consumed; and there is complete emancipation from all wants, desires

and temptations. And the result of this Fiery Free Life will make the world understand that Meher Baba and every one is one with God."

It will be recalled that before the start of the New Life in 1949 Meher Baba had sent Princess Norina and Elizabeth Patterson back to the U.S.A. in connection with the centre to be established there.

At this point something should be said of these two disciples whose names have been mentioned several times. Princess Norina Matchabelli, bom in Italy, was a woman of striking appearance and great personality, a good speaker and entertaining conversationalist, and of outstanding competence. She met Meher Baba in November 1931 on his first visit to New York. It was the turning point in her life. Under the professional name of Maria Carmi she had become famous in the role of the Madonna in Max Reinhardt's production of *The Miracle* staged the first time in London, 1912. She had been given the part because though she did not belong to the theatre, she was a spiritual type in personality and appearance. In 1914 she became the wife of Prince Georges Matchabelli, a diplomat and advocate of independence for his native Georgia, and when she was invited to play in *The Miracle* in the United States in 1924, her husband went to New York where he eventually established the Prince Matchabelli Perfumery, which flourished, and they became American citizens.

After meeting Baba she went to India in 1933, and, after Prince Matchabelli died, returned again in 1936, and in 1937 was with Baba in France. With the author of *The Miracle*, Karl Vollmoeller and Gabriel Pascal she had long discussions upon the possibility of a film based on spiritual points given by Meher Baba, which came to nothing. Following this she returned to India. She died at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in 1957, her ashes were interred on Meherabad Hill.

Elizabeth Chapin Patterson, who became closely associated with her in work for Meher Baba, was born in Chicago, where her father S. B. Chapin was head of a brokerage firm which he extended to New York City. During the first world war she served in the American Red Cross Motor Corps and did much ambulance driving. At the end of the war she entered the insurance brokerage field at a time when few women were in careers in the downtown business section of New York, and she was remarkably successful. When she married Kenneth Patterson, a stock broker, in 1929, she continued her insurance career, spending her vacations in foreign travel. Her husband died in 1956. She first met Meher Baba at Harmon-on-Hudson in 1931, which gave spiritual purpose to her life. Her first visit to India was with Norina in 1933.

She spent long periods with him there, and in 1938 was given the task with Norina of establishing the Meher Baba Journal, which ran for four years.

These two women had been given explicit instructions in 1941 to find a suitable site for a centre for Meher Baba in America: it had to be virgin land, never before built on; it was to have an equable climate, ample water, and cultivatable for food for a large number of people if need be. For three summers they searched for such a site without result. Then Elizabeth Patterson remembered (and wondered why she had not thought of it before) that years ago her father had acquired an interest in a large area of land at Myrtle Beach, on the coast of South Carolina. Originally Mr. Chapin had gone there duck hunting and had become interested in land development, for the wide ocean beach was suitable for a resort town. He later built a seasonal house there, where he spent his winters, and his daughter Elizabeth and her friend went to explain to him what they were looking for. About eight miles north of what was rapidly becoming the town of Myrtle Beach were fresh water lakes, accessible by a road which in Colonial days was known as the King's Highway. One lake called Long Lake seemed ideal, as not far from it was the ocean. It was virgin land with a great variety of vegetation and wild life, yet bordering upon U.S. Highway 17. The area was known for its year round mild climate. Baba was told about the land, and 500 acres became the Meher Baba Centre.

When Elizabeth and Norina returned in 1949 they went to live in the town house at Myrtle Beach. Much work had to be done to landscape even a portion of the large tract of the new centre; the first cabins were built, paths and access roads were made, with water supply, drainage and electricity, also a central kitchen and refectory. The work was done gradually but thoroughly, a number of devotees taking a share, among them Darwin Shaw and Frank Eaton. A brick house was erected for Baba and his men mandali and a guest house for the women. A large cyprus wood beam to be used for meetings was found in Conway, transported and re-erected in a grove of live-oak trees with hanging Spanish moss.

In April 1952 Baba sent Dr. Donkin to help with preparations for a party to visit the centre from India. They arrived in New York by air on April 20, where they were greeted by many American devotees: Adi Sr., Sarosh, Meherjee, Gustadji, and Dr. Nilu; with four women disciples: Mehera, Mani, Mehru and Goher, also Kitty Davy and Rano Gayley who had been staying at Pimpalgaon. Baba was weak following the manonash period of work, and there were no interviews. Dr. Donkin and Elizabeth Patterson met them, and after resting for one night

the party went by train to Florence, and by cars to Myrtle Beach. Norina was waiting at Baba's house, for she had been unable to travel owing to a heart condition which had developed the month before. Baba embraced her and said how much he liked the house, and the view of the lake and ocean.

As usual he allocated the accommodation in the various cabins and houses for those staying at the centre. He also regulated the meals, which at first were vegetarian; but he stated, 'I allow vegetarians to follow their own diet and non-vegetarians to eat meat; I do not interfere with any custom or religion. When faced with love for God these matters have no value. Love for God is self-denial, mental control, and ego annihilation.' Francis Brabazon came from Australia, expecting to return with Baba to India, but Baba saw him for two days, then sent him home.

Baba usually rose at 5 a.m. and walked to the central dining-room by 7 a.m., not eating but paying attention to all present. Then with the women he would go for a walk along the lake path to the ocean. Thereafter he went into seclusion. After the first phase he started to give interviews in the morning from 9.30 onwards, which would continue into the afternoon. He would play games, there was boating on the lake, and in the evening they gathered at the guest house for readings and stories. Baba made a point of getting as many as possible to give accounts of the saints. He would leave early and walk back to his house. Everyone had to be present and available all day. There was one open day, when people came from many parts and Baba met them individually or in small groups in the barn. One of his remarks was, 'Bring me lovers of God and I will bow down to them. Otherwise I shall bow down to myself.' He told Elizabeth that the centre was to be devoted to the following purposes: a spiritual academy; a house of advanced souls; an abode of the saints; a 'mad' institute; as solitary quarters for meditation; a resting place for the afflicted.

On 20 May Baba sent some of the mandali ahead to make arrangements for his arrival at Meher Mount, Ojai, California, where he was to stay. He followed, with the rest of those who were to go with him, the next day, in two cars. Meher Mount is a small estate, a lovely and secluded spot. But they were never to reach their destination.

Before they left, Baba asked Elizabeth Patterson, in whose car he was to travel, with Mehera, Mani and Mehru, if she had her car insurance policy with her. She had not, so he made her stop at her house in Myrtle Beach to collect it. The second car, driven by Sarosh, contained

Kitty Davy, Rano, Dr. Goher and Delia de Leon. They spent the first night at Columbia, S.C., the next at Murphy, Tennessee and en route visited the waterfalls at Rock City. Baba said that was to be their last sightseeing. They stayed at Pond Crest in the Ozark hills the next night. The following morning before they left he seemed preoccupied and not in his usual haste to be off. He told Sarosh in the other car not to let him out of sight as they went along. On the way, he stopped the car, got out and walked ahead for a time. Then they went on, travelling on Route 64. It had rained the night before and the road was slippery. It was not a wide road, and as they came over the crest of a small hill they met an approaching car on the wrong side of the road. Elizabeth slowed up, expecting the driver of the other car to see them and move over, but he did not, instead he came on at great speed, seeing their car at the last moment, when it was too late to avoid a collision. Baba was thrown out, his head bleeding, his arm and leg fractured. Mehera and Mehru were also thrown out and hurt, Elizabeth at the wheel of the car was badly hurt with fractured arms and wrists and broken ribs. Mani, who had been sleeping, seemed unhurt. Baba was the only one who lost blood: he had previously said that he would shed blood on American soil, and there he was bleeding freely into the ground! Had the ditch on to which they were thrown not been unusually soft, there might have been fatal results. The driver of the other car was a veteran of the Korean war, a double amputee, driving a car specially made for his disability for the first time that day. Neither he nor his two companions were injured.

The party's own second car was not in sight. The first car to come along was a man driving into Prague, Oklahoma, seven miles distant, taking his wife to the clinic to have a baby; he summoned two ambulances to come out, into which Baba and the injured ones were put and brought to the town's hospital. While that was happening Sarosh arrived with the second car. As the day was very hot they had stopped on the way for a drink; how troubled they were at disobeying Baba's order to keep close behind can be imagined.

Baba's fractured arm and leg were set, Elizabeth and the others were attended to; they had to be kept in the hospital thirteen days. Then they were taken by ambulance fifteen hundred miles to Elizabeth's home at Myrtle Beach. Baba and the others slowly recovered. He said that his suffering was all the greater because of the injury to Mehera. On 13 June he dictated the following message:

"The personal disaster for some years foretold by me has at last

happened while crossing the American continent, causing me through facial injuries, a broken leg and arm, much mental and physical suffering. It was necessary that it should happen in America. God willed it so."

It brings to fruition the first part of the circular which said that until July 10th (in the Complicated Free Life), weakness would dominate strength and bindings would dominate freedom; but from July 10th, in my Full Free Life, strength would dominate weakness and freedom would dominate bindings; and then, from 15 November, in my Fiery Free Life, both strength and weakness, freedom and bindings, would be consumed in the fire of Divine Love.

The reference to America is significant. Baba had always paid much attention to that continent, and his most substantial following outside India is there. It seems that to him the cauldron of American life into which everything is thrown, the characteristic life of today, provides in its dire churning-up a central point in human existence, out of which new life will come. He has not said this in so many words, but it seems to be so. A few days later he made the following statement:

"Meher Baba is equally connected with Islam and its Sufism, Christianity and its Mysticism, the Orient and its Vedantism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and many other 'isms' which all speak the same divine truth and lead to the same divine goal. Meher Baba is also detached and above all these divine paths. He has to awaken the followers of these paths to the real meaning of these isms in their true spirit by reorienting these isms, and in this capacity he has reoriented Sufism in the charter to be universally adopted."

Towards the end of June he took Mehera, with Mani his sister, to visit the centre, saying how beautiful it was and that he would return some day. Many visitors came and from time to time he saw them. He left for New York in the middle of July when Mrs. Kate Ferris offered him her house in Scarsdale, where he stayed with his mandali, and meetings were arranged at Mrs. Ivy Duce's apartment in New York. There he gave many personal interviews and a discourse. He also gave special instructions to the Sufi group saying that he would make a new charter for them, which he would send from India in November, entrusting the American Sufi work, reoriented, to Ivy Duce.

Baba left New York by air on 31 July for London where he and his party stayed at the Rubens Hotel for six days, the women mandali

remaining in seclusion. Devotees from many parts of Great Britain had interviews with him at another hotel. I saw him there, and afterwards had a long talk with him at his hotel. He left on 6 August for Switzerland, staying at Locarno, where his Swiss, French and some British devotees were with him. All this time he was in considerable pain. They went to Geneva and from there flew to Bombay on 21 August.

On 6 October Jal D. Kerawalla died at Nagpur. Baba had intended that he should play an important part in his Fiery Free Life. He fed a number of poor at Meherazad on 17 October and bowed down to them in memory of Jal. During a short stay in Poona he went to B. D. Jessawala's, where he gave darshan to many; for three hours there was a steady procession from all walks of life.

He continued to be very busy. Circulars were sent to followers all over India, asking who was willing to follow Baba in his forthcoming fiery life and what they were willing to give up accordingly. The response was great. Baba sifted the responses and decided whom to call for a few days the first of November for meetings at Meherabad. This, they all said, was the lull before the storm.

From 1 November no correspondence was permitted. His mandali do not expect to know the reasons for Baba's various activities but they found the prospect of this Fiery Free Life especially difficult to understand. He was constantly saying that soon an unprecedented disaster would befall mankind.

Baba left Meherabad on 15 November with about twenty men going first to Bombay, where he gave darshan to about 500 people, despite having travelled all night. The next day he contacted twenty-one masts.

For some years Baba had not allowed people to come to see him whenever they wished and rarely gave mass darshan. This had now been changed: from 18 November for thirty-five days he made himself available to everyone and gave darshan wherever he went. He actually sought out people and visited many towns and a great many remote villages. He went through forests, over hills, across rivers and streams, often where no car had ever been before. Wherever he stopped there were crowds of people, some having travelled many miles. They came on foot, horses, bullock carts and camels. Some had been waiting years to see him.

There was one old couple in Amarpura who lived in a hovel outside the village. They prepared to meet Baba but lacked the courage to invite him. The darshan in the village being over, Baba the next morning instead of taking the road insisted on the car going on a little used

path to the old couple's hut. There on the raised place outside the hut prepared by the couple Baba allowed himself to be seated and garlanded and afterwards embraced the two. There are other stories of a like kind during this strenuous period.

At every town and village where he stopped, preparation having been made beforehand, he would first, before his presence was announced, go out incognito with only two of his men and search for any masts or saints to whom he would bow down. He would then be received by the local people of consequence and brought to the place of darshan. There the men and women would be seated separately. A message from Baba would be spoken, after which he would bow down to the crowd, and then be seated on the raised dais. Addresses from local people would follow. After that, he would sit for hours while the people would come before him to receive sweets or fruit from his hands, men, women, and children. This would go on all day, and at the end Baba would go to the house prepared for him. Next day he would visit individual houses.

Wherever Baba went during his Fiery Life, he at first washed the feet of several poor people, bowed down to them and gave them money. He said that these poor people were sharing the burden for the spiritual upliftment of humanity and were a help to his work; he bowed to them in gratitude. After this he gave mass darshan to all who gathered at various places. Here too he bowed to the crowd first, then people were permitted to have darshan. Each man, woman and child was given some sweet or fruit as prasad.

His messages and statements were read everywhere he went, translated into local languages. Thousands flocked to take his darshan and people from very far-off places came just to see him. One man came from a distance of 27 miles rolling on the ground, without taking any food till he met Baba. Baba embraced him and gave him fruit with which he broke his fast.

In Hamirpur district he visited different places for ten days. This is a backward and neglected area, having no connection practically with the outside world for nearly three months of the monsoon, being surrounded by two large holy rivers, the Yamuna and Betwa; according to legend it was a temporary abode of Rama during his enforced fourteen years' jungle wanderings. Here it was that Ram is reputed to have carried out his mast work.

Baba had been reluctant to go to Delhi, but under pressure he agreed to do so. The significant event was a meeting at a Sikh College where about 3,000 students under the guidance of their principal gathered to

meet him. Baba was particularly happy in this meeting. Before leaving he gave the following message to a group of students:

"India has gained its national freedom. Let us now try to gain our Spiritual Freedom beside which every other kind of freedom is a binding The purpose of life is to realize God within ourselves. This can be done even whilst attending to our worldly duties. In the everyday walks of life and amidst intense activities, we should feel detached and dedicate our doings to our Beloved God. Enough has been done to make people food-minded. They must now be made God-minded.

"I give my love and blessings to one and all for the understanding of the One Infinite God residing equally within us all and beside whom everything else is false and illusory."

From Delhi Baba returned to Ahmednagar for the routine examination of his leg. For about 10 days he visited various places in Andhra Pradesh State, where his main work was with masts, with no public darshans. In the month of December he visited Amraoti, Saoner and in January, Nagpur, Allahabad, Madras and finally many places in Andhra Pradesh. At Amraoti, besides public darshans, Baba visited Shivaji Art College and performed the opening ceremony of a hall there named after the great Rishi Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), whose portrait was unveiled by Baba. He went to Nagpur, and from there to Allahabad to contact masts, saints and sadhus. There were no public darshans at Allahabad, whence he went to Madras for a couple of days for mast work, and came to Tadepalligudam in Andhra Pradesh.

The last ten days were the climax of the tour. No one was permitted to come to Baba's residence, which was kept away from the town, people from early hours of the morning until late at night gathered for a glimpse of him. Several villages and towns in the district were visited. At Rajamundry - a place of spiritual and political importance - a gathering of about 4,000 waited upon him, and though he had a very, short time there, they were given darshan individually and some messages were read. The last place visited was Ellore where on the last day, a very large crowd of people came.

Meherjee, who was present, wrote at the time:

The most significant thing we witnessed in this district was the spontaneous outburst of love and divine longing amongst people of all shades. From judges and ministers and educationalists to farmers, villagers and depressed classes - all came to see Baba. Baba has never

visited this place before, so how could such a large mass come to know of him all of a sudden? None of us could speak their language which is Telegu, and yet how well we were received at this place! Everybody vied with everyone. Several people had had visions of Baba, some had even seen him there when he was actually in America. A boy of about 9, used to go into a trance and say things about Baba. Some such spiritual experiences by various people seem to be the cause of this welcome. The people are very intelligent and the standard of education is high in comparison with many other parts of India. Perhaps Baba's work is carried out unseen and unheard by many.

They returned on 31 January 1953. Then he left with ten men and six women mandali for Dehra Dun on 16 February. There were no more darshans, but mast, saint and poor work continued. On 22 February Baba gave a talk to his devotees upon a certain matter:

"A rumour concerning myself and my disciples has reached my ears. It is to the effect that during my stay in Rishikesh with my disciples in 1942 some parcels were sent to us by rail, that some of these parcels, being damaged during transit, were found to contain liquor, and that I and my disciples had to leave Rishikesh immediately to save ourselves the embarrassment of an awkward situation.

"I deeply appreciate this action on the part of those responsible for spreading such false rumours, as I feel it has the effect of rendering great service to my work. In spiritual work, opposition, rumours and criticism help as nothing else can. The spiritually Perfect Ones who are one with the Truth, know and bless channels that try to conceal and distort the Truth.

"A principal part of my work, for these many years, has been to bow down to saints, sadhus, the so-called sinners and to the poor. Now, when I go to Rishikesh and Hardwar, I will also bow down to the persons concerned in the spreading of the rumour, and to all who believed it, and I want it clearly understood that this bowing down to them is not an ironical gesture propelled by an egoistic motive on my part, nor is it caused by any displeasure towards them, but that it is an indication of love, from the bottom of my heart, for the help rendered by them in my great spiritual work.

"From the beginningless beginning to the present day I am What I Am, irrespective of praise or universal opposition, and will remain so to the endless end."

At the end of March they went to Kashmir and the Himalayas. These wanderings in remote places at great inconvenience and with much

THE NEW LIFE

hardship belonged especially to the Fiery Free Life. In April he asked all his devotees throughout the world, and everyone who heard of his wish, to repeat audibly for one hour, without break from 4-5 o'clock on the early morning of 10 July, the name of God according to their religion.

Baba remained more or less in seclusion throughout the rest of the year, not to be disturbed on any pretext. From 13 August to 2 September he was engaged in special work during which the Master's Prayer was recited each day in his presence. An English version reads as follows:

O Parvardigar, the Preserver and Protector of All, You are without
Beginning, and without End;
Non-dual, beyond comparison; and none can measure You.
You are without colour, without expression, without form, and without attributes.
You are unlimited and unfathomable, beyond imagination and conception; eternal and imperishable.
You are indivisible; and none can see You but with eyes Divine.
You always were, You always are, and You always will be;
You are everywhere, You are in everything; and You are also beyond everywhere and beyond everything.
You are in the firmament and in the depths, You are manifest and unmanifest; on all planes, and beyond all planes.
You are in the three worlds, and also beyond the three worlds.
You are imperceptible and independent.
You are the Creator, the Lord of Lords, the Knower of all minds and hearts; You are Omnipotent and Omnipresent.
You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite, and Bliss Infinite.
You are the Ocean of Knowledge, All-Knowing, Infinitely-Knowing; the Knower of the past, the present, and the future; and You are Knowledge itself.
You are All-merciful and eternally benevolent.
You are the Soul of souls, the One with infinite attributes;
You are the Trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss;
You are the Source of Truth; the Ocean of Love;
You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High; You are Prabhu and Parameshwar; You are the Beyond-God, and the Beyond Beyond-God also; You are Parabrahma; Allah; Elahi; Yezdan; Ahuramazda; and God the Beloved.
You are named Ezad: the only One worthy of worship.

Part I, Chapter 7

THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH

1953-1954

While at Dehra Dun in the month of September 1953, the Fiery Free Life reached its culmination, and on the 7th of that month, the reputed date of Zoroaster's birth, Baba made one of his most important declarations. It sums up in explicit language his significance as God-Man.

THE HIGHEST OF THE HIGH

Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, each and every creature, each and every human being strives to assert individuality. When eventually man consciously experiences that he is Infinite, Eternal and Indivisible, he is fully conscious of his individuality as God, and experiences Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. Thus Man becomes God, and is recognized as a Perfect Master, Sadguru, or Qutub.

When God manifests on earth in the form of man and reveals his Divinity to mankind, he is recognized as the Avatar - thus God becomes Man....

The Avatar is always one and the same, because God is always One and the Same, the Eternal, Indivisible, Infinite One, who manifests himself in the form of man as the Avatar, as the Messiah, as the Prophet, as the Ancient One - the Highest of the High. This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats his manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and free it from the bondage of delusions.

Of the most recognized and much worshipped manifestations of God as Avatar, that of Zoroaster is the earlier - having been before Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad. Thousands of years ago, he gave to the world the essence of Truth in the form of three

fundamental precepts - Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. These precepts were and are constantly unfolded to humanity in one form or another, directly or indirectly in every cycle, by the Avatar of the Age, as he leads humanity towards the Truth. To put these precepts of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds into practice is not easily done, though it is not impossible. But to live up to these precepts honestly and literally is apparently as impossible as it is to practise a living death in the midst of life.

In the world there are countless sadhus, mahatmas, mahapurushas, saints, yogis and walis, though the number of genuine ones is very, very limited. The few genuine ones are, according to their spiritual status, in a category of their own, which is neither on a level with the ordinary human being nor on a level with the state of the Highest of the High.

I am neither a mahatma nor a mahapurush, neither a sadhu nor a saint, neither a yogi nor a wali. Those who approach me with the desire to gain wealth or to retain their possessions, those who seek through me relief from distress and suffering, those who ask my help to fulfil and satisfy mundane desires, to them I once again declare that, as I am not a sadhu, a saint or a mahatma, mahapurush or yogi, to seek these things through me is but to court utter disappointment, though only apparently; for eventually the disappointment is itself instrumental in bringing about the complete transformation of mundane wants and desires.

The sadhus, saints, yogis, walis and such others who are on the via media, can and do perform miracles and satisfy the transient material needs of individuals who approach them for help and relief.

The question therefore arises that if I am not a sadhu, not a saint, not a yogi, not a mahapurusha nor a wali, then what am I? The natural assumption would be that I am either just an ordinary human being, or I am the Highest of the High. But one thing I say definitely, and that is that I can never be included amongst those having the intermediary status of the real sadhus, saints, yogis and such others.

Now, if I am just an ordinary man, my capabilities and powers are limited - I am no better or different from an ordinary human being. If people take me as such they should not expect supernatural help from me in the form of miracles or spiritual guidance; and to approach me to fulfil their desires would also be absolutely futile.

On the other hand, if I am beyond the level of an ordinary human being, and much beyond the level of saints and yogis, then I must be the Highest of the High. In which case, to judge me with your human

intellect and limited mind and to approach me with mundane desires would not only be the height of folly but sheer ignorance as well; because no amount of intellectual effort could ever understand my ways or judge my Infinite State.

If I am the Highest of the High my Will is Law, my wish governs the Law, and my Love sustains the Universe. Whatever your apparent calamities and transient sufferings, they are but the outcome of my Love for the ultimate good. Therefore, to approach me for deliverance from your predicaments, to expect me to satisfy your worldly desires, would be asking me to undo what I have already ordained.

If you truly and in all faith accept your Baba as the Highest of the High, it behooves you to lay down your life at his feet, rather than to crave the fulfilment of your desires. Not your one life but your millions of lives would be but a small sacrifice to place at the feet of One such as Baba, who is the Highest of the High; for Baba's unbounded love is the only sure and unfailing guide to lead you safely through the innumerable blind alleys of your transient life.

They cannot obligate me, who, surrendering their all - (body, mind, possessions) - which perforce they must discard one day - surrender with a motive; surrender because they understand that to gain the everlasting treasure of Bliss they must relinquish ephemeral possessions. This desire for greater gain is still clinging behind their surrender, and as such the surrender cannot be complete.

Know you all that if I am the Highest of the High, my role demands that I strip you of all your possessions and wants, consume all your desires and make you desireless rather than satisfy your desires. Sadhus, saints, yogis and walis can give you what you want; but I take away your wants and free you from attachments and liberate you from the bondage of ignorance. I am the One to take, not the One to give what you want or as you want.

Mere intellectuals can never understand me through their intellect. If I am the Highest of the High, it becomes impossible for the mind to gauge me nor is it possible for my ways to be fathomed by the human mind.

I am not to be attained by those who, loving me, stand reverently by in rapt admiration. I am not for those who ridicule me and point at me with contempt. To have a crowd of tens of millions flocking around me is not what I am for. I am for the few who, scattered amongst the crowd, silently and unostentatiously surrender their all - body, mind and possessions - to me. I am still more for those who, after surrendering their all, never give another thought to their

surrender. They are all mine who are prepared to renounce even the very thought of their renunciation and who, keeping constant vigil in the midst of intense activity, await their turn to lay down their lives for the cause of Truth at a glance or sign from me. Those who have indomitable courage to face willingly and cheerfully the worst calamities, who have unshakable faith in me, eager to fulfil my slightest wish at the cost of their happiness and comfort, they indeed, truly love me.

From my point of view, far more blessed is the atheist who confidently discharges his worldly responsibilities accepting them as his honourable duty, than the man who presumes he is a devout believer in God, yet shirks the responsibilities apportioned to him through Divine Law and runs after sadhus, saints and yogis, seeking relief from the suffering which ultimately would have pronounced his eternal liberation.

To have one eye glued on the enchanting pleasures of the flesh and with the other expect to see a spark of Eternal Bliss is not only impossible but the height of hypocrisy.

I cannot expect you to understand all at once what I want you to know. It is for me to awaken you from time to time throughout the ages, sowing the seed in your limited minds, which must in due course and with proper heed and care on your part, germinate, flourish and bear the fruit of that True Knowledge which is inherently yours to gain.

If on the other hand, led by your ignorance, you persist in going your own way, none can stop you in your choice of progress; for that too is progress which, however slow and painful, eventually and after innumerable re-incarnations, is bound to make you realize that which I want you to know now. To save yourself from further entanglement in the maze of delusion and self-created suffering which owes its magnitude to the extent of your ignorance of the true Goal, awake now. Pay heed and strive for Freedom by experiencing ignorance in its true perspective. Be honest with yourself and God. One may fool the world and one's neighbours, but one can never escape from the knowledge of the omniscient - such is the Divine Law.

I declare to all of you who approach me, and to those of you who desire to approach me, accepting me as the Highest of the High, that you must never come with the desire in your heart which craves for wealth and worldly gain, but only with the fervent longing to give your all - body, mind and possessions - with all their attachments. Seek me not to extricate you from your predicaments, but find me to surrender yourself wholeheartedly to my Will. Cling to me not for

worldly happiness and short-lived comforts, but adhere to me, through thick and thin, sacrificing your own happiness and comforts at my feet. Let my happiness be your cheer and my comfort your rest. Do not ask me to bless you with a good job, but desire to serve me more diligently and honestly without expectation of reward. Never beg of me to save your life or the lives of your dear ones, but beg of me to accept you and permit you to lay down your life for me. Never expect me to cure you of your bodily afflictions, but beseech me to cure you of your ignorance. Never stretch out your hands to receive anything from me, but hold them high in praise of me whom you have approached as the Highest of the High.

If I am then the Highest of the High, nothing is impossible to me; and though I do not perform miracles to satisfy individual needs - the satisfaction of which would result in entangling the individual more and more in the net of ephemeral existence - yet time and again at certain periods I manifest the Infinite Power in the form of miracles, but only for the spiritual upliftment and benefit of humanity and all creatures.

However, miraculous experiences have often been experienced by individuals who love me and have unswerving faith in me, and these have been attributed to my nazar, or Grace, on them. But I want all to know that it does not befit my lovers to attribute such individual miraculous experiences to my state of the Highest of the High. If I am the Highest of the High I am above these illusory plays of maya in the course of the Divine Law. Therefore, whatever miraculous experiences are experienced by my lovers who recognize me as such, or by those who love me unknowingly through other channels, they are but the outcome of their own firm faith in me. Their unshakable faith often superseding the course of the play of maya gives them those experiences which they call miracles. Such experiences derived through firm faith eventually do good and do not entangle the individuals who experience them in further and greater bindings of Illusion.

If I am the Highest of the High, then a wish of my Universal Will is sufficient to give, in an instant, God-realization to one and all, and thus free every creature in creation from the shackles of Ignorance. But blessed is Knowledge that is gained through the experience of Ignorance, in accordance with the Divine Law. This Knowledge is made possible for you to attain in the midst of Ignorance by the guidance of Perfect Masters and surrender to the Highest of the High.

This was the most explicit direct and the fullest public statement made

by Baba about himself. It is the equivalent of what is said in the *Upanishads* 'Brahman is all, and Atman is Brahman. Atman the Self.... I am Atman, the Spirit himself.... ' To make such a declaration required the highest degree of courage.

He paid a visit to Andhra in January 1954 when he travelled north from Madras, staying there for twelve days, giving darshan to many thousands of people (they said 150,000) and prasad to many (they said 50,000). Arrangements were made to celebrate his birthday there. He set out by rail, third class as usual, on 20 February, and on the way stopped at a number of places, Guntur, Bezwada, Masulipatam and Eluru. At each place mass darshans were held. At all these places messages were given of which several collections have been printed, though not yet in permanent form. An account is to be found in Francis Brabazon's *Journey with God*, but it is fragmentary. At Bezwada on 21 February he said:

"I want you to feel that I am one of you and that is why I am now sitting on the ground with you all. I am on the level of each one of you. Whether poor, rich, small, big, I am like each of you, but I am approachable only to those who love me."

At Eluru on 24 February he visited a boys' school in the early afternoon.

The birthday was celebrated at Tadepalligudam on 25 February. An elaborate programme was got through starting at 5 a.m. and finishing at 9 p.m. He gave the following message:

"I am never born. I never die. Yet every moment I take birth and undergo death. The countless illusory births and deaths are necessary in the progression of man's consciousness to Truth - a prelude to the Real Death and Real Birth. The Real Death is when one dies to self; the Real Birth is when dying to self one is born in God to live for ever his Eternal Life consciously."

A discourse on modesty and humility was given in the afternoon, in which Baba said 'Modesty is weakness, humility is strength'. If, however, 'you feel you are humble it is 'egotism'; also 'to try to be humble is humbug ... Be natural. If you are dishonest do not try to hide yourself under the curtain of honesty.'

Baba left at midday the day after, and many other messages and darshans were given at other places. At Rajamundry a special meeting

of all Baba's workers in Andhra State was held starting at 9 p.m. on 1 March, not ending until 3 a.m. the following morning. Here, addressing a large gathering of his followers, he gave a message on 'What Baba means by real work', in the course of which he said:

"I tell you with Divine authority, that chanting my arti, performing my puja, garlanding me, offering me fruits and sweets and bowing down to me, in themselves mean absolutely nothing. It is a waste to spend money on garlands, fruits and sweets as offerings to me for the conventional puja, and a sheer waste of breath and energy merely to chant my arti. From time eternal, gods have been performing my real puja. What I want from all my lovers is real, unadulterated love, and from my genuine workers I expect real work done....

"I have had enough of this alphabet board and my silence. I must break my silence soon. And when I do, all will know of it. Those who come in contact with me will have a glimpse of me. Some will have a little, some a little more, and some still more.

"Love me wholeheartedly. The time is so near that the only thing which will count now is Love. That is why I have been telling you all to love me more and more. Love me, love me, love me, and then you will find me. From you I want no surrender, no mind, no body, no possessions, only love.

"I come now to the main point. Those who have assembled here have been called workers of Baba, therefore, you must necessarily first understand what my work is....

"First of all, bear in mind that you should not seek appreciation from me or from others. Though this may seem easy, it is very difficult to put into practice. Remember that work in itself is its own reward; the moment you seek appreciation the work is undone. Therefore, seek not any appreciation for the work you do for me.

"Secondly, do not count upon outside help in your work for me. Many of you are ready to work for me wholly, yet because you are poor and have families, you cannot devote your time and means to my work. Why then work beyond your means? When the worker depends upon anyone or anything the work suffers. Therefore, do as much as you can, but do it honestly.

"Thirdly, if money is collected for the work and spent wrongly and without being accounted for, all work in the name of the Divine Cause must be stopped immediately by the so-called Workers... let honesty prevail.

"Fourthly, when you spread my eternal message of love to others,

show them first that you really love me. Do not merely make them read my books and messages; do more. Live such a life of love, sacrifice, forgiveness and tolerance that others will love me. If instead of doing the real work of love, you start organized propaganda for me, it is absurd. I need no propaganda or publicity. I do not want propaganda and publicity, but I do want love and honesty. If you cannot live the life of love and honesty, you should stop working for me. I am quite capable of doing my Universal Work alone.

"Fifthly, I want you all to know for certain that 'Baba's work' needs no money ... to depend on money for 'Baba's work' is work undone. To ask people to give money, and in return to propagate 'Baba's Message of Love' is utter folly. Therefore, whether you have money or not, let it not affect my work. Money comes and goes; whereas my work is eternal.... If you love me even a little, I want your hearts towards each other to be clean and for you to forget your differences. Cleanse your hearts and live for 'Baba'.

"Outwardly, you may establish hundreds of centres for Baba, or none at all; that is your own responsibility. But bear in mind that for my work it is not necessary to have centres or offices, nor accounts and the collecting of money. Let Baba's love be the Centre, the Office, the help and the work.

"I want my lovers and workers to know that there is no greater 'Baba's Centre' than the heart of my lover. Those who truly love me are my centres in the world. Let each 'Babalover,' wherever he or she may be, be the 'Baba's Centre' personified, radiating the eternal message of Love Divine, living a life of love, sacrifice and honesty.

"When I call each one of you a 'Baba-Centre', it does not mean that you should work individually when you can work collectively in groups as Baba-centres. Neither does this mean that you should not work on your own. I have shown you how I desire the work to be done; it is for you to follow the method best suited to you....

"You who love me have expressed your love in a way that touches my heart, and I feel very happy. Yet I have not known one who loves me as I would wish to be loved. There are about 220 men and women from the East and the West who have so completely and utterly surrendered to me that they would do anything I say. Whatsoever I order them they will carry out, even if it means being cut to pieces. To surrender is higher than to love, and paradoxical as it may seem, to love me as I ought to be loved is impossible, yet to obey me is possible. Therefore to say you love me and yet not to obey me would be hypocritical.

"The time is very near for the breaking of my silence and then, within a short period all will happen - my humiliation, my glorification, my manifestation, and the dropping of my body. All this will happen soon and within a short period. So, from this moment, love me more and more.

"Do not propagate what you do not feel. What your heart says and what your conscience dictates about me, pour out without hesitation. Be unmindful of whether you are ridiculed or accepted in pouring out your heart for me, or against me, to others.

"If you take 'Baba' as God, say so; do not hesitate.

"If you think 'Baba' is the Devil, say it. Do not be afraid.

"I am everything that you take me to be, and I am also beyond everything. If your conscience says that 'Baba' is the Avatar, say it even if you are stoned for it. But if you feel that he is not, then say that you feel 'Baba' is not the Avatar. Of myself I say again and again 'I am the Ancient One - the Highest of the High'.

"If you had even the tiniest glimpse of my Divinity, all doubts would vanish and love - Real Love - be established. Illusion has such a tight grip on you that you forget Reality. Your life is a Shadow. The only Reality is Existence Eternal - which is God.

"The tour continued until 24 March at Kakinada when his last message was given in a large hall filled with many educated people and he said, to arouse them:

"It has been possible through love for man to become God; when God becomes man it is due to his love. If people were to ask me 'Have you seen God?' I would reply 'What else is there to see?' If they were to ask me 'Are you God?' I would reply 'Who else could I be?' If they were to ask me 'Are you Avatar?' I would reply, 'Why else have I taken this human form?'"

Part I, Chapter 8

THE FINAL DECLARATION

1954-1957

Baba's course of action proceeded with increasing momentum. He was most active when seemingly most quiet; but outer action was at times on a large scale and intense even over long periods, as this record has already shown. He issued a circular on 10 June 1954 inviting all who loved him, whether or not they had seen him, so long as they were genuinely devoted to him, to attend very special meetings at Meherabad on 29 and 30 September. No one was to come out of mere curiosity, or to pursue ends of his own, and all were to return home immediately afterwards. The invitation was addressed to selected people throughout India and Pakistan. At this 'meeting of meetings', there were to be no women and no male under sixteen years of age; it was declared that this would be the last occasion on which Baba would give 'messages'.

At the same time, he invited men in the West who wished to come. They had to be prepared to reach Ahmednagar by 10 September and to stay until the conclusion of the Meherabad meeting; accommodation would be provided for the period. Seventeen men accepted the invitation from England, France, Switzerland, the United States and Australia. I was among them, and with two friends from England reached Bombay by sea on 20 August: as we wished to travel by ship we had no alternative but to come three weeks early, to which Baba agreed. We were met and garlanded on the ship, much to my embarrassment, with the hospitality that is natural to Indians and specially notable in Baba's devotees. We stayed for one week, when everything was done by Meherjee and Nariman and their families to make our visit happy and to show us the city. It was a fascinating experience, but that season the monsoon was protracted and the heat oppressive, so that I for one suffered much discomfort.

Arriving by ship we were at once in the heart of the city, where prosperity and poverty jostle each other. The most Westernized of Indian cities, Bombay created an impression of extreme unreality.

Indeed, built on one-time marshes it is placed where no city should naturally exist at all. Everywhere the enterprise and taste of Victorian England lay heavily upon its un-Eastern architecture, and the city still retained evidence of Western efficiency not yet completely overcome by its own abounding and disorderly life. As everyone knows, more than three quarters of a million of its inhabitants then had nowhere at all to live but the streets. The old men lay sleeping on the pavements at mid-day, more than half naked, scratching at their hairs. Mothers with bared breasts sat begging, training their toddlers to run after passers-by for a coin. To pause in a street for a moment was an invitation to a crowd of beggars, young and old, diseased and able - but that, at least, is common in every Eastern city. The well-dressed young married couples paraded on the Bund, sometimes side by side, more often the women following the man; the wind and storm-blasted apartment buildings, the lush gardens, the fine mansions, the slums, the street traders offering everything from a shoe lace to a suite of furniture, and any kind of craft from clothes to watch repairs; and by the shore the sweet breeze from the sea. The atmosphere was charged with high humidity, the main streets jammed with overloaded buses, large American cars and bullock carts. I had the impression of being on a gigantic film-set with shooting in progress. It is not, however my intention to describe Bombay as it was then, only to add that in its noisy sweating life an oasis was the Indian Cricket Club.

After a week we moved to Poona for the remaining fortnight, where we stayed at what was once an exclusively Western hotel, settling rapidly into decay, as was the city generally. Yet here, too, life was overflowing, the main streets full of beggars. One day a school came out on strike parading, shouting and singing, forcing the traders to close their shops. The splendid botanic gardens, the once-splendid Governor-General's palace, the great military camp and armament works still functioning in the old tradition, also the race course, signs of the city's surviving importance.

The devotees were generous as ever. Papa Jessawala visited us every day and took us to the sights. We were welcomed by Baba's brothers at the house where he lived as a boy and where he sat in suffering for so long after his inner eye had been opened. We saw his school and paid our respects at the shrine of Babajan. With customary kindness Baba made a special visit to the city to enable us to greet him and to be in his presence. I saw the performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* by the pupils of St Mary's College, which would have done credit to any Western school. We were entertained in the homes of many

devotees, and saw something of the countryside. Before it became time to leave, one of our companions, an old man, decided he could not stand the strain of the coming meetings and, having seen Baba, thought he was sufficiently rewarded for his journey, so with Baba's consent he went back to Bombay to go home.

We met no other Western visitors until we reached Meherabad on the evening of 11 September. They had mostly travelled by air and had arrived in Bombay the day before. I propose to give a full account of the following eighteen days as I saw them as a first-hand record of Baba's methods.

The original intention was that all should stay as guests of various devotees in Ahmednagar, but Baba had decided it would be more convenient, and more in accord with his purpose, for us to be under one roof at Meherabad. Upon the hill is the large two-storey stone house that had served for years as a retreat for his secluded women disciples, in which Baba had been the only man to set foot with the exception of the doctors. The upper storey had been converted for the occasion into a dormitory; two other rooms were on the ground floor, where there was also a large lounge. At the rear was erected a refectory under a corrugated iron roof, a little beyond the kitchens, with a cook and assistants, also five Indian-type bathrooms and washstands, with running cold water and mirrors for shaving, and five toilets. Early in the morning buckets of hot water were brought to the bathrooms as required. The meals were varied and tasty; clothes laundered, pressed or cleaned as necessary; outgoing mail was posted and incoming mail delivered. Medicines were supplied for those who needed them.

In charge of the arrangements were Sarosh Irani and his wife Villoo, who provided everything from cigarettes to station wagons, and the two, assisted by Savak Damania, attended to all our requirements. Savak Kotwal, who lived at Arangaon, stayed at the ashram and saw that everything ran smoothly; he rose at 4 a.m., and retired at 10.30 p.m. Dr Donkin looked after the sanitary arrangements and the health of the party. Nothing that could reasonably contribute to comfort or well-being was overlooked. Baba proved that a Perfect Master was also a perfect host.

Early on Sunday morning, 12 September, the party was taken to Wadia Park in Ahmednagar, where the last mass darshan was to be held. A large pandal, or tent without sides, had been erected for the occasion. Some 10,000 people had already arrived, and were seated both in the pandal and beside it, the men on one side, the women on

the other. Sarosh, who had been elected Mayor of Ahmednagar while he was in the United States with Baba in 1952, conducted us to the platform at the end of the tent where Baba was to be seated, where we were introduced to the prominent local people, the Mayor and member of Parliament, who later made addresses in honour of Baba. Also on the platform were fourteen women disciples of Baba's second Master, Upasni Maharaj, who had come from Sakori; also a number of other devotees and Baba's mandali.

Precisely at nine o'clock Baba arrived. He walked to the platform and spelled out on his alphabet board, 'Not as man to man, but as God to God, I bow down to you, to save you the trouble of bowing down to me'. Descending to the edge of the platform while this announcement was broadcast in English and Marathi, Baba prostrated himself before the assembled people. Mounting the steps again, he spelled out, 'To make you all share my feeling of being one with you and one of you, I sit down beside you'. Then he descended from the platform and sat first among the men, afterwards among the women. Returning to the platform, he washed the feet of seven poor men, giving each a gift of 51 rupees, saying, 'As each one of you is in one way or another an incarnation of God, I feel happy to bow down to you and to lay at your feet this Dev-Dakshana (a gift offered to God).

Baba resumed his seat, and two messages were broadcast in English and Marathi, including 'Baba's Call', in which he said:

"Age after age, amidst the clamour of disruptions, wars, fear and chaos, rings the Avatar's call: 'Come all unto Me'.

"Although, because of the veil of illusion, this Call of the Ancient One may appear as a voice in the wilderness, its echo and re-echo nevertheless pervades through time and space, to rouse at first a few, and eventually millions, from their deep slumber of ignorance. And in the midst of illusion, as the Voice behind all voices, it awakens humanity to bear witness to the manifestation of God amidst mankind.

"The time is come. I repeat the Call, and bid all to come unto me....

"Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite Love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false....

"The greatest greatness and the greatest humility go hand in hand naturally and without effort.

"When the Greatest of all says, 'I am the Greatest', it is but a spontaneous

expression of an infallible Truth. The strength of his greatness lies, not in raising the dead, but in his great humiliation when he allows himself to be ridiculed, persecuted and crucified at the hands of those who are weak in flesh and spirit. Throughout the ages, humanity has failed to fathom the true depth of the Humility underlying the greatness of the Avatar, gauging his divinity by its religious standards. Even real saints and sages, who have some knowledge of the Truth, have failed to understand the Avatar's greatness when faced with his real humility.

"Age after age history repeats itself when men and women, in their ignorance, limitations and pride, sit in judgment over the God-incarnated man who declares his Godhood, and condemn him for uttering the Truths they cannot understand. He is indifferent to abuse and persecution for in his true compassion he understands, in his continual experience of Reality he knows, and in his Infinite Mercy he forgives.

"God is all. God knows all, and God does all. When the Avatar proclaims he is the Ancient One, it is God who proclaims his manifestation on earth. When man utters for or against the Avatarhood it is God who speaks through him. It is God alone who declares himself through the Avatar and mankind.

"I tell you all with my Divine authority, that you and I are not 'We', but 'One'. You unconsciously feel my Avatarhood within you; I consciously feel in you what each of you feel. Thus everyone of us is Avatar, in the sense that everyone and everything is everyone and everything, at the same time, and for all time....

"There is nothing but God. He is the only Reality, and we all are one in the indivisible Oneness of this absolute Reality. When the One who has realized God says, 'I am God. You are God, and we are all one', and also awakens this feeling of Oneness in his illusion-bound selves, then the question of the lowly and the great, the poor and the rich, the humble and the modest, the good and the bad, vanishes.

"Pay heed when I say with my Divine authority that the Oneness of Reality is so uncompromisingly Unlimited and All-pervading that not only 'We are One', but even this collective term of 'We' has no place in the Infinite Indivisible Oneness.

"Awaken from your ignorance, and try at least to understand that in the uncompromisingly Indivisible Oneness, not only is the Avatar God, but also the ant and the sparrow, just as one and all of you, are nothing but God. The only apparent difference is in the states of consciousness. The Avatar knows that that which is a sparrow is not a

sparrow, whereas the sparrow does not realize this, and, being ignorant of its ignorance, remains a sparrow.

"Live not in ignorance. Do not waste your precious life-span in differentiating and judging your fellow-men, but learn to long for the love of God. Even in the midst of your worldly activities, live only to find and realize your true Identity with your Beloved God.

"Be pure and simple, and love all because all are one. Live a sincere life; be natural, and be honest with yourself."

Following this came seven speeches eulogizing Baba; the performance of arti by six young women in light blue saris, waving camphor lamps; bhajans, or devotional songs; and a repetition of the arti by R. K. Gadekar, a disciple from Poona.

Then came the main event, the darshan and giving of prasad, to a seemingly endless procession of men, women and children, flowing for eight hours past Baba, who had seated himself on the lower edge of the platform; he gave each a sweetmeat, while they tried to touch his feet either with their heads or hands. The long queues of men and women, in turn, controlled by police, were made to move as quick as possible. Many tried to kiss his feet, but there was no time for that. The people were of every class, well-dressed ladies and gentlemen and men in uniform as well as beggars.

The stream of humanity was for some hours smooth and orderly, but towards noon a flow of women and children was interrupted by a tidal wave of men, who impatiently pressed forward to the edge of the platform, in spite of efforts by the Ahmednagar police and the mandali to restrain them. It seemed, for a few minutes, as if they would overcome Baba. The din was terrific, both on the floor and on the platform, where exhortations for the men to return to their places were broadcast. Finally, Baba mounted his seat on the platform and motioned for them to go back, which reluctantly they did, and the stream flowed on again in swift but orderly fashion. As the procession continued, Baba would now and then pat some child on the cheek, a man or woman on the head, or recall a woman who had been pushed ahead before he could give her prasad. In the early afternoon his right hand grew so weary that he started giving out the sweets with his left. When some of his disciples asked him to rest, he replied: 'This is my rest.' Every so often he would glance about the platform, sometimes smiling, sometimes gesticulating.

He made no pause for a meal but at three o'clock left the platform for fifteen minutes to visit another part of the park, where they said

20,000 poor people were seated, waiting to begin their meal of wheat grains with curry-sauce, served on large leaf plates. They did not think of eating until Baba first partook of their food. He sat down with them and ate.

Seated beside Baba during the darshan was Gadge Maharaj, an elderly saint, highly respected in Maharashtra. Every so often exchanges would take place between Baba and him, and occasionally amusing incidents occurred. One woman, who evidently believed in collecting as many blessings as possible while she could, having touched Baba's feet and received her gift, tried also to touch Gadge Maharaj's feet as she passed him, who drew himself up in displeasure, but Baba smiled and Gadge softened.

At about four-thirty, Baba sent for me to sit beside him. I watched him and it was obvious that in giving these small gifts he was giving himself each time. It was not a mere casual handing out of a sweetmeat, but a personal contact that he was establishing. Yet he had been doing this for many hours, the sweat rolling off his face, wiped every few minutes by Papa Jessawala or one of the mandali. I sat there for nearly an hour until I could bear it no longer. Baba was not exhausted, but I was.

One of the most extraordinary features of the occasion was the presence on the platform, in the late afternoon, of the women mandali who had heretofore been in seclusion - their first appearance in public.

Shortly before six o'clock the crowd got entirely out of hand. It would soon be dark, and thousands had not yet received prasad, so a rush was made upon Baba, which the police could not stop, and the ceremony had to be abruptly abandoned. With great difficulty the police and mandali got him away to his car. There at first he sat on the top bowing to the people, as the car moved slowly out of the park through the crowd with Baba in a distinctly novel position.

Even after Baba had left, the crowd was continually being augmented by new arrivals. Kirtans (devotional songs) were sung in the park until ten o' clock at night and by the time the programme was concluded they said 100,000 people had been there.

By Baba's orders the next day was a day of rest for the Meherabad visitors. On Tuesday, 14 September, he arrived early in the morning. He embraced each in turn, after which he said that he would embrace us only that day, otherwise his heart would not stand it. There followed introductions, as there were some whom he was meeting for the first time. After the introductions, he took up the alphabet board, which Eruch Jessawala read for him.

"Today I have three points that I wish to convey to you. The first is that I want you to be completely natural and absolutely frank. If the food does not agree with you, say so. If there is anything you don't like, say so. If your health is not good, say so. Sarosh and Viloo are in charge here. Tell them. If they can possibly change it, they will do so. If they can't change it, they will say 'yes', and that will be that.

"Don is in charge of your health. If you have any difficulty of any kind, tell him. You must take care to keep yourselves in good health, because the meetings on the 29th and 30th will be very important, and you must be in good shape to absorb everything.

"The second point: while you are here, from now until you leave, I want you to forget everything about Europe, America, and Australia, and think only of Baba and what you are experiencing here. If you had but a glimpse of what I really am, you would forget yourselves completely and be conscious only of God. So, while you are here be conscious only of what you experience here.

"The third point: these meetings on the 29th and 30th are the last meetings I shall hold before I give up the body. There will be about a thousand present, from all over India and Pakistan - all workers for Baba. Everything I say will be spontaneous, and someone should take down every word, because there will be only one prepared text, but all will be vitally important. I shall tell you why I am here, what I have done, what I shall still do, and what will happen in seven hundred years. After all, you have come a great distance to attend these meetings, and I want you to receive as much as you possibly can from them. When they are over, I want you to go home as quickly and directly as possible, so that you can carry with you, still fresh, what you have received."

Baba then told us to get sun-hats and come with him. He led us to the tomb that he had had built for himself by the mandali with some help; the tomb is not a choice architectural work, but notable for its simplicity. It is of whitened concrete, with an open crypt in the centre, where Baba had spent weeks of fasting and seclusion; on the walls are murals painted by Helen Dahm of Switzerland. Then he showed us the tombs of his mother and father, Nonny Gayley, and Nadine Tolstoy, stopping on the way to point out the hut where he had shut himself up years ago for months, not seeing anyone, only communicating with one of the mandali through a small slit in the wall. From there he led down the hill at a brisk pace to the men's ashram, stopping once to ask if he were walking too fast, and resuming at a slower pace. At the foot

of the hill on the road into town, a bus full of passengers had seen Baba descending, and stopped to pay their respects to him; and other men and women from nearby also congregated to greet him. Then a private bus drove up and fourteen of Upasni Maharaj's women disciples from Sakori descended. All entered the ashram, where the women prostrated themselves in turn before Baba, taking the dust from the ground on to their heads. One of them was Godavri Mai, who was Upasni Maharaj's favourite disciple, now in charge of Maharaj's ashram in Sakori, where thirty of Maharaj's women disciples were living. Baba, through Eruch, spoke to us and to them, saying, 'I am the One Reality'.

Next Baba led us out to the little wooden hut, on legs, so small that one could not stand up straight inside, where he spent a number of months in seclusion in 1925, writing the account of his spiritual experience, which no one so far has seen.

Alongside this hut is Baba's dhuni, or sacred fire. Vishnu, one of Baba's mandali, related how in the drought of 1927, which was so severe that in desperation the villagers came to Baba imploring him to send them rain; whereupon he lit the dhuni, and by the time the villagers had returned to their village, which was close by, it was raining. 'They call it a miracle', said Baba, 'but it was only a coincidence. I shall perform only one miracle - when I speak the Word - the Divine Word. That really will be a miracle.'

Then he took us to another hut, the first into which he had retired in seclusion. Afterwards we walked back up the hill, he motioning the women to take it in leisurely fashion. Once on the way he gathered the Western group about him under a tree, throwing stones in oblique directions, which they were supposed to catch. As we continued up the hill, he bent down several times to pick up stones, which he threw into the fields. On arrival at the retreat, he took the women up the steps to see our quarters, then led them into the tomb, and to other places, after which he sent them back, advising them that he would come with us one day to Sakori.

Then we went into the lounge where he said, through Adi, that the room had been constructed as a water reservoir - there was then only the opening now above the door; he used to let himself in through the window, close it after him, and stay there in seclusion. Baba moved over to the divan and began conversing, through the alphabet board, Eruch and Adi translating. He stressed again the idea of our being perfectly natural and frank with him.

'I am your Master', he said, 'but I am also your friend. I am one of

you, and one with you.' He said that he would come to see us every day between then and the 27th, unless the rains made the roads impassable, or unless he caught cold - 'from one of you' , he added. He would explain many things about the spiritual path and realization, and about his work, and what we could do to help him in it, and he said that everything should be taken down. Everyone was to be present every day between 9 and 12.30, so that each would receive as much as possible of what he had to give.

Baba went on to say that Realization of God came from loving God and seeing God in and through everything. He spoke of the three kinds of conviction that both Sufis and Vedantists define. The first, mental conviction, arrived at through reason, as a result of which one can be convinced that God is. The second, conviction by sight: when one sees God everywhere in everything, as clearly as one would see external objects, but with the inner eye; one is then free from all doubts, and experiences bliss. But real conviction, he continued, is when one becomes God. Then one knows that only God exists, and that one and all are God. It is only when one gets this conviction that one really knows Baba:

"I am one with you on every level, but you know this only when the ego and reason do not interfere. Then Baba appears as he is. I am what I am, whether the world bows down to me, or whether it turns against me; it does not matter. It is no one's fault. To know Baba is not a matter of eating Indian sweets. One has to die to oneself to know me. It is not just a joke - this Love. Be happy, and forget everything except what you experience here. The meeting on the 29th and 30th will be unique, and it will be lasting in its effect. Until then, don't worry about anything; be cheerful, be honest, and look after your health."

Baba then asked each in turn to say something. Malcolm quoted one of the songs of Kabir, which ran, 'Where is the need for words when Love has made drunken the heart?' John Bass said, 'I really don't know what to say. My mind is a blank.' 'To be blank is an excellent thing', Baba replied. Lud Dimpfl said something about being tongue-tied, ending with, 'And we sit here like a bundle of sticks!' Baba smiled, and replied, 'Say "I", not "we"'. Lud thought Baba was displeased with him; he said something to that effect, and appeared greatly distressed. Baba reassured him. 'I love you, and I will never be displeased. Speak from your heart. If you hide what you feel, you will not be honest. I love you for being honest. I really love you. Say

whatever you feel, but say always, "I", not "we". Do you feel happy?' Lud said he did, and Baba asked, what else was necessary? Philippe told how deeply impressed he was with Baba's darshan on the 12th, and said something to the effect that it must have been a great strain on his body. 'Before I drop my body', Baba replied, 'I shall go through violent attacks on the body. What has to happen will happen and I will gladly undergo all this for the sake of humanity. My only happiness lies in making people understand, not through the mind, but through experience, that God alone is the Beloved for whom we exist. In the meeting, I will make this clear as never before, and any of you who are strong enough to carry out that message will do my work. It is only for this meeting that I have called you.'

Joseph Harb said something to the effect that it was a privilege and great joy to be there with Baba, and that he hoped he would be made a fit instrument to carry on the work. Fred Winterfeldt said that when the heart is full, the mouth runs over; that he could scarcely believe that he was really there; and asked by what grace we could attain to the love which Baba described. Frank Eaton spoke of being deeply impressed by the fellowship of Baba's disciples. Bill LePage and John Ballantyne said something that escaped recording, but it evoked from Baba the comment: 'One who wants nothing, gets everything. Nothing means nothing, and one who wants nothing, is never disappointed.' Then he turned to Francis Brabazon, whose remarks also escaped recording, but in response Baba quoted a verse from Hafiz, which runs as follows: 'Do not ask for union with God, and do not bewail separation. Seek only the will of the Beloved. Before I met my Beloved in union', Baba continued, 'I lost everything, ego, mind, and lower consciousness; but thank God I did not lose my sense of humour.' Darwin Shaw said something that reminded Baba of an incident in New York in 1952. Max Häfliger said, 'I don't understand anything about you, but I like your people.' 'That means you don't like me?' asked Baba. Max said something about liking Baba sometimes. 'So you like my people all the time', said Baba, 'and you like me sometimes.' Fred Frey said that he was up in a cloud; that Baba was just what he had expected; that he felt warmed inwardly by Baba's people; and that if he could bring Baba's love back to America it would make him most happy. Will Backett said that his heart had echoed everything that had already been said, and that of course he was blissfully happy to be with Baba.

When it came to my turn I said, 'When you were speaking about the three types of conviction, I was reminded about what Jesus said in relation to seeing God - that only the pure in heart can see him. Will

you explain that sometime?' Baba promised that he would explain tomorrow. Then he turned again to Max. 'Max, you don't like me; anyway, I like you all the same, all the time.' Baba then went on:

"Before I met my Beloved in union - I lost everything, ego, mind, and lower consciousness, but as God, as I have just said, I did not lose my sense of humour. That is why I appear amongst you like this, on your level. Yogis and saints in India you will usually find in meditation, with long beards. You would not be allowed in their presence with shoes on, or smoking, but with me you can do all these things because I am one with you and one of you. From tomorrow I shall work so that this visit of yours will not be merely a picnic or sightseeing.

"There are three types of lovers of God. The first is the mast, who loves and knows only God. He loses all consciousness of self, of body and the world. Whether it rains or shines, whether it is winter or summer, it is all the same to him. Only God exists for him. He is dead to himself.

"The second type of love is one who lives in the world, attends to all worldly duties fully, yet all the time in his heart he knows that this is temporary, that only God exists, and he loves God internally, without anyone knowing it.

"The third type, which is the highest, is very rare. Here the lover surrenders completely to Christ, to the Avatar, to the God-Man. He lives, not for himself, but for the Master. This is the highest type of lover. Unless you have such love, merely to criticize and to judge others will take you nowhere."

Baba then joined us at luncheon, sitting first at one end of the table, then at the other. He questioned each as to whether the food was to his liking. Then he took up his alphabet board:

"I wonder if you understand how fortunate you are to have me with you in this way? Think of those people at the darshan on the 12th, who fought so to have a chance to touch my feet for a fleeting second; who wanted so earnestly to receive prasad. They are the ones who love me. The others, the social people, the political people, the intellectual people, they make their speeches and they leave the platform.

"In Andhra for fifteen days we had two or three darshan programmes every day, with thousands of people coming from surrounding villages in bullock-carts and on foot. They would not understand your being

here with me in this way. In India, they have traditions. As I told you before, yogis and saints are supposed to be in silent meditation. You could not make effective contact with them. Remember always that I am your Master, but that I am also your friend; that I am one with you, and one of you. Therefore you can be completely natural with me, and tell me frankly whatever is in your mind.

"When I am with sadhus, no one is more serious than I. When I am with children, I play marbles with them. I am in all, and one with all. That is why I can adapt myself to all kinds of people, and meet them where they are."

Immediately after luncheon he went away, and an excursion was taken to the Happy Valley at Ahmednagar. On the way a visit was paid to the American Congregational Church Mission where a hundred women and girls were employed working sisal. First started in the city when it was a famine area, the workshop had been maintained since, though during the partition troubles they had very great difficulties. Most of their products went to the United States. The place was bright and cheerful. I found that their best workers earned no more than forty-four rupees a month, part-time.

Outside the Ahmednagar fort, which is an extensive area, surrounded by a high wall and moat, there is a mounted cannon, not far from the drawbridge, which bears a tablet stating in English that at that spot Arthur Wellesley, when in command of military operations in the Deccan, had breakfast before capturing the fort in 1803. Today people regard the spot as a shrine, and worship there in memory of his deliverance. They break coconuts and pour the milk over the cannon. There were garlands and flowers quite recently hung on the gun. This made me think of what Plato said in *The Republic* about images, that those who use them are not really thinking about them at all, but about the originals which they resemble, the real subjects being invisible except to the eye of the mind. For it could not be thought that the ignorant peasants were worshipping the actual cannon, any more than the worshippers of images in the temples were worshipping idols, though they had the appearance of it. They were worshipping an unknown. All the same, idols are dangerous, and of course there are other idols than physical images. It is said in one of the Upanishads: 'The Brahman is not what one thinks with the mind, but, as they say, is that whereby there is a mentation or concept: know that That alone is Brahman, not what men worship here.'

We inspected the Fort, where Jawaharlal Nehru and eleven of his

companions had been imprisoned from 9 August 1942 to in June 1945 after the 'Quit-India' demand, his longest period of imprisonment. 'It was a mild imprisonment on the whole', says his biographer. We saw the series of large adjoining rooms, with their private kitchen, around the large quadrangle, with the very pleasant garden. A comfortable prison, though a prison none the less, now a show-place.

The following day was devoted entirely to private interviews with Baba, one of his characteristic ways of working. I will describe what took place when he saw me. Of course, I had often had such interviews with him before, in England, so that I knew what to expect. He had Eruch with him to read the alphabet board. On other occasions one or more of the mandali might be present, at Baba's request, when they might take part in the conversation, but on this occasion no one else was there. He asked me how I was in health, which is his usual first question. He remarked that I was young for my age. He had work for me to do, but did not indicate what it was; he would explain everything while we were with him. Some would understand in one way, some in another. I understood, he said, and must be patient with others. He inquired about my son, and sent a message to him, and said he would always be with him. I asked why he had thrown the stones yesterday, but he smiled and did not answer. He stood up and embraced me, and as he did so said that people were alarmed that he called himself Avatar. He had made the same remark to me earlier, when I met him in Poona; he had then said without any question from me, 'You don't like the word "Avatar". Do not be bothered by it, we are all Avatars.' He said that the real miracle performed by Jesus was his death. Finally he said it was no accident that we had met, for our lives had been connected always.

These interviews lasted until the afternoon. After I had seen Baba, and in view of what had passed earlier between him and Max, I thought I should have a talk with the latter before his interview, but somehow, I failed to do so, although Max was the last to see Baba. When we met immediately after, he said to me 'Baba is sending me home'. 'When?' I asked. 'At once', was his reply. 'I am packing now and Dr Nilkant is coming with me to Bombay. Baba and I have agreed that neither of us will say why this has happened.' Then Max went away, leaving me with a heavy heart, for he was the man I knew best, with whom I had most in common of all those present; I had been looking forward to our being together during the fortnight. A certain amount of gloom settled upon the entire company as we gathered in the lounge after our evening meal, but no one referred to what had happened.

We arose early next morning (Thursday) and left at 7 a.m. for Meherazad. On arrival, Baba led us first to the room where Kaikobad Dastur stayed, and introduced us to him. For twelve years, he said, Kaikobad has meditated. He repeats Baba's name a hundred thousand times a day. He observes regular watches every three hours, day and night, for meditation, and spends most of his time in seclusion. Baba let Kaikobad himself tell us how he sometimes sees stars, suns and moons coming out of himself. When the moon is in his head, everything is peaceful and he can enjoy the peace and bliss of the experience. When the sun is in his head, it is very difficult for him to maintain consciousness and he often loses it. We were then introduced to Kaka Baria, the manager; he it was who had named the place 'Meherazad', 'Azad' meaning free, 'Abad' flourishing.

Baba took us to his own room, and told us that he had come out of manonash thin and exhausted - as if something had been sucked out of him. It was very rare for him to be in that condition. It had happened to him once before at Angarishi Pahad, on a mountain in the Central Provinces, where he had spent time in a cave in seclusion. Kaka added that in manonash Baba seemed to want to open the door and step out of the universe.

Baba introduced us to Gustadji, who had been with him ever since Upasni Maheraj told Baba that he was Avatar and instructed Gustadji to follow him and do as he said. Gustadji had been silent for 27 years, in accordance with Baba's instructions. There was the asbestos cabin made out of two cabins that were on the top of the hill at Pimpalgaon, in which Baba used to retire during manonash in the daytime. He remarked that he now slept there sometimes, and showed his bed, which consisted of a thin mat and hard pillow stretched over the stone floor.

He got Eruch to tell us of an incident during manonash, which had something to do with conflicting orders. Baba was in this room and Eruch, who was on guard during the night, was told not to open the door unless Baba clapped. He was sitting outside on the ground with a lantern and torch. At 2 a.m. a snake tried to slide under the door of the cabin. Eruch held it fast. Just then Baba clapped. Had Eruch obeyed instructions to open the door immediately, the snake could have entered. So Eruch waited and in a few minutes the snake decided to go elsewhere. But when Eruch entered the cabin, Baba wanted to know why he hadn't obeyed the order to come immediately. Eruch explained, and Baba smiled, 'But I always say,' he remarked, 'when there are conflicting orders, always obey the first'.

There was another story of Gustadji's experience with conflicting orders. Baba had been with some of the mandali to the Girnar mountains for mast work. Baidul, whom Baba calls the mast expert, and can, according to Baba, 'smell' a mast, finds them or takes them to Baba, or Baba to them, as Baba may wish. Baidul had located a mast at Girnar, and Baba had come there late at night with a number of the mandali. The only light they had were some small lamps. They had been moving about for days, from one place to another, sleeping in railway stations, and this night Baba had decided they would sleep near the shrine of a Muslim saint. They found a small room for Baba, outside of which was a concrete bench, on which one or the other of the mandali sat on watch in shifts. For the last 25 years, wherever Baba rests at night, a watchman is posted outside. Sometimes one man watches all night, sometimes they work in shifts. That night Baba's instructions were for them to sit there, to awaken each other in turn, and to allow no noise, not even the least, to disturb him. Sometimes even mosquitoes and flies in flight disturb him. At 3 a.m. it was Gustadji's turn to be on watch. All had travelled all day, without rest or relaxation. From 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. they knew that Baba usually rests completely, and if they have to attend to anything, that was usually the safe time to do it. So Gustadji decided that he would try. He was in this unfamiliar place, in almost complete darkness, so he had to grope his way to what he thought would be a good spot. He had just raised his foot to step off the other side, when Baba clapped. He went as quickly as he could to Baba, who inquired why he was late, and instructed him to sit down and not to move. Later, Baba asked the time, and gave Gustadji permission to go. When Gustadji got outside and started again to relieve his discomfort, the sky was clear, and Gustadji was amazed to find that just beyond the place where he had raised his foot, was a lake into which he would have fallen had Baba not clapped - and being on silence, he could not have called for assistance and would probably have drowned.

Baba led us through the charming garden to the house and ladies' rooms, which provided a complete contrast to the men's quarters. Rano explained that Mehera and the other women were mainly responsible for the garden. On the upper floor, we were taken to Baba's own room, which opens on to a verandah, a large simple room, with a wooden bed, where he sometimes sleeps.

Baba then led us out of the house and up the hill, which, he explained, was not far from Gorakhnath, where Krishna used to play with the Gopis, and it was also near Khandoba's temple. On the way

Baba followed his custom of throwing four stones. He led us first to the place just below the top of the hill where there had been one of the cabins used during his seclusion and mast-work; this was where the mandali had stayed during the daytime. The party followed Baba up to the summit where the other cabin had been in which he had retired. He then led the way down the hill and into the patio of the house, where he said: 'The hill is now barren, but a time will come when there will be much construction there by disciples.' He told us to sit quietly for five minutes, when there would be fruit juice to drink. One of the girls appeared with a large shawl, which she carefully opened. Out of this, she drew an old patched coat, originally brown, now covered with patches of blue and black. Baba said that he had worn it steadily for eight years from 1921 onwards. This included his period of seclusion in the zhopdi in 1924. Eruch said that after Baba had stopped wearing the coat he used to change his clothes frequently, then would give them away, but these things he would not part with; they had been shown today for the first time for many years. Even the mandali had not seen them for a long time.

The next day, Friday, 17 September, Baba arrived at twenty minutes after nine, and apologized for being late. He said:

"On very special occasions I hold prayer meetings with a few of my most intimate disciples. Today I shall hold one of these meetings so that you all may be included. So come down the hill with me.

"First, I want to tell you in a few words about Max. I have had a note from Charles asking me if I would say something to explain his departure, for it has distressed him. In the interview he told me something we both promised not to disclose, and gave a description of his state of mind since he met me two years ago. He then told me that he really did not want to come, but something had made him do so. 'And now, Baba', he said, 'I leave it to you whether to go immediately or to stay until the meeting.' I told him to go. He felt very sad, but I told him to go immediately. He will accordingly leave Bombay on the 22 September. He is a very fine man, and I love him very much. Today he sent me a telegram saying 'Dear Baba, I humbly apologize for having disappointed you and ask your forgiveness'. I cabled in reply, 'Don't worry. My love and blessings.' This I tell you because dear Purdom wanted to know why Max left.

"On the 20th we go to Sakori. Today Sarosh might take you to some place in the evening, but there are to be no more excursions from tomorrow. You will stay here and do as I instruct you. There is

not much time left and there is one special thing I want you all to do."

We followed Baba down the hill, he walking at his usual brisk pace, and reached the ashram at 9.45 a.m. At first Baba sat in his big chair at the east end of the large hall, while the party sat on the floor. Before starting he had all the doors and windows closed. He then called Kaikobad Dastur, and together they went to the opposite end of the room in front of the large painting of Baba where they both washed hands and face in a bowl of water brought to them. Then the Zoroastrian prayer began, with Dastur chanting the words and Baba swaying in accompaniment. At one point Dastur removed the kasti tied around the waist. Then both raised their hands, after which Dastur replaced the string. After this Baba washed his hands again, and placed his hands over Dastur's hands. Dastur then touched Baba's forehead and his own forehead, and again Baba's forehead. At the end Baba touched the ground with his hands.

Next Baba called for a cloth to be spread on the ground in front of his painting and a red scarf with which he covered his head. He and Aloba then stood on the cloth facing in the direction of Mecca. Aloba chanted the Muslim prayer, which consists of the prelude to the Quran and the first verse.

During this prayer, Baba's fingers were moving, and at times he gesticulated with his right hand. Several times Aloba raised his arms, bowed, kneeled and prostrated himself.

The Hindu prayer followed, chanted by Nilu and Vishnu, who stood alongside Baba, facing his portrait. The prayer was in Sanskrit. During this prayer Baba also swayed, moved the fingers of his right hand and swung his right hand at intervals. At one time, he salaamed, and frequently raised his hands to his head. At the end of the prayer he touched the ground with his hands.

Baba then called Eruch and Donkin. All three faced the portrait and Eruch read the special Christian prayer, at the end of which Baba touched the ground.

Christian Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
O Lord! Hear my prayer and let my cry come unto Thee:
Thou who art the God of God, the Father Almighty, the Father
everlasting!

O God! Almighty Father! The Lord of Lords! The King of Kings!
 All the earth doth worship Thee.
 To Thee all angels, to Thee the heavens and all powers,
 To Thee all saints and all beings with unceasing voice do cry:
 The Holy! The Holy of Holies!
 Full are the heavens and the earth, of the majesty of thy glory.
 Thou the glorious! Thou the exalted effulgence;
 Thou the praiseworthy in the assemblage of the prophets;
 Thou the celestial beauty! Thou art the eternal song of thy lovers.
 Thou who art acknowledged, praised and worshipped throughout
 the world, in all churches, synagogues, mosques, temples
 and pagodas: To Thee I most humbly bow down.
 Thou of unbounded majesty! Thou art the father of the Creation.
 Thy true adorable and only begotten son, the Christ,
 Thou art the king of glory, the saviour of mankind, the ancient one,
 the highest of the high!
 O Christ! The Messiah! Thou of the Father everlasting art the Son
 everlasting:
 Thou O most merciful Lord, has taken upon thee to deliver man
 from bondage, to eternal glory:
 O the ancient one! The redeemer! Thou, having first overcome the
 sting of ignorance, didst open to all the kingdom of bliss,
 knowledge and power!
 I most humbly praise Thee, O my God!
 I most firmly acknowledge Thee, O my God!
 O my soul of soul! I believe in Thee, because thou art truth itself:
 I worship Thee.
 O highest of the high; because Thou art the only one worthy of
 adoration: I love Thee above all things and beings, because Thou
 art love divine itself;
 I beseech Thee, because Thou art mercy itself;
 I offer Thee all my thoughts, words and actions, my sufferings and
 my joys, because Thou art the only Beloved:
 I therefore beseech Thee, my God! Lord of Lords! The Highest of
 the High! The ancient one! to have mercy on me, according to
 Thy unbounded mercy, and let my cry come unto Thee:
 O my Beloved! Suffer me not to be separated from Thee for ever
 and ever!

Amen!

Baba sent Donkin out to wash his hands, pacing up and down until he

returned. Then he and Baba both faced the portrait and Don read the Prayer of Repentance, at the conclusion of which Baba touched both his forehead and the ground, and bowed down before his picture.

Prelude

O the eternally benevolent Paramatma! O all-merciful Allah!
 O the most merciful God Almighty! O giver of all boons, Yazdan!
 Being fully aware of your absolute independence and your absolute indifference, Baba, with all humbleness, implores you, O all-merciful God! to accept the prayer of repentance from him on behalf of all his lovers and on behalf of all who are worthy of being forgiven.

The Prayer of Repentance

We repent, O God most merciful; for all our sins;
 for every thought that was false or unjust or unclean;
 for every word spoken that ought not to have been spoken;
 for every deed done that ought not to have been done.
 We repent for every deed and word and thought inspired by selfishness,
 and for every deed and word and thought inspired by hatred.
 We repent most specially for every lustful thought and every lustful action; for every lie; for all hypocrisy; for every promise given but not fulfilled, and for all slander and back-biting.
 Most specially also, we repent for every action that has brought ruin to others; for every word and deed that has given others pain; and for every wish that pain should befall others.
 In your unbounded mercy, we ask you to forgive us, O God, for all these sins committed by us, and to forgive us for our constant failures to think and speak and act according to your will.

At the conclusion of the prayers, Baba ordered the doors and windows to be opened and resumed his seat. 'Today', he spelt out on his alphabet board, 'you have joined God praying to God. God and I are one. Now we go up the hill.'

On the way Baba showed us Donkin's dispensary. He said, 'I have nothing to worry about regarding health, because here is the doctor and he is most dear to me. The faith and love with which this dear son of mine has stuck to Baba is unique. As I told you yesterday, if anything bothers you, if even the slightest thing is wrong with you, tell Donkin.'

We returned to the lounge at the top of the hill where Rano Gayley, who had come to Pimpalgaon with Baba, displayed two symbolic paintings executed under Baba's direction. He said:

"From tomorrow I want you all to think exclusively of me for half an hour every day for seven days. You should each sit aloof, select your own spot, close your eyes and try to bring Baba's figure before your mind's eye. If you find that you cannot do that, then just look at my picture and mentally repeat 'Baba'. If thoughts bother you, don't be concerned; let them come and go, but try your best to keep Baba's figure clearly in your mind's eye. Select spots where you will not be disturbed. One half-hour silent contemplation, for seven days from tomorrow. You must be undisturbed. I want you to do this wholeheartedly. From 9 to 9.30 a.m. daily, on the 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 25th. From the 26th, I shall not be available, as I have many things to attend to for the meetings."

He then called Savak and told him to see that we were undisturbed during this half-hour meditation. Turning, he concluded his remarks by saying, 'Do it so wholeheartedly that I must feel it here', and he pointed to his heart:

"I shall only give points today - no explanation. Tomorrow, if time permits, I shall explain about God and the Universe, reality and illusion, the one and the many, substance and shadow, everything and nothing, knowledge and ignorance, and the gap between the seven descents and the seven ascents.

"Christ and his inner circle, and the Christian mystics, all stressed purity of heart. Muhammad and his Imams also stressed purity of heart. So did Zoroaster and the Magis, so did Krishna and his companions, and the Vedantists. So does Baba stress purity of heart. Today we shall see what this means - what the heart is - what the mind is. Is it only the physical organ that is meant, or something deeper? A sufi said: 'The abode of love is infinitely higher than the domain of mind. He alone, out of the millions and billions of people, can touch and kiss the threshold of the Beloved who carries his life in his sleeves.' This is a literal translation. What it means is that if you want to see your beloved God, you must go before him with your head in the palm of your hand. It means that the mind can never attain to the One who transcends the mind. So we now understand that God cannot be understood. He is not visible, because he is infinitely visible to that eye which has no veil of desires or ego over it. The mind has a dual function, which I have explained at length in *God Speaks*. The first function

is that of thinking. The impressions that lie dormant have to be worked out, and appear as thoughts. This thinking function of mind is known to the Vedantists as *manas*. The second function of mind includes all feelings and emotions. This is called *antahkarana*. That means the heart. So what is known as the heart is actually the second functioning of the mind itself. The impressions called *sanskaras* are spent through both thinking and feeling. In the first functioning of the mind are thoughts of all kinds. In the second functioning of the mind, that is the heart, are all feelings and desires - feelings of joy, pain, disappointment, happiness, shock, belong to this *antahkarana*.

"In sound sleep, the impressions registered in the mind lie in a latent, dormant state. We won't discuss dreams now; they have been explained in *God Speaks*. What wakes you up from sound sleep? The impressions of actions done, and these impressions are spent first by thoughts, then by desires, then by actions. So Krishna, in the *Gita*, said something to the effect that 'impressions should be spent only through thoughts.' Then no new impressions will be formed. If you cannot do this, then let the impressions be spent through desires, longings, feelings, not through actions. Then new impressions will be formed, but they will not be so deep. If impressions lead to action, then new and stronger impressions are bound to be formed. This means that the first functioning of the mind is not important in so far as spending impressions is concerned. It is natural. But the second functioning of the mind, which is generally called the heart, is important because it is the seat of desires, and unless the heart is void of desires and feelings, unless the heart is pure and naked, God who is your innermost Self, cannot reveal himself. Is this clear?

"God is your innermost Self. That means that behind this limited body, you have within you energy, and mind with both its functions. You as you - the ego - are also there. Behind all this, imagine God as infinite in space. Try to grasp what this means. You have this idea of yourself as body; you feel happy, depressed, hungry. You, you, you - this you think to be yourself; but behind this you, there is something that cannot be got rid of, even if the body is not there. If both your hands or legs were cut off, you would still exist as you. That means that you are not this body. In sound sleep, you are unconscious of your body, but you still exist; so you are not this body. Who then is this you? This you is your innermost Self. We must find, in our own self, this important!''.

"Who am I? I am not this body. Then who am I? 'I' might be energy; but when I do not move, do not act - when I am unconscious

- energy does not manifest itself; yet I still exist. So I am not energy.

"I might be mind. But the same applies here. When I am unconscious, in sound sleep, and the mind is still, the mind is not functioning, but I still exist; so I am also not mind. Then who am I? Try to grasp this. Let us try to understand what cannot be understood. I am that which is not body, not energy, not mind.

"In sound sleep, what do you experience? Nothing. That is you. Why? If I am not body, energy, mind, then I am that which has no body, energy, mind; and only sound sleep means that. Only sound sleep answers the question. In sound sleep you are not body, not energy, not mind, yet the body is there, energy is there, mind is there. Only the consciousness of body, of energy, of mind is not there.

"I now go back to the first point and return to this later. The original state of the beginningless Beginning was the infinite sound-sleep state of the Infinite One. In the beginningless Beginning, when there was no creation, no universe - not even nothing - there was only the Is state of 'God'.

"Then started the Ten States of God, which you will find described in God Speaks. During the processes of evolution and reincarnation, impressions were gathered; body, energy and mind developed, and the soul, in spite of its infinite state, experienced itself as the finite body, as energy, and as mind, due to these impressions.

"Now we return. In sound sleep, Malcolm is not conscious of body, energy, mind, and only Malcolm as real Malcolm exists. The important point is that Malcolm in the sound-sleep state exists as 'I am Malcolm' and is unconscious of this 'I-ness'. The ego in the sound-sleep or absolute-unconscious state is called 'the natural ego'. There are three kinds of ego; the first is the natural ego.

"What wakes you up from sound sleep? The impressions that lie on your mind. They say, 'Malcolm, wake up! We want to be spent'. So Malcolm wakes up and spends the impressions through thinking, desiring, acting. And Malcolm, while spending the impressions, thinks 'I am this body'. This is called the 'false ego'. Let us not go too deeply into this. Malcolm, who really is Malcolm, and not this body, according to impressions takes one form after another, and goes on spending new impressions. But that is a different chapter.

"While spending old impressions, new impressions are formed, which also need spending; so, ever new forms are taken, according to good and bad impressions - man, woman, beautiful, ugly, rich, poor, strong, weak, and so forth. They are like different clothes, which

you alternately wear and discard, and, all along, this false ego persists.

"Then comes a time when the impressions grow fainter and fainter, scarcer and scarcer. Eventually they become so faint that they fade away completely, and when impressions are not there, mind's functioning is stopped. The heart is now naked and pure, because there are no desires, no longings, no feelings; yet you are still there. Then this void of all impressions, has no bindings, no limits. It now experiences that state which is above mind, the mind is no longer there. It experiences the Infinite Original State of Real I -ness. This ego is called the Real Ego, and just as with the false ego, Malcolm said, 'I am this body - or I am this energy - or I am this mind' - now Malcolm says, 'I am God'.

"So there are the Natural Ego, the False Ego and the Real Ego. Only the pure in heart can see God. This was what Purdom asked about - what being pure in heart means. Whatever I have explained will take you nowhere, because how can one explain One whom the mind cannot grasp?

"There is a bird of paradise which is said never to come to earth. Hafiz said: 'God is like the bird of paradise. Don't try to snare him by spreading the net of thoughts. In that net you will find nothing but mind.' And so it is said, 'Only love, and God will be yours.' Not thinking, but love. So however much I may explain, God cannot be explained; but if I should wish it in a split second you would see God and you would know.

"Ramakrishna did not speak any language except Bengali. He could not read; he was what they call illiterate. Yet, in an instant, he gained All Knowledge. Flocks of very literate and learned people gathered round him without understanding a thing he said. So love. The secret is, in a few words - when you are there, God is not. The more you use the rational mind the less you understand, for you must be there, and when you are, God is not. So explanations and understandings mean you drive away God, instead of drawing him in. When you understand, you have not understood.

"My one and the same Beloved, it is said, appears in different guises and garbs, and with different names, and appears to be always different, yet he is one and the same Beloved.

"You have to become what you already are. You are God, but you must become God. Christ humiliated himself; God himself crucified himself; to teach this: through love, become what you already are.

"Emperor Janak, Sita's father, was also known to be a Perfect

Master. During his reign, there was a youth from outside his empire who longed desperately to see God. 'I must see him', he said, 'as clearly as I see these external things.' And he decided to see Janak and ask his help. For two months he walked through sun and rain without food. This was about seven thousand years ago. There were no automobiles and airplanes then. Finally he arrived at the courtyard of Janak's palace. The guards accosted and stopped him. He stood outside the wall, crying aloud for Janak, shouting his name, his glory and his fame. At last Janak heard him, and asked his ministers to inquire who he was. 'I am a lover of God', he replied, 'I want to see God. Janak must show me God.' Janak had him brought in and said to his ministers, 'Throw him in prison'. So he was thrown into jail. The youth thought, 'This Janak, who calls himself all-knowing, must know that I am seeking God, yet he sends me to prison'. After a few days during which the youth had had no food nor drink, Janak ordered him to be brought to audience. Janak saluted him with folded hands, and ordered his ministers to give him a bath, to feed him, and to treat him like a prince. He was brought to the palace and seated on Janak's throne. 'Let him enjoy this state for three days', said Janak. The youth did not grasp what Janak had in mind, and of course he did not know how to manage the affairs of state. Poor people came begging, ministers came for advice; he didn't know what to do, so he kept quiet. Finally he appealed to the ministers to ask Janak to free him from this uncomfortable position. Janak came, ordered him to get down from the throne, and asked him which he preferred, life in prison or life on the throne. The boy said, 'They are both prisons, but of different kinds'. Janak then directed him to go, and to return after twelve years.

"The youth left the palace, roamed about India, became a rich man, and took the name of Kalyan, which means 'happy in every respect'. After twelve years he returned to Janak, this time rich and prosperous. The guards again checked him, asking who he was. 'I am the rich Kalyan', he said; Janak, on hearing this, sent word for him to go away for a few more years. So Kalyan returned home and, in the course of time, lost everything that he possessed. After twelve years he returned to Janak who again asked who he was. 'I am the miserable Kalyan', he replied. Janak then sent him away again for twelve more months.

"During this time Kalyan started pondering. 'What is this? When I first went to Janak, I had nothing but I wanted to see God. Then I was thrown into prison. Then I was placed on the throne. Then I became rich. Then I became poor. What does all this mean?'

"When he returned to Janak's palace after twelve months, one of the

guards took pity on him and said, 'You fool. This time when Janak asks who you are, say "I don't know"'. Kalyan followed this advice. Janak then turned his gaze upon him and he lost consciousness of all bodies, of the whole world, and became conscious of his own self as the infinite God.

"The meaning of this tale is - unless you lose the 'I', you cannot see and become God, because where you are, God is not.

"Now about myself. When I was a boy I did not know anything. I had nothing to do with spirituality. My father, who was a dervish, had roamed throughout Persia and India, begging and contemplating God. He taught me some verses from Hafiz and other poets, but I had no interest in this. I preferred games and I found myself the leader of others.

"One day, when a friend gave me a small booklet on the Buddha, I opened the book to the place that told about the second coming of the Buddha, as Maitreya, the Lord of Mercy, and I realized all of a sudden, 'I am that, actually', and I felt it deep within me. Then I forgot about it, and years passed by. Babajan called me one day as I was cycling past her tree, she kissed me on the forehead; and for nine months, God knows, I was in that state to which very, very few go. I had no consciousness of my body, or of anything else. I roamed about taking no food. My mother thought I was mad, and called the doctor. My father understood, but said nothing. The doctors could not do anything. I did not sleep; and then what happened is very rare. It is only for Avatars, who take on themselves the suffering of the world. I took no food but tea, which my elder brother Jamshed, who loved me very much, gave me. One day, all of a sudden, I felt nature's call. I wanted to move my bowels, but it was impossible because I had not had any food, I sat there and had no stool. Then I saw, with these gross eyes of mine, circles and circles, whole universes. From that moment, instead of the Divine Bliss that I was in, for nine months, I was in such tortures that no one in the world can understand. I used to bang my head to relieve my pain. I scarred my head on floors and walls. I could not contain myself. It was as if the whole universe was on my head. I used to break windows open with my forehead.

"Then I was drawn to Sai Baba. It was an intense urge. Sai Baba directed me to Upasni Maharaj. He picked up a stone and hit me on the head. All at once, I felt calm. Then seven years passed, and one day Maharaj folded his hands and said, 'Merwan, you are the Avatar'.

"I am now infinitely enjoying bliss and infinitely suffering at the same time. As soon as I drop my body, I shall go to my abode of Infinite

Bliss. I suffer and suffer. From October, for three months, there will be the climax of my sufferings, and then the world will recognize me.

"Sometimes I feel, Why explain anything? Just come, sit down, you all here, be quiet, and be in company with Baba.

"Sometimes I feel like explaining things. I wonder which is better. What shall we do? Shall we go on explaining, or shall we be quiet?"

We also were divided on the subject, so Baba decided that on one day he would explain, and on the next we should be quiet with him:

"Your work has to be defined. It has to be practical and yet divine; practical in the sense that in every life it can be achieved, not just sitting quiet, aloof, renouncing the world.

"All four prayers say the same thing. Since Babajan kissed me on the forehead, I bow down to my own Self. Why?

"What is needed is to become, not only to see. You have to become what you already are. You are God, but you have to know how to become God. Christ humiliated himself to teach this - through love, become what you already are."

The above is an example of one of Baba's silent 'talks', read from the alphabet board by Eruch, other examples follow. On Saturday, 18 September from 9 to 9.30 a.m., all sat quietly, thinking of Baba as he had ordered. At 10.05 Baba was seen walking up the hill; on the way he stooped down three times, picked up a stone each time, and threw it into the grass. At the top of the hill he greeted each of us warmly, clasping our hands. He began inquiring about the meditation asking each in turn. Then he said:

"Today I will explain about trance and inner sight - samadhi. Trance, which the Sufis term haal and Vedantists bhav, is just a momentary ecstasy which, in the true spiritual sense, has no great value. During this state of haal one feels unconscious of his surroundings and of his own body, but conscious of an overpowering force of bliss pouring in on his soul. As soon as this bhav ends, he is just his ordinary self. There are four different types of samadhi - yoga samadhi, tantric samadhi, nirvikalpa samadhi and sahaj samadhi.

"Yoga samadhi and tantric samadhi have no importance, spiritually. In these samadhi, one feels at peace with everything and everyone, and finally finds his mind still; but as soon as this samadhi is over, he is again his own ordinary self. Most yogis, after these samadhi, feel the strain of illusion even more. It is like intoxication; one feels in harmony with everything for a while, but when the intoxication is over, one gets

a headache. So, yoga samadhi, tantric samadhi, are like getting drunk. One feels an emperor, as if one could do anything; but as soon as it is over, the stress and strain of life resume.

"In Nirvikalpa Samadhi which the Sufis call Fana; which means passing away from selfhood to union with God, the soul identifies itself with God. This samadhi is the real samadhi. Here one becomes God. God's knowledge is his knowledge, God's bliss is his bliss, God's power is his power, God's beauty is his beauty. During this samadhi, he has no consciousness of body, energy, mind, universe, but is only conscious of the Self as God. Very, very few get this Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

"It is said: 'After cycles and cycles, one gets Fana'. This is called Fana-fillah, or one who has been made one with God. Very few such regain normal consciousness; but one who does regain normal consciousness has Sahaj Samadhi. Sahaj Samadhi is Nirvikalpa Samadhi in action when one is fully conscious of the universe. Such a one, when he speaks, eats, moves about, plays, or does anything, is enjoying Nirvikalpa Samadhi all the time. He is called a Qutub which, in Persian, means the centre of everything - the pivot - what we call a Perfect Master. He is now on every plane of consciousness, one with God, even on the level of an ant, and simultaneously he is functioning in the gross, subtle and mental worlds; he is above everything. Sahaj Samadhi means effortless Oneness. It is as simple as moving the hands or winking the eyelids.

"Tomorrow, if you remind me - I don't promise - I will tell you how, when thinking of me, you can still do everything you need to do in the world. This is not Sahaj samadhi, but sahaj dhyana. Even while eating, drinking, working, while looking at motion pictures, or attending to your business, you will still feel that Baba is with you.

"Tomorrow, when we play the Indian records, I intend to explain many things, if I am in a good mood. Today, let us keep silence, but at the same time listen to some English recordings. I am very fond of music, but have not had the time to listen recently. The girls made me bring these records. While the records are being played, be here in this room mentally, and not elsewhere. Kabir said, 'Any music is the seventh shadow of that Word'. As soon as I break my silence, that first Word will make your hearts vibrate."

A number of records was then played, including a song by Yma Sumac which Dana Field translated as 'I love only Thee, I worship only Thee, to Thee only I surrender the key to my treasure', and Baba continued:

"He who could do this would know me. This reminds me, that when I drop this body, which will come about through violence, not one will be near me at that time - none of my lovers, none of my mandali - only those who would kill this body. The circumstances will be so created that in the confusion Baba will not find one near him. Only afterward will they come. It is staring me in the face. It might happen before the end of the year - my breaking the silence, dropping the body, and all this. In the meeting, I will speak at length about this."

There followed another record of Yma Sumac when Baba turned to me and said:

"Dear Charles, can anyone imagine how I am here and simultaneously everywhere? And I am being crucified every moment. I would willingly die a million deaths if I could find one who loved our Beloved God."

I replied that I could imagine it but that was all.

While another Yma Sumac record was being played, a card was handed to Baba which read, in part, 'If I could see you only for a moment, I should be eternally grateful'. The signature was that of a young Japanese, K. Hitaker, from Tokyo. Eruch ushered him in, and he prostrated himself before Baba, who bade him rise. 'I don't allow anyone to come up on the hill', he commented wryly. Then he called Lud to him and embraced him. Lud returned to his seat in tears. Baba then gave Hitaker his own grapefruit juice to drink, and said, 'You have come far, drink it all'. When Hitaker had finished drinking, Baba asked him, 'Why did you come such a long distance? Baba is everywhere.' 'I should like to have you come to Japan', Hitaker replied. 'After seven hundred years I will come to Japan', said Baba.

Hitaker later told Eruch that he had heard of Baba years ago from the leader of a Theosophical group in Japan, and that he had been longing to meet him ever since. He was invited to India by the Japanese Ambassador, to whom he is related, and seized the opportunity to make contact with Baba. He had now to return to Calcutta to get an extension of his visa, so Baba told him to go to Calcutta, arriving on the 22nd, leaving on the 24th to be back in Meherabad on the 28th in time for the meetings.

Two Australian young men, Bill LePage and John Ballantyne were then ordered by Baba to sit in his tomb from midnight for half an hour, mentally repeating Baba's name, with eyes open and mouth shut. He

told Francis Brabazon that he would be responsible for them if they should fall in the crypt, and asked Francis what he would do if that happened. Francis replied, 'It isn't what I would do, but what you would do to me, that matters'.

Baba said later that after the meeting on the 30th, he might have Hitaker sit alone in one place for seven days without food or drink. 'And', said Baba, 'if he does this, I may give him just a tiny glimpse of me. He is a fine boy, and very much in love with Truth. I have drawn him. He has no idea how.'

On Sunday Baba arrived at 10.25 a.m. It was a soft, cloudy morning. He smiled, but appeared to be suffering. He said that today he would sit for many hours. 'Today I have plenty of time, let us go slow. From tomorrow I have no time.' He asked each individually about his health; some had small complaints. 'I want you all to be well and strong for the 29th and 30th. I feel strange today', he said, 'I sometimes cannot describe my feelings; certain things even I cannot describe. For example, when I was walking up here I threw stones. Years ago, I used to throw stones; at every step I would stoop down, pick up a stone, and throw it. I do it now sometimes. Why I do so I cannot say. What do you think? Divine Play?'

He asked 'What do you feel when I come?' A young Australian said, 'A funny feeling'. Baba couldn't understand what he meant. He asked, 'Did you keep your eyes open when you sat for half an hour last night?' 'Yes'. 'What did you feel?' 'My heart pounded all the time, and I could not say your name.' 'What was there to frighten you?' 'I had images of the outside world.' The other young Australian said, 'I had a feeling that there was no ventilation when the door closed. I felt nothing.' Baba asked if they would do it every night for seven nights. They said, 'Yes'. 'Do not be frightened,' said Baba, 'there is nothing to fear. Don't force your attention; keep awake and don't move. Even if a snake comes, let it pass by. And love Baba during these half-hours. Fear means there is no love. Think of Baba from the bottom of your hearts; after seven nights you will have a glimpse of Baba. Why this fear, Francis? Francis of Assisi and Francis Xavier loved Christ with all their might, and what they suffered none of you can guess; but fear was foreign to them. Do not fear, love me. Don't be bothered; think of Baba; be happy. So from tonight, Francis, see that they sit there and close the door.'

A boy came in with an envelope. Baba took the envelope and told him to go. He went on to say, 'Francis, you sell all and follow the Cross. I am in a peculiar mood. We will have a vague talk, moving

from one subject to another. I seldom sleep till after 3 o'clock in the morning. When I am in seclusion, the night watchman is called every few minutes until then. When do you all go to sleep? At ten. Don't let the two young men sit tonight, as you have to be up so early, but from tomorrow.' Baba gave Ludwig some tablets to enable him to sleep: they were what the boy had brought.

'You asked about planes', he said to Malcolm. 'Planes meant what?' Malcolm answered, 'States of consciousness'. Baba replied by giving a discourse on worlds, planes and consciousness, at the end of which he said:

"Let us have music. Indian music is all about love. Some of you may not like it, but I will explain. I never question about God. I put questions to you about your health and food, but never about God." After the first record, Baba said: "This is a wonderful state of love. The lover is not concerned with the planes and the different states of consciousness. He is only concerned with God and how to love God. He arrives at a state when this love fills his world, and the pangs of separation are so unbearable that he says, 'I now want to forget you; but the more I try the more I remember you'. This torture is unbearable." He proceeded to give interpretations of the words sung in the different records:

"Oh my beloved God, only he is fortunate and big-hearted who cannot avoid shedding tears in his love. Oh you, who are training to be lovers of God, beware; you will be shown innumerable supernatural sights of different kinds; beware; only love God and do not be ensnared by these visions and powers.

"Oh you, who love to talk of love, do you know the difficulties and hardships facing you? The Master tests you at every step on the Path of Love."

Baba asked us to say whether we liked the music. Nearly everyone said he liked it and was much moved; only I said it meant nothing to me. 'The majority has it', said Baba. 'Don't talk to me about music', he went on, 'the first song I sang has brought the burden of all this universe upon me.'

He went on to say, 'God is eternal; illusion semi-eternal. God does not change; illusion changes. Your shadow is always with you, but it changes in the morning from what it is later, and at midday you do not see it; the shadow is semi-eternal.'

Malcolm asked, 'Does God enjoy illusion?' Baba replied, 'God as God-Man enjoys illusion, but is free from it, for he governs illusion. All these are words, but words based on experience; you have that solace at least.' Malcolm replied, 'We should have more solace if you gave us the experience'. Baba did not answer. The records and the interpretations continued:

"Here the Sufi of experience says: Oh you, who have arrived at the Goal and know the secret of God, see that you reveal the secret only to the few select ones."

Baba said, 'When Mansoor said "I am God", the Muslims got infuriated and hanged him:' Oh Mansoor, even if you are hanged for having said you are one with Beloved God, do not reveal the secret. Oh Shams-i-Tabriz, because you raised the dead and the Muslims skinned you alive, do not reveal the secret.

'Oh Lovers of God, do not let what is in your hearts come to your lips. Remember, one who really loves God, God annihilates him; God mixes him with the dust.'

Baba said, 'This was true of the Apostles of Christ and the Saviours:'

"O Lover, beware, God tests you by being cruel, by giving you false hopes, even by cutting you to pieces. Kalyan says: The Master ties you fully dressed, hands and feet, unto a plank, throws you in mid-ocean, and says, 'If you love me, let not one drop of water touch your clothes'. Why does he do this? The answer is that which Peter the chief apostle was told, 'You will deny me'. Why? Jesus, in that way, took the whole burden of the world and made Peter share it. To love means to lose your whole self with all its paraphernalia: it means torture, pangs, longing, and if; despite this, one is firm in his love, he becomes one with the Beloved. What was the height of suffering to Peter? That he denied his beloved Master. This denial was to enable him to share the sufferings of Jesus.

"The lover says 'Now the effect of your love has so infinitely widened my vision that wherever I go, I see nothing but you. I know, Beloved, I shall not be able to bear your glory. Yet I am ready to die; show me your face.'"

Baba went on to talk about Sanskrit and Persian. He said, 'Try all of you to keep your lips tight and say something. The sound will be

OM. That is the seventh shadow of that Word. The Sanskrit language is based on OM, I personally prefer Persian.' He said of another record: 'Some of you may like the singer's voice, others may not. She is the greatest Indian Qawali singer. She always sings about lovers of God. Here she sings about masts who, in love for God, have discarded everything and appear as mad. The mast says to the Beloved:

If you want to make me mad for you, do so; but don't make me a laughing-stock. Oh you people of the world, who think me mad, and throw stones at me, if you were fortunate enough to have this love, you also would be mad like me.

Oh you, who talk of loving God, you have to bow down to him as though at every step, every particle of dust were a threshold to the Beloved.

A Persian record of Hafiz's poem was played, and Baba interpreted:

"Do not procrastinate. Start to love from this very moment.
Do not forget the Beloved even for one instant."

Baba explained that the Master of Hafiz, whose name was Fariduddin Attar, had long tresses of black hair. Hafiz says in the following poem:

Do not let your hair flow freely as my heart receives an arrow from
every hair.

O Beloved! These tears that I shed are tears of blood so precious that you should consider them as pearls and wear them as earrings.

God says, O Lover of Mine, if you want to enter My Lane (Path),
first let your head roll under My feet and be kicked by Me as a ball.

The lover says: I have been killed by your Love, and yet you cruel
Beloved, you do not even glance at me.

Baba said: 'So today we have tried to love God, we talked of love and heard songs of love. I am the most busy in the world. I have to look after the details of these meetings, and work on all planes. Yet I am the most inactive. Today we resolve that we must love God at any cost, and the most practical way to do it I will tell you at the next meeting.'

Baba was present during luncheon. He saw a number of the party, and then left, walking down the hill.

Next day, Monday 20 September, the party had to get up at 5 a.m. and be at Ahmednagar at 7, where with Baba and some of the mandali,

they set off for Sakori. The cars stopped for a time at Rahuri, where there had been the mast ashram. Hundreds of people were there to meet him and he walked through the town, busy looking, a centre of sugar-growing, with three sugar factories. The mandali arrived on top of a public bus as their own small bus had broken down. While we were waiting we told stories at Baba's suggestion, he listening with pleasure.

Sakori was reached at 9.35. We were met by a large gathering of villagers with a band of cymbals and drums from the ashram, also the town band with brass instruments and a banner, and a white pony and small donkey. The party was conducted to the ashram, led by the bands. The ashram, founded by Upasni Maharaj, contains his tomb. The area had been scrub and a cremation ground; but now contains extensive buildings where men and women devotees of Maharaj live. There is a dairy with herds of cattle. All at the ashram have to work; the pony and donkey draw the water. The head of the ashram is Godavri, whom the party had met before, a small, serious, sometimes smiling woman. Baba was garlanded, and brought the group first to the women's quarters, then to Maharaj's shrine and temple, the dairy and other buildings. He insisted that we should be careful to be near him wherever he went. There was a large crowd of people. Baba said:

This old man (Upasni Maharaj) was God. I said at my last visit here that I would not stop again in Sakori. But I remembered that he had once said that visitors would come here from other lands to do devotion, and to fulfil this I had to come and bring you here. Now my work here is finished. After the meetings of the 29th and 30th, the following three months will be for my final work, to break my silence, to manifest, and then to die a violent death, all in quick succession. You should all bow down at Maharaj's tomb. I am the Ancient One. When he threw that stone at me I knew I was the Ancient One.

What Baba had said first in English was translated into Marathi. Arti was sung by a dwarf woman. Baba said: 'You all can have no idea how happy I am here. Godavri is the Mother here and all are her companions. She met Maharaj when two and a half years old. He put her on his lap and said, "All this belongs to you". They all live a life dedicated to my Master. I love her most dearly.' The nuns were dressed in yellow saris and the candidates in white.

Upasni Maharaj, said Baba, was a tall heavy man, usually naked, except for a gunny cloth and sandals when going out, at one time for fourteen months and twelve days he lived in a bamboo cage and took nothing but coffee once a day. The cage was about three feet by three

and a half feet so that he could not lie down. He died in a room shown to the party. On a stone over the doorway to the room there is engraved Maharaj's will. The room contained the couch on which he died. Baba paid homage, and one after another did the same under Baba's guidance, kneeling down and kissing the stone.

The mandali and others were given food in a lower room where Baba sat with them for a few minutes, but we were taken to an upper room and given refreshments at small tables. The food was tasty and daintily served. Baba in a playful mood threw fruit from his table to be caught by various people: this was prasad. He merely touched his own food. He appeared strained and suffering, as he did throughout the visit. A hymn was sung in his praise. At the end he said, 'To find me, you have to lose yourself. But these are just words when spoken and heard. Losing oneself and finding oneself is for very few lovers who carry their lives in their sleeves.'

Baba visited a sick girl and fed her rose petals. He took the group to the ladies' dormitory and sat in a jhula, or swing, and a girl sang the song Baba composed for Maharaj. The buildings were visited again, and he sat with the party in the temple and showed them Sai Baba's stick and pipe kept in silver cases. It had been intended that we should visit Sai Baba's shrine at Shirdi, but there was no time.

We left after a memorable day's experience. On the way back, Baba stopped and got out of his car to inquire about Fred Marks, who had hit his head on a low doorway and had been bound up by Baba. Baba's attention was drawn by Dana Field to the danger of his wearing his scarf in his car, as it was flowing out of the window; Baba immediately removed it. He had lost his look of suffering. He also sent the members of the mandali to collect booklets and other literature presented to us at the ashram, insisting that everything should be given up.

The following day, Tuesday, Baba arrived at 10.15 and said he would stay longer that day. Having inquired from each about his health, he said that he himself was tired; he had not slept for three nights. He felt the burden of the universe. 'I promised to teach you how to play marbles', he said. 'I am above promises, but I have been reminded, and will do so.' He explained that there are two types of game, showed us what they were and played with us. We went into the lounge, and although the couch had been prepared with a rug and flowers, he did not sit on it but took a chair in the corner of the room. He said he would first explain about Sakori, where he took us yesterday, and would talk as the thoughts came to him, not necessarily consecutively:

"First, about miracles, and why I think that from the spiritual point of view, they are nothing but farce. When Jesus said, 'I and my father are one', he meant that he was God. Is this true? Did he actually say it? God created this entire phenomenal universe. That is God's miracle and the miracle of Jesus. It means that innumerable beings were created by Jesus who died according to his will. Yet it is supposed that Jesus' greatness is that he raised some few dead to life. How ridiculous that is, unless it has some hidden meaning. It is supposed that he is the Saviour because he raised a few dead and gave sight to the blind, creating insignificant illusions in the midst of his great illusion. Why is he supposed to have performed these miracles?

"Had Jesus not raised the dead, had he not performed the miracles, he would not have been crucified, and he wanted to be crucified. He performed the miracles to make certain of being crucified. Many miracles have been attributed to me, but I do not perform miracles. When people think miracles have been performed, their faith has done it. One miracle I will perform, and for that miracle the time is nigh. I have said that my miracle will be not to raise the dead but to make one dead to himself to live to God. I have repeatedly said that I will not give sight to the blind, but I will make them blind to the world in order to see God.

"Why have I explained about miracles now? It has to do with our visit to Sakori. Yesterday we did not have time to go to Shirdi. There you would have found a different atmosphere. People come there from all parts of India for Sai Baba's shrine. In almost every house in India, you will find Sai Baba's picture, it is in cinemas and on match boxes. This Divine Being is being commercialized. Sai Baba was Perfection personified, and the state of affairs at Shirdi I do not like. Soon I shall change the whole atmosphere there.

"When I was in that superconscious state I was drawn to Shirdi to be near Sai Baba. When Sai Baba wanted to move his bowels, people would take him in procession with a band and pipes. He was worthy of all that. He might stay there for an hour, and procession and band would return with him to his seat. I was drawn there, I had bloodshot eyes, and had had no sleep for days. I laid down my head on his feet as he was walking in procession. He cried loudly, 'Parvardigar!' meaning, 'You are God!' After saying that, he pointed to the direction far away where Upasni Maharaj sat.

"So I went to Upasni Maharaj, who was thin and weak; as soon as he saw me, he picked up a stone and hit me on the forehead, and instantaneously I recovered normal consciousness. Then I went with him to

Sakori, and stayed for seven years. Sakori was not then as you saw it yesterday. It was still waste land, with a small hut for Upasni Maharaj. There was a woman there, an old lady called Durgamai, who loved Maharaj and myself equally. People gathered there, mostly Brahmins, for Maharaj was Brahmin by birth."

Baba here interrupted what he was saying to remark that yesterday a very peculiar thing happened. The president of a society in the south of India wrote to him to send a mantra there, as they were preserving mantras and wanted something from his hand. 'They sent a new copybook for me to fill. I dictated: I am the Highest of the High: I am the Ancient One - I signed this with my own hand.' Eruch added that this was the first time Baba had signed such a declaration with his own hand; and he had asked for a copy, signed by Baba, for the office, which he gave. He went on:

"John the Baptist was a wonderful being. He gave his neck; he was the Master of Jesus. You have read how the disciples of John found fault with Jesus' disciples for living in comfort and having good food, when they had nothing of the kind. I will tell you how history repeats itself. Jesus got himself crucified. Last night I died a million deaths, and this morning I was so heavy in the head I thought of cancelling my visit to you. But suddenly I was well."

Baba resumed what he was saying about Upasni Maharaj:

"People began to come pouring in for his darshan, mostly Brahmins. A structure was erected and a Brahmin atmosphere prevailed. Maharaj and I used to sit together every day, and the Brahmins got jealous. 'Why is this Zoroastrian so favoured by Maharaj?' they asked. Maharaj gradually gave hints of my divinity. Few could swallow this, many resented it, but our daily sittings continued. They built a Hindu temple there and performed the usual ceremonies. Then one day Maharaj declared to all his mandali that Merwan is now perfect."

Among the mandali who heard Baba relate this, Ramjoo and Adi Sr. were there. Ramjoo said that the impression made on their minds was that Maharaj wanted them to follow Baba and to carry out his orders, important or unimportant, even though they found them difficult. Adi said, 'He wanted us to stick to Baba through thick and thin'. Ramjoo said that Maharaj declared he had given up everything to Baba; he had handed him the 'key'. Baba continued:

"From that day I did not go to Sakori. And from that time the Hindu atmosphere increased. Maharaj encouraged them to be jealous of me, and to be bitter, and to hurt me. But Maharaj told Durgamai and Yeshwantrao that Merwan is Malik (Lord) of the Universe. When the Brahmins heard me called Malik, they wanted to kill me. We were both unaffected by this.

"Then Godavri came, and Maharaj said, 'I do not want this Brahmin atmosphere of men', and he began to gather girls of pure character who wanted to love God only. The novices dressed in white are called Kanyas.

"Later on Maharaj sent word by Adi's mother Gulmai, 'Soon I shall drop this body, so tell Merwan to come and see me'. I said I would not set foot in Sakori, so a meeting was arranged elsewhere in a hut. We embraced each other and I put my head under his foot. He said, 'You are Adi-Skakti' (The Supreme Power). He started weeping, and said to me, 'Keep your eye on Sakori.' Then we both went away, and three to four months later, Maharaj dropped his body, and Godavri was given charge of the nuns. Godavri was in the secret all the time, but never said a word about me. But the atmosphere there was Hindu, with their ceremonies. I have come to destroy in the world all rites and ceremonies that are superficial. Godavri loved me in secret. The men there made it appear that I was not the spiritual heir of Maharaj, only of Babajan, and spread the news that Godavri was in charge of the ashram and Maharaj's spiritual heir. Poor girl, she is so good, a wonderful soul among women. She was in a fix, but her good nature kept her going.

"Then my disciples increased and the Sakori Brahmins got more and more annoyed, like the disciples of John the Baptist. Then a miracle happened, all due to Godavri. Her loving influence overcame the Brahmin atmosphere. She at last saw me at Nagar and asked me to come once to Sakori. As I had promised Maharaj I would keep an eye on Sakori, I took the occasion of Yeshwantrao's housewarming to go.

"Godavri welcomed me, placed her head on my feet, garlanded me, and placed me on the swing where Maharaj used to sit. I embraced all the group and they melted. Godavri showed her love so clearly that the entire atmosphere changed. As you saw at the darshan on the 12th of September, Godavri and the men were there. Now they all love me and recognize me as the Avatar.

"I want you to understand, however, that the miracle atmosphere is still at Sakori, though not so much as at Shirdi. People try to raise the status of Maharaj by these petty things. They have good intentions,

but I will put an end to all this. God, Love, Truth and Purity are free from these absurdities, and free most of all from rituals and ceremonies, done because of custom without heart or understanding."

Baba then took his seat on the couch. He said, 'Rest for five minutes'. He talked about other matters. He asked, 'Do you want me to go on about the planes?' The answer from a number was, 'Yes'. He then continued the earlier discourse, concluding by saying:

"To sum up, we have to feel in our heart of hearts that only God is real, that he alone exists, that he is in us all, that he alone is to be loved: God and God alone.

"From now on there are to be no sittings at night for the two young men, and no more morning meditations for anyone. On the 24th, at 12 midnight, everyone is to keep awake and think of me for half an hour. Do this with all your hearts. All of you, or at least one of you, will see me: I am there. Seeing me means a picture of me a long way off. Keep my form before your mind's eye. The eyes may be open or shut, but keep me before your mind."

He asked us to sit for one minute with our eyes closed, and to picture him after first looking at him. Afterwards, he asked what happened. Francis said, 'It comes and goes'. Baba replied, 'Because you come and go! I am there always.' He went on:

"Do you know how St Francis of Assisi loved Jesus and became one with him? He loved him as Jesus ought to be loved; but in Francis's group there was one who was a glutton. Juniper loved Francis most, though he did not sit in meditation or think of anything. He gave more trouble to Francis than anyone, yet he loved Francis dearly. When we love from the bottom of our hearts we give all our good and bad, even our troubles; the lover gives everything and demands nothing. I give everything and demand nothing. Love me like that and Baba is your slave. Even if you can't do that, don't worry. As long as you are mine, you need not worry. You are mine, that is why I have drawn you such long distances. If you can't picture me, don't worry; if you don't love me, don't worry; I love you. At midnight on the 24th, don't force, be natural, keep calm; don't sit like yogis.

"It is said of me that I am most slippery.

"Now, one secret. Try to picture your wife and child; in an instant they are here. This is of no great importance, but it helps a little. You can bring them from Australia, but you can't bring Baba from here."

On Wednesday Baba arrived at 10.30 a.m. He did not walk up the hill as usual but came by car and appeared to be strained and tired. He went at once into the lounge, after greeting everyone. He said, 'Today there is nothing to explain. I did not feel like coming today. Yet I wanted to see you dear ones, so I decided to come. I have much to think about before the meetings. My thinking is not just thinking: the whole burden is upon me.'

He inquired about the health of each individual, as usual. 'You must all be fit for the two days of the meeting. Dear Will', he went on, addressing one of us, 'I call you my archangel, and you are very devoted to me, and I love you intensely; but I cannot understand your saying every day "I am better today"'. Will explained that he slept better every night. Baba made no comment but to others he said, 'I do not believe you when you say you are very well'.

'I used to say to the mandali', he went on, 'that in God's work maya always opposes: it is necessary. Just as illusion is necessary for the realization of God, so maya's force in opposing God's work gives strength to the work. The greater the opposition from maya, the better the result.' He continued:

"Before the mass darshan on the 12th, Ahmednagar had had a record rainfall. Sarosh came to me to say that if the rain did not stop the darshan would have to be postponed. I said, what God wants will happen. When the weather changed, it was thought to be Baba's miracle! That is absolute nonsense. I do not say this to display humility: it is a fact. I said that I did not mind the rain. God may want rain, but the meeting will be held. If it rains, they will get wet, they will have to change, and I shall have to change. The meetings on the 29th and 30th will be the first and last meetings of the kind. As the day approaches for these meetings the burden is lowering on my head, just as the clouds lower in the sky. If you don't keep your health it will be an additional burden.

"I sometimes seem to be speaking at random, but I am really working elsewhere.

"When you say 'I am ill, I am hungry, I am old, I am young, or I am not hungry and do not want this food', and so on, when you use all these I, I, I's, recollect that when your hands or legs are cut off, your 'I' remains the same; whatever happens you remain the same. Why identify yourself with the body? Yet for 24 hours a day you do so. Will used to say, 'I am thirsty'. He now says in old age, 'I am better'. If that were true it would mean that Will was the same limited

body. **Aham** implies identification with the false. Why do we do this? Even when we understand, we still identify. Why? The **T** is not the body, nor the eating nor the quarrelling one. For ages the unlimited Self has been in illusion, because consciousness and intellect were not developed. In the human form consciousness and intellect are developed, but there is identification with illusion because of the habits of ages. Hafiz says: 'You, who do not come out of this age-long habit of being ignorant, can never realize the Self as infinite'.

"It is truly said that God has no beginning and no end. Think this over. If he had no beginning, what was there before God? The answer is, God. You cannot in imagination reach where no beginning was. The answer can only be God. What will be there after billions of years? God. Always God. This means that in Eternity there is no time. Nothing has ever happened, and nothing ever will happen. Billions of years ago you were; today you are here, ever afterwards you will be. Today all that is happening is not happening, though this does not appear to be so now.

"When one has experience of Eternity, one knows that God Is. To say that God was, is and will be, is wrong. All Eternity is now present at this moment. So I say, 'God Is'.

"What happened yesterday had produced a temporary effect; but the actual happening of yesterday has stopped, which means that nothing happened yesterday. The temporary effect is illusion. So it goes on: God and illusion running parallel. Illusion says everything is happening, God says nothing happens.

"When you are in the grip of the false 'I', which identifies itself with what happens, illusion governs you. But when you know the truth, you do not identify yourself with it. All we see, hear and experience in the world is not God. Whatever you can understand, is not God. Whatever is explained is not God. Whatever is expressed is not God. The poet says:

"The lover says to the Master: You have taught me something that has made me forget everything. You have created in me a desire that says, do not desire anything. You have given me that One Word which says, words mean nothing.

"And the lover says: Oh Master, I was seeking God and thought Him this and that. Now you have given me something of which even my imagination cannot produce the shadow.

"It is all words. When you say Self, God, Infinity, they mean nothing. To attempt to understand by reading or hearing explanations is an

insult to our beloved God, who is beyond all understanding. The only answer is Love. If we love God, we become him. There is no further question. But we must love with all our hearts, so that only God exists for us."

There followed some music, during which Dr. Ben Hayman arrived from Texas. 'I wanted you here, so you came', said Baba. He told him to relax, and said he wanted him to feel that he had not missed anything.

'There will be no more explanations', he then went on. 'I will play marbles with you! I am so full of humour and so human that it is difficult even for rishis and saints to know me as I am. I am at every level and act according to that level. With a child I am a child; with the highest saints I am one with them. It is my nature to be absolutely natural, even with the beloved God, who is one with me, and I with him.' He went on:

"If you understand what I have just said, the solution to everything is in your hands. God is infinite honesty, and unless we love him honestly we cannot know him. Though beyond understanding, the heart full of love can understand the un-understandable. If you love God you become one with him; that is the only thing. And you can love God.

"When I washed the feet of the seven poor, and bowed down to them, I did it with all my heart. I did not merely play the part of one who bows down and gives gifts: I became that. What did you see that day? This bowing down is due to Perfect Ones, according to Hindu custom, also the giving of gifts. I became by my act the devotee and disciple of seven Perfect Ones. I placed my head on their feet and gave gifts. I am everything, but I became all this, and honesty demands that what I am, I must express."

The next day Baba arrived at 9.30. As usual, he said, "All must be fit by the 29th and 30th. The wind is not good for throats: Keep warm. All explanations are stopped from today", he declared, "Tomorrow I shall take you to the village. I love these poor people of Arangaon. Tomorrow at a quarter to four the villagers want to do arti, and I have permitted them. The village is full of germs, but with me everything is safe because I am the poorest of the poor. I say that and really am that: emperor and beggar at one and the same time....

"The people of this village are very dear to me. You will see how they

live in mud houses. I say this because yesterday Frank and Ben were seen going toward the village, and I sent a message that they were not to go. You must be fit for the 29th and 30th. But I thought, these men, women and children are dear to me and why not let you see them? I have no time myself nowadays even to take a bath: I have not had my hair washed for three months. I have no time and no sleep.

"At the meetings, people will be coming from all parts of India and Pakistan who love me. This is my last meeting, and I want to say some things that will last till I come back in 700 years. So be fit and in the mood to listen.

"Maharaj had told Yeshwantrao that Merwan is Parabrahma, which means 'God beyond.' 'So do what Merwan tells you to do', he said. As I told you I did not sleep for nine months. Then I was with Maharaj till one or two o' clock in the night, and went to a small hut nearby and Yeshwantrao was there with me. He would press my feet and give me betel leaves. I did not eat, but every five minutes asked for pan. He could not sleep because I did not sleep. For seven years this man served me with such love as is rarely found. When the atmosphere that I have described existed, it was Yeshwantrao who was the target of these Brahmins for attending me. But Yeshwantrao was adamant. He obeyed Maharaj by obeying me, so he was put to great suffering, physically and mentally. Now the atmosphere is clear. He does not remind anyone of the old days. It is as if he had forgotten everything. He helps them with corn and money. Yeshwantrao has now Maharaj and Baba as one in his heart. The refreshments you had at Sakori were provided by his help.

"We are all meant to be as honest as God, as loving as God, as happy as God: only the Christ suffers for humanity, although he is the source of all happiness. You see me in this physical form, but every moment I am crucified. Only those fortunate ones know this. I suffer as no one could suffer; I suffer because I love ...

"How Godavri loves me and what a virgin she is! She is like Krishna's mother. Some time ago a well-known astrologer came to pay homage to Maharaj. I had already sent news to the West and elsewhere that I should break my silence and meet a violent death. She had had that circular and was much depressed. The date and time of my birth were given to the astrologer, who said the months of November and December would be very hard for me. She asked for some relief for me. This man said that for fifteen days there should be ceremonies and mantras done of their own accord. A letter from the chief priest of the temple said this had happened, and that they willingly and lovingly

performed the ceremonies, and kept the ashes according to their customs. I followed out what they wanted because of their great love. Nothing can stop what has to happen. I have to break my silence to manifest, and to drop this body. What is ordained must be. If people love God as I want them to do, my work is accomplished...."

On Friday Baba arrived at 10 a.m. on foot, pale and worn, but smiling. He said:

"No more explanations today. It is the last day of my coming here. Today we will drink together. This is not the Last Supper, but the Last Drink, and I am happy that at least from among you all no one will sell me, though someone has to do that job. My physical end is going to be a violent one. I am the Ancient One, and you will all love me more and more after my body is dropped, and will see me as I really am. Today I won't explain anything; what is there to explain?"

"You all say, 'Yes, Baba', but do not do.

"My ways are so unfathomable that sometimes I too cannot fathom them. If you had but a glimpse of me as I am, you would lose consciousness. Love me and you will be loving God. And God is to be loved honestly. The slightest hypocrisy or dishonesty keeps you far away from God. God our Beloved is here now in you all, who knows what you will think tomorrow. He is all knowledge, and when we love him honestly he becomes one with us. It is not that we have to become one with him, but he becomes one with us. My last message to you, dear ones, is to love God, and you will find I am one with God."

There was an interval for individual interviews during the morning. On returning, Baba looked at a photograph of himself as a young man and said, 'I love him very much'. He sent for the drinks. He said the poor have little food, and those at Assam and elsewhere suffer from the floods. 'I am in all, and I am in Eternal Bliss, because of God, and in everlasting suffering, through these souls. I want to make people not only food-minded, but God-minded. That is why I have called these meetings.' He said:

"I am infinitely restless, and infinitely at peace simultaneously.

"Jesus, being God and omnipotent, allowed himself to be helpless, humiliated and crucified. He knew it all, because he had planned it all, long ago, and he did it for all. But to have the right results, he had to experience the helplessness and suffering. Do not think that because he was all-powerful, he did not suffer the humiliation and the crucifixion, or it would not have had the desired effect. Some people think

that because I am one with God, my body is not affected by anything. At times, so as not to hurt their feelings, I have to behave as though I do not feel cold or the sun. Someone came and sat by me when full of cold, and thought, 'as Baba is God, this cannot affect him'. But I am on the human level, and must behave as on the human level. So when I saw she had cold and fever, I knew that she would not like it if I turned away, so I held my breath. The first time I was in London, it was drizzling and cold, and everyone was wearing warm clothes, and they wanted me to be filmed in these thin clothes, thinking it did not matter to me. So I had to feel cheerful and I afterwards sent for a warm coat. All the mandali know that when Meherabad was in full swing with asylums, hospitals, etc., I was very thin; and when I discarded the old coat of mine, I used to go about supervising and being cheerful with everyone, and being everywhere, and used to keep fit. Even now I feel fit, but I think I shall catch cold from you all!"

The fruit drinks were brought in and put before Baba, only the Westerners remaining, the mandali going out, except Eruch. The doors were shut; there was silence. Baba said, 'For one minute close your eyes and ask God, who is the innermost Self of us all, to help us to love him honestly'. He then sipped from each glass, and handed a glass to each one. 'Drink slowly', he said. When all had finished, the doors were opened, the mandali came in and took a glass each, not sipped by Baba. He got up and said, 'Now we will all go to the tomb'. We visited the tomb, the graves and Baba's room, and afterwards he sat with us under a tree. Then he went down the hill, taking only an Indian boy with him.

At 2.30 in the afternoon Baba returned from the men's ashram and led us down the hill, where we were joined by the mandali, and a number of disciples and devotees from various parts of India. When they had gathered about Baba in the large hall, he got Vishnu to recite the Praise of the Ten Avatars. Then one of his devotees from Andhra, M. Ramalinga Shastri, read in Sanskrit that passage from the Bhagavad Gita in which Krishna says:

Age after age, from time immemorial, for the destruction of ignorance, for the preservation of Truth, I have taken human form.

When he had finished Baba said, 'You say this as if you were swimming in mid-ocean and attacked by sharks'. Then Baba continued wryly, 'I have created everything, and yet I don't know Sanskrit. I just nod

my head as if I knew'. Evidently he considers Persian, English, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu and Marathi adequate to serve him. He then called another disciple from the ashram, Sidhu Kamble, to sing a devotional song, which Sidhu did with varied inflection and appropriate gestures, which Baba translated, at least in part, with occasional comments:

"One who loves cannot talk about loving, and my Beloved seems not to care for me. When my heart was drawn by the locks of my Beloved, I thought the locks were very near, but now I have walked all my life, until my feet are full of blisters, and they are still far from me."

Here Baba interjected, 'Baba also is so near, and yet so far!' Then the song continued:

"When the lips of separation tried to touch the cup of Union, hundreds and hundreds of lovers were burned."

At these words Baba applauded, and arose, and led the party to the dhuni nearby, where shavings of sandalwood had been heaped and covered with ghee (clarified butter) and a crowd of Arangaon villagers had gathered, waiting for Baba to light the dhuni, and begin the ceremonies which they had planned as a mark of their devotion to him. Following the lighting of the dhuni came the performance of arti by the headman of Arangaon and several women, who also garlanded Baba and took the dust off his feet.

The Call of Baba is God's Voice,
The Order of Baba is God's Will,
The Prasad of Baba is God's Presence,
The Love of Baba is God's Grace,
The Goal of Baba is God-Realization.

Then an elderly native with an elephant horn mounted the platform on which the dhuni is situated, and was embraced warmly by Baba who invited him to blow the ancient horn. This was the signal for a procession to the village, led by men dancers from the village, who performed a harvest dance to the accompaniment of drums, bells and chains, with an occasional blast from the elephant horn. All the way along the road from the dhuni to the village, which is about a quarter of a mile, men, women and children who had been waiting at the edge of the road, pressed forward, trying to touch Baba and, if possible, to take up the dust at his feet to apply it to their foreheads.

The village of Arangaon is a sixteenth-century small walled town, now fallen into almost complete decay. It contains evidence of the prosperity it once enjoyed in the wood-carvings and colour-decoration surviving in the ruined temples and other buildings, for the countryside was then much more fertile than now. The present population of about 2,000 lives in the ruins. The western gateway still stands with the shrine of the Monkey God, the protector of the town, outside it.

Arriving at the village, we found throngs of men, women and children crowding the narrow streets in anticipation of Baba's visit. 'Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!' rose in a chorus of welcome, and they pressed forward to garland Baba and prostrate themselves. Soon he was covered with garlands of jasmine and roses, which he kept on in spite of the afternoon heat. He led the party in turn through temples and houses, introducing them individually to various families of his devotees, including 'untouchables', with comments on their poverty, on his love for them, and on their devotion for him, all of which were abundantly evident. This procession through Arangaon seemed to me very much like Jesus walking through the Galilean villages with the people crowding upon him, touching him, and bringing their children to him. At every turn one's heart was warmed by simple, spontaneous expressions of love, as if a river of love was losing itself in an ocean of love, and only boundless love existed. In one of the crude houses a very old man prostrated himself full length on the dirt floor in front of Baba sobbing with devotion. Baba lifted him gently, and embraced him. In the crowded streets, as Baba moved forward followed by throngs of people, some women set down their children at the side of the street and dashed out to touch his feet as he passed. One with a garland she wanted to present tried to reach him without success, until he turned, stopped, reached out his hand, accepted it, and moved on again.

After about an hour and a half of visiting, garlanding, and giving darshan, Baba gathered the party around him in a small enclosure, where three young girls danced to the accompaniment of music from an harmonium, bells and drums. Following this, Baba gave prasad to about 200 people. Then the procession through the town was resumed with Baba leading into the quarters of the untouchables, and finally to the houses occupied by some of the families of the mandali where coconuts were broken at his feet, and more garlands were placed around his neck.

All the time, in spite of Baba's pre-occupation with these devoted villagers, his solicitude for the welfare of the Western group was

evident. He would stop every once in a while to be sure that all were close to him. We were reminded to watch our heads while entering low doorways, and not to stumble over piles of stones, or water-drains; and once Baba ordered a boy to stand on a tree-stump in the middle of the road, so that we should not trip over it!

At about six o'clock, Baba ordered us back to the men's ashram at Meherabad to wait for him, while he went to visit the patients in a tuberculosis hospital nearby. When he returned, he gathered us about him in the large hall and ordered each to take two tablets before retiring as a precaution against malaria. Then he gave us each what he said would have to be his last personal embrace, as from that time he would be unable to see us privately again.

The following day, Sunday, there was another event. Baba had decided several days ago to give darshan to those of Ahmednagar and the neighbourhood who had not been able to be present at the big darshan, so a platform and a seat were erected in the patio of the Khushroo quarters, where Adi Irani lives and has his office, and alongside of which the Sarosh Motor Works is placed. The party was expected to be present at 3.30 p.m. They arrived to find crowds of men, women and children waiting outside the compound. Baba embraced each of us in turn despite what he had said the day before. Then he seated Ben Hayman, Frank Hendrick the oldest of those from the West, and myself beside him on the platform.

Soon a stream of women in tan-coloured saris was flowing past at the rate of forty-five a minute, many of them leading or carrying children. All castes, creeds and religions were represented, and all stages of social circumstances. At various times Baba sat on the seat, on the platform, on the step leading to the platform, and on the ground, and once he stood on the platform for a period. The women and children were followed by the men, middle-aged, and young. He spelled out on his board, 'No explanations or discourses can compare with this personal contact. I feel that I am in all. It is Baba bowing down to Baba.' At one time Baba motioned the Westerners to move out of the sun and sit near him in the shade. He would bend down, pick up a stone, and throw it to one of the Western group.

At a quarter to six, the queue of waiting people was still long, and Sarosh tried to persuade Baba to stay another quarter or half an hour, but Baba this time was adamant and left at six o'clock promptly, instructing us to return at once to Meherabad.

Next morning Baba came unexpectedly when several of the group were not present. He said he did not want to come as he had to deal

with other things; but the women had presents they wanted him to give with his own hands, and to distribute photographs to which he had put his signature. Hitaker, the Japanese, was called and told that from 12 mid-day until six o'clock tomorrow evening, he was to keep silence, to think of Baba and to read the messages.

Baba then explained what was to happen on the 29th and 30th. On the first day there were to be group talks and interviews, when we should come down to mix with the company and chat with them, but there was no need to stay there. We must, however, be there at 8.45 a.m. next day, and come away only when he said so. He then again embraced everyone and went away.

It had rained heavily for twenty-four hours from 4 a.m. on Tuesday until Wednesday morning; most of the time an 'elephant rain' with a very high wind from the north-west, so that part of the wall surrounding Meherabad was broken down, and the water blew into the refectory, dormitory and elsewhere. But the wet soon cleared away.

Down the hill near the highway a large pandal had been erected just off the roadway, in which a thousand men could be seated. There were also sleeping quarters for them, a place where they were to eat, and a field kitchen. Owing to the heavy rain there was deep mud everywhere, and much discomfort must have been suffered by all the nine hundred and fortyeight devotees and workers for Baba who had arrived during the day and night from various parts of India. Nonetheless the arrangements improvised under difficult conditions were most efficiently carried through. There was hot water for everyone, and good food. An electric light supply was fitted throughout the pandal and the other buildings, operated from the Meherabad flour mill for the villagers. The comfort of everybody was attended to, and the mandali worked extremely hard to make sure that everything went off without a hitch.

The pandal was gaily decorated, with a platform at the end for Baba, who arrived on Wednesday morning early. When all had gathered in the pandal, Baba had this announcement made on the microphone:

"I called all you dear ones for the meeting. What is meeting? Meeting means we meet. So before we begin anything, we meet in embrace for the last time. So meet me with all your heart, but not so tightly as to break my ribs!

"Last night, all the time I was thinking: Why did the rains start especially on the 28th when you were to arrive here? All the 28 days before there was sunshine and the programmes went off very cheerfully.

The darshan programme of 12th September, the explanations to the Western group here, and another programme at Sakori, where I went to lay my head at the shrine of my Master, and the small darshan on Sunday went off well. Then for the first time I asked myself, whether I was the Avatar; and the clear and definite answer was 'Yes, I am the Ancient One, the Highest of the High'. Then I asked Avatar Meher Baba, why this rain - this inconvenience to the lovers who have come all the way to meet you? Avatar Meher Baba replied, 'Those who really love you would come with their heads on their palms, and this inconvenience would be a happiness to them'.

"In all parts of India, every year thousands of pilgrims go to pay their homage to the holy places and the tombs of the saints and Masters, undergoing all kinds of hardships on the way - sometimes journeying long distances on foot, and many die on the way from illness, exposure and disease, the prospect of which does not deter them from their objective. How much more hardship and inconvenience you should be prepared to undergo, therefore, when you come to the living Master! For, instead of the pilgrimage to tombs and holy relics of the past, you are gathered today before the living Avatar.

"Now after embracing you all one after the other for the last time, be brave and confess your weaknesses, because very soon I am going to destroy all the bindings of religious ceremonies.

"As I am going to drop my body soon, this is your last opportunity to embrace me. By God's will may you all be worthy of my love, and not sell me."

All present were then invited on to the platform to come to Baba for this last embrace. One of the men, before he reached Baba, started sobbing bitterly. Baba was in great good humour, and joked with many who came to him, and patted others on the shoulder.

At 9.30 a.m. the prayers were said, Zoroastrian, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu, which had been uttered on the previous Friday, with the addition of a Sikh prayer by Guru Nanak, spoken by Dr Daulat Singh. Again Baba took an active part in the prayers. At one time there was an interruption by someone acclaiming Baba, which he sternly checked.

After the prayers, Baba asked if anyone felt tired, as he would allow an interval before the Prayer of Repentance. All cried that they were not tired. Baba then said, 'Pay proper attention and make this prayer for yourself and for all the world with all your hearts. God is dead to the language of the mind, and keen to hear only the language of the heart. If you put your heart into his prayer, God will definitely make

you love him.' This was translated into Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Telegu, as were all the other statements made during the meeting. Baba said: 'What is known as virtue and sin are nothing but strength and weakness.' Then followed the Prayer of Repentance with the addition of a Sikh version.

Baba then said: 'You are now free to call out "Jai" or anything you like', and he called for Francis Brabazon to come to the microphone, who cried: 'Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!' which was repeated loudly by the company. After which Baba told the company to disperse and said that from 2 o'clock onwards he would call groups and give talks to them, also a few private talks. He told the Westerners to go up the hill and stay there. He also said, 'Whether it rains or not, be here tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock and in the afternoon at 3.30, when I will say precisely for the last time what I have to say'.

Thursday was cool and cloudy, with a little sun, but no rain. Instructions had been given that none of the devotees was to go up the hill. The crowd of men was waiting for Baba by the pandal and when he appeared at 9 a.m., they made a path for him to pass through. He then led the whole company up the hill. When they arrived, Baba sat under a tree near the gate, looking down the hill. He allowed pictures to be taken of himself and the crowds and led the way to the tomb, after explaining through Eruch, Kaka, and two other men in four different languages, that he wanted the assembled men to see his last resting-place.

All then returned to the pandal, and Baba entered the tent, mounted the platform and took his seat on the couch. He sat on the couch and looked at the company, and said:

"Before I give my Final Declaration, I want to say a few words regarding other matters. After the meeting, I shall leave promptly. All who want to get the full benefit of this meeting, and return home with the atmosphere of this place, are to go directly after the meeting to their destination. If any should want to stay at Bombay or other places, it would mean that they had not come to Baba only, but to talk or to play, or to attend to their own affairs, so I want all to return home at once. One devotee from Jubbulpore has asked if he might go to Panchgani and has been told that he must return home, and afterwards go to Panchgani if he has to.

"Before the Declaration, I will say a few words about my Masters. Today, during both sessions, I shall be precise in what I want to convey to you."

He then asked for the men from Sakori, five of whom came on to the platform and sat down. He said: 'What I am, what I was, and what I will be as the Ancient One is always due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj - these are the five Perfect Masters of this age for me.'

He interrupted one of the interpreters of this statement to say to him that he appeared excited and confused, 'because you think I am going to drop this body', continued Baba; 'But I am not going to drop the body today!' Baba then went on, 'Only Maharaj and Babajan directly played the main roles. Babajan, in less than a millionth of a second, made me realize that I am God; and in the period of seven years Upasni Maharaj gave me the Divine Knowledge that I am the Avatar. Before Maharaj dropped his body, we physically met in a secluded place.' At this point Baba again called the translator to account and asked him to repeat only the words he spelt out on the board, not to interpret them. He went on: 'And before I drop my body, I had to meet him, so I went to Sakori and bowed down to his shrine and told him, "You know I am the Ancient One".' Baba again interrupted the translator and replaced him with another. He went on: 'Maharaj was Perfection personified. At the head of the Sakori Ashram is Godavri Mai, whom I call "Yashoda". She is a unique female personality and loves me beyond words, and to me she is the dearest of the dear.'

Baba then introduced the Sakori men. He first asked Yeshwantrao to rise, and said, 'He is the link between Maharaj and Merwan'. Wagh then stood up and Baba said: 'This is Wagh, who has for years faithfully and honestly carried out the office work and the arrangements at Sakori Ashram; he can be called one of the few main pillars of Sakori.' Vasant Deshmukh stood up and Baba said: 'Here is Sakori's high priest; even his priesthood will not save me from the violent death.' Purandhare stood up and Baba said: 'One of the most honest, faithful workers at Sakori.' Then Bharucha stood up and Baba said: 'This old Parsi father loves God wholeheartedly and longs for God, at Sakori, near the feet of Maharaj.' The Sakori men then left the platform. Baba said:

"Now please pay attention, be wide awake, not drowsy. Since I stopped speaking, and also stopped writing, except for my signature when essential, I carried on with this alphabet board all these years of my silence. From the 7th of October 1954, I shall give up this board too, I won't make any signs with my fingers, like Gustadji, to convey

thoughts. From the 7th of October, I shall not be speaking, writing, or using the board, or making signs with my fingers. I shall be as if withdrawing within myself. This is because now at last the so-long-promised and repeatedly promised time of breaking my silence is very near. From the 7 October 1954, I shall completely retire from my present activities. There will be no mass darshans, no programmes, no meetings, no messages, nor correspondence. Take this seriously and do not write to me from the 7 October, as I shall pay no attention to letters. I shall, however, go with Gadge Maharaj when he takes me to Pandharpur, if he has the fortune to do this, as I shall drop this body soon. The mandali have asked me today to say in a few words exactly and precisely what will happen to me. So I tell you - note it down.

"In October at Satara, I shall be appearing to lead a retired, normal life, eating, taking walks, and so on; but there will be no use of the board and other things from 7 October, as I have told you. By the end of April 1955, I shall drop this body. During the six months, November to April, three phases of the Avatar-life will manifest themselves. First, a very strange and serious disease will attack this body, which will be the cause of my humiliation that I have been speaking about. Secondly, the humiliation will end in the sudden breaking of my silence, and my uttering that Word which only God can utter. Thirdly, Glorification will replace humiliation. All the pent-up Infinity in me will splash and spread over the Universe."

Baba called for Dr Donkin and said that what followed was important, that he must grasp it and convey it over the microphone. Donkin then read the following:

Baba wants to use a simile about the atom bomb. Just as an atom bomb, which in itself is so small, when exploded causes tremendous havoc, so, when he breaks his silence, the universal spiritual upheaval that will take place will be something that no one can describe. It will happen in a second, at a time when nobody expects it. Just as when an earthquake takes place suddenly, when no one is ready, and no one can do anything, but everyone in the affected area feels it, so the breaking of his silence will create a spiritual upheaval and everyone will feel it in his heart.

And, unbelievable as it may seem, my universal Glorification, he says, will not be manifested very near my physical presence, wherever I may be then. At the time of my Glorification, all will feel it throughout the world, but those who are around me will not be affected. They who will be there will not be merely disinterested in Baba, they will

actually be hostile. For example, I may be then in Poona, with no one from the mandali near me, but thirty or forty of the hostile group may be there, and they will not feel this Glorification and upheaval. All the rest of the world will feel it. No one of my mandali or lovers will be near me when I am beaten and finally stabbed.

Yet I never die. I am always the Ancient One. You should all remember that God alone is real, all else is illusion.

Your attending this meeting and hearing in precise and definite terms about these happenings will be worth it if all of you, or if some of you, or at least a few of you, spread the message of my love to others.

The above was heard in deep silence. Baba then said that at 3 o'clock, his Final Declaration would be read in all the four languages, and that from 5 o'clock, all would be free to depart and that all must leave by tomorrow noon. They were asked not to try to embrace Baba as he left, or to garland him, or to ask him for anything. He asked the Western group to go at once up the hill and to come down at 3 p.m.

In the afternoon when everyone had assembled, Baba was outside the pandal and entered at 2.50 p.m., taking his seat. The company was told not to rise. He then asked for five young men and said to them: 'You asked for this, so I give you ten minutes.' They then sang a hymn to Baba; Baba expressed appreciation in gestures, and sent them back to their seats.

At 3 o'clock precisely, Eruch read 'Meher Baba's Final Declaration', which is given in full:

I am very happy to have you all here.

I know that very many of you have come to Meherabad under greatly difficult circumstances. Some of you have covered thousands of miles, and even crossed continents to be at Meherabad today. It is your deep love for me that has braved all obstacles and prompted you to sacrifice your comforts and conveniences to honour my call and to be near me today.

I am deeply touched by your devotion and I am proud of the hearts that contain such love and loyalty.

There are many more devoted hearts like yours yearning to be present here, but these are not to be seen in your midst today. I know that in spite of their intense desire to be near me, they could not possibly come for one reason or another. Therefore they depend on you to convey to them in detail all that you see and hear during this

two days of unique opportunity that has fallen to your lot. I trust you will not fail them.

Although you are present here with all love and faith in me and though you feel blessed to have my personal contact, yet I know that you will not realize today, as you ought to, the true significance of my call and your presence here at this juncture. Time alone will make most of you realize, not many months from now, the significant importance of this assembly.

The time is fast approaching when all that I have repeatedly stressed, from time to time, will definitely come to pass. Most of you will witness those events, and will recall very vividly all that transpires during these two days of your stay at Meherabad.

I have not come to establish anything new - I have come to put life into the old. I have not come to establish retreats or ashrams. I create them for the purpose of my universal work, only to repeatedly dissolve them once that purpose has been served.

The universe is my ashram, and every heart is my house; but I manifest only in those hearts in which all, other than me, ceases to live.

When my universal religion of love is on the verge of fading into insignificance, I come to breathe life into it and to do away with the farce of dogmas that defile it in the name of religions and stifle it with ceremonies and rituals.

The present universal confusion and unrest has filled the heart of man with greater lust for power and a greed for wealth and fame, bringing in its wake untold misery, hatred, jealousy, frustration and fear. Suffering in the world is at its height, in spite of all the striving to spread peace and prosperity to bring about lasting happiness.

For man to have a glimpse of lasting happiness he has first to realize that God, being in all, knows all; that God alone acts and reacts through all; that God, in the guise of countless animate and inanimate entities, experiences the innumerable varied phenomena of suffering and happiness, and that God himself undergoes all these illusory happenings. Thus, it is God who has brought suffering in human experience to its height, and God alone who will efface this illusory suffering and bring the illusory happiness to its height.

Whether it manifests as creation or disappears into oneness of reality, whether it is experienced as existing and real, or is perceived to be false and non-existent, illusion throughout is illusion. There is no end to it, just as there is no end to imagination.

There are two aspects experienced in illusion-manyness and oneness. While manyness multiplies manyness, oneness goes on magnifying

itself. Manyness is the 'religion' of illusion on which illusion thrives.

In the illusory beginning of time, there was no such state of mess in illusion as there is today. When the evolution of consciousness began, there was oneness, in spite of the diversity in illusion. With the growth of consciousness, manyness also went on increasing, until now it is about to overlap the limit. Like the wave that reaches its crest, this height of manyness will dissolve itself and bring about the beginning of oneness in illusion. Suffering at its height will cause the destruction of this climax of manyness in illusion.

The time has come for the pre-ordained destruction of multiple separateness which keeps man from experiencing the feeling of unity and brotherhood. This destruction which will take place very soon, will cause three-fourths of the world to be destroyed. The remaining one fourth will be brought together to live a life of concord and mutual understanding, thus establishing a feeling of oneness in all fellow beings, leading them towards lasting happiness.

Before I break my silence or immediately after it, three-fourths of the world will be destroyed. I shall speak soon to fulfill all that is shortly to come to pass.

To affirm religious faiths, to establish societies, or to hold conferences will never bring about the feeling of unity and oneness in the life of mankind, now completely absorbed in the manyness of illusion. Unity in the midst of diversity can be made to be felt only by touching the very core of the heart. That is the work for which I have come.

I have come to sow the seed of love in your hearts so that, in spite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of oneness, through love, is brought about amongst all the nations, creeds, sects and castes of the world.

In order to bring this about, I am preparing to break my silence. When I break my silence it will not be to fill your ears with spiritual lectures. I shall speak only one Word, and this Word will penetrate the hearts of all men and make even the sinner feel that he is meant to be a saint, while the saint will know that God is in the sinner as much as he is in himself.

When I speak that Word, I shall lay the foundation for that which is to take place during the next seven hundred years. When I come again after seven hundred years the evolution of consciousness will have reached such an apex that materialistic tendencies will be automatically transmuted into spiritual longing, and the feeling of equality in spiritual brotherhood will prevail. This means that opulence and

poverty, literacy and illiteracy, jealousy and hatred, which are in evidence today in their full measure, will then be dissolved through the feelings of the oneness of all men. Prosperity and happiness will then be at their zenith.

This does not mean that oneness in illusion shall remain so eternally. That is because all this that is, is illusion, and the consciousness of oneness as well as of manyness in illusion is part of the process of evolution. The time is bound to recur when there will be again the same beginning, growth and culmination of the heights of manyness and oneness in illusion.

My next advent, after I drop this body, will be after seven hundred years, and that will mark the end and the beginning of a cycle of cycles. All cycles of time in illusion end and begin after 700 to 1,400 years, and there have been and will be millions and billions of such Cycles in a cycle of cycles; thus, there is no end to illusion, which always remains illusion.

Age after age I come amidst mankind to maintain my own creation of illusion, thereby also awakening humanity to become aware of it. The framework of illusion is always one and the same, but the designs in illusion are innumerable and ever-changing. My advent is not to destroy illusion because illusion, as it is, is absolutely nothing. I come to make you become aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion, which is nothing but the shadow of my infinite self, and through me you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness.

My manifestation as the Avatar of the time will be of short duration. This short period will, in quick succession, cover my humiliation, the breaking of my silence, my glorification and my violent physical end. Everlastingly with all the divine bliss within me, I eternally suffer for one and all - thus I am crucified eternally and continually for all.

During this short period, my Word of words will touch the hearts of all mankind, and spontaneously this divine touch will instill in man the feeling of the oneness of all fellow beings. Gradually, in the course of the next seven hundred years, this feeling will supersede the tendency of separateness and rule over the hearts of all, driving away hatred, jealousy and greed that breed suffering, and happiness will reign."

The Declaration and the four translations were received in complete silence. There was not a movement from any of the company. During the reading of the first translation, one of the mandali, sitting in the first row, appeared to be asleep. Baba noticed him and sent Eruch

to awaken him and bring him on to the platform where Baba spoke to him and made him stand until all the translations were finished.

Baba got Padri to pat his back four times while the second version was read. Once he gesticulated for a glass of water, which was brought to him. He listened attentively to each reading. During the third reading, Baba was quieter, and expressed approval to Eruch. Deshmukh read the fourth version, and Baba asked Eruch if everyone could hear clearly. Baba sat on the edge of the couch, then moved on to the steps. Then Baba distributed prasad; the assembly broke up, and Baba went away.

Thus was brought to a close what must have been the most remarkable experience in the lives of all who were present. The Western group and the Indian devotees had many friendly talks before the latter left, but the entire company dispersed with great rapidity. A large proportion of the devotees were young men, but there were young and old, men of every type, a large assembly of deeply interested people. The quietness and orderly behaviour of everyone throughout the two days was impressive; and simplicity, sincerity, absence of display and intense seriousness were notable characteristics. That Baba was in control was certain, but so lightly and unobtrusively that it was hardly to be noticed.

That evening the Western visitors left Meherabad on the hill in the evening from Ahmednagar by train to Bombay, whence they were to travel to their homes by ship or air. Before we left Ahmednagar station I looked for someone with whom to spend the night's journey, and sought out Malcolm Schloss. There were two others in the compartment, so that there was room for one more and I got in. I thought I should like to travel with him, for I was not likely to see him any more, as he was to return at once to Los Angeles, I to London. We were in a second-class sleeping compartment, and though we got some sleep, much of the time was spent in conversation about what had been taking place at Meherabad. Phillippe Dupuis and Frank Henrick were the other two, both interesting companions and the journey was an agreeable one.

Malcolm went straight from the train to the airport. I had to stay in Bombay for a couple of days, waiting for my BOAC flight. Baba's followers filled the time with kindness, and with Phillippe, returning to Paris, I spent some pleasant hours. I found the city rather less overpowering than before, but was glad to leave it. Indeed I was sick for home. I did not have the feeling that I was leaving Baba, who, I thought I might never see again; but I was leaving an overwhelmingly exciting

country, uncomfortable, searching, the outlook and mentality of whose people was so different from our own that it was easy to misunderstand all that one saw and heard. A rich country, with an overpowering starving and ignorant democracy, the cradle of ardent wisdom and truth.

I reached home without incident. Malcolm, however, stayed on in Paris for a few days before continuing his journey to the U.S.A., and when he reached New York proposed to remain there a few days. On the second day, he was found dead one evening in the apartment that had been lent to him.

After this final meeting Baba seemed to withdraw more and more within himself. He gave up the use of the board on 7 October. As many of the mandali as possible were present and he bowed down to the feet of each one individually. He then reduced all communication to the minimum of gestures, without recourse to making signs as of 'writing with forefinger'. In very exceptional cases, he spent hours making one of those present repeat the English alphabet again and again, stopping each time the required letter was arrived at, to form the word or grasp the sense of what he wished to convey. This was a wearisome mode of communication. Later he developed his own method of communication by gestures and fingers.

Baba had mentioned during the Meherabad meeting an intended visit to Pandharpur, which would be his last public appearance. Thus, he kept his promise to the aged Gadge Maharaj and visited the place on November 6th.

Pandharpur is on the right-bank of river Bhima, about 160 miles from Ahmednagar, a place of pilgrimage in the Deccan. Twice a year people come from all over India. Baba had made it clear that while he would gladly go to Pandharpur for the day, he would not give darshan to the masses. But at Maharaj's urgent request, he did so, saying that he would be at Maharaj's disposal for the full period of his stay of twenty-four hours. He would not, however, take food, or sleep, but would make himself available to the pilgrims. The Maharaj was about eighty-five years old and for the past fifty years had devoted himself to the many poor and depressed people, leading them to devotion to Krishna.

Following this visit to Pandharpur, Baba gave to his mandali on 13 November, at Satara, the following explanation of the Final Declaration:

Clarification and Confirmation of the Final Declaration

It is really very difficult for anyone to believe and understand what

I say, because none can grasp the meaning underlying my words. It is natural for even my intimate mandali not to understand; but I want you to take everything that I said in Meherabad during the meetings very seriously, because all I said was the truth; they were the words of God, and all the things said must come to pass in exactly the manner described by me.

From the day I declared in Meherabad that there will be the destruction of three-fourths of the world, that a strange disease will attack my body, that I shall suffer humiliation, that I shall break my silence and speak one Word, the Word of words, that there will be my glorification, and that finally I shall drop my body when I shall be stabbed in the back, my lovers and others have been confused, trying to interpret my words in different ways.

Everyone is free to interpret my words in any way they think and feel. But one thing I tell you, that whenever I say a thing, I naturally use my own 'language', and whatsoever is said by me is truth. But, my 'language' is such that none can understand or grasp the underlying meaning of what I say; therefore, when I want to say a thing I have simultaneously to make use of your language also, knowing well that you would understand nothing whatsoever if I were to make use of my 'language' alone.

In order to help you to understand my Final Declaration and to put an end to your confusion and worry, I want you all to know that when you saw me dictate on my alphabet board during the Meetings at Meherabad, and heard about:

- (1) A strange disease attacking my body: was said in your language.'
- (2) The humiliation that I shall suffer: was said in your language.
- (3) The breaking of my silence and my uttering the one Word of words: was said in my own 'language' and simultaneously in yours, because when I utter that word, it will be an audible word to you.
- (4) My Glorification: was said simultaneously in my 'language' and in yours.
- (5) The destruction of three- fourths of the world: was said in my own 'language' alone.
- (6) The stab in the back: was said in my own 'language' alone.
- (7) The dropping of my body: was said in my own 'language' and simultaneously in yours.

Consequently, whatever is said by me in your language, you are able to understand and know what is said; but, that which is said in my own 'language' is impossible for you to understand, however much you may try to interpret the meaning behind my words only the fulfillment

of events can unfold to you, in due course, the meaning of what is said in my own 'language'. I therefore want you not to worry unnecessarily or be confused. Just believe whatever I say is Truth; and all that I have said in my Final Declaration will come to pass precisely as I have dictated, by the end of April 1955. And the beginning of all that is to happen within the period of these six months will be effected by me from the 1st December 1954.

From that date to the 16 January 1955, all concerned should know that:

- (1) Each and all things as intimated, declared and clarified by me are fixed and ordained fact, and God will see that everything happens and is done as fore-ordained by him.

All that is destined to take place is unavoidable, yet the resultant effects can be modified in two different ways according to circumstances. The modification of the effects of a destined plan can either affect the intensity, scope, shape or size of the chain of events, or bring about a considerable change in the factor of time. In either case, the effects can be modified as much in relation to me and those closely connected with me as to the world at large. For example, the world can absorb fully a simultaneous spiritual and material shock either by a modification in the quality and quantity of events or by a considerable change in the time factor. If the time limit April 1955 as mentioned at the Meherabad Meetings remains unchanged, then in order to enable the world fully to absorb the shock of shocks, the chain of events may be modified both in degree and in kind. But if the time limit is changed considerably, the events will take place without any modification whatsoever. In that event the most important and significant point is that definitely and emphatically the link between my physical body and all my external activities as carried on up to now, will be dropped by April 1955, and there will take place an immeasurable change in the external relations between me and those closely connected with me. If I do not drop my physical body, I shall yet, so to say, 'die', for I shall then become actually dead to the world up to the end of the modified period of time. During the indefinite period of the modified time, I shall completely stop one and all of my external activities as carried on by me in the course of the different phases of my physical life so far, including the present life of retirement amongst those who live with me permanently.

I shall then, throughout this modified period of time, live a life of complete physical detachment from everything and everybody

except a few as will be absolutely necessary for my requirements of nature in the barest sense of living the life of a man alive.

- (2) I wish all my lovers to observe a fast and remain only on water (which can be taken any number of times during the fast) for 24 hours, from 8 p.m. on Saturday February 12th to 8 p.m. on Sunday February 13th, (local time in each country) and to devote all available time during the twenty-four hours in praying to God in the way each likes best to pray to him.
- (3) Honesty is the keynote to Divinity. He who can love God honestly can lose himself in God and find himself as God.

Baba started a forty days' fast on 1 December, of one meal a day for the first ten days, followed by a more complete fast on liquids only. Preceding the fast there was an all-night vigil by himself and the mandali. During the entire period the mandali in relays repeated the name of God throughout each twenty-four hours. When the fast ended on 9 January 1955 at the strike of midnight all stood outside his door and as he came out said loudly together the name of God. That day a meal was given to fifty-six poor people, the girls in the Satara orphanage were given new clothes and 50 or more lepers were provided with new garments. Baba looked very drawn and tired.

On 14 January Baba gave darshan to a large crowd of people in Poona lasting with a short interval for ten hours, he taking nothing but a little water. From the 25 January he went on visits to various places and on 6 February gave darshan in Bombay. He was back in Satara and on 10 April issued:

The Final Decision

The Universe has come out of God. God has not come out of the universe. Illusion has come out of Reality. Reality has not come out of illusion. God alone is Real; the universe itself is illusion.

God's life lived in illusion, as the Avatar and as Perfect Masters, is not illusory; whereas God's real life lived in creation is both real and illusory. Illusion, illusory life, and God's life in illusion are not and cannot be one and the same. Illusion has no life. Illusion is illusion and is nothing by itself. Illusory life means life in illusion, with illusion, surrounded by illusion, and is illusory life. God's life lived in illusion is not illusory because in spite of living the illusory life God remains Conscious of his own Reality.

God is absolutely independent, and the universe is entirely dependent. When the Perfect Masters effect the descent of God on earth as the Avatar, they make Reality and illusion interdependent, each upon the other. And thus it is that his Infinite Mercy and Unbounded Love are drawn upon by those who are immersed in Illusion.

Between God and the Universe, infinite Mercy and unbounded Love act as a link eternally made use of by men who become God (Sadgurus, Perfect Masters or Qutubs), and by God who becomes Man (Avatar, Christ or Rasool). So the Universe becomes the eternal playmate of God. Through this link the Avatar not only established life in his Divine Play, but also established Law in illusion. And, this law being established by the God-Man or Avatar is the law of the law-less Infinite; it is eternally Real and at the same time illusory. It is this Law that governs the universe: all its 'ups and downs', construction and devastation are guided by this law.

At the Cyclic period, God's Absoluteness is made to work upon this Law by the God-Man as God's Will, and this means that anything and everything that the Avatar wills is ordained by God. Consequently, all that I stated in the Final Declaration and Confirmation is ordained by God, and must and will happen.

I was in Khuldabad the 22nd of March. There night and day I did my work most intensively. The intensity of my spiritual work caused great pressure on my physical body and mind, and it was there that I decided that all I had declared in my Final Declaration must come to pass exactly in the same sequence and with the same intensity of effect but with modification in the time factor. Therefore, with the change in the Time Limit, the Intensity, Scope, Shape and Size of the chain of events will take place without any moderation whatever, to bring into effect the destined Plan.

In the meanwhile mankind must await, according to this Final Decision, the witnessing of all that is to come to pass as ordained by God. This is the time when man must love God more and more. Let him live for God and let him die for God. In all his thoughts, in all his words and in all his actions love for God alone must prevail.

This was followed by calling to Satara thirty-six persons from Poona, Nagar, Bombay and elsewhere, together with the mandali to receive special instructions. They were to be present at 7.30 in the morning and to be available for six hours; in the event Baba remained with them until 3.30 p.m. without an interval, except for being shown the room in which he kept his seclusion. He said it was good that they had come and

to say that he hoped all would stick to him but if all were to give up he would not mind at all. For those who chose to remain with him there would be still greater hardships and disappointments. They were asked to continue with him without asking anything, and without expecting him to do anything important or unimportant. At 12 o'clock the following 'instructions to all concerned' were read out:

According to my Final Decision, except for the time factor everything will happen in every detail and sequence as declared, clarified and confirmed by me.

There is now no limitation to any point in time, nor contact with any point in time. Things may happen after one month or three months, after three years or twenty years. In short I may speak tomorrow or my silence may be broken after 10 years.

I am free from all promises, bindings, undertakings and arrangements. None should therefore ask for anything material or spiritual from me at any time or on any account. I will do what I think to be the best for one and all and when I deem it fit.

It is only on the above basis that all concerned must now decide whether to give up or hold on to my daaman, i.e. to believe in me, revere me and remain devoted to me, by following my orders and instructions.

The period of three months from May 1st to July 31st 1955 is a period of crisis for me. I must go into retirement for 3 reasons: (1) for myself, (2) for those who love me, and (3) for all.

(a) During the period of my stay in Jal Villa at Satara, I will not step out of the central rooms of the bungalow.

(b) I may or may not eat and sleep regularly for the duration of the crisis.

(c) I am not bound to remain in any one place during or after the first month of my retirement. I may change my plans at any moment and might undertake to go on foot from place to place or go into even greater solitude.

No one should under any circumstances come to see me or communicate with me directly or indirectly for any reason whatsoever up to the end of July 1955.

All those closely connected with me, all those who love me, and all those who care to follow my instructions must be scrupulously honest; must strictly abstain from sexual actions; and must try to spread my message of Love and Truth as far and wide as possible during the period of crisis for the three months from May 1st to July 31st.

In the course of the long meeting Baba made a number of important statements which included the following remarks:

If I am what I am, it is all the more natural for you not to be able to understand all that I wish to express, and why I say all that I say. It has been going on like this for thousands and thousands of years. If I am the Highest of the High I know why Jesus was crucified, and why Muhammad was stoned. For all the so-called good and bad things said about them by the so-called good and bad world, people understand next to nothing about Christ and Muhammad, about Ram and Krishna, Zoroaster and Buddha, and about all the things they said and did....

Sometimes I cannot help asking myself about the things I do and say, and about the things I deliberately avoid and easily forget. At the last meeting in Meherabad I gave my final declaration and yet it was followed by a clarification, a confirmation and lastly by the decision.

Until the other day I had not given it a thought... then, while taking a rest I asked myself why did I give out the Declaration? Who asked me for a Clarification? Where was the need to issue a Confirmation and what made me give the Decision?

I was satisfied that all had been inevitably necessary. Throughout time, in accordance with the common law of nature, there are four stages to everything. Therefore the day I had announced my Declaration, I knew the decision inherent therein would have to be worked out by me through the stages that would follow.

Thus my declaration was in fact my decision, but for the declaration to be manifested as the decision, it had to pass through the intermediary stages of clarification and confirmation....

The initiative of all initiatives, the foremost Lahar or spontaneous urge on the part of God to ask himself, 'Who am I?' was God's declaration; creation was then necessary for its clarification; the evolution of perfect consciousness in man is its confirmation and involution the transformation of human consciousness into God-consciousness concludes in the decision that throughout God was God and never anything other than God....

The party dispersed after this - the date was 24th April - and in recording the event Baba's sister, Mani, says 'as usual after such work had been successfully completed there was an unexpected and welcome shower of rain. The effect was most refreshing.'

On 1 May he went into seclusion for three months. They went back to Meherazad, and Baba broke the seclusion several times to receive

groups from distant places. He also went from time to time to Meherabad.

During November an American engineer, Don Stevens, spent some time with Baba, an account of which is given in *Listen Humanity!* (New York, Dodd Mead & Co. 1957). The book *God Speaks* had been published the previous September in New York, by the same publishers, edited by Don Stevens and Ivy Duce: a description will be given later.

From 7 November until 3 December a series of *sahawas* was called at Meherabad. Two pandals for sleeping and feeding were erected, somewhat as before. Four weeks were devoted to these *sahawas*, two hundred men each week belonging to a particular language group, Gujarati, Telugu, Hindi and Marathi. At the start all were urged by Baba to be with him as freely and intimately as the resident *mandali*. 'On my part', he said, 'I shall be equally free and frank with you; but do not expect to hear only pleasant things from me.' He went on to say, 'Try to forget what you think you already know'. He said: 'There is no sense in shouting "*Avatar ki jai*" every now and then. If you want to shout do so within your hearts. Let it not be heard by others.'

Among those who came was a man named Mouni Buwa who had been keeping silence for many years. Baba asked if he were still silent. He nodded 'Yes'. Baba then ordered him to speak. He uttered '*Parabrama. Parabrama*'. Baba then went on:

"You say you want God-realization. It is all superficial. I want to warn all who approach me that they should not expect health, wealth, wife or children from me. I tell you that those who have associated with me through love have suffered complete material pain. History records this. All I give is God. I want only Love."

The story was told of how Kaikobad, referred to earlier, had craving for God. For eleven years he was with Baba, to whom he dedicated his means and family. Baba kept him away from the *mandali*. From 1 August 1944 he repeated Baba's name one hundred thousand times every day. In 1946 he was on Meher Hill and had an experience, he saw Baba. The experience was repeated several times. Once he lost consciousness, and was at the point of losing his body. He said he saw Baba everywhere, all the time, but not in physical form. He says that whenever he sits in his room in the dark he sees light and can bring Baba's *swarup* before him. Baba commented:

"This is not God-realization. It is only a glimpse. It is natural for

Kaikobad to love Baba because he has had a glimpse. There is one thing greater than love, it is obedience. There is one thing greater than obedience, it is surrender. None has surrendered to me as he ought. You may surrender wealth, life, body and all, but not your mind. When mind is surrendered, what is there? There is Baba."

Another story was told of a well-dressed man who came to Baba years ago. He started to weep and said, 'For forty years I am in search of God. I do meditations; now I come to you'. Baba replied, 'If you obey me I will give you God-realization. What about obeying?' 'I will cut off my head', said the man, 'and lay it at your feet.' 'You need not cut off your head, but be stark naked and walk about Ahmednagar.' The man replied, 'Baba, that is very difficult, for I was brought up there. I know many people. What will they say?'

Baba said, 'If you cannot do this, why talk of cutting off your head?' Among the remarks Baba made at different times during the course of the sahawas were the following:

"After I drop this body, thousands upon thousands of people will come. So age after age the same thing is repeated. No sooner do I drop the body than people come to the tomb. When I go to give darshan thousands of people flock around me. What is the use? If I am great, greatness does not consist in collecting crowds around me. What I want is a little love from you.

"I hate the words sadhu and buddha. Why use them?

"I myself am eternally free. In you I am bound.

"There are three kinds of seekers (Jignasu): 1. One who says: 'I know God is within me, and I have to seek and find him.' But he has no courage and his rebirths continue. 2. One who says: 'I know God is within me, and I have to seek and find him within.' He has courage, plunges into the river and is drowned. He feels he has no need of a Master. 3. One who says: 'I know God is within me, and I have to seek and find him within myself.' He has courage and obeys the Master. If the Master says 'Drown yourself', he will throw himself into the river, but the Master saves him, for he is there.

"Every individual here and elsewhere is the same one, ever-indivisible God. I say this because I am responsible for the whole creation. If I am not here then not only will you not be here, but the whole creation with its gross, subtle and mental spheres will not be. In short, everything exists because I exist.

"In your case also the whole of creation exists because you exist. When you sleep soundly then for you everything vanishes and is

absorbed in your sound-sleep state, the most original, beyond-beyond state of God.

"After being refreshed in the most original beyond-beyond state of God, your consciousness plunges you first into the dreams-in-sleep, then you wake up again within the dream of creation. Therefore alternately you remain asleep or keep dreaming either the dreams-in-sleep or the dreams of creation The whole of creation is a play of thoughts: the outcome of the mind. It is your mind that binds you; it is also the mind that is the means of your freedom. You are eternally free. You are not bound at all. But you cannot realize your freedom by merely hearing this from me, because your mind continues to entangle you in illusion. Therefore you only understand what I am telling you, and mere understanding is not the same as experiencing the truth that I am telling you. For that truth you must let your mind be halted. Then as soon as you see me as I really am, you will find yourself to be your own infinite and eternal self.

"Hearing is not understanding. Understanding is not conception. Conception is not perception. Perception is not experience. Experience is not being God-realized.

"I have already told you that love for God and obedience to a Master are beyond the reach of man on his own, and that complete surrender is almost impossible. The best thing is for man to purify his heart.

"The best way to cleanse the heart and to prepare for the stilling of the mind is to lead a normal life in the world. Living in the midst of your day-to-day duties, responsibilities, likes and dislikes becomes the very means for the purification of your heart.

"For the purification of your heart leave your thoughts alone but maintain constant vigil over your actions. Let thoughts come and go without putting them into action.

"It is better to feel angry sometimes rather than merely to repress anger. Although your mind may be angry do not let your heart know it. Remain unaffected. If you never feel angry you will be like stone, in which form the mind is least developed.

"Let the thoughts of anger, lust and greed come and go freely without putting them into words and deeds. Then the related impressions in your mind begin to wear out and become less harmful.

"When you feel angry or have lustful thoughts, remember Baba at once. Let my name serve as a net around you."

Someone spoke of a vision, which he described. Baba praised him,

but said that however enchanting the vision, there is no need to tell others, for doing so is to gratify the ego. Love if exposed is an insult to love.

When asked if those who had gurus should give up repeating their names and repeat Baba's name instead, Baba replied that there is no need to do that. 'Baba' is not in the name of Baba, he is in all. All should repeat God's name when the work is in progress; when it is over repeat Baba's name. The work referred to was washing the feet of 250 poor people, which Baba proceeded to do; it occupied one hour.

During the period Godavri Mai and her girls from Sakori paid a visit on the occasion that the villagers from Arangaon were invited.

At the end of these sahawas some of the Andhra group laid themselves on the ground in front of Baba's car so that it could not move. Baba got out of the car and called for arti. After the singing was over Baba told them to stand where they were as he got up to enter the car. The order was obeyed and Baba went off.

There was a darshan at Sakori at the request of Godavri and the other kanyas on 26 January 1956 which lasted for eight days. This was repeated at a number of other places, and he was asked to visit Shirdi (Sai Baba's town) but refused. Many of these darshans were very large affairs. He then resumed retirement at Satara, and on 15 February 1956 said that he would be in complete retirement for one year except for the visit to the West he had promised in July. He said that he would start with a strict fast, but would change his plans as and when he chose. Twenty men selected from the four sahawas groups in November were to share this fast, remaining in seclusion, repeating Baba's name fourteen times one night, exactly at midnight, twenty-eight times the next, apart from this not to say Baba's name even once during the day, and not to lie down for a period of seven days. On 13 March two masts were allowed to come and Baba worked with them intensively, then they were sent to their respective places.

Arrangements were made for the visit to the West; as they proceeded he sent the following message on 2 July:

As declared in the past, I am free from promises and am not bound by time and space. Though all happenings are in the realm of illusion, a great so-called tragedy is facing me and my lovers. My long-expected humiliation is near at hand. This may happen tomorrow or any day of this year, or it may happen next year.

The love, courage and faith of my lovers will be put to a severe test, not by me, but by Divine Law. Those who hold fast to me at the zenith of this crisis will transcend illusion and abide in Reality.

I want all my lovers to know that the contents of this circular, however despairing, should not affect their enthusiasm and the efforts of their preparations for my coming, because my humiliation and 'tragedy', though necessary, are but passing phases which are bound to have a glorious end - as is destined.

Before he left he asked all his lovers 'and if possible interested ones' to observe complete silence from midnight 9 July to the following midnight (local time) and a partial fast during the twenty-four hours, taking not more than two cups of tea or coffee once, and one meal during the evening of 10 July.

He traveled via Zurich, changing planes there, accompanied by Adi K. Irani, Dr Nilkanth Godse, Eruch Jessawala and Meherjee Karkaria. In Switzerland he was met by a number of devotees, some of whom traveled with the party to Paris, where they were joined by others, and on to London, where they arrived on the evening of 17 July. They stayed at the Hotel Rubens; next morning at 9:30 Baba started interviews, and in the afternoon there was a reception. Sitting on a chair on a low dais he received all who had come, about 200 people from various parts of the country as well as Switzerland, France, Belgium, Denmark and elsewhere. Afterwards he gave a brief 'talk'. This was repeated in the evening. There were private interviews throughout the next day and in the evening the party left London airport for New York. In that city he was greeted by the devotees and stayed for seven days, giving interviews, and was the guest at a reception at Manhattan House, attended by 135 people. All this time he was in semi-seclusion; he was also very tired. But as he met people both in London and New York, he gave the appearance of full strength and vitality, being his humorous, lively, attentive, patient self, with no signs of exhaustion. There were no 'messages' or 'discourses'. With more than fifty devotees the party left for the Myrtle Beach centre on the 24 July. There he stayed for six days, giving a TV interview one day, then left for California and for a short stay in Australia, arriving back at Satara in the middle of August. The seclusion was kept strictly, with occasional breaks for his mast and poor work.

An unusual request was made by Baba on 8 November when he asked all concerned in the U.S.A. to be informed of the following:

Every Baba-lover should write immediately and direct to Baba-a short letter-just this once during his seclusion. None should expect a reply to the letter, directly or indirectly.

On Sunday 2 December he went to Poona for the day, and, on the return journey to Satara, at a place known as Udatara, about fourteen miles away, there was an accident at 5.15 p.m. Eruch, who has driven Baba many thousands of miles, was driving and with Baba was Pendu, Vishnu and Dr Nilkanth (better known as Nilu). The car was running normally and at moderate speed, but suddenly got out of control, crashed against a low stone culvert at the side of the road, turned over and landed in the gully. There was no other traffic on the road at the time nor any pedestrians; it was a dull afternoon with high cloud. All were thrown out and seriously injured. A man on the way to Poona came along, and lifted Baba and Vishnu into his car, the latter the least hurt, and brought them to Satara. Soon after, a truck arrived into which Eruch, Pendu and Nilu were put and brought to the hospital at Satara. Nilu did not regain consciousness and died before arriving at the hospital. Eruch suffered four broken ribs and Pendu had his leg badly damaged.

The injuries to Baba were very serious. His head and face were badly hurt, his tongue torn, the right hip damaged, the upper rim of the acetabulum being fractured, the broken chip of bone slightly displaced. There was at first thought to be no fracture of the parts of the upper end of the thigh so often sustained in motor crashes, but a slight fracture was in fact found. He was looked after by Dr Donkin and Dr Goher with the aid of an orthopaedic surgeon. English specialists were consulted and X-ray photographs sent, and the possibility of an operation was discussed. Baba, however, refused the operation.

When told of the devoted Nilu's death, he said, 'He is blessed to be with me'. He gave the following message, 'Do not worry. All will be well. Faithfully carry out the instructions given by me.'

Though he had good attention at Satara, Baba listened to the doctors' plans and was taken to Poona where there were better medical facilities. The healing of the fracture seemed to progress satisfactorily, but he continued to be in great pain. At one point in his illness, the Hungarian uprising being in progress, Baba made one of his extremely rare comments on political affairs, saying, 'The Hungarians are suffering much in their present struggle. Many lie wounded and helpless on the roads, away from their loved ones and from care and relief from pain. At least, I am lying on a bed, with the care of good doctors, and the love of all my lovers, present and absent.' He continually said, 'I am happy. It is as I wanted it'.

During December Gadge Maharaj, and the mast Ali Shah, who had been with Baba for many years, died, on the 21st and 27th respectively.

Baba was able to be brought to Meherazad on 12 February, and on the 15th of that month, the completion of the year's 'seclusion', he touched the feet of 800 poor people there, then putting his hand to his forehead, giving to each his prasad of sweets and a piece of material.

Before the accident at the end of October, Baba had given instructions that all who love him, and if possible those who are even just interested in him, should observe the 15 February when he emerged from his seclusion as a fast for twenty-four hours, starting at midnight the previous day. The fast was to be complete, not even water to be taken; those participating were to think of Baba and repeat his name as often as possible during working hours.

On 18 April he went to Sakori, not to disappoint Godavri Mai for darshan. He went to Poona on 28 April for darshan at the St Mira School, keeping his promise to his 'beloved Dada', T. L. Vaswani, when people came from all over India, many thousands altogether. These were strenuous efforts for one suffering physically as he was. Indeed, he was moving about on his crutches in a way that astonished everyone. Pendu, however, was getting on slowly, and it looked as though it would be some time before he could walk again.

On 25 May and 9 June he called on each occasion about fifty men disciples from Bombay and other parts for meetings with him. This communication with people went on throughout the summer. A fast and silence was kept by everyone, East and West, on 10 July, the thirty-third anniversary of Baba's silence.

During September tentative arrangements were put in hand for the combined East and West sahawas intended for January-February the next year. No one was really certain whether the meetings would be possible, for Baba was having much pain and his movements were greatly restricted. He called a meeting of his intimate followers including the resident mandali, thirty in all, for Sunday 8 September at Meherazad, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., when he began by distributing sweetmeats, saying, 'Let me sweeten your mouths before I make you swallow some bitter pills...'.

"I intend to tell you things straight from my heart and I expect you to let them reach your heart, not just your ears.

"I am no saint. Because I am Beyond, I am therefore beyond all saints. The world, once it knows who I am, will understand then what I want you to understand now - that from the beginningless beginning I am the Ancient One, immutable and eternal. You may wholeheartedly

believe me to be the Avatar; but belief, however deep, does not amount to absolute conviction."

Here, someone interjected, 'There is no question of conviction for those of us who have accepted you once and for all, because our acceptance is absolute'. Baba continued:

"It is all for the best if that acceptance remains unshaken under all circumstances. The world in general accepts the existence of God, without caring overmuch about the reasons for doing so. It is a fact, also, that there are a few in the world who do see God as he is to be seen, and fewer still who know God as he really is to be known.

"I have already warned you of the dark cloud I clearly see hovering over me. I have been referring to it in one way or another for many years. In fact, only the shape of things changes every time I come, and that is why I say the same things again and again in different ways. At the time of Jesus, I uttered many warnings, yet none could grasp in advance the necessity of my crucifixion.

"The dark cloud is very, very near to bursting and I have to take the whole force of it upon myself. You can have no idea of what that will mean for me - it will be like hell itself bursting upon me on earth. Be resolved to hold fast to my 'daaman' even when this cloud bursts; you will thereby share in my work.

"Look at the weapons of destruction science has evolved. Nation accuses nation of preparations for war, and world catastrophe might come without warning at any moment. World events reflect the results of my inner working. At the time of Noah's Flood, hell was let loose in the world. Scientists and statesmen now declare that if total war comes, the whole world may perish. They are just echoing me - but the whole world cannot perish because I have to come again after 700 years.

"To fulfill all that is ordained, I work; and this work releases the tremendous force that stamps my advent. The impact of this force on groping humanity is an awakening in general, and the realization of the Self in particular.

"But how difficult it is to overcome all hindrances and complete the work in hand when there are distractions to be reckoned with! Just as I am now quite unable to do so many physical things unaided, in spite of an otherwise healthy body, I may, at the time of the impending crisis, become even mentally helpless, without being mentally deranged in the least. You may then not be able to continue to hold on to my

'daaman' because circumstances will seemingly justify your letting it go. I am infinitely merciful, and so repeat the same thing again and again so that you may remember my words and try your best to cling to me.

"Whatever is to happen will happen. This is the principle, or as I call it, the Law of 'Must' - the Law on which universal illusion thrives. It is as if the complete film of illusion, from the beginningless beginning to the endless end, were being projected continually. If it is destined that my 'daaman' should slip from your hands, it will; but it is for me to warn, and for you to remain alert. In illusion, you may die at any moment. The illusory life has no guarantee because no one can know for certain what will happen the very next moment. Except God, everything is illusion. This world and all its affairs are so insubstantial that it is meaningless even to say that they have no substance.

"It is no joke to realize me. Those who develop inner sight and even those who are established saints fail to fathom me. This is because Fana stands between all illusion, from the lowest to the highest, and the One Reality. The practice of Shariyat, that is, living in strict compliance with the laws and precepts of one's religion, may lead one to tariqat, the path of Gnosis, which has six stages. But tariqat has its end in Fana. Imagine, for example, that your body is your self and that your body must be totally consumed by you in the course of the six stages of gnosis. You will have to do this with your own mouth, piece by piece, at every stage. Ultimately, in the last stage, your own mouth must eat itself! This is what I mean by the final Fana, and this is why I tell you that it is impossible to realize me without my help.

"Although I appear to be quite different in every Avataric period, I always am and always remain the same from beginning to end. I live the worldly life that is lived by the people, in order to help them live the divine life that I live simultaneously. To be established in the hearts of the people, I need no religious organization. On the contrary, religious organizations need me in order to be established after me. Those who do not love me fail to understand me; and those who do not realize my divinity fail to understand it.

"I am often touched by the outpourings of love, faith, sacrifice and service on the part of the growing number of those who believe in me here and in the West and I do not mind the attitude of those who remain unconcerned about me, even of those who oppose me. But I am constantly eyeing your obedience to me, because it is futile to have love from the whole world in the absence of the required degree of obedience from you.

"I do not mean that you intend to disobey me or that you disobey me deliberately, when I insist so often on your obedience. On the contrary, I do not forget your sense of duty.

"The point I wish to drive home is that it is never too late to obey me, and that you should obey me to the end, that you should obey me with courage undaunted by any disaster, and that, above all else, you should obey me when I stand face to face with the dark cloud.

"For six months you should take care of what I say to you, and after that I shall take care of you. I say again, do not leave me and live to repent later when there will be no remedy for your loss. For six months, do not give up obeying me at any cost - come what may, remember me and do as I say. Make all other thoughts subordinate to your resolve to please me with all your heart.

"Now, for six months, up to March 1958 -

(1) Be ready and determined to do whatever I ask you to do. (2) Do no lustful action whatever; even husband and wife had better remain celibate. (3) Be honest. Honesty demands that you deceive no one, give no false hope or empty promise. (4) Try your very best not to hurt the feelings of others, but not to the extent of doing any lustful action.

"Those who have not surrendered to me or who cannot do so, but would nevertheless like to obey me, should consider the last three as my orders to them."

At the end he embraced each man, reminding him before his embrace to concentrate forcefully upon his resolve.

A member of Baba's mandali, A. Gustadji died on October 30th, after a few days of not feeling well. He had never been away from Baba except by his orders, and had been observing silence since 1927. He accompanied Baba to the West on some visits.

By the beginning of November Baba declared that provided his condition did not get worse there would be sahwahs at Meherabad in February and Western sahwahs at Myrtle Beach in May, followed by sahwahs in Australia in June. He had been receiving treatment from a number of specialists, and now in November there was treatment from a blind American chiropractor, Dr. Harry Kenmore from New York. The doctors had said that Baba would never be able to walk as before, because of the condition of the hip-joint, but now there became a prospect of it. Dr. Kenmore was confident. Indeed, he treated Baba not only professionally but as a devotee. The outcome was that on

28 November the invitations to the sahawas as planned were sent off. Baba said:

"I tell Harry that as long as he is here and attending to me I will do what he says, and in his absence will try to carry out his instructions. But I cannot promise to carry them out fully because I have work to do. He has satisfactorily attended to his business and I have to attend to mine. I have taken on this body for humanity's sake, and during the year I have to use my body for the work I have to do in my love for humanity. Therefore I must not take care of it to the extent of letting it interfere with my work. On the other hand I must take enough care so that it stands up to the strain of work that lies ahead of me."

Baba was staying at Guruprasad and darshan was held there for about four hundred people. It lasted all day. Among those who came was a blind Bengali girl 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 sahawas and to break the fast the day the sahawas 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."

Part I, Chapter 9

THE SAHAWAS OF 1958

1958

At last there came the oft-postponed sahawas - the 'intimacy of the give and take of love' first for the Eastern followers at Meherabad. There, temporary structures were erected for feeding and accommodating about 900 men, as was done four years earlier. Two groups were arranged, mainly according to language, the Hindi and Marathi group first, the Telegu and Gujarati second, each being allowed five days. The first arrived on 15 February, leaving on the 20th, the second on 21, leaving on the 26th, allowing a day's interval between for clearing up. Pendu was in charge of the arrangements. On each occasion, special trains were halted on the track close to Meherabad, the nearest station, Ahmednagar, being three and a half miles away. The men were of all occupations, religions, ages and colour. One devotee named Ramdas, from Hamirpur in North India, walked the thousand miles on foot, taking about forty days, through jungles, over mountains and rivers. Baba came from Meherazad each day.

On 24th February Baba said: "This is my last sahawas and tomorrow will be my last birthday celebration. It might also mean that even my body may drop. But I will ever live in you all, my lovers. After my return from the West there will be no darshan and no sahawas programmes. This is definite: So love me more and more. Be honest in your love for me. Try to serve others with love."

"Though I am the Avatar, I am past sixty and can no longer depend upon my memory, like any worldly man past the age of sixty. The fun is that you all are in search of memory, whereas in my case memory seeks me!

"For those on the spiritual path I am the sun, giving them light and life. There are a very few on the path who bum themselves completely in the glory of my light. There are some who warm themselves in the rays of my light, taking care to be away from the intensity of the glory of my light; and there are others who remain under shelter, keeping themselves shut away from the rays of the glory of my light."

As the sahawas took much the same form as the American sahawas to be described later, in which I participated, I leave any further account until then. When they ended Baba went at once to Mahabaleshwar to rest and for a complete change, preparing for the journey to the West. He stayed at a house called Shapoor Hall, perched on one of the highest hill points. Most of the time had to be spent in his chair, walking a few steps only to the car when taking a drive. Close to the house is an American mission church, and on Easter Day an open air service was held where they prayed and sang Easter hymns, not far from Baba's room where he was resting. At the end of April he went to Poona for a few days before going to Bombay for the flight West.

He had already sent the following message to the West:

My suffering is daily becoming more intense, and my health is daily getting worse, but my physical body continues to bear the burden. Despite it I shall hold the sahawas. I expect from you a deep understanding of my self-imposed suffering, begotten of compassion and love for mankind. Also understand, therefore, that I shall not undergo medical examinations or treatments for my injured hip either in America or Australia. No doctor or treatment will be of any help before the pain I am undergoing has served its purpose.

This sahawas will be unique in the sense that you will witness and share my present universal suffering by being near me as my fortunate companions - being with the Ancient One, who will be completely on the human level with you. It will be helpful to all participating in the sahawas, to know of the hint I have given to those living with me reminding them of my 'declaration' wherein I stated that my glorification will follow my humiliation, pointing out that this period of my sahawas will fall within the orbit of my universal suffering and helplessness'

I may give you more, much more, than you expect - or maybe nothing, and that nothing may prove to be everything. So I say, come with open hearts to receive much or nothing from your Divine Beloved. Come prepared to receive not so much of my words but of my Silence.

The American and Australian groups together raised the necessary money for the travelling expenses of Baba and four mandali, Dr. William Donkin, Adi K. Irani, Eruch Jessawala, and Nariman Dadachanji, and for the expenses of the sahawas, the Europeans being the guests of the American friends on their arrival at the Meher Centre at Myrtle Beach on the South Carolina coast.

All who came to the sahawas undertook to spend the full time there, to make no other visits during the period, to leave exactly on the dates given them, and to be ready to obey Baba implicitly. There was to be no publicity of any kind and no visitors were allowed.

In accordance with Baba's wishes, no one met his plane at the Idlewild Airport, New York, on Saturday, 17 May at 9.30 a.m., two hours late. He was reported to have been in a good mood and to have stood the trip fairly well, and went at once to the Centre. He had given orders that all were to arrive on 19 May, not before. Everyone was free to travel his own way: so individuals and groups arrived from early morning, from England, France, Switzerland, Israel, the majority of people from the United States and some from Mexico, altogether 225 people. By 10a.m. that day Baba was in the Lagoon Cabin to welcome those who arrived as soon as they entered the Centre, and he remained there most of the day.

The following day, Tuesday, all assembled in the large bam for the first full day of sahawas. When all were seated in a semi-circle, Baba was carried into the bam on his special chair, he 'said' through his gestures, interpreted by Eruch at his side: 'Relax and be comfortable. Feel at home because I have come down to your level. I want you to be here in spirit as well as physically.'

He then spoke about the accident in India the year before, and talked about the Indian sahawas. Looking at all before him he said, 'Don't worry. You haven't come to die unless a snake bites you! Let us hope, because you do love me, you will be happy here; you will not mind inconvenience. Just remember that I have not eaten properly for three days because of the pain. It is your love that has brought me here. I love you all alike.' Baba also said not to worry if he called one person to be with him over and over again during the sahawas, and another not at all, it was his way of working. Any worry over whom he called would disturb their love for him.

After a break all rose, Baba also, while Dr. Kenmore recited the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance. Baba resumed, 'Is everyone here prepared to obey me one hundred per cent? You should be very honest.' It seemed that everyone raised his or her hand. 'Can you obey me one hundred per cent?' asked Baba again. A young man exclaimed, 'It's impossible!' 'One should try', said Baba 'Harry Kenmore has had a great discussion on this point and has said, one must obey, not try to do so. That is one of the reasons he has come....

'What I want is love and obedience. I might manifest in you if you

have them. Discourses and messages are good, but are mere words. What I want is your love and obedience, one hundred per cent. I want one who does his best. In the time of Jesus I said the same thing; leave all and follow me. And the same in the time of Krishna and Zoroaster. I do not mean you to leave all your responsibilities but that my will becomes yours. My will should be your pleasure. God is infinite honesty. To love God you must be honest.'

'In the spiritual path there is no room for compromise', said Baba. 'Raise your hands who cannot obey me.' None raised a hand. 'Now raise your hands, all who will try to obey me!' Everyone raised his hand. He said:

"If you love me one hundred per cent you will be able to hold on to me. Obey me at all costs - especially until 10 July. You will never see me again in the flesh - all will come to pass in quick succession as I have said, any time after the 10th."

Baba mentioned that a Gujarati newspaper accustomed to printing articles against him, published an astrological prediction that a great Parsi saint would manifest this year. 'But', added Baba, 'I am not a saint. I am the Ancient One; and I tell you, the time has come. When I drop my body, I shall remain in all who love me. I can never die. Love me, obey me, and you will find me. Henceforth no one must give me a gift in cash or in kind. Only your love will be accepted. I want only your love. We will now have a little change. The raising of hands has made me very happy:

"There are four general headings of obedience: (1) patriotic obedience, that of a soldier ready to lay down his life and die for his country; (2) paid obedience, that of a servant; (3) the obedience of a slave, the compulsory obedience of one who has no choice of his own; (4) the willing obedience of love. There are four kinds of obedience in love: (a) literal, word-for-word obedience; (b) discriminatory, or the obedience of common sense; (c) complete obedience without pleasure; (d) complete obedience with pleasure. There is a fifth obedience which is very rare, absolute obedience, in which light becomes dark and dark becomes light because the Master says so. It is impossible to obey me one hundred per cent unless you have one hundred per cent love for me and accept me one hundred per cent as God incarnate. So it is for you who have raised your hands to do my will."

Baba continued, 'The purpose of my coming to the West has been accomplished. Tomorrow we will start discourses. Now let us have some jokes.'

After the gathering Baba went to the Lagoon Cabin and saw various groups. It was then announced that there would be no meeting in the barn next day. There was rain during the late afternoon, and throughout the evening and heavy rain at night. The following morning Baba devoted himself to interviews with groups and individuals from 9.30 until 4 p.m.

On Thursday, Baba arrived at the Lagoon Cabin after nine. It was apparent that he was suffering more than usual. Gathered in the barn again, while rain still splattered outside, Baba said that last night was his worst. He was crushed with the work; the pain increased, he was in fever. Kitty and the mandali had told him to rest the whole day but he would not listen. He said, 'I must go. The time is fast approaching. We sleep in the barn.'

He had told the mandali that he would see whether he would break the sahawas and also cancel the sahawas in Australia and go straight back to India. If he should decide to continue here he will also go to Australia and give sahawas there. No one need worry about that because the day before yesterday all raised their hands, signifying obedience. Although nobody said anything at this announcement, there was obvious consternation. Baba continued generally to say that his first instruction was whether sahawas is cut short or not - to remain happy. 'As long as you are here do not think of your homes and affairs, but think of Baba. I say with my divine authority, I am God in human form, therefore love me. I know everything.'

Baba went on to talk about the preparations being made for the Australian sahawas. He had informed Francis Brabazon that the sahawas was to be in Brisbane, and said, 'I will come and give you my presence for six days'. Francis replied, 'It will be enough if you are here for a single day'. Baba remarked, 'This reminds me of Hafiz, who says, "To be with a Perfect Master for one moment is equal to a hundred years of sincere prayer with all one's heart and soul"'.

'Are you all happy?' Baba asked. All including Baba raised their hands. He went on, 'Nothing will help me. I am happy as I also raised my hand.' A reading from the first day of the recent Indian sahawas was then given by Don Stevens:

Sahawas

I am the only Beloved and you are all my lovers; or I am the only

Lover and you are all my beloveds. I want you all to remain happy in my sahawas. I am the Ocean of Love. Draw as much of this love as possible. Make the most of this opportunity. It rests with you to draw as much love as you can out of the Ocean. It does not rest with me to explain to you how you should love me. Does a husband or a wife explain to one another how to love? One thing is certain; I want to give you my love. It depends on each of you to receive it. The easy way to receive it is to forget your home, family and all worldly affairs, when you are here, and be receptive to my love. This is the first thing. The second thing is to have a good night's rest, sleep well each night and feel fresh when you come here for my sahawas each day. I am God: if you remain drowsy in my presence, you will miss me and your drowsiness will oblige you to remain absent from my presence, in spite of your daily attendance.

'Sahawas' means intimate companionship. To establish this companionship you should be free with me. Sahawas is the intimacy of give and take of love between the lovers and the Beloved. There is no need to explain this give and take, for to create an atmosphere of explanations and discourses is to mar the dignity of love which is established only in the closest intimacy.

How do I participate in the sahawas? I bow down to myself, I embrace myself. It is I who smile, who weep: it is Baba who sits here on the dais seat and it is Baba who squats on the ground in the tent. Baba meets 'Baba': Baba consoles 'Baba', pets 'Baba', chides 'Baba'. It is all Baba, Baba, Baba. Such is my experience of participation in the sahawas.

Drink deep at the fountain of love, but do not lose consciousness. If you can but taste even a drop of this love - what a wonderful experience it will be! Have you any idea what this sahawas is? He who approaches me with a heart full of love, has my sahawas. After I drop this body and my passing away from your midst, many things will be said about this sahawas. Take fullest advantage of this opportunity in the living presence of the Avatar. Forget everything else but my sahawas and concentrate all your attention on me. I am the Ancient One.

Baba interposed for Eruch to remark that one man in India was so overwhelmed when he heard this that he fell unconscious on the dais. Baba had to call for volunteers to remove him. He was unconscious for two days. Baba was taken to the tent where the man was lying. He poked the man in the stomach with one of his walking sticks. The man

got up and embraced Baba who then had him given some milk. The reading went on:

I am Sakshat Paramatma. If anyone were to get even a glimpse of my real state, one would be glad to be cut into pieces a thousand times for me.

If I were to turn the Key, those who are opposed to me would change into real bhaktas (lovers) in no time. Anyway, even Virodh Bhakti (remembrance of those who oppose), is better than no Bhakti (remembrance through love).

Of what use is it to have my photo on paper? It is better to establish me in your hearts.

If I am not all-knowing what would it avail you to send me chits and notes? And if I am all-knowing, I know everything: chits and notes do not serve any purpose. I tell you, I know everything; I am all-knowing.

If you take me to be God, God is all-knowing. What is it then that makes you come to me with your difficulties? As it is, it seems to you that I do not know everything.

It is definite that I am in everyone. And the glory of the suns is the seventh shadow of my real state of reality. Even a glimpse of this glory is enough for one to lose all consciousness. Nothing but the effulgence then remains to be seen continually.

Don Stevens asked for clarification of the meaning of 'the seventh shadow'. Baba replied: 'If you put the brilliance of the seven suns together, their glory would not equal the first shadow of my glory'.

There was another reading:

The Meaning of Love

Love has no limit, but the mind is in the way. This obstacle cannot be removed without my grace. It is impossible, because mind has to annihilate itself. For example, if one were asked to jump over oneself, the most one could do would be to take a somersault! Yet it is impossible to jump over oneself; one may jump over others, but not over oneself! Thus one may want to realize 'Baba' as he really is, but the obstacle remains.

Books and discourses will not bring about one's spiritual regeneration. Mind cannot be annihilated by mind, for one cannot jump over oneself. Only by loving me as I ought to be loved, can the mind be destroyed. Anyone may have love for me, but not the love I want.

My lovers may be likened to one who is fond of lions and admires them so much that he keeps a lion in his own home. But being afraid of the lion he puts him in a cage. The lion is always encaged; even while he feeds the lion, he feeds the pet animal from a distance and from outside the cage. Baba is treated like the lion by the lovers. There is love; there is admiration; there is an intense desire to see Baba comfortable and happy; and Baba is also frequently fed by love of the lovers. But all this is done, keeping Baba segregated from one's own self. What is wanted of the lovers is that they should open the 'cage' and, through intense love, throw themselves inside the cage to become food for the lion of love. The lover should permit himself to be totally consumed through his own love for the Beloved.

In spite of all explanations and reading of books, words remain mere words. They do not take one any further than intellectual satisfaction. Only love for God works the miracle, because love is beyond mind and reason. Where then is the necessity to read? I authoritatively say: I am the Ancient One. I have been saying this to all the world. If you love me with all your heart, you shall be made free eternally.

The affairs of the universe continue to go on without being burdensome to me in the least. But the discourses and explanations on the subject of the affairs of the universe are a headache to me. The affairs of the universe continue without my paying special attention to them. They continue to work as naturally as one's breathing, to which one does not have to pay special attention. But when there is exertion, or when one is pressed to give a discourse on breathing, one becomes conscious of the act of breathing.

In the same way, when it comes to giving explanations, I feel like one who climbs a hill and becomes breathless. Giving you discourses and explanations is burdensome to me; and as discussions, discourses and explanations are also included in the affairs of the universe, the whole affair becomes more of a burden to me than ever. Playing marbles, gilli-danda, cricket and flying kites are also included in the affairs of the universe; but these unburden the burden. It is like coming down a hill: it is more of a relaxation than exertion. Jokes and humour are also the things which give me relaxation.

But whether I am burdened or relaxed makes no difference; for as I really am, I am beyond all this.

I will tell you tomorrow something about my work and the workers. The selected workers should be those who do real work. I want to lay stress on workers and work. Work should be done as work; otherwise it would be no work at all. I cannot tolerate egoism and hypocrisy. He

who works for me, does not oblige me, for he works for his own self.

The ultimate experience can be had only after the heart is completely purified. God forgives everything except hypocrisy.

I am the Light of the Universe. One day, as soon as you get a glimpse of my reality, you will come to know me; and you will get the glimpse. Very rarely one can see me as I really am; you see everything except me. You see the curtain that surrounds my reality. Fortunate are they who see even the curtain.

When, at the Indian sahawas, Baba's brother's son, Sheriar, approached Baba for an embrace someone said that he was Baba's nephew. Hearing this, Baba said: 'All of you gathered here are my near relatives.'

When someone was introduced to Baba there and all his qualifications were enumerated, Baba said: 'I am unmindful of these qualifications. The only qualification I want you to have is love. I see whether one loves me or not. You love me and I am pleased with you.' When someone spoke against the display of emotion, Baba said: 'Emotion is not bad; but love is quite different.'

After their references to the Indian sahawas, the 'talk' went on:

There is a mast at Meherazad. He has no body consciousness. He remains in the same position for hours together without moving his limbs in the slightest degree. He appears as though he were dead; but he has become the dust beneath the feet of his Beloved God. He is my beloved child. Even he who has become like dust does not know my real state. Some of the sahawasees have already seen him. He is not mad; but looks like it. He is also childlike. If you make him stand up, he will remain standing until you tell him to sit down again. His mind does not function as the mind of an ordinary human being; yet his mind is not blank. Intense love and longing for God has made him like dust. This mast does not belong to this world, though he is in it. This does not mean that I want you all to become like him; with your present normal mental state I want you to love me as much as possible.

'This reminds me', interposed Baba, 'of Mahavira Vardhamana about whom many books are written and whose teachings became the foundation of Jainism. For fifteen years Mahavira behaved just like this mast. People thought him mad and stoned him; children teased him, dogs barked at him. But later he regained normal consciousness and became a Perfect Master.' The reading concluded:

Saint and sinner, high and low, rich and poor, healthy and sick, man and woman, young and old, beautiful and ugly are all equal in my eyes. Why? Because I am in everyone. None should hesitate to come to me, meet me and embrace me with love.

Baba differentiated between bhakti (devotion) and love. He said: 'Consummation of bhakti (devotion) is love. When one's bhakti is at its zenith, one begins really to love Baba. And when love burns the love; i.e. when love is intense, there remains no curtains between the lover and the Beloved.' Pointing at all present, Baba remarked:

"But you should not take it for granted that you are in this stage of love. It is for very few to annihilate their very self to merge in me. So I say, love me more and more. Times are difficult; my daaman might slip out of your hands. I think within one year this body will drop. Do not miss this opportunity. With a clear conscious love me sincerely and help those in need. I am eternal.

"In illusion, how I play my own game none knows. It is a fact that in illusion there is time and space. In reality there is no time and space. Listen carefully; this is turning into a discourse, however much I wished not to give one. I tell you, until this moment nothing has happened; after this moment, nothing will happen. Every moment of the present is the real moment. In the present is embodied the past and the future - in my real state from eternity. I am the Ancient One and the creation is my shadow: so I know what has happened and will happen before and after millions of years, which is nothing but illusion. What I want to tell you is that I know everything. I am in each of you and everywhere. As conscious real 'I', in this false 'I' of yours, I know everything. You exist as you were existing, because you were there, you are there and you will continue to be there. You have been caught here in the snare of maya; and the accumulation of sanskaras makes you get more and more involved in maya. For example, take a man who is sleeping. He dreams that a thief is trying to murder him. He wakes up in a fright. He is now afraid to go to sleep again lest he might again dream the same dream. And the real fun of it all is that all the time he knows that it was all in a dream! Even so, all this life is a dream. The past and future are not there. There is only the Eternal Now in the everlasting present.

"I tell you not to worry! Whatever suffering may befall you, you should put up with it with full faith in and love for Baba. At the most what could happen? You might die. And it is so very obvious that you have to die one day; you have to drop this body sooner or later. Why

not then think that your body is not there already and so act detached? One more thing you must remember: that is, be honest. I am in everyone and in everything. God is in everyone and in everything. And because God is in everyone and everything he knows everything. So be resigned completely to his will.

"Once you were a child; now you have grown up. During the period from childhood until now you have gone through moments of great joy and sorrow. Where has all that gone? The fact is neither joy nor sorrow was there; it is due to maya that you think of and experience things which have no foundation. Within 20 or 30 years you will also forget the thoughts and events of today. So the best thing for you to do is just to love me. Love me honestly, work for me, I alone endure; all else is but a passing show! There should not be any trace of show in the work you do for me. You should have no expectations of reward for any work you do. In fact, I am much pleased and happy with your love and work. Don't worry.

"Remember one thing. The time has come. Show your mettle in this period: it is the time. The world will do my work when I am not physically here. There is no doubt of my being God personified. You love one another - as my workers, and then give that love to others. I know your family, financial and other difficulties. There is nothing more to tell you. The 'dark cloud' is near to bursting. As soon as I return from America and Australia you will find what I say will come to pass. This body of yours is a temporary phenomenon, you cannot come to terms with it. But it is a great thing if you are near me on this physical plane. I tell you all, all this is a dream. You do not realize it. When you are asleep and dreaming and I give you a sharp slap in the dream, you become wide awake. Only then do you realize that it was all just a dream. If you serve others let your service be honest. Think of me always." ¹

Baba asked at the end, 'What shall we do, Ben?' Ben Hayman answered, 'I enjoy whatever you do.' He said he might not come tomorrow because there is no tomorrow! It is better to have the discourse:

On Split Ego or Split 'I'

You must have heard about split personality. Stories have been developed on this theme, for instance, Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde - a combination of good and evil characters in one.

¹ Note that this was not a reading, but was extemporaneous; there were many such remarks: the readings are given titles.

Such a state, to some extent, is common to all. One day a person feels happy and in a buoyant mood; the same person, the next day or the next hour, may feel dejected and depressed. One day he does good actions; the next he is engaged in actions that are undesirable.

Just as there is a split personality, so there is split ego. All do not have a split personality, but all do have a split ego - 'I'. The real 'I' of all is One. There is also false 'I' in every individual, which gives rise to his separative existence. The infinite real 'I', which is One and in all, is seemingly split into innumerable, finite false 'I's' . . . the One real 'I' plays the part of innumerable finite false 'I's', in multifarious ways and in varying degrees.

The main support of false 'I' is ignorance. False 'I', utilizes three channels or means for its expressions - the gross body (physical body), the subtle body (energy), and the mental body (mind).

In other words, with the support of ignorance, the real 'I' takes itself as false 'I' and tries to derive fun out of the situation. In doing this, the false 'I' continuously gets set-backs and endures great suffering. Eventually, the real 'I' gets fed up and stops playing the part of false 'I' . As soon as the real 'I' stops playing the part of the false 'I', it becomes conscious of its (real) pristine state. This consciousness is eternal. It also realizes that being eternally happy its experience of being fed up was nonsensical ignorance....

The real 'I' when playing the part of false 'I' , as the false 'I', whatever it does, sees, feels, thinks, understands, says, is false, because the false 'I', is virtually false itself.

The aim of all yogas is one. The aim is that the false ego or the falsity of the split ego should disappear, and the real ego be manifested in its reality.

In other words, the real 'I', which plays the part of the false 'I', should play the part and assert itself as it really is.

It becomes impossible for the real 'I' to forget that it is playing the part of the false 'I'. But the real 'I' tries to forget the part it plays of the false 'I', through action (karma-yoga).

For example, take Eruch. His is the real 'I' within, but as Eruch, he is the false 'I'. Now the real 'I', within Eruch tries to forget that it is playing only the part of the false 'I', as Eruch. Whilst trying to do so, the false 'I' as Eruch, tries its best to serve so many other false 'I's'. But the fun is that one false 'I' in its struggle to forget itself remembers so many other false 'I's', while bent upon serving them!

The One Real 'I', which is eternally free, gets apparently bound by

this process, and is eternally trying to forget and to remember at one and the same time.

In another type of yoga (bhakti-yoga) the real 'I', while acting the part of the false 'I', tries to worship the real. The false 'I' cannot be anything but false, and cannot have any conception of the real 'I'. The real 'I', acting as false 'I', forms a false conception of the real 'I'.

Then what does the false 'I', say? It says, 'O Real "I"! I worship Thee in all!'

And the tragedy is that when the false 'I' prays to and worships the real 'I', it comes across only the innumerable false 'I's'. In fact it worships other false 'I' is, rather than the One and Real 'I'.

However, the path of Love (prem-yoga) is unique, because on it the Real 'I' plays the part of the false 'I', while it itself covertly remains in the background as the Beloved. And, while continuing to play this part, it burns or consumes its false ego, to remain ultimately itself as the Beloved.

In Eruch, for example, the real 'I' acts as the false 'I' and loves the real 'I', within. On one hand there is the real 'I' and on the other, there is the false 'I' as Eruch. But these are not two separate 'I's'. The false 'I', as Eruch, tries to bestow love on the real 'I'. And that is why with gradual increase in love and with greater intensity of longing, the false 'I' by degrees gets more and more consumed, effaced, by love. All the while, the real 'I', as the Beloved, remains in the background, as it really is. Eventually, when the false 'I', is totally consumed, there remains neither the false 'I' nor love. The Beloved, as the real 'I', reigns supreme as the One Infinite, Indivisible Self.

In the subtle planes, the inner experiences of the real 'I' may be said to be Divine Hallucination. In the mental planes, the inner experiences of the real 'I' may be said to be Spiritual Nightmare; inner experiences end in Divine Awakening.

When someone asked Baba whether the physical body was the false 'I', Baba said:

"That which asks this question is the false 'I'. He who translates and those who hear the translation - all are false 'I'.

"When one says, 'I am Eruch', 'I am hungry', 'I am happy', 'I am a Muslim', this is false 'I' speaking. A man bows down and worships Allah as the only Reality: at the same time, while bowing down, his mind is full of worldly things, his family, his business and so on. Thus, instead of bowing down to the Real 'I', he bows down to forms of the false 'I' that he has in mind at the time of worshipping."

Baba explained that Shariyat are the prayers and rituals of the man of the world; God pays no attention to them. Tariqat is the experience of the split 'I'. There are also Haqiqat and Marefat. But there are no distinctions in God. He went on:

"Here is Fred Marks from London. He is actually God; he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. But God in Marks says, 'I am helpless, I am here, I do not know everything.' The God in Marks says, 'I am a man'. The God in Mrs. de Blasio says, 'I am a woman'. But God is neither man nor woman. This distinction is due to imagination. For example, Don Stevens has a mind. There are innumerable thoughts or divisions in that mind; but there is only one mind. With this mind, Don imagines a cobra with ten heads; he creates that cobra, he preserves it, and then he destroys it; but in reality there was no cobra.

"In the same way, God imagines in the beginning and creates many divisions. All one sees and does is a play of the imagination. On the higher planes one experiences that there are no divisions. Kaikobad sees divisions but sees Baba in all the divisions. He has to go beyond this and see no division but see himself everywhere. Of millions of men of God, a rare one will realize God. It is so difficult, so impossible. Even Peter did not realize me when I was in the body as Christ.

"But remember all these are mere words. What has to happen is for the individual to become completely unconscious, as in sound sleep. When you are completely unconscious, that is the state of God; but you must also be conscious of everything. So you must be unconscious; yet a hundred per cent conscious. In sound sleep you go back to the original state but are not conscious of it; when you are in that state all the time but conscious at the same time, then you have found me."

In the afternoon Baba and the whole party attended a showing in Jane Barry's theatre in Myrtle Beach of the film taken by Charmian Corrinet of Baba's trip to the U.S. in 1956. Baba was very pleased. There was also a short film of the recent Indian sahawas.

The next day, Friday 23 May, Baba started by clearing up a misunderstanding. He said, 'I do not want to give interviews. I want to stop all interviews. But this does not bind me. I made it clear at the beginning that I might call a single person for half a day or I might not call anyone at all. I might call a small group to my house, or I might call the girls to my house. This means I cannot be bound by my decision. I feel some of you are thinking, "Why does Baba call five near him, or why does he call Anita every day, or Margaret? Why not the

rest?" It all depends on my wish. It does not mean I love them more or others less. Maybe the one whom I do not call at all I love more than all the others. I told Nariman to tell Don every day I'll pay a visit from 9 to 12 at the barn. It may be 9 o'clock or 9.30 or 10 o'clock, but expect me at the barn at 9. Then I go to the Lagoon Cabin until 2. I might call someone for my work or I may not. When I go to my house I may call someone or I may keep 9 to 5 for interviews, and finish the sahawas by giving interviews. There are two alternatives; both are liked by me. We still have to decide. So hands up for the barn?" (Many hands were raised). 'Hands up for interviews?' (No hand was raised).

'If I know everything, what is there to tell me? I know before you tell me. Only remember the hands you have put up for obedience. I will carry with me when I return to India the list of those who raised their hands; and if of a sudden I issue orders, individually or collectively, try to obey them implicitly. Everything else compared to the orders that I may send is insignificant.' Baba continued:

"This morning I had a decision before me. Last night a lot of working was done. Eruch says I was very restless until about 11 o'clock; Donkin, Nariman and Adi also said so. The decision was this: whether to leave Myrtle Beach in two or three days or prolong my stay for seven days. I decided this morning to stay until the 30th. On the 30th I leave for Australia, thus cutting short the sahawas by four days. I came on a Friday, so that I stay here for 14 days.

"There are many factors that cause me to make this decision. Before everything, I want to be in India before July 10th. It is very important for me and my lovers. For the sake of my lovers in India and for all I must have one month in my hands before the 10th."

The following was read:

On Obedience

In one of his couplets Hafiz says, 'How can you step on the Path of Truth unless you step out of the boundary of your own nature?' The Path of God-realization has untold and intolerable hardships and suffering. Even yogis, saints and Satpurushas are unable to fathom my reality. But what is one's own nature?

I am not going to repeat the theme of evolution of forms and consciousness, which has been explained at length in *God Speaks*. Best

to begin this discourse with the birth of a child: the child takes birth according to his past karma. He will act, think, feel, according to his sanskaras gathered in past lives; there is no way out of it for the child. This is what I call the law of 'must'. This law sticks to the child from birth to death. It has formulated the nature of the child, and has become the child's very nature. In addition to this inexorable law of must, the environmental circumstances of the child are such that he cannot but act and feel according to the impressions of the experiences of past lives. When the baby is born, it must cry; mother must feed the baby; its very sex is determined by the law of must. If the baby is a male child, it is so because it must be born a male child; if it is a female child, it is so because it must be born a female. And when the child grows into a man or woman, it becomes what it does become because it must be so. Do not confuse this nature with Nature - the entire panorama of the earth and its seasons! Your nature is the nature created by you and nurtured by you. It is one's own nature that is responsible for the body one takes on - the shape, the complexion, the health, sickness: appetite, temperament, etc. In short, anything and everything connected with one's own self - physical, subtle and mental.

Now to return to the difficulties on the Path. I say that it is impossible even for one on the Path to fathom my real state: why is it impossible? Hafiz said that unless one steps out of the limitations of one's own nature, one cannot step on to the Path of Reality. What Hafiz means is that it is impossible to realize your real self so long as you are bound within the limitations of your own nature. This means that you should go against your very nature, against the very nature of your physical, subtle and mental bodies!

Thus, if you are hungry, you should not eat; if you are not hungry you should eat! When you feel like sleeping, you should not sleep; when you do not feel like sleeping, you should sleep! This is what Hafiz means by going against one's own nature - stepping out of the boundary of your nature. Again, if you wish to see anything, you should not; and if you do not wish to see, you should see. When you exert yourself, you pant; but you should not pant, you should feel normal. Your breathing should be a normal breathing, just when you are out of breath. You are sitting, silently listening to this discourse and your breathing is normal; it must not be so - according to the couplet of Hafiz. From all this you will understand how impossible it is to go against your own nature and realize me as I really am. But, here, Hafiz himself comes to your rescue and says that there is a solution: this solution too is most difficult, but at least it is less impossible. In another

of his couplets Hafiz says: 'O You, if you ever get possessed by madness to realize God, then become the dust at the feet of a Perfect Master!' Hafiz uses the word 'madness' to depict that it is a sheer impossibility to realize this state of Reality. The question now arises as to how should one become dust at the feet of a Perfect Master.

Dust has no thought of its own, whether it is trampled upon, or applied to the forehead of a man, or remains suspended in air or water. It is all one and the same to it. I tell you that there is no truer and better example of complete obedience than becoming like dust.

Those who cannot follow this discourse should not worry: just concentrate on me. Words have no real value. It is good if you can understand: if you do not, why worry?' Summing up, he repeated what a Sufi poet had said: 'After years and years of longing for Union with God, only one, out of a million Mardan-e-Khuda (Men of God) realized God.' Baba concluded by saying: 'Be brave. Be happy. I and you are all One. And the Infinite that eternally belongs to me will one day belong to every individual.' Correcting someone, he pointed out that it was incorrect to say: 'You and I are One'; the truth is 'I and you all are One.'

Baba went on to say:

"At the Eastern sahawas there were four saints. Two genuine saints, and two - let us call them - saints. There was one: Yogi Sudhananda Bharati. He was on the stage with me; he loves me and wants to spread my message of love far and wide. Godavri Mai from Sakori also participated. She has a large following. People come and pay their respects to her and she is invited to different places. I call her Yashoda - the foster-mother of Krishna. When I call her for any occasion she comes and does everything I tell her. She obeys me implicitly.

"It is very important to hear what I am going to say. There is a child who was born in Central India whom they call Balak Bhagwan and he was very soon proclaimed as an incarnation of God. Thousands crowded around the child for healing purposes, for paralysed limbs, blindness and so forth, and he would give these people dust or water. Newsmen came also, and so many flocked to him that the police had to make arrangements for the crowds. Articles were written about him. They called him 'Balak Bhagwan' or 'Child-God'.

"The child grew up; he goes about in just a loin-cloth. He has a very good heart. He knows me. He has now formed the habit of having a flock of people pay their respects to him, bow down and garland him.

"One day something happened. He wanted to contact me. He was 17 years old. I was in Pimpalgaon and he came all of a sudden and fell at my feet. He wept and embraced me and gave me a tight hug. I made him sit down close to me. He chatted with me and called me 'Meher Maban' - 'Great God'.

"I told him he should be careful to allow no one to bow down to him. And if, in spite of this, people got healed through their faith in him, not to take it for granted that he had powers. He promised and went back. Then he came to the sahawas. I made him sit on the dais. I gave discourses during the day and I left Meherabad for Pimpalgaon every evening. He also used to give discourses saying, 'If you obey me, Baba will bless you'. But all there were my lovers. When I returned the next day I heard what happened. He asked for my forgiveness saying, 'From now on I will just love you, Baba'. But he has formed the habit of having followers.¹

"One day I learned that a saint from Nagpur came for sahawas. He would sit in the crowd listening to my discourses and then in my absence form a group and give discourses. I called him and told him to obey. I asked him if he were prepared to obey me. Then I ordered him to leave immediately, to fast for 40 days, to take only plain water, and all the time to think of me. He promised to obey and he bowed down to me. He left. For 12 days he fasted; then I sent an order for him to stop fasting, and told him to observe silence to July 10th."

A discourse was read on 'The Play of Ego', at the end of which Baba commented:

"In India we find people without spiritual authority allowing others to bow down to them. Even one of my old followers, after many years of contact with me, left me 30 years ago and established an ashram at Nasik. You have seen or heard of it as a place of spiritual pilgrimage. He used to tell people, 'Baba has made me his charge-man'. People paid homage to him. The news reached me and I sent one man to tell him to stop all this display and nonsense and come to me. He didn't listen. He was very happy with his surroundings. Three years passed and he established a big following, among whom was a very beautiful woman. It was not a proper marriage and the woman conceived. The police heard of it and the man got frightened. He left and ran to me. Then I

¹ This young man was present one day at the East-West gathering, four years later (p. 367) when he sat at Baba's feet on the platform. He is now known as Balak Meher, i.e. the child of Meher.

reminded him that he did not come three years ago when I called. Now he should either go back and settle with the police or stay with me when he would get leprosy.

"There is no mention of this in any of the books, but it is recorded in Chanji's diary. He stayed with me and got leprosy, all the time repenting. I forgave him and instructed him to go out and beg for his food, to be without money or women. Not to stay anywhere but to return after a year. He roamed about for two years and came back. He was cured of the disease. Now he loves me fully and longs to tell everyone about me."

Baba called for a brief intermission and asked for music. Max Hafliger played a Swiss yodel record, explaining that when Baba went to Europe in 1935 he enjoyed the sound of the yodelers after being in seclusion in the mountains. Max said, 'This record is only the seventh shadow of the real yodel'. Then the song that the men of Appenzell sing before they start to vote, very freely translated as follows:

Life eternal flows from thee
in endless surging rivers
and throughout all worlds upholds
the soul of thy creation.
Oh, the joy I have, I know
you, the Highest of the High,
Oh, the love I have from thee,
Master of my soul.
May thy presence be my guide,
may thy name for ever lead me,
may my feet be kept securely
on the path of life divine.

After the song Baba said: 'This reminds me of the 10th of July. This time no one should keep fast or silence but repeat seven times in a just audible voice (not shout) exactly at midnight between the 9th and 10th of July according to your local time: "Beloved God, Thy will has come to pass"'. Then Don Stevens read:

Love and Devotion
Love burns the lover.
Devotion burns the Beloved.
Love seeks happiness for the Beloved.
Devotion seeks for blessings from the Beloved.

Love seeks to shoulder the burden of the Beloved.
 Devotion throws the burden on the beloved.
 Love gives: Devotion asks.
 Love is silent and sublime, devoid of outward expression.
 Devotion expresses itself outwardly.
 Love does not require the presence of the Beloved in order to
 love.
 Devotion demands the presence of the Beloved to express affect-
 tion for the Beloved.

Baba then went to the Lagoon Cabin over which floated the Baba flag of seven colours sent by Mehera. Again he called individuals and small groups. He asked for all who had not seen him to kiss his hand. Then he was carried in his special chair for a tour of the centre from cabin to cabin. He left about 3 o'clock.

On Saturday, 24 May, Baba entered the Barn and asked the time.

'It's 9 o'clock, Baba's time', he said. 'Join me again today in the Prayer of Repentance, with all sincerity, and God in his Infinite Compassion will forgive all your weaknesses, shortcomings and failures up to date. Let the prayer sink deep into you and concentrate on me.'

After the prayer, Don Stevens read:

I am the Son of God the Father and God the Mother in One.

God is One. He is both father and mother in One. He is in everyone and in everything; but God is beyond this too. I will tell you about God in the Beyond state. In the Beyond state God is both God the father and God the mother simultaneously.

Now we will discuss the worldly father and mother. Suppose a couple has seven sons. It is natural for the father to love those sons who are useful to him, who are healthy, intelligent, brilliant - obviously, the father will remain pleased with such sons. Now the six sons of this worldly father are healthy, strong, intelligent and good in all respects; the seventh son is a disabled weakling, innocent, simple and guileless (Bhola). The father has no love for this seventh son and loves only his six sons. But the mother loves her seventh son the most because he is weak, sick, disabled, simple and guileless.

God is both the father and the mother in One. The Avatars are Sons of the Father in the Beyond state. All past Avataric periods witnessed the presence of the Avatar as the healthy, bright, wise son of God. All this means that the Avatar always remained the Beloved

Son of the Father. Note that the Avatar always takes a male form and mingles with mankind as man.

Hitherto, God in the Beyond state did not have occasion to play the part of God the mother. In this Avataric period, God the Father is very pleased with me at my being infinitely bright, wise, efficient and perfect in all respects (Us tad or 'shrewd') as my Father wants me to be, and I am the beloved Son of my Father. At the same time, in this form I am physically disabled. In America, in 1952, I was injured on the left side of my physical frame from leg to face. In India, in 1956, I injured my right side from the head down to the leg. Besides being physically disabled, I am also infinitely simple and guileless (Bhola). Thus, I am also the well beloved Son of my God the Mother. So, in this incarnation of the Avatar, God has the occasion, as it were, to play the part of both Father and Mother.

Twice during the reading Baba touched or pointed to his right foot and touched his brow. Another discourse was read:

Love is the Remedy

Do not give undue importance to explanations and discourses. Words fail to give any meaning to Reality; because when one supposes that one has understood, one has not understood; one is far from understanding anything so far as Reality is concerned. Reality is beyond human understanding, for it is beyond reason. Understanding cannot help because God is beyond understanding. The moment you try to understand God you 'misunderstand' him; you miss him when you try to understand him. Reason must go before knowledge dawns.

All this is a show, fun, a play. Mind must go, because the play lies in the mind. And the play is that mind must annihilate itself. Only manonash (annihilation of mind) takes one to reality. There is a way to annihilate the mind. The way is love. Just consider ordinary human love: when a man or woman is deeply in love with his or her partner, nothing comes between them. They get totally lost in love for one another. There is neither admiration nor fault-finding. There is total absence even of exchange of thought: love prevails without thoughts. Mind becomes defunct for the time being: for in such intense human love mind does not come into play. The mind apparently gets annihilated for the fraction of a second when love and loving are at their zenith. This brings about a state similar to trance. If ordinary human love can go so far, what should be said of the height of love divine?

I am the Ancient One, the One residing in every heart. Therefore, love others, make others happy, serve others, even at discomfort to yourself; this is to love me. I suffer for the whole universe. I must suffer infinitely; unless I suffered how could I ask my lovers to suffer for others? I am One with all on every level: I am One with all on every plane of consciousness: and I am beyond all planes of consciousness.

Baba made this comment after the reading:

"Have you heard of the two lovers, Majnu and Leila? They had human love at its height. Majnu was at a great distance from Leila, always trying to love her and repeating her name wherever he went. But Leila was at some other place. One day a thorn went into Majnu's foot; blood came out. At the very same moment Leila felt a shock and blood trickled from her foot. Even such human love falls short of Divine Love. Human Love at its zenith is Ishqa-e-Mejazi: Divine Love is Ishqa-e-Haqiqah. His whole life was Leila; he saw Leila in everyone. Of course he was not careful of his clothes, health, food. He roamed about always thinking of her. Then he met a spiritual Master sitting under a tree. The Master called him, saying, 'If you had tried to love God as intensely as you love Leila, you would have seen God everywhere, in everything'. Majnu answered, 'I am not after God, I am after Leila, I see her in all'. The Master called him, embraced him, and in an instant Majnu had the experience of God everywhere. Then he started to cry 'Anal Haq!' or 'I am God', instead of Leila."

Then followed the discourse on:

God

In the sub-human stage, the consciousness of false self or false 'I', which is very slight, provides scope for evolution. In the human form the evolution of consciousness is completed and the consciousness becomes full. Love comes into play actively for the first time. As love plays the part more actively and fully, the false 'I' begins to get consumed more and more. Eventually, when love is at its zenith, the false 'I' gets totally consumed; this results in consummation of both lover and love at the altar of the Beloved. Neither does the lover remain in love, nor does love reign supreme over the lover: the goal is attained. The Beloved is supreme over his self: there is nothing except the Beloved: everything else is consumed.

'I will now explain', commented Baba, 'what cannot be explained. You should all try your best to understand what cannot be explained. Here is Beryl. You, Beryl, are the infinite ocean, but as a drop of that ocean you have three layers. You see, hear and smell, do this and do that, not from within, but through your eyes, your nose, your outer layer. That which you see is from the outer layer of your infinite self of which you are the drop. Beryl does not see the Infinite through the outer layer. Beryl uses energy, becomes active and so forth. That is not you. You don't go anywhere. You are infinite. It is the drop that sees and moves, and as a drop you feel limitations. '

He called for a hat, a pillow, a pen, a box and a notebook. 'Here is Beryl, the Infinite, in the shape of a hat. Beryl is unlimited; she is infinite; there is no end to her. But Beryl eats, drinks, does everything through these layers (Baba points to the notebook, pen and box on the pillow). What is required is that Beryl, instead of doing things in this outer direction (crown of hat), turns inwardly and sees everything as infinite. Just a turn (Baba turns the hat around, so that it opens to the opposite side), and she sees herself as infinite. If you drop one layer, there is another, and so forth. You continue to see illusion through the layers. If you take a complete tum, you experience yourself as infinite.' Baba put the hat on himself. He went on:

"Now the point is, how should Beryl do this? It is impossible, because since millions of births she has formed the habit of looking in one direction. Just as when you are born you see what is in front of you and continue to see it and take it for granted. The most you can do is through your own efforts, or through the guidance of Walis on the Path, to change your angle of vision slightly. You will not take a complete tum, but you will shift your vision. Let us have a demonstration to make it clear. I have not explained this in India. This is the gross plane (pointing to the notebook). This is the subtle plane (pointing to the box). You have formed the habit of seeing the gross world through the gross plane. Now if Beryl contacts a Wali, he can't help Beryl to tum about but he can help her to take a step backwards and see through the subtle plane. The gross world is Out of sight (Baba removed the notebook). But a Perfect Master makes her jump and she turns around completely, and that is the end. With the help of a Perfect Master, she does not need to step back to go forward.

"The explanation gives me a headache. Actually it does happen this way. Those on the subtle planes have different experiences from those on the gross plane. The angle of vision completely changes but all is

still illusion. On the mental plane you see wonderful things. Your vision changes and you see illusion from a different angle. But you have to go beyond illusion; then the gross, the subtle, the mental and God are all here. Don't think that the gross, the subtle, the mental are higher or lower than each other - all are here. It is your angle of vision that makes the difference. You begin to see more deeply into the subtle, then more deeply into the mental sphere, then you take a complete turn and see yourself as infinite. Nothing remains but your self.

"Have you any idea of that bliss? It is continual, without a break, everlasting, never-changing. Baba continued, saying, 'in a big group, there are big differences. So in Andhra I had to spend a whole night in Rajamundry discoursing on work. But in spite of doing their best to follow my instructions, difficulties remained; so at the sahawas they had complaints to make. Instead of talking to each individually, I gave them a five-minute discourse on work.'" He then asked what time it was and said, "Baba's time is ten after ten". (It was really ten after eleven). There followed this reading:

Action and Inaction

- I. In the Beyond-Beyond state of God there is 'Unconscious Inaction'.
- II. In the state of God-realization, there is 'Conscious Inaction'. This is not the state of Perfection but of Liberation (Najaat). In this state there is absolute tranquillity which gives rise to infinite power, knowledge and bliss.
- III. In the Intermediate state (between I & II) there is 'Conscious Action'. Actions promote sanskaras. Sanskaras in turn breed more actions and create bindings; in this state there is bondage.
- IV. In the state of Majzoob of 7th plane there is 'Unconscious Action'.
- V. In the state of Perfect Master there is 'Conscious Active Inaction'.

This was interrupted by Baba saying:

"Perfect Masters are free of sanskaras: they have no impressions. As such, there cannot be room for actions of their own: their life is one of inaction but made active because of the prevailing environmental circumstances. Actions of Perfect Masters are prompted by the environmental atmosphere prevailing."

The discourse then went on to provide examples of what had been said earlier:

- I. The Beyond-Beyond state of God may be compared with a child fast asleep in a cradle: it is an example of 'Unconscious Inaction'.
- II. The state of the God-realized person (not a Perfect Master) may be compared with a child wide awake but still in the cradle: this is an example of 'Conscious Inaction'.
- III. The state in between I & II may be compared with a child awake and out of the cradle: it is an example of 'Conscious Action.'
- IV. The state of Majzoob of 7th plane may be compared with a somnambulist: the somnambulist walks about or performs other actions in sleep and is not aware of what he does in this state. Similarly the Majzoob of 7th plane does actions and is not conscious of them. His is 'Unconscious Action': he eats, drinks, speaks, etc. But all this is his 'Unconscious Action'.
- V. The state of a Perfect Master may be compared with a child wide awake but inside the cradle that is continuously rocked by mankind. It is 'Conscious Active Inaction'. Inaction is being inside the cradle: and active inaction is the rocking of the cradle by others. God is Conscious Inaction indeed. And the tranquillity of this 'Conscious Inaction' is so very profound that it gives God the attributes of Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss.

Baba commented:

"This should be read two or three times to understand it; it is difficult. Hafiz has said, 'The universe and its affairs are nothing into nothing!' Our bondage is due to actions. Good action is a binding and bad action a binding. One has to go beyond actions, then there is no binding. One cannot go beyond actions unless one is in sound sleep because of impressions which need expression. Expression in turn creates actions, and actions create bindings. Don, when you sleep soundly, you are in the original state of God. There are no bindings, no actions. But past actions demand that you get up, so you start putting your impressions into action. The goal is to go to that original state of yours of inaction, but consciously. In sleep you are unconscious and there is unconscious inaction. How can you be free of actions? Again we fall back on love. Love is the remedy. Not only in this incarnation but every time I come I stress that love is the remedy. We have seen the masts: they love me so intensely there is no occasion for sleeping, talking or eating. Don't

force yourself to love in that way. It comes naturally. What I want is this. Listen carefully; it is very important for my lovers."

There followed a reading:

My Wish

The lover has to keep the wish of the Beloved. My wish for my lovers is as follows:

1. Do not shirk your responsibilities.
2. Attend faithfully to your worldly duties, but keep always at the back of your mind that all this is Baba's.
3. When you feel happy, think: "Baba wants me to be happy." When you suffer, think: "Baba wants me to suffer."
4. Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: 'Baba has placed me in this situation.'
5. With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.
6. I say with my Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes my name at the time of breathing his last comes to me: so do not forget to remember me in your last moments. Unless you start remembering me from now on, it will be difficult to remember me when your end approaches. You should start practicing from now on. Even if you take my name only once every day, you will not forget to remember me in your dying moments.

After the reading Baba called for some jokes. Then he had 'My Wish' read again. He said, 'This is in addition to the orders I shall send from India between the tenth of June and the tenth of July'. The discourse was read a third time. Again Baba said, 'I want you to follow everything that is said here point by point, but this discourse excludes one point - on obedience. Any order I may send between the tenth of June and the tenth of July, you should follow implicitly and carry it out at any cost.'

Baba left the Barn and had private interviews at the Lagoon Cabin until 2 o'clock. Then, to music, he was carried in his chair to a spot opposite the long table on which was a triptych photo of him in his youth. Some youngsters garlanded him with pink carnations. He embraced each of the 40 children present, and was carried to the three-tiered birthday cake, on which was written, 'The goal is to be united with him in love'. Baba cut it and dipped the iced lemonade into paper cups for the children and all got prasad. He left about 3 p.m. and the children went for rides on the lake in the Venetian gondola.

As Baba entered the Barn on Sunday 25 May, everyone stood and

cried 'Avatar Meher Baba, Ki Jai!' while Baba was carried in his special chair. It was raining hard and Baba greeted the company with, 'Fine weather today! It is my mood reflected. You have no idea how I suffered last night. This morning I am very happy. I want you all to take care of your health. Don't get colds. One will catch it from the other; all will get it and then it will come to me! At the sahawas in India, some devotees came with the 'flu, especially the first group: it spread throughout the camp.'

'Last night was unbelievable. This morning, despite the weather, I feel very happy. Directly after our session in the barn today, I will go to my house. There is a group of women I want there between 1 and 1:30. After they leave my house, all the rest of the ladies will join me there. So today till 4 no one should leave the Centre. Tomorrow Margaret Craske's group of dancers will give a performance. The day after tomorrow Mike Loftus will arrange a programme by the men. On the 28th, I invite all the men to my house. The 29th is reserved for packing. The afternoon is a holiday for all. I may come to the barn, to the beach.... Is it clear to all?' A discourse was read on:

The Inexorable 'Must'

Everything and everyone in the universe is constrained to move along a path which is prescribed by its past. There is an inexorable 'must' that reigns over all things large or small.

The freedom which man seems to enjoy is itself subject to inner compulsions: and the environmental pressure, which limits the scope of reactions or moulds the reacting self, is itself subject to the inexorable 'must', which is operative in the past, present and future.

Man has his name, his sex, his personality, his colour, his nationality, his characteristics, his pain and pleasure and all that he may possess because he must have all these.

This overpowering compulsion is exercised by the force of innumerable impressions gathered in the past. These accumulated impressions cloud the consciousness of the 'self' at every stage, in every incarnation of the future, which, in one's life, belongs to one's living present.

The rule of this inexorable 'must' governs and reshapes the so-called destiny of man in every incarnation as long as the 'self' of man remains conscious of impressions. The principle of 'must' which overrides human plans is based on divine law which both adjusts and gets adjusted by evolutionary impressions. It is only the divine will that can supersede the divine law.

The so many deaths during the one whole life, beginning from the evolution of consciousness to the end of the involution of consciousness, are like so many sleeps during one lifetime.

One who lives for himself is truly dead and one who dies for God is truly alive. Baba extended what he had said the day before:

"How God is beyond imagination I will explain in a few words. God has no beginning. Can you imagine when God was not? Suppose your imagination takes you as far back as millions and trillions of years, and the answer is still: God was. But what was before God? And again the answer is: God was. So, can anybody imagine what was before God? Or how it all began? Even imagination cannot carry us to any idea of how God began - how everything began. To think of having no beginning cannot be imagined. There is no beginning. And before God was? The same answer: God was. Now, in illusion you will find yourself getting a beginning. And where there is a beginning, there will be an end. So you, who are experiencing illusion, how can you imagine that which has no beginning and no end? Yet you as yourself, as a drop of your own infinite ocean, have no beginning and no end. You have this form. You take birth. You have a beginning as a drop: you grow, you die, you end. You begin and end in illusion. You, as bodies, have a beginning and an end. You are the Infinite One, but as a body you have beginning and end; as the Infinite Ocean - of which you are the drop as body - there is no beginning and no end.

"To experience your real Self is the goal. You are and you will ever be. There is no one else but You. Instantly, in a flash, you will know everything, including why you have no beginning and no end. But this knowing will have nothing to do with mind, reason, logic. It is beyond mind. You know the answer to everything, you know that nothing has happened and nothing will ever happen. You then experience bliss, you become all-powerful, all-knowing."

A discourse was read on:

Omnipresence

There cannot be anything hidden from One who is Omnipresent. And as there cannot be hidden anything from such a One, he must be omniscient. He is all-knowing, knowing everything.

Thus, it follows that he must be knowing to do everything. He will say: I know to create everything; I know to destroy everything; I know to preserve everything; I know to do everything.

Thus he who is Omniscient is inevitably Omnipotent. His being Omnipresent made him Omniscient and this also made him Omnipotent. In short, to be Omnipresent is to be both Omniscient and Omnipotent simultaneously. All three attributes of God are linked with one another, giving rise to the infinite bliss of God. One who is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, cannot help but be in the infinitely blissful state.

Baba said in explanation:

"What happened yesterday? Nothing. What will happen tomorrow? Nothing. All happens now. This experience of everything happening at this very moment is dnyan, knowledge, wisdom. It has nothing to do with the mind, reason. One who has this experience of eternal knowledge - dnyan - is wise. Mind says 'It was yesterday that Baba was here. Baba gave us a discourse, and we all listened, and the children had a party', and mind also says, 'Tomorrow we will have a performance'. But one rare being knows that there is no such thing as yesterday or tomorrow. There is the Eternal NOW from the beginningless beginning to the endless end. There is one moment only - the ETERNAL NOW. He, who experiences the Eternal NOW, finds all doubts, worries, everything dissolved like mist, and remains in eternal bliss."

Fore- Knowledge

A. The fore-knowledge possessed by an ordinary person depends on memory based on past experiences:

- (i) When a person sees a man on a mountain-top, the person has fore-knowledge that if the man falls down the mountain he will surely die.
- (ii) When a person sees a row of horses at the starting-point on a race-course, the person has fore-knowledge that the horses will run as soon as the 'Start' signal is given.
- (iii) When a person sees a bottle of whisky, he has fore-knowledge that the liquid will give intoxication. He associates whisky with intoxication.

Thousands of such examples could be given of fore-knowledge in an ordinary person.

B. Fore-knowledge of Perfect Masters depends on the everlasting indivisible experience:

(a) Everlasting - without break in continuity;

(b) Everlasting - No scope for past, present and future to determine themselves even relatively.

Thus it is that Perfect Masters and Avatars assert: 'I know everything.'

It is due to their everlasting indivisible experience that there is no scope left for anything other than their infinite, indivisible, omnipresent, all-pervading individual Self, the Existence Eternal.

Baba commented: 'I know everything. This means I know the past, the present and the future, how many births you have taken in the past, how many you will take in the future and I know what you will think when you are born after one million births. I know it in this Eternal Now of mine. This is the meaning of all-knowing.'

Baba asked the time (11 o'clock). 'See how we are all concerned with watches and time in illusion! But when we go beyond illusion there is no time, no space. It is eternal bliss.'

'Let us have music', continued Baba. Magda Lena Alverado, eight years old, recited a poem. Mrs Hutchins asked was this not the anniversary of Pentecost and what was its significance. Baba refused to answer.

Baba said that Harry Kenmore had a very good heart. 'He is 100 per cent for Baba, and is the only man to whom Mehera was permitted to speak for five minutes. I have not permitted Mehera to speak to any man. Harry, what did you feel about Mehera?' Harry replied: 'Mehera radiates love and purity. I felt she was the feminine counterpart of Baba.' Baba turned and gave him a kiss.

Then the record of 'Begin the Beguine' was played; Baba said it had an eternal meaning. He beat the time with his fingers on the arm of his chair. 'I always hear this record at Nariman's place when I go to Bombay.'

Some Indian records were played. In between Baba explained, 'In India there is classical music. I do not much like it. They come and sing classical songs for me and I do not appreciate it. I like Qawali best. There is a depth to what they say and to the words they use. The Qawalis are all based on me. About my greatness and my work....'

'Here are four Indian records. If you cannot follow them, remember the Indians don't appreciate English music! The first record is in praise

of Khwaja, the guru of the age. The people come to Ajmer to pay homage to his shrine. The singer sings in praise of Khwaja, that means he sings my praise. Another song is in praise of Muhammad: 'God's beloved king on earth in human form, who has found his own glory in all the flowers and birds.' It has a deep significance.

"Here the singer speaks of Nur, of the brilliant effulgence of God. One can't describe Nur. The brilliance of the sun is but the seventh shadow of God. The word khuda is used for God. So he tells of khuda which is infinite effulgence. The singer tells of the infinite effulgence of God being contained in the human form as Muhammad, as Jesus Christ, as Baba. The infinite bottled up in human form. If one can understand the depth of the words, one can appreciate the depth of what is being said, especially in Qawali: 'The God-Man is the ocean of Unity, and the saints are the pearls in the ocean'. Some records were fortunately left behind in Pimpalgaon, otherwise I should have had to explain every word! Qawali are not religious, but spiritual songs. They are devotional songs, and have nothing to do with religion. Like the Christian mystics, each one of whom was my gem, each was a lover of God. Jesus was their Beloved, and they did nothing but love their Beloved. They were burning with love that burned their sins to ashes.

"Here the singer sings of the Qutub of that age. Do you all know what Qutub means? He is the Perfect Master, the pivot, the centre of the whole universe. Sadguru and God-Man. Have you learned all these terms? The singer says: 'I need not go begging anywhere from anyone. If anyone can give me anything it is the Qutub. So I fall at his feet and beg for nothing.' We hear the word mangna; it means to ask, to beg. He says, 'I don't want to ask or beg anything from God because Qutub has divine knowledge and will give me anything, including God'. He says, 'Ask anything from the Qutub and he will give it to you, but be wise and ask him for God, because he is the only one who can give Union with God'.

"This side is about the God-Man, the one that is expected. When he comes all are blind to it. None can know about it. But he brings with him a thick cloud of compassion that bursts and gives a shower of compassion. All expect him - men, winds, clouds, trees, all - but none sees him, all are blind to him, but he showers his love and compassion on all beings and things."

In the afternoon he called two groups of women to receive prasad, the first were about twenty who assembled in the living room of

Baba's house. They were those whom Mehera had known or corresponded with, she had sent them little presents and had told Baba for whom each present was intended. He said he had nodded his head at the time but now he could not recall! He could solve the universal problems but not this problem.

Baba sat in his armchair and the women sat on the floor and on chairs around him. Then he said, in his love, Mehera came first, and then Mani. Mehera was his Beloved. Mani was his true sister in work. She loves Baba and works for him from morning to late at night with correspondence and other details, even though she is not in good health at present. She loves him and has surrendered to him one hundred per cent.

Baba then handed each her present from Mehera. He said that Mehera was 17 when she first came to him. Later he passed round a small box containing a lock of his hair at the time he was a young man. It was auburn, curly hair. He also gave for all his centres and groups, large coloured photos made by Behram. He gave each of the women some of his hair from another box as a very special prasad of his grace. He told them to leave directly after receiving the hair. One who was present said that it was not easy to put into words the feelings each experienced. Baba looked radiant. His nearness was surcharged with Love.

On Monday, 26 May, at 10 o'clock Baba entered the barn. 'For the first time today I am punctual. According to my time, it is 9 o' clock. From 6 to 8 I was busy with the mandali about the sahawas; from 8 to 9 with people for work; from 9 to 10 I was in the Lagoon Cabin with those who are leaving today and with newcomers. I shall leave the barn at 11:45 and go to the Lagoon Cabin. I have to see certain people; I come back here at 2. Kitty, are there any more newcomers? Only two? How many are expected for the second week?' 'Three or four', Kitty replies. 'If they really meet me for only one second, it is sufficient for a lifetime. Now we listen to the discourses':

God and Cosmos

God is infinite reality; Cosmos is infinite illusion.

In infinite illusion there are infinite suns, stars, moons, planets and the creation as a whole evolves ad infinitum.

For instance, take the head of a human being. The head is one and there is one individual mind. Yet innumerable hairs grow over this one head; even when all the hair is shaved, the growth of hair does not cease: the hair reappears and covers the head.

Within the head as such, the hairs, though innumerable, have no value, because even when all the hair falls off; the head, though bald, remains. Whatever value attached to the hair is but decorative. The hair may help to make the head appear attractive and may create a feeling of self-satisfaction; but hairs, as such, have no value when compared with the head upon which they appear and disappear.

One individual mind that generates thoughts innumerable may be compared with the head that has a growth of hairs, also innumerable.

One individual mind is capable of containing, emanating and absorbing any number of thoughts. Energy and all matter are the outcome of mind itself.

To understand the all-importance of God, who is infinite reality: let this all-importance be compared with the importance of mind; and the importance of creation be compared with the hair upon the head.

I tell you that God is infinitely all-important when compared with the Cosmos, which has no value other than that of the hair upon one's head - the hair that lures one and that creates illusory self-satisfaction.

Real Birth and Real Death

There is one real birth and one real death. You are born once and you really die only once. What is the real birth?

It is the birth of a 'drop' in the Ocean of Reality. What is meant by the birth of a 'drop' in the Ocean of Reality? It is the advent of individuality, born of individuality through a glimmer of the first most-finite consciousness, which transfixed cognizance of limitation into the Unlimited.

What is meant by the real death?

It is consciousness getting free of all limitations. Freedom from all limitations is real death; it is really the death of all limitations: it is liberation. In between the real birth and the real death, there is no such reality as the so-called births and deaths.

What happens in the intermediate stage known as births and deaths is that the limitations of consciousness gradually wear off until consciousness is free of limitations. Ultimately, consciousness, totally free of limitations, experiences the unlimited reality eternally. Real dying is equal to real living. Therefore I stress: Die for God and you will live as God.

Baba commented: "You are first a child, then grow old and drop the body, but you never die and never were born. In the East, Vedantists

believe in reincarnation, in innumerable births and deaths until one attains Godhood. The Muslims believe in one birth only and one death only, the Christians and Zoroastrians the same. All are right. "

"But Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, Zoroaster, all meant what I mean by real birth and real death. I say you are born once and die once. All the so-called births and deaths are only sleeps and wakings. The difference between sleep and death is that when you sleep you awake and find yourself in the same body; but after death you awake in a different body. You never die. Only the blessed ones die and become one with God."

When the discourse on Fana was to be read, Baba preceded the reading by saying: 'This is short but difficult. Those who cannot follow it, must not worry. It's nothing but words. Only love counts. If the most unintelligent one can love me as I ought to be loved, he is infinitely more blessed than the most intelligent one who doesn't know how to love me.'

Fana

Fana is the state of unconscious consciousness. This is followed by Fana-Fillah where the soul is unconscious of everything except Self being God.

Before the soul loses its human state and gains the divine state of Nirvikalp, it has to experience the vacuum state of Nirvan.

Nirvan is the infinite vacuum state when the soul is fully conscious of real nothing.

Nirvan is immediately and inevitably followed by Nirvikalp or Fana-Fillah, where the soul is fully conscious of Real Everything. Nirvan and Nirvikalp are so irrevocably linked and tied together that each can be said to be the Divine Goal:

False Nothing - Illusory everything
 Real Nothing - Neither everything nor nothing
 Real Everything - God the Infinite

False nothing leads to false everything; and Real Nothing leads to Real Everything. False nothing is linked to false everything; and Real Nothing is linked to Real Everything. Eventually false nothing ends in false everything, and Real Nothing ends in Real Everything. In duality false nothing is false everything. In unity Real Nothing and Real Everything are one.

Baba commented: 'If you listen seven times, there is a chance of your

beginning to understand. Or you might lose yourself in nothing. What is the Real Nothing? There is a difference between nothing and the Real Nothing. Real Nothing means not even nothing. On the 6th plane, one sees nothing but God everywhere; one sees nothing and Everything. There is still duality: the seer and the seen. The seer sees nothing but God. When the seer crosses the 6th plane with the help of a Perfect Master and is pushed across the abyss, his experience is of an infinite vacuum. It cannot be described; there is neither seer nor seen; not nothing - not anything; it is Real Nothing. But this Real Nothing is immediately followed by Union with God who is Everything. The vacuum is infinite and it must be filled by the infinite. That is the experience when one is pushed into the 7th plane. So even saints of the 6th plane of consciousness who see God everywhere, do not know what Real Nothing is.

'About answering questions on this discourse: to tell you the truth, I don't like questions and answers. From the beginningless beginning I asked one question, "Who am I?" and gave one answer, "I am God". All other questions and answers do not interest me. Still, to please you, I will listen to questions and answer them. Harry is full of questions!'

They went on to the next discourse:

Planes of Consciousness in the Next Incarnation

Do persons on the spiritual planes of consciousness take birth having consciousness of the same plane? Yes, but the consciousness is very gradual, as when a person of gross consciousness dies and is reborn with consciousness of the gross world. The child gradually becomes aware, as it grows older, of the same gross world according to past experiences of the gross. A child born with consciousness of a certain plane is not all at once conscious of the plane. The plane unfolds very gradually as the child grows. Later in life, this child as a man is established in the life of his respective plane-consciousness, as a man of the gross world gets established in his worldly life. Thus, a person of the gross world dies to reincarnate as of the gross world; so also a person of a particular plane of consciousness reincarnates as of that respective plane of consciousness and then gradually gets established in the plane of consciousness of his previous life. He may or may not make further progress in the planes of higher consciousness. Progress depends on the help of a spiritual guide of a higher plane, on the grace of a Perfect Master, or on his own efforts in the life of that particular plane of consciousness.

Baba commented:

"As I said the other day, the gross, subtle, mental spheres and God are all in you, in your human form. Do not try to find them in some other world. They are in you. It is consciousness that gives you the experience of other worlds. In the gross world the whole cosmos exists; also in the subtle and mental worlds there are innumerable experiences. But the experiences you have in the gross world are different from those in the subtle world. You yourself do not change; all is in you. You do not go to 'geographically' higher levels. As the angle of vision of consciousness changes, your experience changes. In the end you experience yourself as God, which is the ultimate experience, the real experience. All other experiences of the gross, subtle, mental worlds are illusion. So are all the states of heaven, hell, limbo, planes. Don't seek them anywhere but within you. Eventually to become your own self you have to love me. There is no other solution."

Another brief discourse:

Surrenderance

He who genuinely surrenders to a Perfect Master surrenders completely without asking for permission to do so. He does not even expect acceptance of his surrender from the Master. Complete surrender in itself embodies the acceptance of one who has surrendered completely as he ought to have done.

Baba interrupted to say: "To ask me "How can I love you" is to insult love. How can I answer? What is your answer, Harry?" Dr. Kenmore replied: "Thanks for placing me in this predicament! One cannot be told how to love Baba, one must pretty much find it out for oneself. Such a question denies love on the part of the lover."

Baba continued: "Had Jesus told Peter how to love him, Peter would not have denied him. I can tell you how to obey me, but there is no answer to how to love me. Love me in the way you understand love."

"I can tell you how to obey me: Do anything I tell you, even at the cost of life itself. And if you do obey one hundred per cent, with all sincerity, at any cost, it will be greater than loving me. Obedience is greater than love. But who can obey me? Only one rare one can obey me, but I have that assurance from you all. Just do whatever I tell you to do. You have all put up your hands - we'll see."

The Lover and the Beloved

Beloved God is in all.

What is then the duty of the lover?

It is to make the Beloved happy without sparing himself. Without giving a second thought to his own happiness the lover should seek the pleasure of the Beloved. The only thought a lover of God should have is to make the Beloved happy.

Thus if you stop thinking of your own happiness and give happiness to others, you will then indeed play the part of the lover of God, because Beloved God is in all.

But, while giving happiness to others, if you have an iota of thought of self, it is then not love but affection. This tends to seek happiness for the self while making others happy.

As for example: (1) A husband's affection for his wife. The husband wants to give happiness to his wife; but while doing so he thinks of his own happiness, too. (2) A mother's affection for her child. From this affection the mother derives happiness purely out of giving and seeking happiness for her child.

Baba commented: 'You are the individualized ocean.' He pointed to the brim of the hat he was holding and said: 'Visualize this hat as you. You see this gross world (pointing to a box); and with the help of a saint you jump backwards and begin to experience the subtle world (putting the box behind the hat and pointing to the notebook). Then again, with the help of another saint, you see the mental world, not the subtle or the gross. But what does a Perfect Master do? He makes the self turn completely around, make a complete roundabout turn, and the self disappears. The self goes, and God remains.

'The question is, how is individuality retained? The stamp of individuality remains, it is left behind to say, "I am God", "Beryl is God". Jesus said, "I am God." This stamp or mark remains. It is still real individuality. Remember the Real Self is within. When helped by a Perfect Master, the Real Self is removed, the imprint that remains is the original individuality. That is as far as I can explain it or touch your understanding. The Real Self is removed and the Real Individuality remains as an imprint.

'Suppose this is the infinite ocean. It is full of drops. Each drop is the ocean as long as it is not separate. So there are innumerable drops in the ocean. One says, "I am stone"; another says, "I am man", "I am woman", "I am this", "I am that".... Suppose there are three drops whose Real Self is removed and God remains; but the individuality is there. So Purdom (one drop) says "I am God" and his experience of his own ocean of bliss is continuous, without a break. Another drop, called Lud, is from the same ocean. Its Real Self is removed,

individuality remains, and says the same thing: "I am God"; and Beryl says "I am God". Three drops of the ocean say the same thing but the experience is individual. It's so easy to understand.... so difficult to attain.

'So what happens when you are pushed into the seventh plane? You leave your false self and also the Real Self and instantaneously you experience yourself as God.'

Baba called for an intermission. Some people remained clustered about his chair, especially the children. On resumption he said:

"Have you all heard of Saint Mira? In India everyone knows her. People sing the bhajans sung by Mira in praise of Krishna. Mira was a very beautiful girl. She was the wife of a royal prince of a wealthy family in North India, who later became king. She loved Krishna with all her heart, but did not live at the time of Krishna, about 5,000 years ago. Mira lived 200 or 300 years ago. Her husband did not like the way she was going about on the streets for she was the queen and queens did not mix with the crowd. She would enter the huts of the poor, the name of Krishna on her lips as she sang. She suffered many trials and threats to test her love for Krishna: she was locked up in a room, her food was poisoned, a cobra was concealed in a bouquet of flowers; she accepted all as a gift of her Lord Krishna and nothing happened, he protected her. She refused to have anything to do with anyone but her Lord Krishna. Finally the king drove her away. She said, 'If the king drives me out I have a place, but if the Lord of the Universe is displeased, I have no place'. The people turned against her. As years passed, she looked radiant in her rags. Then the king came and fell at her feet. For a man in India to bow down to a woman is a sin, and to his wife, unforgivable. Yet he fell at her feet because she was sincere. When she died all revered her, and now people repeat her bhajans.

"I am Krishna, I want all of you to love me as Mira loved me. Mehera's love is different and cannot be compared to that of Mira. A record will be played on which Mira sings. She uses words with a deep meaning, 'Krishna is mine, I belong to Krishna. I have nothing to do with anyone.' You hear the word gopal because Krishna as a boy looked after the cows."

After the record was played, Baba asked Don Stevens if he knew about St Teresa of Avila, and Dr Kenmore said: 'She devoted her whole life to Jesus. That's all I recall.' Baba replied, 'That is the most important thing. She loved me; she devoted her life completely to me.'

A record of spirituals sung by Marian Anderson was played. Baba closed his forefinger and thumb in a circular gesture of approval. When 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands' was sung he gestured with his right hand - 'I've got the whole universe in my palm'. The last song was 'Let My People Go'. Baba's face became solemn, and it became very quiet in the bam. He touched his right foot and then his forehead twice.

From 12 to 2 p.m. Baba again gave interviews in the Lagoon Cabin. In the afternoon there was a performance by Margaret Craske's group of ballet dancers. Afterwards they said they had never danced as they danced that afternoon.

On Tuesday, 27 May, Baba entered the barn at 10 a.m. Children offered him flowers. Two discourses on Compassion were read, and Baba continued:

"The explanations here are perfect provided one understands how the law of karma works. In India, I said to the mandali, 'I am now helpless physically. I am mentally helpless and spiritually helpless'. The mandali couldn't understand how the Avatar of the age could become helpless spiritually. Last night Eruch asked me, 'How is it possible for God to become spiritually helpless? We understand your physical and mental helplessness.' Now I repeat my explanation to him:

"I am conscious of all power and I am conscious of all knowing. I know everything. I am conscious that I can do anything, everything. But this moment, now, I do not want to do anything. If I use my power, the purpose of my suffering for the universe will not be served. Jesus was all-powerful, all-knowing. He knew he had to be crucified and could have used his power to avoid it, but he did not and made himself so helpless as to say on the cross, 'My God, even you have forsaken me!' Why? He could use his power but he did not want to use it. At present I have spiritual helplessness. Harry, is it clear to you?"

Harry nodded. 'If it is clear to you, it is clear to all.' Baba then asked Harry to give an explanation. Baba smiled while he was talking. Then he asked me and I replied, 'Jesus and Baba have no karma; they chose to be men.' He went on:

"Hafiz quotes a Perfect Master as saying, 'I killed my friend and nourished my foe. Even God has no authority to ask why the Perfect Master does this or says that.' To explain this I would have to prolong my stay for several more days! It has deep meaning. When you suffer,

don't worry; say, 'It is Baba's grace'. Then I am pleased with your love. Now, what do you want? One more discourse, or music or jokes? Personally, I want jokes, but let's keep your wish. I want you all to be happy. I say to you, remain happy under every illusory circumstance. Do you follow, Harry?"

Harry nodded. After some records a third discourse on 'Maya' and one on 'Auras' were read, and Baba resumed:

"You are all blind - unless you see me as I am. This is what I mean by this discourse on maya. Irene used to tell me that Westerners were spiritual, that they have more spiritual understanding than the Easterners. I said she was right. Easterners have no understanding but they have more love. And of course Irene was not pleased; so I had to create an explanation for her, so she was pleased, and God remains pleased.

"Remember one point, try to follow it, it's so new and difficult. Why do I say, everything is here within you? It is not above or beneath; the difference is only in the state of consciousness. For example, an ant is here on the barn floor; it is free, active. You also do actions here on the same floor. But the consciousness of the ant when compared with yours is insignificant. You are conscious of planes flying over the barn. You also know about air flights and so many things. But the ant on the same floor with you is not aware of planes. The difference between the experience of the ant and your experience is very great, though you are both on the same gross level. So similarly the difference between your experience and my experience is like that between you and the ant; we are here together in the same room and on the same floor, but to me you appear as the ants appear to you!"

That afternoon a performance was given by the men in the barn. Harry Florsheim was master of ceremonies and gave Baba a toy alligator that beat a drum. Then all the men sang, 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands'. The performance entertained everyone and at the end Baba commented, 'Today's performance is one of the few things I shall miss in my next advent!' He embraced all the performers.

Suddenly, as he was about to leave the barn, Baba's mood changed. A look of intense suffering came over him, and his eyes were far away. He remained in his chair, as all fell silent. He did not allow himself to be moved for some time. When taken back to the Lagoon Cabin he remained seated outside, with a look of compassion and suffering as many of the group stood silently about. He continued for ten minutes,

then got into the car and went to the Guest House. He stepped out of the car and a chair was brought for him. He continued to sit silently and intensely for about seven minutes, before returning to his own house.

On Wednesday 28 May at 9:50 Baba entered the barn and said, 'The most exalted spiritual experience is that of oneness, and the most exalted spiritual status is that of one who manifests unity in duality.' He went on: 'The highest experience is the experience of oneness which cannot even be called oneness. And the most exalted spiritual status is that of one who manifests unity in duality. That means one, who, after becoming one with God, through love for all, brings God down to earth.

'Today, I ask God in his infinite mercy to forgive, up to this moment, all my lovers all over the world who are not present here physically.' Baba asked everyone to keep seated while Harry Kenmore recited the Prayer of Repentance. Baba said:

"Hafiz says something very nice, and it is the truth. He says 'The Perfect One can turn khak, dust, not into gold but into an alchemy that turns everything into gold'. This means, Perfect Masters can raise those who are in the lowest depths to the highest levels with one glance or nazar. Nazar means a glance. It means that if a Perfect Master so wills, while he is sitting here in the barn and he wishes to give God-Realization to someone in India, one glance is sufficient. Hafiz says also: 'But I am afraid such a Perfect Master will seldom look at me. I love him so much but I am afraid he will not even glance at me out of the corner of his eye.'

"Today from 2 to 3p.m. I want the men to come to my house just to see it and to receive the last embrace and prasad. Tomorrow is a holiday for me. A holiday for me means more work! The day after tomorrow those who are going to the airport must get up at 3 and be ready to leave at 5:35 am. The mandali and I will be up at 3 am; so, tomorrow is the day for packing. Eruch is with me constantly at the cabin and with me at my house ... until midnight. He always gets up at 5. So tomorrow Eruch is free. Kitty tells me all are going to the airport. Is it necessary? Are only the women going or are all going?"

'All, Baba!', Kitty retorts. Baba teases. 'I am happy today, very happy. This morning Nariman wrote to Goher to convey to Mehera that I gave more of my love here than at the Meherabad Sahawas. It's a fact. Eruch says I am devoting more time to you here. Mehera loves me very

much. She loves me as I ought to be loved. She has written to Kitty a Marathi song in couplets, to be read out to all in the presence of Baba.' Kitty read the couplets in her version of Marathi and Baba beckoned Adi to recite them. 'In Ramdas' couplets', Baba said, 'he uses the word Guru, Master. But Mehera has substituted "Meher Baba, Guru Nayak"; Meher Baba, Master of all Masters.' The translation read:

May I always be blessed by your company.
 I want your company at every moment of my life, and only
 in your cause should this body be sacrificed.
 O you, the Infinite One, have infinite attributes,
 Do not be indifferent to me!
 O Meher Baba, Guru of Gurus,
 I ask nothing but this last wish,
 I don't ask for God or for God-realization,
 or powers, or authority. My only wish is:
 Please don't be indifferent to me!

Baba said, 'All are free to go to town tomorrow but nothing can be certain with me. I might come to the Lagoon Cabin or I may not come at all. I may just play with that toy alligator! If I come here to the cabin, Eruch will not accompany me. There will be no one to interpret. Just see me - be with me! It does not mean I won't come at all. I might ask the strong men to carry me to the beach. There is no fixed programme with me. Last night I asked Nariman to telephone that no one should go out off the beaten paths in the woods.' Nariman said he had forgotten to phone. 'Wonderful!' Baba said. 'It is not Nariman's fault; it is because he missed yesterday's performance by being at Wilmington. I want you to remember not to move about here and there in the dark off the paths. If you see a snake don't be afraid. Repeat Baba's name and if it bites you don't be nervous, say 'BABA' with all your heart. This reminds me: yesterday in my house I told Kitty, Margaret and Elizabeth what happened once in Meherabad. '

Elizabeth began the story, saying that cobras are known to enjoy inhaling human breath. Years ago, Baba gave Mansari a stick for protection against robbers; but she said, 'Baba, the whole village reveres you, they would not dare to step into the ashram'. Baba continued:

"Mansari is not the nervous type. She is afraid of nothing, only snakes, the sight of snakes. One night she awoke and there was a cobra on her chest. Her eyes met those of the cobra. I had warned her

always that when in difficulties or emergencies to repeat my name with all her heart. But she was frozen with fear and for about five minutes could say nothing. Then she took in her hand that small stick and saying my name knocked the cobra off the bed. Then she saw it crawling up on the bed again! Then, repeating my name, she killed the snake with the stick. She was trembling for two days afterwards. She cried when she saw me again, saying how I had saved her life."

Baba imitated her fear, her trembling, her looking into the eyes of the snake and so on throughout. He asked, 'What do you suggest we should do until 11:45? What do you want?' 'What makes you happy, Baba?' 'Everything makes me happy. I am very happy. Yesterday's performance made me happy not just because it made me laugh, but because you all love me.' Mrs Bahjajian rose and asked Baba's guidance and help. 'I am very happy to hear this from you, but was it necessary to tell me?' he asked.

'She resembles my aunt', he added. 'My name was on her lips when she dropped her body. My brother Jamshed, when we were boys used to quarrel and fight with me. As he grew older, Jamshed began to love me. Later on, in Meherabad, he couldn't sleep because he thought all the time about me. When he went to Poona all of a sudden he had a splitting headache and the heart felt heavy, and just before an attack of apoplexy, he felt very blissful. He shouted my name and then fell in a coma. And during those three hours his lips were moving with the rhythm "Baba, Baba, Baba!" Mani was there. Then he died. He came to me. All my relatives, my school friends, you haven't any idea how difficult it was for them to accept me as the Avatar after quarrelling with me, playing marbles with me.'

I asked him, 'Will you comment on what you mean by "to come to me"?' Baba replied:

'To come to me' means experiencing me as I am. No more bondage of births and deaths. But it does not mean the state of a Perfect Master, of Perfection. That is only to be attained in the gross body. So if you are not blessed with this state of perfection, at least you can have liberation. If you just take my name at the moment of dropping your body, you will come to me. Yes, anyone. It's not easy to take my name at the very moment of leaving the body. Then you individually experience infinite bliss. After liberation you continue to experience infinite bliss eternally. Why? Because it belongs to you eternally. You experience what belonged to you eternally. Even spiritual ecstasy cannot be compared with Divine Bliss. Remember this!

'Should I leave the barn, Harry?' Harry: 'Baba, aren't you capable of making up your mind yourself?' 'Ben, what do you suggest?' 'Either way you wish', Ben replied. Harold Rudd rose and told a funny story. Ivy Duce asked if she could display the chart. No, said Baba. One or two others who wanted to ask questions, were stopped by Baba. He said:

"Let us just take as an example that the sun is God. The sun is not God, it is gas. Let us say, it is God: infinite power, infinite bliss, infinite knowledge. It is all there in the sun. Those on the mental sphere are near the sun and they directly receive the rays of the sun. Those in the subtle world are a bit further off. The rays of knowledge and bliss are filtered through the mental sphere and only the residue is received by those in the subtle sphere. The gross world is very far off. It is so thick, so crude. Only the last traces of infinite bliss and knowledge come through to the gross world. Those in the subtle plane receive less of my rays. Those on the gross plane receive just a trace of my infinite power, bliss, and knowledge. In the mental plane rays of infinite knowledge are received directly and those on this plane know the minds and thoughts of everyone. The rays of infinite knowledge when they strike on the mental plane are received directly by the saints, Walis. The knowledge is now converted into knowing the thoughts of gross and subtle minds. In the sun, infinite knowledge knows everything as God.

"In the mental plane, rays of that infinite knowledge make known the minds of all. When they percolate to the subtle, those on the subtle planes know the mind of those who are associated with them. The same infinite knowledge from the sun, coming through the mental, subtle, and striking the gross, gives mind, intelligence, the power of reason, logic and all that is associated with the mind. So this gross human mind which is so powerful and able to think and act, to invent so many things, that is able to imagine anything - is really nothing but a trickle of that infinite knowledge of the sun.

"Now no more! It is already giving me a headache. Ben says, 'Baba, relax!' [Ben did not say anything.] Beryl, see: This gross human mind which can invent, imagine, think anything, can't know the minds of others. But the mentally conscious human mind can know the minds of all. It is so powerful, it can even raise from the dead a body that has been dust for years. It has happened before. This power that is received is the rays of the Supreme All-Power that is the sun, is God. Here rays from the sun can raise the dead; and I repeat, the mental, subtle, gross worlds are all phenomena, illusion. There is no reality but God. All

else is illusion. So raising the dead, giving sight to the blind are but tamasha; the farce."

After some music, Baba left the barn for the Lagoon Cabin, and in the afternoon the men went to visit him in his house. They were ushered into the living-room where Baba sat in the far corner, wearing his pink coat. He was in a hearty mood, recalling the hilarious show the men had put on for him the day before. It was a mood of man to man. After embracing each man, Baba placed a wrapped candy into the right hand of each. There was no discourse; the reception was simple and brief. He then came out of the house and walked slowly across the garden and stopped near the magnolia tree in the shade. A chair was brought out and Baba was seated. He told the men to fan out so that they might catch the candy he would throw, and began tossing it in his usual way, i.e. looking in one direction and throwing in another. When the candy was not caught it was returned, as Baba said it was not to be retained as prasad. 'This is not a game', he said. It was a link between himself and each lover, for the future. 'If you eat it with the feeling that it is the gift of God, you benefit; but if you eat it as mere candy, it has no meaning. Don't give the candy to anyone else. It is to be eaten immediately by the recipient.' He said:

"Krishna was the first Avatar to institute the custom of prasad. Once he was in the company of four companions or lovers and a Rishi who lived in the mountain fastnesses came for Krishna's prasad. He had lived so long in meditation that his eyelashes grew downwards and ants made their home on his body. Krishna replied that prasad was for his lovers and none else. This consisted of laddu or Indian sweetmeat balls. At last the Rishi, who was very intelligent, begged Krishna's favourite disciple, Pendya, who was a cripple, to ask Krishna for him. This Krishna permitted (because he was the slave of his lovers) and as a result the Rishi gained illumination."

The party then left. At the end Baba appeared serious and more impersonal; his work seemed to have come to an end.

Although he had said he would be there at 10, it was 9.20 when he made his appearance at the Lagoon Cabin on Thursday 29 May.

He gave a number of private interviews, then came out to listen to Harold Rudd's recitation on tape of a portion of *The Light of Asia*, where the young Buddha sees sickness and death for the first time. It was rather sad and Baba's face reflected a serious mood. As throughout the sahawas, his fingers actively 'worked' at intervals.

Afterwards, Baba was driven to the beach as all walked or drove there separately. The gate to the beach was locked, but the chain on it was broken by the men before Baba arrived. A small incident then took place, for he called for me to leave the car in which I was travelling to come into his car and sit by him. In some way I got my left thumb caught in the door. Baba immediately stopped the car and ice was sent for. Meanwhile everyone crowded about the car, and Baba said, 'Because of Charles, you will have more than five minutes of my presence.' He had originally said he would come to the beach for five minutes. At the beach he was carried in his chair to the water's edge where he removed his sandals and dipped his feet in the sea. When he was driven back to the Lagoon Cabin, he asked me to sit by him and I told him that I had always said it was dangerous to be near Baba! I did not see him again on this occasion.

On Friday 30 May, Baba left his house as the dawn was breaking. The main party had gone ahead to Wilmington in three buses. When they met him at the airport, he embraced one person and gestured to say, 'Don't tell anyone you embraced me this morning!' He asked one and another how they slept, or how they were returning home. A few people were late and explained to Baba why; he said: 'I am in you all. But I can only enter your heart when you have driven out everything else. But I feel shy, I do not enter your heart if I find there the slightest impurity.' At one point, he tapped his right leg, then his left, then his right again.

The plane left for Washington, where a change was made for Los Angeles, then to San Francisco, whence Baba and his mandali were to fly the next day to Australia.

The party reached Australia on 2 June and went immediately to Woombye in Queensland, about seventy miles north of Brisbane, where about eight acres on Kiel Mountain had been bought and offered to Baba. Under the direction of Francis Brabazon a number of helpers had moved the original wooden farmhouse lower down the hill to be used for the women's quarters, and had built a new house on the old site for Baba and the four mandali, also a meeting hall, and had constructed new roads. It was a beautiful place with lovely views. The men guests were accommodated in tents. More than fifty people from Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, had arrived by Monday, and on the following morning Baba and his mandali were received by the company. They met at once in the meeting hall where Baba said they would spend three hours each morning and evening with him. He asked about the centre and was told that it was his

property, but he said it must be held by Francis Brabazon for Baba holds no goods or property. He enquired about those who had subscribed for the purchase of the property and the alterations, and ordered that each was to have his or her contribution returned. The company was then individually introduced to Baba and embraced by him and the Prayer of Repentance was read.

In the afternoon Baba asked for the names of those who had helped in the building. He then talked about the sahawas in India and the United States. The discourse on obedience was then read, Baba interrupting in the course of it to explain. He asked if what was being read was understood, and for those who were prepared to obey to raise their hands. Those who did not were asked to come forward, and two boys and one man did so. One boy said he had not understood, and his mother said she could not have explained to him properly; the other two said they were not sure whether they could obey or not. They were allowed to remain.

Baba continued to speak about obedience, many questions were asked and there was an animated discussion. After a ten-minute interval the discourse was resumed. At the end Baba said it would be the last time they would see him in the flesh; they must forget their problems, for he knew them, and enjoy his presence. The meeting was resumed at one o'clock when Baba declared that he had completed the most important part of the work he came to do. The next morning was occupied with private interviews, and in the afternoon the company assembled in Baba's room when further discourses were read with comments by Baba. There was a gentle warm rain all day.

Thursday morning was misty and then all went again to Baba's room and the Prayer of Repentance was read once more. All were ordered to repeat the words, 'Beloved God, thy will has come to pass', seven times at midnight on 9 July. Baba then inspected the rest of the buildings and the tents, after which they re-assembled in his room, and gifts from the women in India were made to the women present. At the close some of Baba's hair and stones from Meherabad were distributed. In the afternoon there were photographs and entertainment.

The last day, Friday, they were called to Baba's house at 9 a.m., when the discourse on the false and real 'I', was read. This was followed by singing, but no records, as there was no electric power. In the afternoon, farewell was taken of Baba. It was a sunny afternoon, though full of sorrow. Baba and the mandali were then driven to Brisbane to fly to Sydney for India. The company was told to stay until the

following morning except one man who was given permission to catch a plane that afternoon. On Saturday in the rain the party broke up and all returned home. The centre is being maintained. On 26 June Baba wrote personally to each of those throughout the world who had attended the sahawas:

The following are the orders I mentioned I would send between 10 June and 10 July:

For forty days, beginning on 14 July 1958 (1) Repeat (audibly but softly) 500 (five hundred) times a day, at one sitting any time during the 24 hours, 'Beloved God thy will has come to pass in that all our Baba has declared will soon come to pass this year'. (2) Give up one cherished item, i.e. some special food, or drink, or smoking, etc.

You should not write any inquiry to India regarding these orders.

There were variations in the orders, some being asked to repeat the words 1,000 times, others 1,500 times a day. At the end of the forty days those who had the orders were asked to report direct to Baba whether they had done so. There was very little failure. It is not surprising, perhaps, that many of those concerned were uncertain as to the meaning of what they had to do. There was no particular virtue in repeating the words, however, apart from the obedience, though they must have had a significance that was not explained.

Part I, Chapter 10

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

1958-1962

A few of the mandali were kept at Meherazad, though Eruch was sent to Meherabad, where there was a gathering on 9-10 July. Something like 200, mostly men, were called. Among the few women were the Maharanee of Baroda and the Dowager Rani of Kurudwad. At midnight on the 9th, Baba's dhuni was lit, and, immediately after, the rains came, breaking the long dry spell that had threatened famine in Ahmednagar district; the day was very wet. When Baba entered the meeting hall at 8 o'clock two of the mandali were allowed to garland him, but he immediately took off the garlands, placing them on a table by his side. The sky was heavy and the hall was dark. Baba sat 'talking' and joking. There was singing and his arti was performed, but only up to 9 o'clock; during the singing he put on his garlands again. Then the Prayer of Repentance was said in English followed by translations. The Universal Message was read out in English with the usual translations.

Meher Baba's Universal Message

I have come not to teach but to awaken. Understand therefore that I lay down no precepts. Throughout eternity I have laid down principles and precepts, but mankind has ignored them. Man's inability to live God's words makes the Avatar's teaching a mockery. Instead of practising the compassion he taught, man has waged crusades in his name. Instead of living the humility, purity and truth of his words, man has given way to hatred, greed and violence.

Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present avataric form I observe Silence. You have asked for and been given enough words - it is now time to live them. To get nearer and nearer to God you have to get further and further away from 'I', 'My', and 'Mine'. You have not to renounce

anything but your own self. It is as simple as that, though found to be almost impossible. It is possible for you to renounce your limited self by my Grace. I have come to release that Grace.

I repeat, I lay down no precepts. When I release the tide of Truth which I have come to give, men's daily lives will be the living precept. The words I have not spoken will come to life in them.

I veil myself from man by his own curtain of ignorance, and manifest my Glory to a few. My present avataric Form is the last Incarnation of this cycle of time, hence my Manifestation will be the greatest. When I break my Silence, the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive of it. It will help every individual to break himself free from his bondage in his own way. I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself. The breaking of my Silence will help you to help yourself in knowing All this world confusion and chaos was inevitable and no one is to blame. What had to happen has happened; and what has to happen will happen. There was and is no way out except through my coming in your midst. I had to come, and I have come. I am the Ancient One.

Baba then went on to say that his recent visits to America and Australia would be his last to the West. He said none should expect any discourses, darshans, sahawas, or interviews. The time for breaking his silence was near, and he must complete everything within six months from 14 July. He added, 'I may have to drop my body'.

The discourse that follows was then read:

God Alone Is

Infinite consciousness can never lessen at any point in time or space. Infinite consciousness includes every aspect of consciousness. Unconsciousness is one of the aspects of infinite consciousness. Thus infinite consciousness includes unconsciousness. It sustains, covers, pierces through, and provides an end to, unconsciousness - which flows from and is consumed by infinite consciousness.

In order to assert infinite consciousness unequivocally I declare that I have infinite consciousness; and I can do this most emphatically because I am infinite consciousness. I am everything and I am beyond, beyond everything. I am ever conscious that I am in you, while you are never conscious that I am in you. Daily I support you and share your consciousness. Now I want you to uphold me and share my consciousness one day.

Man being unconscious of actually possessing the never-ending continually conscious experience that God is everything and all else is nothing, for him everything is everything: Air is. Water is. Fire is. Earth is. Light is. Darkness is. Stone is. Iron is. Vegetation is. Insect is. Fish is. Bird is. Beast is. Man is. Good is. Bad is. Pain is. Pleasure is - and thus there is no end to what all else is, until he arrives at 'nothing is' and instantaneously he realizes 'God Is'.

It is not easy for man to accept and keep on accepting under all circumstances that God Is. Even after his firm acceptance that God Is, it is supremely difficult though not impossible for him to realize that he has firmly accepted. And realization means that instead of being fully conscious that he is man, man becomes fully conscious that he is God, was God, has always been God and will ever remain God....

Before he can know Who he is, man has to unlearn the mass of illusory knowledge he has burdened himself with on the journey from unconsciousness to consciousness. It is only through love that you can begin to unlearn, thus eventually putting an end to all that you do not know. God-love penetrates the illusion, while no amount of illusion can penetrate Godlove. Start learning to love God by beginning to love those whom you cannot. You will find that in serving others you are serving yourself. The more you remember others with kindness and generosity, the less you remember yourself; and the less you remember yourself the more you forget yourself. And, when you completely forget yourself, you find me as the Source of all Love.

Give up parrotry in all its aspects. Start practising whatever you truly feel to be true and justly to be just. Do not make a show of your faiths and beliefs. You have not to give up your religion, but to give up clinging to the outer husk of mere ritual and ceremonies. To get to the fundamental core of Truth underlying all religions, reach beyond religion.

Through endless time God's greatest gift is continuously given in silence. But when mankind becomes completely deaf to the thunder of his silence, God incarnates as man. The Unlimited assumes the limited, to shake maya-drugged humanity to a consciousness of its true destiny and to give a spiritual push to the world by his physical presence on earth. He uses the body for his universal work, to be discarded in final sacrifice as soon as it has served its purpose.

God has come again and again in various forms, has spoken again and again in different words and different languages the Same One Truth - but how many are there that live up to it? Instead of making Truth the vital breath of life, man compromises by making over and

over again a mechanical religion of it - as a handy staff to lean on in times of adversity, as a soothing balm for his conscience or as a tradition to be followed in the footsteps of the past. Man's inability to live God's words makes them a mockery. How many Christians follow Christ's teaching to 'turn the other cheek', or 'to love thy neighbour as thyself'? How many Muslims follow Muhammad's precept to 'hold God above everything else'? How many Hindus 'bear the torch of righteousness at all cost'? How many Buddhists live the 'life of pure compassion'? How many Zoroastrians 'think truly, speak truly, act truly'? God's Truth cannot be ignored; and thus by mankind's ignorance and weakness a tremendous adverse reaction is produced and the world finds itself in a cauldron of suffering through wars, hate, conflicting ideologies, and nature's rebellion in the form of floods, famines, earthquakes and other disasters. Ultimately when the apex is reached, God manifests anew in human form to guide mankind to the destruction of its self-created evil, that it may be re-established in the Divine Truth.

My silence and the imminent breaking of my silence is to save mankind from the forces of ignorance, and to fulfill the divine Plan of universal unity. The breaking of my silence will reveal to man the universal oneness of God, which will bring about the universal brotherhood of man. My silence had to be. The breaking of my silence has to be - soon.

At a quarter to eleven Baba declared it was eleven o'clock 'Baba's time' and left for Meherazad.

On 25 August Baba sent the following warning cable to his devotees throughout the world:

Circumstances during these three months will be put to test love and faith of my lovers so try best to keep firm hold of my daaman. Do not talk ill of others and try not to think ill of others. Remember no correspondence with me or Eruch.

He remained in seclusion, and on 19 October sent the following to all his devotees:

I declare that a unique and unprecedented occurrence will soon take place in the spiritual realm. But apart from this and irrespective of whatever may or may not happen after November end I want you to

put your full trust in me and try to hold on to me and to obey me till the very end. Are you prepared to do so? Reply direct to me short and to the point only. Apart from this one short reply you must not correspond with me or Eruch until otherwise informed.

Replies were to be in not more than four lines. Thousands were received in due course and were read to Baba; each was acknowledged in a circular letter which said:

Obedience is more than love. Love is a gift from the Beloved to the lover, whereas obedience is an offering from the lover to the Beloved.

Baba went to Poona in December, staying at Guruprasad until the middle of the following January. An American visitor, Ivy Duce, was permitted to visit him there, for five minutes.

Early in February 1959 a visitor from the West came to see him at Meherabad. He said that he had come to India to sit in meditation for a time near a shrine in Ajmer and desired to meditate on Baba in Baba's physical presence. He was told by Baba:

Don't run away from the world: renounce your own lower self.

Don't renounce the world: renounce your own lower self.

Don't seek solitude anywhere but within your own self.

Silently cry out within your own self, 'Beloved One, reveal yourself to me as my own real infinite Self'.

It is you who are obstructing yourself from finding your Self, so try to lose your lower self in continued remembrance of God, who is your real Self.

Don't become Master of disciples till you have mastered your own self.

He spoke of meditation upon God, defining meditation as 'neither devotion nor love: meditation means mental effort in pinning down the object of thought before one's mind's eye'.

His birthday was not celebrated that year at Meherazad. He continued in what seemed slow, but was in fact under ordinary circumstances rapid, progress towards recovery. He was in constant pain still, but those who came to see him remarked on his radiance. At the beginning of March 1959 he went to the home of Nariman Dadachanji in Bombay for a week, receiving people from 9 to 12 each morning, sometimes in the afternoon. Altogether some hundreds of people came,

including many who had not seen him before. This was strenuous work, because, as already noted, Baba always gives himself. No wonder that he looked tired. On the afternoon of 13 March he paid a visit to St Joseph's High School at Wadala, when he was introduced to the fourteen hundred students and each walked past him. He then visited the Industrial Home for the Blind and embraced the blind men there. When one man asked why he was so unfortunate as to be blind, Baba replied, 'You do not know your good fortune. All are born blind, even those who think they can see. They do not see the real, any more than you, but you do not see the false either: it is your desire to do so that binds you. Do not ask for physical sight, but to be given the true Sight that will enable you to see the only thing that Is. Think of me constantly.'

He returned to Guruprasad at Poona at the end of the month where many hundreds came to him, some from distant parts. On 2 April he received the Indian cricket team about to visit England for the test matches. He gave them a special message:

"I am the spiritual all-rounder of all time 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 may show the spirit of love."

Someone from Deccan College interested in yoga practice came to see him, and Baba said:

"What do you mean by yoga, and what do you aspire to attain through it? There is only one true yoga, and that is 'you go'. I know of no other yoga than 'you go'. The meaning of yoga is as simple as that. You are your own curtain, only when you go can you come. The problem is, how will you go? The only solution is Love. When 'you go' (are 'annihilated') through love for God, the Beloved, 'you come' ('emerge') as you really are."

He said one day during the period:

"When I retire at night I feel as though my body had been wrung out. My general health is getting worse, yet I am getting much more active. But it is not for reasons of health I now stop giving darshan. It is for my universal work, which weighs on me heavily, of which you can have no idea. The time is come. The universe is come out of me and has to come into me."

He gave up darshan shortly after, and from 14 May asked all around

him to help him during the following fifty-six days by being fully resigned to his every wish. The anniversary of his silence, 10 July, was not observed. On 13 August he sent out the following:

From the 14th of August to the end of October 1959, maya will make everything go against me. Maya being the Showman displaying things that do not really exist, will make everything, including my health, body, energy, words and promises, go against me, and this will automatically test the faith of my lovers. But the only thing that maya cannot go against, is my Work, because maya itself is the means of bringing about the results of my Work.

Maya, being my instrument for fulfillment of my Work, has to do its utmost to bring about the utmost results of this Work.

Maya, having existence only in non-existence, will, in the end, give way to the one only Reality that is God. And so God will manifest in his Glory.

I want all my lovers to guard against maya's tricks and hold firmly to my daaman.

A response to this came from the North of India in the form of a spontaneous wish to repeat the name of Baba round the clock for twenty-four hours, those participating taking three hourly sessions each, for the period. This was taken up in many places.

The seclusion continued more or less up to the end of the year, when he washed the feet of twenty-four and twenty-seven lepers on two different days, bowing down to each of them afterwards and giving them money and cloth. A letter from Mani said:

What is wonderfully reminiscent of real 'old times' is something we have not seen for several years, something we had resigned ourselves to never perhaps expecting to see: Baba walking back and forth to the mandal is unaided and unaccompanied. The sound of that sudden clap so dearly familiar, and we run out to find him walking over to our cottage, open umbrella in hand and with a not so noticeable limp. We are not quite used to this and still find ourselves joyously startled when he suddenly gets up and walks over by himself to another room. This is not only contrary to our most optimistic expectations, but contrary to the emphatic opinions and advice of doctors and specialists who knew the extent of the injury. One of them, who has seen the transformation said, 'It is exactly the condition that would have resulted from the operation we advised. It seems he has performed his own

operation!' And so it was that I teasingly warned Dr. Kenmore who is once again allowed to be here for a few weeks from this September, 'You will be literally "running after" Baba this time.'

But despite this unexpected and heartening progress, Baba's general health has been far from good. At times one sees a great tiredness in his eyes, and he says, 'I am not only infinitely tired, but infinitely tired of being tired. But my work must and will be done.'

The five last months of the year had been a tremendous strain. He looked extremely worn and weak. When the seclusion ended he did not want any visitors or letters. On 9 December a message was issued which stated:

This obeying me and holding on to me denotes on your part complete and unconditional surrenderance to my will, and as such requires from me no statement, no clarification or declaration, regarding the import or results of my universal working in this world or the three worlds or beyond. Whatever I may say or may not say; do, undo, or not do; my lovers' trust in me and resignation to my will cannot seek from me a reason or explanation. But, because of my love for you my dear ones who are part and parcel of my Infinite Self, I state the following:

The infinitely crucial phase of my work has been completed to my entire satisfaction, on the 28th of October as stated by me. The essential period of work to follow, will end equally satisfactorily on the 24th of December.

The result of this my work will be 100% established on the 24th of December. This result will manifest in two stages: my Humiliation and my Glorification.

In the stage of Humiliation, the measure of your love for me and your preparedness to obey me will be tested, not by me but by the phase of Humiliation itself. Blessed will those be among you who will hang on to my daaman through it all, emerging triumphant in the divine glory of my Love.

The stage of Glorification to follow, will be when I break my silence with the divine Word - THE WORD that will indisputably assert the existence of God, in the mind and heart of man; that will make the world know that God not only exists, but that HE ALONE exists, infinitely and eternally.

I will break my silence and give the Word in 1960 in any month, on any day, at any moment.

The work ending on 28th October can be compared to the amassing and arranging in a universal heap the accumulated rubbish of man's ignorance in illusion that enmeshes him in the false and prevents him from realizing his true identity.

The result to be 'established' on 24th December, will be as my applying the match to this rubbish-heap.

The stage of humiliation to follow will be as the smoke that will first result, getting into your eyes and 'blinding' you, creating confusion and trying to envelop you. Do not let it confound you or get you in a panic.

The fire that will follow will clear away all the smoke of doubt and confusion, its light will reveal the One Truth that Is, and all that is not will perish in its consuming flames. This is my Glorification.

Do not worry. Be happy in my love and continue to hold fast to my daaman to the very end. Rest assured that all will be Divinely well. God does not abandon those who trust him. They who love me and obey me as I should be loved and obeyed, will one day be similarly loved and obeyed. Those who have today willingly chosen to become my slaves, will become true masters tomorrow.

Although he would not be 'secluded' after December, he wished no one to visit him, nor disturb him with letters or requests for interviews.

In the new year, 1960 he started to leave Meherazad again, on 2 January going with the mandali to Arangaon where his arti was sung; and there was afterwards the usual band and dancers. Resting now and then, Baba walked on this occasion something like two miles, which astounded everyone.

At the end of the previous year the poem, Stay with God, was published in Woombye, Queensland, written by the Australian poet, Francis Brabazon, who had been continuously with Baba since the start of the year, having previously made a number of short visits. The long poem in five parts is in praise of Baba, in irregular verse, something like William Blake's Jerusalem, which is an epic in praise of the love of Jesus: it is praise of one who has given meaning to the poet's life. In his preface the poet says that his religion has been the quest for beauty, which had led him to the very embodiment of Beauty in Baba, the ideal or perfect man:

You are the great Undoer, so that what shall be done shall be done.

The Remover who brings, the Stupefier who makes intelligent.

The Wind that levels the young wheat that the stalks may grow strong in the sun; while you during the days of its growing attend other else, and whet with your eyes the scythe of its reaping –

Thou lovely one! Thou faithless one of all faith!
 Thou stonecutter and gemcutter! Thou potter and breaker of pots!
 Thou upturner and returner! Thou upheavaller and leveller!
 Thou bender of what is straight, and Thou straightener of the bent!
 Thou Baba!

There is argument and exposition and many lovely passages, a presentation of Baba without parallel.

In a letter dated February 1960 Francis said:

How different is the reality of staying with God from the romantic idea of 'sitting at the master's feet'! Staying with God is the hardest work one can do. One of the proofs of Baba's greatness is the greatness of those who have been with him all their lives. Even Baba sometimes betrays his admiration for them. Sometimes I cannot help but wonder how it is that I am here among these men - why I am here. I am certainly no ornament anywhere, and here I certainly don't earn my tucker. Most of the time I am about as stupid as an ox, and not as useful. Only by being what he is could Baba have held these men for a lifetime. Being greater than the saints, he has not allowed them the beatific experience of the saints, he has given them only hard work, poor accommodation, poor food and little sleep, and the crushing weight of his divine love and boundless compassion. They have stayed simply because he is what he is - the Perfect Man, which is the totality of Goodhood in human form; and he who is the only Person in the world or beyond it who can make and keep them happy.

In the summer he was at Guruprasad when on 16 May three young sons of one of the Parsi devotees in Bombay were 'confirmed' in Baba's love at the request of the parents, and as at a Zoroastrian confirmation a white garment called a sadra was put on and a thread called kasti affixed round the waist; this was done by Baba, who afterwards said:

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 to give you the real binding of love.



The Schoolboy (circa 1909)



The God-Man (1957)



Upasni Maharaj (1920)



Meher Baba (1920)



Quetta (1922)



Quetta (1923)



The Mandali, Quetta (1923).

Top Row: Abdul Rahiman, Masaji (Baba's Uncle), Baidul, Ramjoo, Asthma, Padri.

2nd Row: Slamson, Baburao, Pendu, Nervous.

Bottom Row: Jal (Baba's brother), Gustadji, Meher Baba, Adi Sr., Behramji.



Jabalpur (1938)



Meherabad (1941)



Meherabad (1937)



Meherabad (1941)



Communicating from Seclusion
Meherabad (1941)



Seclusion, Meherabad (1941)



Darshan, Ahmednagar (1954)



The Tomb, Meditation Cells, Old Hospital, Baba's Cabin, Meherabad



Meher Baba, Poona (1961)



The East-West Gathering, Poona (1962)

He paid a visit to the Hindu Women's Rescue Home in Poona, at the invitation of the head of the society and gave the following message:

"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 Antony, principal of St Catherine of Siena School in Bombay, who has dedicated his life 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."

Father Antony expressed his intention of printing in his magazine this spontaneously given message from Baba. So Baba made him repeat the message. This he 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 on 6 June, said:

"It is better to deny God than to defy God."

"Sometimes our weakness is considered as 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."

He gave darshan on 5 June to a great number of people, estimated locally at over 10,000, who came from many parts of India, and on

19 June he received 160 poor people, placing his head on the feet of each and as usual giving them money.

Writing at this time Francis Brabazon said in a letter:

The great mast Neelkanth, the same who said that there will be a terrible catastrophe and people will be roaming about like wild beasts, has been brought down from Rishikesh in the foothills of the Himalayas by Kumar. He is housed a little way from here, in an empty house owned by a Poona devotee. Kumar and Baidul are his attendants. Dear Baidul is nearly a mast himself now. Baba took some of us round to see Neelkanth. He was naked (he never puts on any clothes in the winter at Rishikesh where there are heavy snowfalls). He has a very beautiful body, quite plump, and although his hair and beard are shot with grey, his skin is smooth and bright as on a child. His hair and beard are long and well-kept. He took no notice of our entrance. We were only allowed to stay a minute and then sent out. Baba stayed with him about half an hour.

He added that a Sanskrit research scholar, attached to Deccan College, where Baba attended as a youth, had been coming regularly, and one day sat down among the assembly when someone started reciting in Sanskrit some frivolous verses to Baba. After a few moments he rose, bowed before Baba and left. The next morning after greeting Baba, he sat down as usual, when Baba asked him why he had left abruptly the previous day, he replied that he had some work to do. The following conversation then took place:

Baba: Did you feel disturbed because of the recitation?

Scholar: No, I was not disturbed, nothing like that. I left because I had to bid goodbye to some guests.

Baba: Did you feel hurt because of the recitation, feeling it was an insult to Sanskrit?

Scholar: I didn't like it but that was not why I left.

Baba: Even if you felt it was an insult to the language you should not be affected. I am God, and I am insulted every moment.

Scholar: I am trying to learn to tolerate things that are not to my taste.

Baba gave him a few words of encouragement, and later the scholar said, 'Ah Baba must really love me, otherwise he would not have taken the trouble to correct me'.

Francis added to his letter these lines:

We sit with God through the days while he waits;
 waits the talk of the little men, the Prime Ministers and the Presidents;
 waits so patiently their insults to each other and their strutting,
 each justifying the war he will soon begin - the little men without honour,
 without love. How patiently God waits! Yet it is not surprising,
 since the little men are not men at all but puppets that dance and wave
 their arms and mouth the words while he the Puppeteer and Ventriloquist
 pulls the strings and speaks.

This was at the time of the abortive 'Summit Conference' in Paris.

Return was made to Meherazad by the end of the month when again 150 very poor people, mostly lepers, were received in Ahmednagar, their feet being washed by Baba, then touched with his forehead, and a gift of money and cloth given to each. This took more than two hours and was exhausting. On 30 June the following message was given:

This is to all of you who love me and obey me, as well as to all those who would do so. Most particularly, it is to all of you who have replied in the affirmative 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 you 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.

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 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.

From 1 July Baba went into complete seclusion at Meherazad and said that no one should come to see him, only those for whom he sent for some work. Neither was anyone allowed to correspond with him except in emergency until the end of the year. He asked 'all who love and obey him and all who would wish to do so' to observe complete silence from 8 p.m. 9 July until 8 p.m. 10 July - the thirty-fifth anniversary of his silence. He said himself on that day, 'To drown all sound in my silence is to hearken to my word of words'.

The seclusion continued broken only by such events as when on 10 September he touched the feet of 220 poor people all from the surrounding villages, bowing down and placing his head on the feet of each one, putting 10 rupees in the hand of each.

By the beginning of October he was seriously ill and had much suffering: 'You are Bliss itself; to make you aware of it, I come amongst you and suffer infinite agony.' At the end of November the following message was issued:

My silence must break. There is no escape from it.

I shall not lay down my body until I have given the WORD to the world.

Of my own I shall not break my silence; Universal Crisis will make me do so. When the Crisis will reach its absolute culmination, it will make me utter the WORD at that moment.

Circumstances are converging and fast gathering momentum towards precipitating the right moment, which will come completely unawares - at any time, any hour, any day. That Moment is not far away.

As I am the pivot of the Universe, the full pressure of the universal upheaval will bear on me, and correspondingly my suffering will be so infinitely overwhelming that the WORD will escape from out of the Silence.

Remain completely resigned to my will, and do not let any circumstances or situation shake loose your grip from my daaman. I shall not come out of my seclusion until I break my silence. The Divine Moment for my giving the WORD is not far off.

By that time he was suffering from post-herpetic neuralgia, which caused him to cancel a meeting at Meherazad on 4 December, but this had cleared up before the end of the year.

Before then he had, however, sent 'a wish to all who love him' in the following terms:

- (1) They should repeat any one name of God 500 times daily for 21 days, from the 26th of December 1960 through the 15th of January 1961. This repetition should be of anyone Name only - the Name most close to their heart.
- (2) They must fast once for 24 hours during these 21 days.
- (3) The men have the option of fasting for any number of days, at one stretch, during the 21 days; the women the option of fasting at the most for five days only - i.e. they must not fast for more than five days during the period of 21 days.

Those undertaking to observe the fast for any prolonged period after the 24 hours, should do so entirely on their own responsibility, without risking and affecting their health, job or Baba-work. Baba does not want his lovers to observe a prolonged fast by neglecting their responsibilities towards their family and friends.

- (4) Whether one fasts for 24 hours or more, the fast so observed should be done at one stretch - without any gaps in between. The person fasting should drink plain water and 'sherbet' (syrup and water) or weak tea (without milk), as many times a day as desired.
- (5) Smoking, and intake of necessary medicines, is allowed during the fast. Those fasting over 24 hours may take tobacco or snuff if they are in the habit of doing so.

As always Baba was explicit. Those deciding upon a fast exceeding twenty-four hours were not to do so if their health or work were likely to be affected or any responsibilities towards their family or friends. No one was to write about the fast, but at the end of the period all

were to send a simple notification of what they had done, without writing a letter.

In February 1961 Joseph Harb of California and Dr Ben Hayman of Texas were permitted to see him and remarked upon his looking extremely well. He also had a visit for a few days from his youngest brother Adi, who had been in England for the past five years. But he continued in seclusion, even from those nearest to him. All the same the birthday was celebrated at all the places where he is known, and he sent the following telegram:

I am the one who is always lost and found among mankind. It is your love for yourself that loses me and it is your love for me that finds me. Love me above everything, for now while I am in your midst I am most easily found as I really am.

He was in Poona the middle of March 1961, in strict seclusion. Those around him began to think that the final complete seclusion was beginning. He was still seriously ill, alternating with times when he seemed well. Occasionally he went for drives in the car and sometimes played ping-pong, giving a very vigorous game. He would also sit now and then in the evenings with the mandali. For a fortnight in May he gave up one hour each afternoon for people to visit him. They were not to bring any offerings, or garland him, or bow down to him, or seek private interviews, or advice, or ask questions, or to expect anything. Neither were they to repeat their visit.

The announcement of this opportunity tempted a number of friends in America and one in Australia to come for the one hour. Also many came from distant parts of India who knew of Baba but had not set eyes on him before.

He asked 'all who love and obey him' to keep the 36th anniversary of his silence on 10 July by observing complete silence for twenty-four hours from 8 o'clock on the morning of Sunday the 9th to 8 o'clock on the morning of the 10th, in accordance with local time.

During this visit to Poona a flood disaster fell upon the town on 12 July when the swollen Mutha river washed away a dam twenty-five miles away and made a breach in the dam that provided the town's water supply. The flood was the worst in living memory; half the town was under water and thousands lost their homes. Baba had been in the town near the mango tree where Babajan used to sit a couple of hours before the flood overwhelmed the spot. The waters reached close to Guruprasad.

Three weeks later he left to return to Meherazad where he was to continue in seclusion indefinitely, with no visits and no correspondence.

In the following March, 1962, Baba went to Guruprasad for three months; he asked that no one should visit him unless called expressly. He returned to Meherazad on 1 July. Before this, a notice was sent to his followers, East and West, to the effect that he would make another special visit to Poona, to give darshan for seven days from 1 November. The darshan was only 'for his lovers'. A detailed announcement stated that those from overseas would be allowed to visit him in the mornings, while Eastern visitors would be given the afternoons. It was made clear that no personal interviews would be granted, no correspondence allowed, he would give no advice on personal problems or allow questions, and no discourses were to be expected. In short, nothing was to be expected beyond the opportunity of being in his presence.

In the end, the darshan was reduced to four days. One hundred and thirty-seven visitors came from Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand, and approximately 3,000 from all parts of India and Pakistan. Among the Western people were doctors, lawyers, architects, other professional and business men, students, teachers, farmers, ballet dancers, actors, as well as wives and mothers and some children, a very representative group. The Eastern people were of all classes, castes and religions, and came from a very wide area, including a number from Persia.

Before I give an account of these few days, which I must extend a little because it closes the Baba story as far as it goes, let me say that coming back to India after eight years I found in the country, in the people, in the atmosphere, something that was not merely the wind of change but the breath of the future. I was impressed by a sense of great potential energies that will raise this land to a position of greatest importance in the world, something quite different from what I had felt before, when I was oppressed by poverty, decay and corruption from which there seemed no escape. Now, while poverty, decay and corruption were still evident, there was also a sense of purpose, undefined, it was true, and a pulsating life, undirected, but certainly present. There is much in India that is rooted in its past, despite the speed of Western unrootedness and obliteration of its own past which tends to weaken Indian life, nonetheless there is, together with widespread restlessness, abounding life and spirit. Instead of wishing to get home I had a longing to remain, which was a complete reversal of my earlier feeling and I am bound to declare it.

The approach to Bombay from the airport is through extensive areas covered with overcrowded shacks, the people living in conditions that shock the visitor and reduce his feelings to the lowest degree; for here the evils hit one in the face, and one forgets the hidden destitution and misery of the great cities of the Western world. Extensive building reconstruction is going on, the storm-blasted houses are repainted, and the familiar international matchbox-type architecture is well in evidence. In the city itself the population overflows in contrasted destitution and opulence, and though the atmosphere was oppressive even in late October, there was enormous energy displayed in terrific disorder. On this occasion I remained only a few hours, for my destination was Poona, which was reached in a little over three hours by train through some magnificent scenery, but the impression remained with me there.

I arrived with others in heavy rain on Sunday evening, 28 October. I was once more in crowded, dusty Poona in the midst of a wide crumbling land. It was the time of Divali, the festival of lights in honour of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity. Houses and streets were brightly illuminated, the loudest possible fireworks were exploded day and night, for Indians joy in noise. How loudly they talk to each other!

What was more significant, this darshan was to be held at the height of the Cuban crisis between Russia and the United States, and when the Chinese armies' attack upon India was in progress. In the town there were signs of India's hasty war effort and an acute sense of the Chinese danger, but little evidence of military activity or any interference with ordinary life, apart from the suspension of internal air services and warnings that it might be inadvisable to travel north.

Guruprasad is an ornate bungalow in a garden of many acres belonging to the Maharanee of Baroda, on the outskirts of the city. Baba and some of his mandali, with the women mandali, were already there. In the garden a large platform and canopy for Baba had been erected, and a large area covered for protection from the sun for the thousands to attend the darshan; there was a large covered space at the front of the house where visitors could wait; also a medical tent. It had been intended that the Easterners should mostly sit on the ground, but, owing to the monsoon continuing, chairs for all had to be provided at the last moment. Indeed, the persistence of the monsoon presented a serious problem and caused much concern to those responsible for so large a gathering. Baba said, 'I am omnipotent but helpless; if the rain is to stop, you must stop it!' After the first day, however, the rain did stop.

It was still raining, however, the day after our arrival, with dense clouds broken by long intervals of sunshine, and the day after that it was dull with a little rain. That afternoon, the Westerners were taken to the house where Baba lived as a boy, his school and college, Babajan's shrine and other places. On the morning of 31 October the Western women were called to meet Baba, when they also met the women mandali. (These women were at Guruprasad during the entire period but were not present at any of the gatherings.) The Western men went to see Baba in the afternoon. On both occasions Baba embraced all, one by one, and enquired about their journey and what difficulties they had had to overcome. The company sat around him in the large reception room of the house, he on a sofa at the end of the room, with Eruch speaking from his gestures. The Maharanee sat on the left at his feet on this occasion, as she did throughout the entire period of darshan; she sat erect, her eyes on Baba hour after hour, hardly ever glancing aside; occasionally he looked down at her with a smile. Baba looked tired, but the atmosphere was cheerful. Apart from inquiries very little was said. 'The clouds will disperse,' he said, 'the end is coming.'

To meet Baba again after more than four years was to find him greatly changed. He was now more than ever a suffering man. His expression was as bright, his eyes as keen as ever, and his alertness seemed not to have diminished, but he was withdrawn, and for much of the time looked far away, as though not belonging to the world. He constantly smiled and was ready to joke, and his humour had not deserted him, but there was a certain indifference that I had not noticed before. Above all there was an immense sadness that moved me strangely. When he walked one saw that he went heavily.

At nine in the morning on Thursday, 1 November, Baba received the Westerners for the first formal darshan. Although no discourses were promised, he 'talked' for two hours. The following is a summary of what he said:

Suffering is a sign of having realized God: suffering is God's gift to men.... You are to become the dust at the feet of the Perfect Master, which means that you do not know your own self. You are nothing but dust. You are no longer your own.

There is another point. God is indivisibly one and indivisibly in each one. God is each one. What are the divisions? Why are you separate? This is nothing but ignorance: there are no divisions, no separateness. Think of God as the ocean, and of every drop in the

ocean as the ocean itself. Every bubble is an appearance of separateness. The bubble of the mind does not know that it is the ocean until the bubble bursts.

Bliss is God's original state. Power is God's existence. Knowledge is God's duty.

To know God in his infinite contradictions is to become conscious of his consciousness of his unconscious To achieve the God-state do absolutely nothing while doing everything To be infinitely conscious you must consciously lose consciousness of yourself.

Long for union with God until you go beyond longing for union and long only for the will of beloved God. Complete forgetfulness of self is to forget even that you have forgotten.

There are different ways of seeing God. (1) Meditation, which is a very long process, only one in a million sees God through meditation, and even that is not being one with God. (2) The grace of a Perfect Master. The simplest way is to leave all and follow Baba, which does not mean to leave your family and work. It is not your love for me that has brought you here, but my love for you. One cannot do it oneself, if one has the will one gets the grace.

If one had one hundred per cent physical love it would be good, but no one has it. Divine Love is the gift of God. The gift is in the depth of the ocean. You must learn to swim and to dive to reach the pearl.

Eruch says 'Obedience is a terrible affair. I thought it easy to love and obey, but I found I could not do it.'

Hafiz says:

When I began to love God I thought I had fallen into the ocean.
I did not know I was only on the beach.
Only when I entered the water and was tossed in the waves:
Oh God, why did I crave for you? What is this tossing from
ocean to shore?

Baba got one of his Persian disciples to recite some verses of Hafiz in Persian with translations, for all the well-known translations of Hafiz, he said, do no justice to the poet. He then went on: Space is the gulf between imagination and reality. Involution of consciousness fills this gulf. Time is the interval between your most-first imagination and your most-last imagination. Eternally it is always Now. Where imagination ends God Is. Can you follow this? Baba cannot.

Baba is telling us about consciousness and we watch an ant upon the

carpet. You are also on the carpet. The ant tries to crawl upon you, but the consciousness of the ant is different from yours. The difference you may call 'inclusiveness'. You are all as ants before me in my consciousness though I am also as you are.... you are all crawling upon my body like ants, as you are also with me in this room, but what a difference between your ant-like consciousness and my infinite consciousness, though we are all on the same level....

I am waiting for the moment when I can break my silence; for that I need infinite patience. The time is fast approaching.

The party then dispersed, and Baba retired.

In the afternoon the Westerners met the Easterners in the pandal. Baba's welcome was given in English by Eruch, afterwards translated in various tongues. He said:

My dear Children. Your coming 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.

Those who have not been able to come should not feel disheartened, for my love is with them as always and specially so at this time.

You have come from great distances not for some convention or conference but to enjoy my company and feel afresh my love in your hearts. It is a coming together of children of East and West in the house of their Father.

All religions of the world proclaim that there is but one God, the Father of all in creation. I am that Father.

I have come to remind all people that they should live on earth as the children of the one Father until my Grace awakens them to the realization that they are all one without a second, and that all divisions and conflicts and hatred are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance.

Although all are my children they ignore the simplicity and beauty of this Truth by indulging in hatreds, conflicts and wars that divide them in enmity, instead of living as one family in their Father's house. Even amongst you who love me and accept me for what I am there is sometimes lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

Patently I have suffered these things in silence for all my children. It is time that they become aware of the presence of their Father in their midst and of their responsibility towards Him and themselves. I shall break my Silence, and, with my Word of Words, arouse my children to realize in their lives, the indivisible Existence which is GOD.

Throughout the years I have been giving many messages and discourses. Today I simply want to tell you who are gathered here in my love to shut the ears of your minds and open the ears of your hearts to hear my Word when I utter it.

Do not seek my Blessing which is always with you, but long for the day when my Grace will descend on all who love me. Most Blessed are they who do not even long for my Grace, but simply seek to do my Will.

The Master's Prayer was recited in English by the blind Harry Kenmore, but not translated. Baba said: 'May my love make you feel one day that God is in everyone.'

Then all present were invited to come to Baba putting their hands on his knees, when he touched them. At this moment the rain started again in an immense downpour. Baba and those with him on the platform were protected, but everyone else, including all the Westerners and Easterners, was soaked. This did not break up the gathering in the very least. Men and women came in turn for two hours, which must have been extremely exhausting for Baba, because it was obvious that he was giving himself continuously. The rain ceased after about half an hour, but dripped upon those present for some time. After five o'clock the proceedings ended with the singing on the platform by Poona devotees of Baba's arti, with musical instruments and lights, an impressive ceremony.

The Westerners met on Friday November 2nd, when a diagram was displayed of the four journeys from infinite God to infinite God, and commented upon by Baba. In particular, he asked everyone to understand that the gross, subtle and mental spheres are not separate as shown in the diagram. 'There is a gulf', he said, 'between the mental world and the world of Reality in which man knows God and as Man-God becomes God and abides in him. It is most difficult to enter upon the inner journey.'

Eruch then read the brief discourse on 'The Four Journeys', the substance of which was as follows:

God is infinite, his Shadow is also infinite. In his Shadow is contained Infinite Space in which is the Infinite Gross Sphere which contains the Creation that issues from the Point of Finiteness. In the Creation are millions of galaxies, the centre of which is the planet we know as our earth. In the galaxies there are developed life forms, and in some planets evolution is completed and human beings exist. But only on

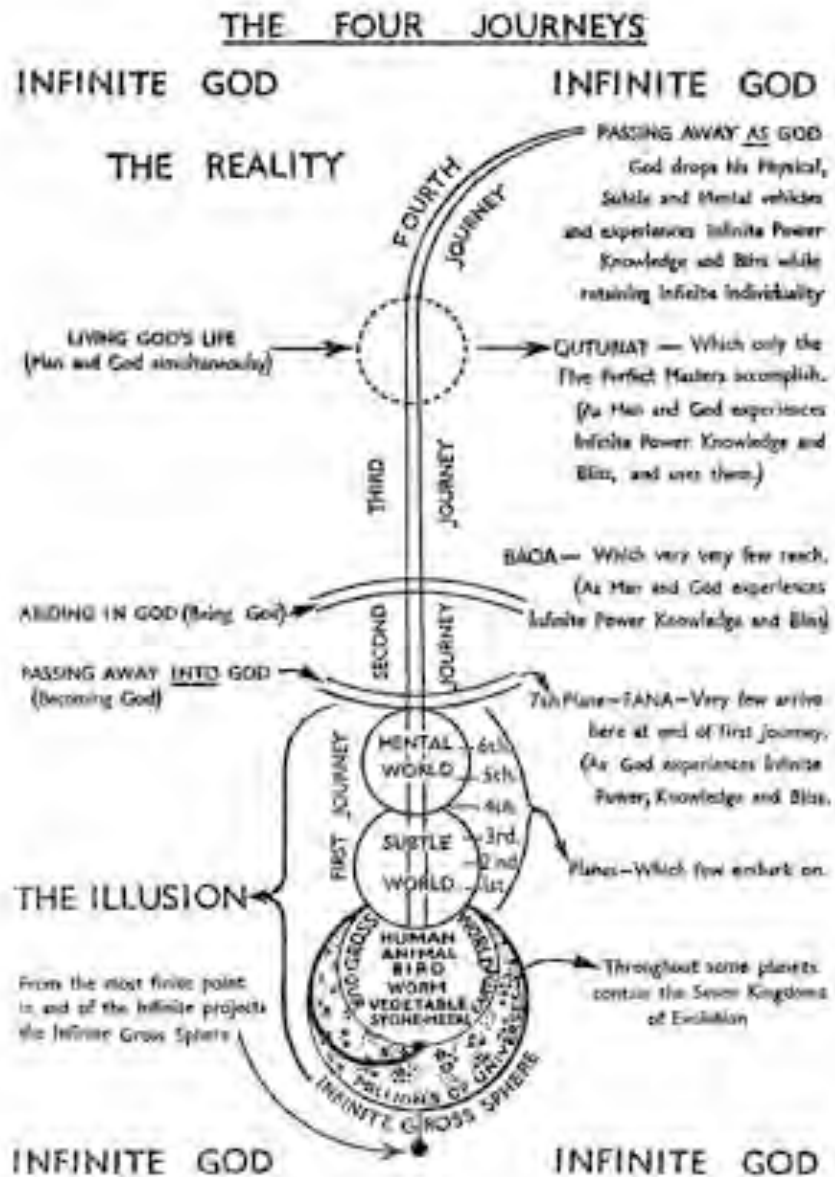


Diagram of the Four Journeys Poona (1962)

earth do human beings reincarnate and pass through the involutionary process to God Realization.

The involutionary process has seven planes or stations; the seventh plane completes the first journey of the soul. Only few embark upon the planes and very few complete the state of I-am-God, with full consciousness, experiencing infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss.

A few who complete the first journey enter upon the second journey, which has no planes but is instantaneous; the I-am-God state becomes abiding in God as God. In this state, individuality is infinite, and includes gross consciousness, so that as Man and God the soul knows its unlimitless in limitation. The third journey is taken by those whose lot it is to bear the burden of infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss and live God's life as Man and God simultaneously. There are only five Perfect Masters on earth at any moment; when one drops his body one of those abiding in God takes his place.

All who live God's life on earth and all who abide in God as God on earth when they drop their bodies shed their subtle and mental vehicles and pass away utterly as God, retaining infinite individuality, experiencing infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss. This is the fourth Journey.

As God is without beginning and without end these four journeys are never journeyed, for everything that has the appearance of being appears from that which has no beginning and passes into that which has no ending.

At the end Baba said, 'This is not for you. Don't worry. If you obey me and hold on to my daaman, where I am you will be.' And he went on:

"Only on this earth can God be realized. It is not possible for men to contact the worlds that contain the kingdoms of evolution but are without spiritual development. On these other worlds there are beings that have more intelligence than exists in men. The earth is the centre of creation because men are made in God's image, and only human beings on earth are capable of advancement."

He ended by saying, 'Through your learning the simplest things have been made very difficult'. Leonard Willoughby from New York sang the negro spiritual 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands'. Eruch said on a sign from Baba, 'Your voice says the truth.' Finally, those present were asked to write one letter to Baba immediately they reached home.

In the afternoon Easterners and Westerners met again at 2 p.m. There was no rain, although the wind was in the S.E. and there was much cloud. After announcements, there was bhajan by a company of singers from Poona, and the approach to Baba by those who had not already taken part was continued. Despite the large crowd of people and their anxiety to come to Baba, complete order was maintained throughout the afternoon until 6 o' clock. As before the Western visitors sat during the entire period. The affair ended with the arti without the ceremony.

As there were still many Eastern visitors to come to Baba he went to the pandal at 6 a.m. the next morning, Saturday, at 8.30 a.m., before meeting the Westerners. He had fisherfolk from the village of Chirale near Bombay who had been sitting on the front porch brought in and asked them to sing. What they sang, translated by Eruch, was:

I bow to you in your infinite aspects; infinite Bliss, infinite Knowledge, and infinite Power are in this human form of yours. You are my real father and mother. I long for that day when I become one with you.

They received a prasad of sweets and after embracing Baba left for home. The Westerners gathered while this was taking place, when he greeted them. On this occasion there was singing by one of India's foremost classical singers who had come especially from Calcutta, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, which was received with pleasure by Baba. Afterwards he made enquiries about people who were sick and had some of them brought to the gathering. He said:

"In 1963 I shall see no one and will have no correspondence.

"I shall then prepare for the urge to break my silence. I want to finish my universal work." He added after a reference to the disturbed state of the country:

"Instead of blood, let the love of God flow."

He resumed with the Easterners at 1 p.m., and at 3 p.m. a message to 'My Dear Workers' was read in English by Darwin Shaw, followed by versions in three languages. In the course of it Baba said:

"In spite of telling you that I will not give 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 you doing.

"I had to give you a message on Thursday because you expected one; and the theme of the message was on your being my children, because despite much talk about a Baba-family there is more a semblance than a reality of kinship among you who are the children of One Father.

"True children of One Father do not greet one another with smiles and embraces and at the same time harbour grudges and ill-feeling, but 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 Unless there is a brotherly feeling in your hearts, all the words that you speak or print in my name are hollow; all the miles that you travel in my cause are zero; all organizations for my work are but an appearance of activity; all buildings to contain me are empty places and all statues that you make to embody me are of someone else.

"I have been patient and indulgent.... because you have been very young children in my love, and children must have some sort of games to play. But now you are older and are beginning to realize that there is a greater work ahead of you than what you have been doing. And you have been searching your minds and hearts as to what this work might be.

"It is not a different work to what you have already been doing - it is the same work done in a different way. And that way is the way of effacement, which means the more you work for me the less important you feel in yourself. You must always remember that I alone do my work. .. I allow you to work for me so that you have the opportunity to use your talent and capacities selflessly and so draw closer to me....

"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 from me. When you put my work before yourself the work will go right, though 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...."

There was singing of ghazal by Lata Limaya, bhajans by Burrakatha in Telegu, and a programme by Habib Quawal and singers from Ahmednagar.

On Sunday morning Baba gave darsan to those Easterners who had

not yet received it, and there was a meeting with the Westerners. A public darshan had been announced for the people of Poona for the afternoon. Prior to this, when all were present, the Universal Message of 1958 was read, after which a newspaper representative was allowed to ask Baba about the war situation with China and what its outcome would be. He said: 'As I am the Ancient One and as I am in India, in the final outcome India will be victorious.' (This was reported throughout the country the next day omitting all except the last four words.) He added: 'Krishna said that from time to time he came to protect his lovers. I am the Lord Krishna. I am the Christ, the personification of love.' Baba repeated the statement that he had to prepare himself 'for the urge to break my silence. It will take about a year.' He went on to say that 'next year' means 'next year', and that for the first time he took the responsibility for his promise. 'I cannot bear to keep the word within.' The Prayer of Repentance was then spoken, at the conclusion of which Baba permitted the mandali to bow down to him one by one. This was the first time for twenty-two years that had been permitted. Then a large number of poor came to Baba, women and children first, including parties from the scheduled classes, among them Indian gypsies. This was followed by the public darshan, and prasad was distributed by the mandali to those who came. There was a great pressure of people for some hours and just after 6 p.m. the gates were closed. The darshan ended though many were disappointed. I estimated that about seven thousand people came this day.

On Monday November 5th the Westerners gathered at Guruprasad at 8.45 a.m. when leave was taken of Baba. There was music. It was a sad occasion as he said it was the last time. All (except a few including myself) were to return home during the week, most of them on Saturday. He rested at Guruprasad for the next few days, in the meantime seeing those who had helped in the organization of the gathering. I was given an hour's interview with him on Monday afternoon to discuss certain questions arising out of the writing of this book; when I left he kissed me on both cheeks. During the week the Western visitors paid a visit to Ahmednagar, Meherazad and Meherabad, visiting Baba's tomb. On Saturday morning Baba left for Meherazad, and those who could do so were permitted to say farewell to him when he sat for a few minutes at Babajan's tree in the Bund Gardens: there was a glow upon him, but his eyes were dark with sadness. This took place at 7.30 a.m., when a great crowd gathered.

So Baba went to continue his seclusion.

PART TWO

Part II Chapter 1

THE MAN

'I am one of you, and one with you'

(1)

To let this account of the life of Meher Baba speak for itself should be sufficient, but to do that would be to neglect some part of what the reader will expect. I propose to offer an explanation of what this man of whom I am writing seems to mean. A large part of the story I have told in the foregoing pages may appear incomprehensible, some of it nonsensical, and many questions are bound to be raised. I cannot pretend to answer every question, but I want to study briefly his teaching and his methods, especially what he says about himself and to suggest how he can be understood.

On rational grounds I do not know that any attitude but that of skepticism is possible. Those who are prepared to apply only empirical tests, to regard him from the point of view of the everyday world, will arrive at no other conclusion. It appears to me that he has to be approached as perhaps witnessing to more than the matter of fact. Baba's explanations about himself extend beyond the realm of common sense, so that he cannot be judged merely by it. Neither is he to be regarded as a philosopher, though it is true that much of what he 'says' is philosophical, but he always quickly leaves the philosophical for what can only be regarded as the prophetic. Indeed, he is more a prophet than any other kind of man in our familiar discourse. Yet no one can read his 'messages' or observe what he has done in his life without realizing that he is much more than a prophet, great as that function is. He is often referred to as a 'mystic', an ambiguous word often applied to the morbid, nebulous, and confused, which is the very opposite of what Baba is. While his way of life and 'speech' display high degrees of the mystical, his 'work' is undoubtedly altogether different from that of any mystic. He has to be approached as an unusual and perplexing personality, on his own terms, as one who lives

on the level of direct vision of spiritual or inner reality. For my own part, though naturally disposed to question everything, it is from that point of view and after more than thirty years' friendship with him that I invite the reader to examine his story as I have written it and to consider what I now have to say.

(2)

Meher Baba's early life up to the age of nineteen years while he was still a student was entirely normal. I have met his contemporaries at school, who say that he was an ordinary boy, intelligent, high spirited, giving no indication of anything unusual. Indeed, it was difficult for his friends to realize what happened to him, for nothing in his own mind or in the minds of others marked him out. His own family had recognized in him no special traits until the change took place that I have related, when they found him at first, as they find him still, beyond their understanding, which is what one would expect from a family. He has said that one day, in his teens, he had in his hand a small book on the Buddha, and it suddenly flashed into his mind, 'I am that'; but he forgot about it. When the old woman, Babajan, embraced him and the change started, he had at first no indication of what was to follow. It was at a subsequent visit some days later when she kissed him that he was overcome as by some unknown power. Only a long time afterwards was he able to say what had happened. He said that Babajan appeared to him as he lay on his bed that night and led him through the planes of consciousness. This meant that from that moment his life became abnormal, and, as I have described, for nine years he was in a mental and physical condition that unfitted him for ordinary intercourse. Little more is known about that period, for he has said barely anything about it. He was a puzzle and despair to everyone around him.

Baba's experiences were not those of 'illumination' in the ordinary sense; for they were not the outcome of searching, and his will was not involved. What happened came as a surprise; he did not appear to be lifted up, but thrown down and made useless: it could be said that he entered into ignorance, experienced 'unknowing', and suffered total renunciation. He went through a period of physical and psychic sacrifice, of inexpressible agony accompanied by unbearable bliss. Indeed he was apparently not very different from the so-called mad men or masts to whom he devoted so much attention in later years, but in fact his state was not at all the same, though the element of sacrifice

in the past state resembles his. In the course of it he did not so much become a new man as re-acquire self-possession. At the end he was the same young man as before, recognizably the same, nothing of the past having been lost, but unmistakably a man with a new direction that took him away from normal living and work. He did not live with his parents any more or with his brothers and sister. There was no thought of a career or earning a living or even of being a holy man. He was seemingly an ordinary man but also and in a very definite sense a man apart.

(3)

As I have related, I met Meher Baba rather more than eight years after the culmination of these experiences, on his first visit to England in the autumn of 1931, when he arrived at a house in Devonshire where I happened to be. Until a few days earlier I had not heard of his existence. He was awaited with much excitement. When he appeared my immediate impression was that he was no stranger: I had, I thought, met him before: it was as though a lost memory was revived. His appearance was unusual, his hair abundant and very long, down to his shoulders, and his European clothes did not seem to belong to him. I found him unaffected and natural, self-poised, with ease of manner. He took everything as a matter of course. I observed some who were present to be overcome with emotion, but though I was drawn to him, I felt no emotional effect. Emotional disturbance is common in those who are brought into contact with Baba, a matter to which I shall refer again. Except for being more than thirty years older and suffering from the effects of his recent accidents, he is now in all essentials exactly the man that he was then. This is a fact to be noted.

Baba was in his thirty-seventh year, a small erect man, five feet six inches in height, with a rather large head, or a head that appeared to be large, an aquiline nose, and an olive complexion. He was slight in build, muscular and physically very strong, extremely animated, having a mobile face, constantly smiling, and with expressive hands and gestures. One soon observed that he was childlike and mischievous as well as a good deal of an actor, with quickly changing moods. Thirty years later, following the car accidents, he does not maintain this active disposition and has become physically heavy, due to enforced relative immobility. He made at first and still makes an immediate friendly appeal to those who meet him, to which most people respond, though not everyone. He is indeed disarming in his

obvious simplicity: the atmosphere that surrounds him might be described as that of innocence.

At times during the period I have known him he has appeared serious and troubled, and I have seen him tired and ill. At such moments he has an air of intense preoccupation. At other times, and normally, he seems to have no cares whatever and invites confidence. His physical changes are rapid: one day ill and worn; the next, well, youthful-looking, and lively. Nowadays, when meeting people he displays vitality, but is otherwise withdrawn and suffering.

He is normally a strict vegetarian, takes no alcohol and does not smoke. Though his tastes in food are simple, he is often difficult to please. Sometimes on his visits to Europe and America his friends would plan a delicious meal, and to make happy those who had prepared it he would show every sign of pleasure; but afterwards the only evidence of eating would be a hole in the centre of a slice of bread. He eats, but seems to have no desire for eating. When not in India he would now and then eat meat; for he is not bound by any dietetic principle or habit.

His practice is to rise very early in the morning, and to retire from his daily routine usually about 6 p.m. Unless in strict seclusion, he almost invariably has one disciple sit awake in the room until relieved by another. In seclusion a disciple is on duty outside his room or hut throughout the twenty-four hours. When not in seclusion he used to take a great deal of exercise, walking rapidly several miles every day, and even in seclusion he walked continually up and down the cell or room in which he confined himself. He loved mountain climbing, and many of his long journeys were taken on foot. He could outlast anyone, even the strongest, on such occasions.

Since the severe motor car accident in 1956, he has, of course, been unable to be physically active. Indeed, that he is now able to walk at all is astonishing; but against all forecasts he can occasionally walk a little when he is in the mood, but latterly he walks only with assistance. His recovery was without doubt contributed to largely by his own inner intention; while he had the best surgical and physiotherapeutic attention, he seems to have cured himself sufficiently for his own purposes. Yet he remains in constant pain, which appears to affect in turn every part of his body. He says, 'There is no remedy for my pain, it has fallen in love with me and become a Baba-lover'.

He reads and speaks English and four other languages fluently. His use of English is that of a cultivated man, for in his youth he had read much English literature, especially the poets. He knows, of course, the

Persian and Indian poets, his favourites being Hafiz and Kabir, and has himself written poems and songs. His pleasure in poetry is shown in his encouragement of the Australian, Francis Brabazon, whom he has kept with him for some years and whose verse Baba has not only inspired but enjoys. This is part of his play. He is widely read in Indian and Persian sacred writings as well as Christian, Jewish and other works. For many years he has done no reading but is read to. Newspapers are read to him and anything else he asks for, including his letters, to which he indicates the replies to be sent. He has considerable taste for music, preferring Indian music, to which he will listen for hours, but he enjoys Western music, too. At times he takes Indian drums and other musical instruments on his travels on which his disciples play, also a gramophone.

He is fond of games, including card games and table-tennis, and often used to play ball games outdoors. He delights in the presence of children and romps with them as a child. He is a strict disciplinarian over those who are nearest to him, not the slightest departure from the rules he lays down being overlooked. He is methodical about business and attends to every detail himself, giving the impression of being exactly there, at the very moment, wherever he may be. 'I am the Master who pays attention to details', he says, which creates difficulty at times, when he is in seclusion. He sees that everything is done exactly as it should be done, being as unsparing of himself as of others. He makes a practice of demanding unexpectedly what seems to be the trifling and unnecessary; for instance, in the most awkward places he may ask for particular food; in a train, perhaps, just as it is about to start, he will demand hot milk, and the disciple must fetch it even though it may mean almost certain missing of the train. That sort of thing is regarded by his mandali as part of the price of being with him, and all agree that he never orders what is really beyond their power to do.

He takes almost incredible quantities of luggage on his travels, most of it never used. He changes his arrangements constantly, not only when travelling but at home, so that nobody knows exactly what is to happen from day to day. This constant change of plan, as recorded in earlier pages, is undoubtedly part of his method of working, which will be discussed later. A contrast is provided by his practice of punctuality in keeping engagements and his demand for punctuality in others. That he is a Master as a man there can be no doubt, for he is master of every situation and is never at a loss. No one can be in his presence without realizing his serenity, command, balance and immediacy.

He appears to exert no power; instead, he shows defenselessness or a sort of helplessness, which may seem to contradict what has just been said; for he certainly has an air of authority, yet never gives the slightest sign of being inflated with personal importance. He never poses or appears to be taking up an attitude, on the contrary, he is simple, even humble: what I say is unmistakable. There flows from him warmth, understanding and humour. There is no spiritual pride. His bowing down to others, washing the feet of lepers and the poor, and his taking upon himself menial tasks, are genuine, and sometimes involve severe physical demands, borne always as matters of course, and scrupulously carried out. There is transparent radiance and certainty. He is the very opposite of the immobile, passive, and remote. He can be severe, uncompromising, and angry, but never petulant, irritable or ill humoured.

At the sahawas gatherings, some of which I have described, he appeared like a sun, open to those who have come to him, as he bids them to be open to him. Yet in this openness he does not 'say' more than the recipients can bear. The really notable thing about him is that while the greater part of his 'work' is secret, he is not secret in manner. Indeed it is as though everything were laid bare. At times, however, he withdraws as behind a curtain, and seems not to be present, even when in company. And, of course, most of his life is in seclusion.

(4)

Meher Baba is unmarried and has never had anything to do with women, not that he ever made a vow of chastity. He has women mandali who are completely devoted to him; they are kept in seclusion, at one time on the hill at Meherabad, now in the house, Meherazad, near the small village of Pimpalgaon, in the Deccan. He regards them with extreme tenderness.

(5)

As will have been observed from the preceding chapters, Baba fasts frequently for long and short periods. During these times of fasting he usually sees no one except the few disciples appointed to attend upon him; neither, as a rule, does he attend to any outside affairs, though he does not neglect any detail concerning the mandali around him. The fasts consist of entire absence from solid food, and he takes as a rule only a little weak tea, sometimes a little milk. In such periods of fasting he is engaged, he declares, upon his 'work'.

Fasting in the ordinary way means to become detached from the world and to cease all but essential physical activities as much as possible. It is entered upon as a discipline, not so much to mortify or punish the flesh as to encourage the intensity of spiritual energy: it is a withdrawal from the objective world so that power may be concentrated subjectively. In that way, fasting plays a part in religious practice. Baba's fasts, however, are of an entirely different kind. He fasts not as a discipline but simply because he cannot take food owing to the 'work'. As a result of fasting he naturally becomes weak, and, as I have pointed out in the narrative, suffers in a normal physical way, though not always, for at times he has done more physical work than usual during fasts. His periods of seclusion are of the same nature. They are not for meditation or contemplation but for the sake of the 'work'. They vary from virtually total seclusion when he sees nobody except the disciple required to wait upon him; sometimes he does not see even him. There are other periods when he sees no visitors, and attends to no affairs or correspondence except of the most urgent kind; and there are times when he is available to the mandali but not to others. Otherwise it has been Baba's practice to be accessible to all, but in recent years the seclusions have been more continuous and except for short periods he has not been accessible. He has said of these seclusions:

I am really the only one who is not in seclusion. It is the rest of humanity that is in seclusion; I have come to enable it to emerge into Eternal Freedom.

In contrast to the seclusions, Baba has displayed extreme activity, making journeys throughout India and Pakistan by train, car, bus, and on foot, visiting holy places and remote villages and towns as well as the great cities, covering practically the entire sub-continent. From time to time he has made public appearances, but these journeys have been mostly in seclusion. He has also travelled round the world paying special attention to America and Australia. His journeys to Europe are notable for visits to London, Paris, Rome and Madrid, and to the countrysides associated with St Francis of Assisi and St Teresa of Avila. These journeys, too, have almost invariably been in seclusion, and he has made no public appearances.

(6)

His two severe motor car accidents appear to be 'accidents' in the true sense, that is to say they were due to chance. People have been

puzzled about this, trying to explain away the elements of chance, but I do not think they need to do so. Baba is subject to chance as are all men, for chance is an element in human life, though what chance means to him is another matter. An obvious difference is that he does not react in the normal way, for he does not appear to be taken by surprise, and does not resist, or complain: on the contrary he accepts, takes responsibility, and acts as though he had chosen what had taken place. The two car accidents illustrate this fully; both were very serious and had in the obvious sense gravely ill effects. He did not allow them to be so treated. Every possible help and attention were given to those involved with him, and his personal sufferings were severe, but all was regarded as part of a plan. Thus the factor of chance disappeared, transformed by his will. When Dr Nilu was killed in the second accident, Baba's comment was, 'He is blessed; for he has come to me'. As Baba is subject to chance, so is he subject to heat and cold, and the ordinary ills of man, just as he can be ignored, misunderstood and attacked. Were he to choose to be a miracleworker, he could no doubt overcome these obstacles, sustain his life by other than normal means as the advanced yogis do, and make himself accepted by those who reject him, but he does not do so. He evades nothing, and could say with the great Milarepa, 'mine illness to me is an adornment'. He has said that his body is to him as the nail is to the toe: he is simultaneously careful of it and ignores it.

(7)

That many people should look for the marvelous is to be expected, but unless Baba is accepted as a man he cannot be accepted on any terms at all. If he is not a man, he is not for us, and as a man he is consciously limited, though the extent of that limitation it is not possible to define. I have written about him as a man, objectively, not aiming to present him in one aspect but all round, as far as that is possible; and before I go on to attempt an explanation of the nature and structure of his life, I hope that interest in him as a man will have been established.

Part II Chapter 2

THE PERFECT MASTER

'The real conviction is when one becomes God'

(1)

As a man, Meher Baba is a Perfect Master. It is necessary to examine this because the term is unknown in the West, though familiar in the East from the writings of the Sufi mystics, Indian poets and philosophers. 'Perfect Master' is Sadguru in Sanskrit, and Qutub in Persian, an equivalent in English being 'Man-God'. It is applied to one who has attained self-knowledge, who has gained mastery over his nature and achieved union with Reality. In a psychological sense such a man lives on the central axis of his being and is in control in every situation; he is master over himself, which is more than to be master of a technique. To put it in Freudian terms, a Perfect Master is an unrepressed man, without the guilt feeling that drives to evil and multiplies defects in even the best of men, for he is free from unconscious fantasies and disorders, being in full possession of himself.

How Baba became a Perfect Master we know from the story I have told in the previous pages. He did not attain it by study or the cultivation of an aptitude or the development of a skill, or because he set out to do so. Suddenly at the age of nineteen his life at college was interrupted and apparent disorder brought into it. He did not understand what was happening and his parents thought he was going out of his mind. Yet he was not plunged into unconsciousness, but brought into such heightened consciousness that he was blinded by ecstasy. He could explain nothing and outwardly became helpless, though his inner awareness was intense and his sense of freedom overpowering. After two years he became partly aware of his surroundings, but for an entire period of nine years he was virtually out of normal life. He had to realize that he was not what he hitherto had thought himself, and at the end he knew himself inwardly and was able to act free from illusion.

(2)

Such illumination, or revelation, or awakening, or realization of the Self, or union with God is found in all religions. In the dialogues of the Upanishads, the records of Krishna and Gautama Buddha, in the Jewish patriarchs and prophets, in certain of the dialogues of Plato, in the New Testament, the writings of Plato in us, and the early Christian Fathers, in the Christian mystics and saints, and in Muhammad and the mystics of Islam - it is in them all. The idea that a man may go, or be brought, beyond what he knows as his 'self' is expressed in different terms, sometimes obscurely, but always with conviction, and always as the presence of harmony and wholeness.

That most ruthless of anti-God philosophers, Frederich Nietzsche shared in it, for he declared that on a day in August 1881, when he was approaching thirty-seven years of age:

If one had the smallest vestige of superstition left in one, it would hardly be possible completely to set aside the idea that one is the mere incarnation, mouthpiece, or medium of an almighty power. The idea of revelation, in the sense that something which profoundly convulses and upsets one becomes suddenly visible and audible with indescribable certainty and accuracy - describes the simple fact. One hears - one does not seek; one takes - one does not ask who gives: a thought suddenly flashes up like lightning, it comes with necessity, without faltering - I have never had any choice in the matter. (*Ecce Homo*, pp.101-2.)

The experience is shared not only by saints and philosophers but by artists, poets and men of science, also by ordinary people at moments of sudden awareness. Efforts are made to distinguish between these 'natural' experiences and those of a 'spiritual' nature, but there is no need to do so when they are genuine, not induced.¹ The illumination is of the same order, however much it may vary in degree, or whatever the occasion or the words into which it is afterwards put, and whether it be called self-discovery, or revelation, inspiration, or the beatific vision, or the satori of Zen, or Plato's marriage with the supremely real and good, or the soul becoming the bride of Christ.

These illuminations certainly belong to something within the human soul, and provide evidence of man's possible participation in

¹ Meister Eckhart used the right words when he said 'Do not worry whether it is natural or supernatural; for both nature and grace are his'.

an existence beyond time and change. To describe them is next to impossible. Two points should especially be noted, that they occur during waking consciousness, hardly ever in sleep or dream, and that to attempt to induce them by the use of drugs or any other mechanical stimulus of emotion or by dulling the senses as in yogic exercises is futile¹ for the illumination is essentially disassociated from the phenomenal.²

Mostly the experience is transitory, it comes in a flash, often at the moment between sleeping and awakening, perhaps at a time of great stress, more often in tranquility, frequently as the fruit of concentration; then goes, sometimes to be repeated, sometimes not. This is as true of a 'spiritual' experience as of the so-called 'natural', even though it may change one's life, as when René Descartes had a vision at the age of twenty-three that the structure of the universe was mathematical and logical. But the clarity and the effect of the experience, 'natural' or 'spiritual', may not mean that one lives in it or 'becomes' it, for only too often the illumination, as with Descartes, though true, is partial, not the whole truth. Even with the mystics the truth they find, the God they encounter, though unmistakable and overpowering, leaves them in Nature, their vision is incomplete, while the sense of beatitude comes and goes.³ Rarely the illumination is permanent. Indeed, it then can hardly be called an 'experience', for it is not something that occurs: it is the ever-present in which one lives. There is no change except in appearances and in the energies of the soul; inwardly the spirit is what it always was. Thus it is called 'awakening'.

The Perfect Master realizes his eternal being, his 'I-am-ness'. That was the awakening of Meher Baba. He knew himself to be universal or eternal humanity, man in the 'image' of God, the Man-God, and lived in that knowledge.

¹ Cf. R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane* (Oxford, 1957) in which Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (London, 1954) is critically examined. Dr Zaehner is an authority on Zoroastrianism, and a convert to Roman Catholicism; his book is of importance. He distinguishes between a strictly religious mysticism, whether it be Hindu, Christian, or Muslim, and natural mysticism, which at its best he regards as pantheistic: but he is not sympathetic to mysticism of any kind.

² An examination of what he calls 'eccentric spirituality' or 'ultrasupernaturalism' as a recurring Christian phenomenon is contained in R. A. Knox's *Enthusiasm* (Oxford, 1950), a scholarly historical study, ironic in manner, though the word 'enthusiasm' is not used as a term of abuse. The study is confined to Christianity.

³ In Chapter 4, Part I, of this book Meher Baba's work among masts is described: from this it will be seen that 'illumination' does not always leave a person in a rational state or fit for normal life.

(3)

The idea of the perfection of man in this knowledge of God, found in Eastern religions as in Christianity is more difficult to grasp in the language of the West than in that of the East. The Vedantic doctrine of man and God as one, the same substance, is, however, in harmony with the Platonic doctrine of man's participation in, or affiliation with, the divine nature, a doctrine held by many Fathers of the Church, and by all the Christian mystics, but denied by many Christian theologians, as it is denied in Judaism and Islam. The words 'union', 'participation', 'sharing', 'image', are used by them in a sense that maintains separation between man and divinity, for man as creature is thought to exist at an infinite remove from his Creator. God his Father loves him as a father loves his child, as a lord loves his servant. Man encounters God; he has a dialogue with him; but possesses a derived existence, he is 'like' God, but not God.

This insistence upon an eternal distance between God and man is due to the need to maintain the idea of God's 'holiness' to which man must be subject and before which he must stand in dread. There is much that is valid in this belief, because without it there is the tendency to fall into the deadly sin of pride. Certainly, imperfection is heavily impressed upon man; he knows himself to be conditioned by Nature, his escape from mundane existence is only momentary. Unless he can look upwards beyond the 'I' of which he is so conscious he has no hope of permanent escape, and for those who cannot do so, whatever other knowledge they may have, there is nothing but atheism. If he can look up, if he can tremble before the Unknown, it is possible for him to realize that the 'I' that says 'I do this or that, I like this or that, I am this or that, I love, I hate', and so forth, is false, that his ordinary life is not real, and he may discover a real 'I'. That is what Vedanta, the New Testament, the mystics of Christianity and of Islam, tell him. When the 'I' of everyday life is denied and the self that he knows is given up there emerges another 'I', a 'not I'. Thus in every man there are two natures, there is his natural selfhood, and a sleeping self, the real 'I', which the mystics with one voice declare to be divine. 'That something in man which is of God's order.... and by which man is of the genus and species of God', said Meister Eckhart. There is no room for pride, for to know this Truth we have to know ourselves as nothing, to become as dust, surrendered utterly in obedience. This is to be 'poor in spirit' in the sense of the first of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount.

(4)

There is much disputation about this, seen in its most acute form in Islam with its insistence upon the oneness of God. Only after his death was Muhammad regarded as perfect, the Mirror of Allah. Until then he was the Prophet, who did not see God; he was the Messenger who received his revelations from an angel. Islam, therefore, is very uneasy about anything equivalent to the divinization of man, though the Sufis have had more to say of it and in more explicit terms than almost any other mystics. There have been Shams-ud-din Hafiz, Bayazid Bistami, Jalalu'b-Din Rumi, Farid-al-din Attar, Al-Ghazali, and many others. One of the most famous was the saint, Husayn Ibn Mansur al Hallaj, who was executed at Baghdad in 922 for declaring 'I am God'. He was a poor man, a wool-carder by trade, who wrote:

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
If thou seest me, thou seest Him,
And if thou seest Him, thou seest both.¹

One of the greatest Sufi scholars and mystics, the eleventh-century Al-Ghazali, wrote of those who return 'from their ascent into the heaven of Reality':

.... There remaineth nothing with them save Allah. They became drunken with a drunkenness wherein the sway of their own intelligence disappears; so that one exclaimed, 'I am the one Real!' and another, 'Glory be to Me! How great is my glory!' and another, 'Within this robe is nought but Allah'.

But the saint added that 'the words of Lovers passionate in their intoxication and ecstasy must be hidden', for they concern secret inexpressible matters.

(5)

When we take account of the orthodox Christian doctrine that while man has a divine origin he still needs the mediation of Christ to become an 'adopted' son, it is important to remember that the negative elements are for the sake of keeping man in his place, and that these elements are transmuted in the experience of the mystics. The 'new

¹ R. A. Nicholson. *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* (Cambridge University Press, 1923) p.134.

man' is the gift of Christ, the divine man, when the 'old man' has been surrendered; how this gift is made and the 'unselfing' accomplished accounts for the differences between the Christian churches.

The differences between religions amount to precisely the same thing, how the unselfing takes place. In every religion salvation is a matter of 'awakening', a breaking into a new consciousness, a kind of knowing beyond rational understanding. In Buddhism this is by individual effort; in Christianity it is through the work of Christ, the mediator. This word 'mediator' is worth looking at: it does not mean one who stands between the individual and God, but one through whom grace is given, as a physician mediates healing through his sub-consciousness to his patients in the course of his clinical practice. The sleeping self, captive in sin through disobedience, held fast in natural life, has mediated to it through Christ's sacrifice the grace of God. In the Christian Church this is effected through the sacraments. In Islam there is reliance upon the Prophet. In Hinduism there is need for a guru, in Zen too. And Baba is explicit that without grace nothing is possible.

Baba's own life shows his original dependence upon his Masters, and the foregoing record makes plain his continual dependence upon God. We should clearly understand that Baba does point to God, not to what may be regarded as 'apotheosized man', for he does not 'deify' the natural man, in the Western humanist sense, but makes it very clear as the twelfth-century Sufi mystic, Attar, said, that the natural man must be covered 'with the garment of nothingness and drink the cup of annihilation'.

(6)

This element of nothingness is the sign of perfection by which the Perfect Master is known, not by any display of powers. The remarkable affirmation of the Muslim al Hallaj to which I have referred deserves to be considered in this connection. Al Hallaj did not say 'I am a God', which, indeed, would be a sign of madness. What he says is entirely different. As Rumi pointed out, had he said 'I am the slave of God' it would, indeed, have been 'a presumptuous claim' affirming 'two existencies, his own and God's'. Instead, by saying, 'I am God' he 'made himself non-existent and has given himself up'.¹ He was not elevating himself. So with Baba. When Baba as Perfect Master declares his divinity he does not say 'Bow down to me as a God, serve me as

¹ Cf. Rumi; Poet and Mystic: 'Deification', p.184. tr. R. A. Nicholson (Allen & Unwin, 1950).

a God'. He says, 'I bow down to you. I serve you'. He is at all times in a state of utter humility. As God is the Non-existent because beyond existence, when Baba says, 'I am God' he is really saying, 'I am the non-existent. I am nothing'. That is not the elevation of the proud and conceited, but abasement. That is why he bows down to the crowds, to the poor, lepers, and the mad, acknowledging the hidden divinity in them. He says, 'I am the Highest of the High', but demonstrates by action, 'I am the lowest of the low'. Thus the Perfect Master has nothing in common with the idea of the great Man, or with the principle of leadership; he is not placed above others and does not dominate. His function is to serve. 'He who becomes the perfect "slave" becomes the Perfect Master', says Baba.

(7)

Meher Baba's teaching is that in the natural evolution of forms and spiritual involution of consciousness there arise Perfect Men, among whom there are those who know themselves as Perfect Masters. Perfect Men are those who have reached the final involution of consciousness, freed from the impressions of evolutionary, transitory and illusionary life, who as fully individuated souls know that they are God and man simultaneously. As God they have full possession of power, knowledge and bliss, and as man are capable of normal human activity on earth. These God-realized men (and women) usually leave their physical bodies, having no further use for them, but among those who do not there are always on earth, so Baba says, fifty-six (which I understand to mean not less than fifty-six) whose task is to live the life of perfection, in love and obedience to God, and to aid the further involution of consciousness in others. Among these perfect beings there are always five (which I understand to mean not less than five) who are Perfect Masters. The perfect beings are always unknown as such; but Perfect Masters may be known only if they reveal themselves, their function being the same as that of the perfect ones, and, in addition, 'to control the affairs of the whole universe'. (God Speaks, p.53) This is not control over events but control in events, so that the responsibility of men is not diminished, they are given increased ability to act. The control is of inner forces in nature, in individual men, and in human society.

(8)

Thus we should understand that in realizing his own originality and uniqueness Meher Baba has realized that which exists potentially,

unrealized and hidden, in every man. This is the free life, the culmination of the new life, described in earlier chapters of this book. That is why Baba seems out of place in the phenomenal world in which dreams and shadows still occupy the mind, and explains why he does not fit into a society whose values are empirical, temporary and insecure. We are told that those who achieve perfection usually leave the world. The exceptions are when they have specific work to do as with Gautama Buddha, who, after long years of wandering and renunciation, being rewarded with 'a pure and heavenly vision surpassing that of man', found the Golden Path, and instead of entering into nirvana returned for the salvation of mankind.

To acknowledge what this means when it concerns oneself requires great courage; any form of courage is one of the basic virtues, but this demands much more than any ordinary courage, the courage of the divine. Seneca said that the wise man is like God; and only the Godlike, only God himself, can make this great affirmation to himself. Because there are no positive outward signs the way is open to fools who lack courage, as well as to self-deceivers and to frauds, and there have been many of them. There is, however, an infallible test. It is that one who makes the claim of divinity does not seek to take advantage of whatever status or powers perfection may be supposed to bestow. Neither does he exploit his own nature and capabilities, not even his apparent defenselessness. In short, the test of 'love' in its unemotional aspect applies. Unless pure love is present without any admixture of self-seeking, the one making the affirmation is certainly false, either self-deluded or a charlatan. 'Proofs' such as miracle-working or occult powers are worthless, for all powers can be deceptive; but there can never be any doubt about pure love.

(9)

Therefore, in the course of his announcement of the divine vocation, Meher Baba says to his disciples, to the crowds, to the poor, lepers and the mad, and to those who come to him, 'You, too, if you but knew it are God: Why not wake up?' He claims no superiority for himself; for the entire essence of this knowledge is to lose every residue of self-importance. Any man freed from identity with his empirical self, thus being able to know his real self, could say what Baba says. When I was with him at the sahawas in Myrtle Beach in 1958, the company played as often as they could in his presence the negro spiritual, 'He's got the

Whole World in His Hands'. Baba sat looking at the company as the song was played, looking intently, half smiling, half serious; it was impossible not to realize what was in his mind: 'Do you not see that you, too, have the whole world in your hands, if you would but accept it?'

Part II Chapter 3

THE GOD-MAN

'I am the Ancient One, the Highest of the High'

(1)

Meher Baba is not simply a Perfect Master, he declares himself to be Avatar, or God-Man. Let us note at once that Perfect Masters, as well as the Avatar, declare themselves not dependent upon being recognized. Indeed, there is no way in which divinity can be known except by revelation. It cannot be discovered, for our natural eyes cannot perceive it. We are wholly dependent upon Man-Gods and God-Men announcing themselves, and unless they choose to do so they remain undisclosed: we may brush by them in the street or sit at the same table with them unknowingly. Therefore it is not arrogance or self-assertion upon their part when they declare themselves, for if they wish to be known they must say so. Any such declaration is subject to scrutiny, of course, and is to be received with extreme caution, even scepticism.

A Perfect Master is one who has gone through the process of cosmic evolution and involution and become a Man-God. An Avatar, or God-Man, is one who does not pass through those processes but is born as a man who knows himself to be God.

An Avatar, therefore, is not simply a manifestation of God, but God manifested, God become incarnate. Meher Baba points out the difference, which is profound. None the less, both Perfect Master and Avatar are equal in having God's life and are on every level in the world:

Both are simultaneously on the level of the lowest to the highest... the only difference is that the Perfect Master acts on that level and the Avatar becomes on that level....

For instance a Perfect Master cannot or will not fall ill but when he appears to have fallen ill, it is just his 'acting' of illness.... when people

see the Avatar ill, he has actually fallen ill and has literally become ill.

A Perfect Master behaves as the creature of that level' whereas the Avatar becomes as the creature of that level. (God Speaks, pp.141-2)

The Perfect Master takes on the karma of individuals, the Avatar does not, 'his Godhood functions universally' (Ibid. p.229) The Avatar is beyond limits of function: in him God becomes a man for all mankind, simultaneously God becomes a sparrow for all sparrows. (Ibid. p.129)

(2)

The literature upon God-Men and Avatars is extremely small in any language to which I have access, and almost invariably what is written seems to maintain confusion between the realization of God (as in Perfect Masters) and the 'descent' of God as man, an incarnation.¹ What are regarded as manifestations of God are frequently not distinguished from God manifesting himself, for instance the Persian poet, Jalalu'l-Din-Rumi, whose lines on the God-Man I have used to introduce this book, seems to be writing about what I should call the Man-God. That is understandable, for, in a sense, there is no difference, as Baba says. Indeed, at times he seems to say more. When I was with him at Poona in 1954, he said to me quite unexpectedly, 'You are bothered about the idea of Avatar. There is no need to be, for we are all Avatars.' This was an instance of his knowing what was in one's mind before one had given expression to it, or even thought of doing so. He followed this remark ten days later by a declaration which read as follows:

¹ The articles on 'Incarnation' in Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (1914) contain the best survey and illustrate the confusion. Sir James Frazer's chapter on 'Incarnations' in his famous work *The Golden Bough* (*The Magic Art*, vol. i, ch. vii), gives many instances from accounts of primitive peoples of incarnations of or possession by a god. But Frazer, as a scientist, was interested in phenomena and in drawing deductions from their analysis and comparison, without sufficient if any regard for their inner significance, as though it were possible to understand a fact in human society without participating in the minds of those to whom the fact was representation. He assumes that these particular phenomena are evidence of ignorance or delusion, ignoring the possibility that they may represent a reality that is hidden, or an imperfect knowledge that has been lost. He finds the idea of a God-Man to be 'nothing very startling for early man', which surely is a highly significant discovery.

When I say I am the Avatar, there are a few who feel happy, some who feel shocked, and many who take me for a hypocrite, a fraud, a supreme egoist, or just mad. If I were to say everyone of you is an Avatar, a few would be tickled and many would consider it a blasphemy or a joke. The fact that God being One, indivisible and equally in us all, we can be nought else but one, is too much for the duality-conscious mind. Yet each of us is what the other is. I know I am the Avatar in every sense of the word, and that each one of you is an Avatar in one sense or another.... Therefore it is God who makes me say I am the Avatar, and that each one of you is an Avatar.

What we are intended to understand is that if it be granted that men contain the principle of divinity then the Avatar as such and men as such are essentially one. The difference between the Avatar and other men is that he is conscious of 'descent', while they may (by grace) become conscious of ascent.

(3)

Avatarana is a Sanskrit word meaning 'descent', the descent or incarnation of a deity. 'Avatar' exists in the vocabulary of the West where its Eastern sense is recognized, but where it seems invariably to be employed in a vague way as the representation or manifestation in a man or by a man or group of men of a particular idea. Even in India Avatar is used in a manner that detracts much from its significance. The distinguished Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan refers to 'the eternal avatara, the God in man, the Divine consciousness always present in the human being', and says, 'When the Divine birth takes place in us' the embodied human consciousness is uplifted into the unborn Eternal' (The Bhagavad-gita; Allen & Unwin, 1948), which is a statement of inherent divinity; but he seems to hesitate at the idea of the descent of God, 'the contraction of the Divine majesty into the limits of the human frame', though he also says:

The Gita makes out that Krishna is an incarnation (avatarana) or descent of the Divine into the human frame. If the Infinite God is manifested in finite existence throughout time, its special manifestation at one given moment and through the assumption of one single human nature by the Divine person is but the free fulfillment of that same movement by which the Divine plenitude freely fulfills itself and inclines towards the infinite. If God is looked upon as the saviour of

man, he must manifest himself whenever the forces of evil threaten to destroy human values.

A. K. Banerjee in his *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western* (Allen & Unwin, 1952) says 'all the diverse orders of beings in the world may in a general sense be spoken of as incarnations (avatars) of the supreme Being.' The Bauls of Bengal say in one of their songs, 'As we look on every creature we find each to be his avatara.' These are not statements affirming the Avatar, as such.

If the idea of Avatar has any specific meaning it must go beyond any consciousness of his own nature that man may acquire, just as it must be more than 'God in everything'. That the Gods become men and live among them is a popular element in Hindu religion, in which there is a place for many devas or Gods. The same, can, indeed, be said of the Homeric world of the Greeks, and of Greek popular religion in which the Gods had human form. The Roman Virgil starts a poem written before the birth of Christ:

The great procession of the ages begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, and the reign of Saturn returns, and the new child is sent down from high heaven.

In India, Vishnu, the Preserver and Saviour, one of the aspects of the supreme Brahman, had a number of incarnations,¹ the favourites being Rama and Krishna, the latter the most loved because of his bravery, kindness and gaiety. There is a tendency, too, in India to apply the description of Avatar to remarkable men, as for instance Ramakrishna.²

¹ Some say the first descent was in the form of a fish, others say a tortoise.

² Ramakrishna (1836-86) was a priest devoted to the service of the goddess Kali. He was without Western education, and could not write: a Hindu, he practised both Islam and Christianity, one after the other: a God-intoxicated man, sometimes thought mad, a great teacher, who disclaimed being a founder of a religion or sect. His strange ecstasies before the image of Kali made his followers feel that he had become the goddess. Ramakrishna had difficulty at times in keeping his mind normally conscious and would slap himself and pull his hair to do so. An Avatar should have no difficulty. His disciple Swami Vivekananda quoted him as saying on his deathbed, 'He who was Rama and Krishna is now Ramakrishna in the body - but not in your Vedantic sense.' That he was a Perfect Master is certain, but I am not sure that more can be said of him. It does not seem to me to be of great consequence to say more, for reasons I have already indicated: the divine consciousness in both Perfect Masters and Avatars is the same, though their activities are different. (Cf. Romain Rolland - *Prophets of the New India*. London 1903 and *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*. Mylapore, Madras, India, 1960.)

That man has a relation with God which gives him a unique position in creation seems more clearly brought out in the Western conception of Jesus as God-Man than in the Indian idea of Avatar. The descent of God in Christ has meant much more than avataric events have seemed to mean because the historicity of Christ is central in Western thought, giving concreteness and actuality to the idea not found elsewhere.

Often in Indian writings the Ultimate Reality is referred to as an ocean, symbol of infinity. This is not (at least not always) intended to be pantheistic, for the ocean in this sense is thought of as containing an infinity of drops, which, maintaining identity with the ocean, do not lose their own identity, the ocean as a whole surpassing the infinity of drops. The 'ocean' is a symbol, no more. Ramakrishna speaks of the 'one God who rises up at one point and is known as Krishna, and, after another plunge, rises up at another point and is known as Christ.' This is difficult for those brought up in the Western tradition to acknowledge, though an idea akin to it is that of the Unknown God beyond God who can be known.

(4)

Before proceeding further I must refer to what Meher Baba says about the Avatar. In an early discourse (November 1938) he said:

.... the first individual soul to emerge from the evolutionary process as a Sadguru- is the only Avatar who has ever manifested or ever will manifest. Through him God first completed the journey from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, in him he first unconsciously became man in order consciously to become God. Through him, periodically, God consciously becomes man for the liberation of mankind. (God to Man and Man to God, p.49)

Later in God Speaks he said that....

.... the advent of the first Avatar on earth was not possible without there being the five Perfect Masters to effect that coming: in the beginning the five Perfect Masters became realized first and then there took place the first advent of the Avatar. (p.226)

I shall have occasion later on to refer to the nature of the statements we have from Baba in books bearing his name and elsewhere; we have to

bear in mind that we do not always have his own words, for he neither writes nor speaks, and sometimes the words are those of others representing what he is thought to have said. What I understand Baba to mean is that the first individual soul who completed the processes of natural evolution and spiritual involution, and became fully God-realized, a Man-God dropped his 'physical, subtle, and mental vehicles' to enter the state of infinite power, knowledge and bliss; in due course, and, in the love and compassion of God, he re-incarnated directly as God-Man, for the sake of awakening mankind from captivity to the phenomenal world. He was the first 'Saviour'. Who he was and when he appeared is unknown, for his advent is beyond history, though without him there would be no history.

Meher Baba says further that 'The Avatar is always one and the same ... made to repeat his manifestations from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different names and different human forms' (Ibid, p.144) As Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita:

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Arjuna, then I incarnate myself.

Or to quote what was said by the second century St Theophilus of Antioch:

.... whenever the Father of all wants to do so, he sends him (The Word) into some place where he is present and is heard and seen.

There are other rather like references in the Egyptian Philo and Clement of Alexandria, though this line of enquiry need not be followed here, except that Origen's vision of the Logos manifesting himself can be quoted:

There exist diverse forms of the Logos under which he reveals himself to his disciples, conforming himself to the degree of light of each one according to the degree of progress in saintliness.

What is important is that the advent of the God-Man is repeated in history.

I do not understand this to mean that historically there is only one God-Man under different names, that the first God-Man of whom we know, perhaps Zoroaster, manifested again as Krishna, later as Jesus Christ. That would be to confuse what is eternal with the temporal.

The first Man-God, having transcended all material and temporal elements, became one with God in the beyond without losing what can only be described as individuality. It was he who in God's will, which was also his will, descended again into the material and temporal for the sake of mankind and became the first God-Man. That particular 'individuality' did not repeat the act. The next advent of God as God-Man was another individuality and bore another name. But because all who enter into complete union with God are one with each other as well as with God, those who appear as God-Men are one infinitely. 'Had he a thousand sons they must needs be the same Son', said Eckhart. They are indistinguishable in divinity, though eternally distinguishable in individuality, so that Zoroaster is eternally Zoroaster, Krishna Krishna, Jesus Christ Jesus Christ. They are one in divine 'nature', in the theological sense, and in divine personality eternal: not individualized parts of a whole but each himself containing the whole. This is difficult to express, but it is what I understand Baba to mean. When I asked him in November 1962 if it were so, he agreed.

It seems to me that here is a contribution to the doctrine of 'incarnation' of great value, though it remains a mystery, intended to be such. As stated by Baba, the idea involves assumptions open to much less critical objection than that contained in most theologies, while retaining the element of mystery. This may perhaps be seen more clearly when I discuss Baba's cosmology in the chapter on his teaching.

Baba will be found to speak of the Avatar as Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, sometimes of himself as 'when I appeared' as Krishna or Christ, which, as I have indicated, is not to be taken in a literal sense. The idea of the God-Man cannot be understood at all except as a symbol of the eternal Logos, so that every manifestation is unique and unrepeatable in the phenomenal presence and idiom of the age. As Baba says:

Whether there have been twenty-six Avatars since Adam, or one thousand, and twenty-four thousands of Prophets, as is sometimes claimed, or whether Jesus Christ was the last and only Messiah, or Muhammad the last Prophet, is immaterial and insignificant when Eternity and Reality are under consideration

These avatic presences regarded as revelations symbolizing the activity of God in phenomena mean that incarnation is not the introduction into the body of a man of a divine principle or person, or the possession of a particular human ego by a divine personality, but the birth of the divine being as a man.

(5)

The Hebrew-Christian doctrine is that the first soul (Adam) to pass through the creative (evolutionary) process to become fully a man was disobedient, fell into sin, and became lost, in which failure the entire human race was involved. From that failure or sin, mankind needed to be redeemed, which, because of its 'lost' state could not be achieved without a Saviour. In the specific Christian doctrine the infinite consciousness as the Son of God incarnated as the Second Adam in the name of Jesus Christ as Redeemer of mankind. As defined in Christian theology the Incarnation is the assumption of human nature by the divine nature for the sake of the redemption of human nature. There is a single person or ego, not two persons or egos in one body but a single person in a single body. Thus there is no separation between 'Jesus', the man, the 'Christ', the divine being, the God-Man, and, as I understand it, Avatar in the exact sense, certainly as Baba uses the word, means the same. This Christian doctrine of Jesus Christ as God-Man was defined in the fifth century at the Council of Chalcedon.

This important definition was made because of the difficulty in the early centuries of Christendom in understanding the human nature of Christ. That he was divine presented much less of a problem; it was the association between divinity and humanity that raised the most anguished questions. The great danger was that Jesus Christ should be thought of as the descent of a divine being into the body and soul of a human being, the possession of one personality by another. There were even those who thought it possible to distinguish in the sayings of Christ between those that belonged to the divine person and those that belonged to the human person; even St John Damascene declared that it was the human nature that wept at Lazarus's tomb, and the divine nature that raised him. What was aimed at in the Chalcedon declaration was to state as unequivocally and positively as language would allow that Christ was a single person who spoke with a single voice. In other words that he was really a man, not a possessed being, nor a phantom. They solved the difficulty by declaring that he was wholly God and wholly man, a single person with two natures, one 'the only begotten, the divine Logos', the other 'a rational soul and body'. The two 'natures' were not mixed, they were 'two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures having been in no wise taken away by reason of the union, but rather the properties of

each being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one 'hypostasis' (substance or essence). Positive as it was this still left the possibility of dispute, but the declaration has remained to this day as the best that can be attempted.

There is no wonder that the matter was highly difficult, because the incarnation of God in human form is as great a mystery as the creation of the world.¹ To the Western mind with its concern for objectivity and its consciousness of actuality, the Eastern disposition to see no distinction between spirit and body is absent, for to the East the body was illusion, and as Pope Leo I said in his letter to the Council, 'there is no illusion in this matter'. Essential to Christianity is the historical figure of the God-Man, Jesus, in human flesh and rational mind. Thus the Chalcedon declaration of incarnation is one of the most dynamic statements ever made of the relation of God to man. In its light should be viewed the New Testament stories of the Virgin, the birth in Bethlehem, the star in the east, the visits of the wise men, kings and shepherds, also, and this is most important, the flight from death into Egypt.

(6)

I have dealt with this subject at what may seem undue length, though from its nature rather summarily, because the claim of Meher Baba to be God-Man has to be considered. I think the Chalcedon declaration to be an aid to its understanding.

The human element in the God-Man, without which earthly life would be impossible, is the contraction and limitation of God: the divine element is the fullness and freedom of God: the two elements becoming actual in one person. The discussion upon human deification in the last chapter should be looked at in this sense; that man becomes God and God becomes man being two aspects of the same divine act. The great Saint Athanasius said that God had to be *hominized* that man might be deified. As creation is contraction of the consciousness of God so incarnation is contraction in the form of the divine-human being, human in all respects in phenomenal existence, the divinity hidden within a cloud. The incarnated being is subject to time while conscious of eternity.

There was nothing outwardly unusual about Baba's birth; so far as

¹ Perhaps reference may be made, though I am not a Hegelian (not thinking that 'the rational alone is real'), to Hegel's lectures on 'The Absolute Religion' contained in the volume, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. (English translation, London, 1895.)

his parents were concerned his conception and birth were normal, which is what one should expect. The God-Man is born in the normal biological manner but his soul is not in the process of involution. Thus the birth can be called miraculous, though the miracle is inward, without outward sign until the moment comes. It is not strange that Baba gave no indication of remarkable gifts during his childhood and youth; he had to wait until he was nineteen for the change to take place when he discovered his impersonality in a human sense and endured much anguish. We know when he knew himself to be Avatar, for Upasni Maharaj threw the stone that hit him on the head when they first met: 'All at once, I felt calm, and I knew I was the Ancient One', said Baba afterwards. He was then twenty-one years of age. Not until seven years later, when he was twenty-eight, did Maharaj say to him, 'Merwan, you are the Avatar'. The account came from Baba afterwards.

His five Perfect Masters were Babajan, Tajuddin Baba, Narayan Maharaj, Sai Baba, and Upasni Maharaj. He said, 'Babajan gave me Divine Bliss, Sai Baba gave me Divine Power, Upasni Maharaj gave me Divine Knowledge'.

When he first declared himself to be Avatar, is another matter, for the declaration had to be made by him, if at all: where and when that was done I do not know. He functioned as Perfect Master long after he knew himself as Avatar, for an Avatar acts as Perfect Master, just as he acts as an entirely ordinary man. He referred to himself by implication as God-Man in America in 1932, and there are early discourses on the Avatar and God-Man, in 1938 and 1941, which do not specifically refer to himself, though such references can perhaps be inferred. Eruch Jessawala says that when he used to visit the Jessawala family in Poona about the year 1938, Baba would at times spell on the alphabet board, 'I am the one who is expected'. He seems to have referred to himself, casually, as Avatar when among his intimates long before that period, though very rarely. In the highly important manonash declaration on 6 February 1952 he did not use the word Avatar. The specific declaration is the 'Highest of the High' statement of 7 September 1953. Since then his references have been frequent. At Meherazad in 1957 he said, 'From the beginningless beginning I am the Ancient One, immutable and eternal', when he explained that he used the pronoun 'I' in two senses, 'I' the Baba we know, and 'I' the Eternal Self. That Baba does declare himself God-Man in the full sense there is no question. The initial obscurity and slowness to announce it was not because of doubt in his own mind; he had to wait until the right

moment, which was his moment, not for a spectacular occasion or under conditions to be remembered by others. I have not questioned Baba on the subject, for I am pretty sure his answer would be a smile and a remark to the effect 'What does it matter?' I have, however, spoken to some of the mandali close to him, and what they say agrees with the above.

(7)

At this point something must be said about the relation of Meher Baba to Jesus Christ. Unless it is possible to contemplate the idea of God eternally revealing himself, the idea of a God-Man other than Jesus Christ cannot be accepted. It seems to me as a Christian, believing in the creeds of Christendom, that it must be contemplated, for it is fundamental Christian doctrine that God is eternally concerned with mankind, the incarnation being a specific sign that he is never separate from man. In all religions worthy of being called religion God seeks man: as St Augustine said 'Thou wert with me but I was not with thee'. The overcoming of evil by good, the union of God and the individual soul, the suffering of the God-Man, are all the actions of God mediating with man.

It seems to me that to see the way of Jesus in Baba or the way of Baba in Jesus is not to diminish Jesus or to suppose that Baba is a substitute for him in any way whatever. Jesus cannot be replaced. Whatever has been thought from time to time in periods of stress, or whatever has been declared in the face of heresy, the Christian mystics have never supposed that while Jesus Christ is the way he alone as a historical figure is the only way: his way is the only way, but his way has been in the world from the beginning: the way of obedience, sacrifice and love. I understand Baba to mean this when he reminds Christians who come to him that they should practise their own religion. Sometimes people are confused about this, because it seems that in Jesus and Baba they have two Masters - the same question arises in India as between Krishna and Baba - but there is no dilemma if it be realized that the Masters are one. There is no obligation to choose one and reject the other. Jesus said that no one can serve two masters, when he was contrasting God and Mammon, but he was not telling his fellow Jews to give up their way or worship, or the Samaritans theirs, or the Greeks theirs, when he said 'Follow me.'

How then should we understand the relation of Baba to Jesus? This appears to be as difficult a question as that of the relation of religions

with each other. When one is committed to a particular religion, as indeed one must be to be able to appreciate the inwardness of religion at all, it is hard to avoid a somewhat equivocal attitude towards other religions; one seems bound to assert that one's own religion is in some way superior to or more complete than others. The best treatment of the subject known to me is contained in the works of the Swiss scholar, Fruthjof Schuon, in particular, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions* (1953). An excellent discussion on the God-Man is by the Russian Vladimir Solovyev (1853-1900) in *Lectures on God-Manhood* (1878). The subject has certainly not been ignored by others, whose conclusions, however, I find uneasy. Fruthjof Schuon is Christian, Protestant, with a profound knowledge of Islam and Eastern religions, while Solovyev was Christian Orthodox with a deep knowledge of the Eastern and Roman theologies and some knowledge of Eastern religions; I refer the reader to their books. Schuon says:

If Christ had been the only manifestation of the Word, supposing such uniqueness of manifestation to be possible, the effect of His birth would have been the instantaneous reduction of the universe to ashes.

My own conclusion is that no satisfactory answer to the question of the relation between Jesus and Baba is possible unless we can agree that both manifest the same Eternal Consciousness; they are not identical persons, neither are they repetitions of each other: the work of each is unique. Therefore, to suppose that Baba is the Palestinian Jesus come again, is a fundamental error.

There are pictures of Baba in which he is represented as the suffering Jesus, as there are pictures of him as Krishna. This kind of devotion is sometimes to be found in the treatment of the lives of Christian saints, in particular St Francis of Assisi, whose life has been presented in such a way as to resemble the life of Christ. Dante himself is not innocent of this for he found in St Francis, to use Baron von Hügel's words, 'the reproduction of the divine paradox of the life of Jesus'. It is true that the Christian does aim to be, as Kierkegaard said, 'contemporaneous with Christ', but that does not mean that he repeats in himself the life of Christ, which was once for all, but that he sees with Christ's eyes the reality of God in the changing and imperfect world. It is a fact that to see Baba walking through the streets of Indian villages, when he gives darshan, is to see what is not unlike what must have taken place when Jesus walked in Judea and Galilee. In the same way the people press upon him, mothers carry their children, the old

and the diseased strive to get near him, the disciples push the people back, making way, he stopping them, beckoning to the mothers and children, touching them, and giving blessing. I have described in these pages what I have seen. In a sense this is Christ come again, I have said to myself. Yet to think of Baba as the 'Second Coming' in the Christian sense, as I have found people do, is to misinterpret that extremely subtle doctrine, which certainly does not mean in any literal sense that Jesus will come again as he was before, as though it were necessary for his humanness to be recognized again; his second coming is 'in glory'. Besides, Jesus did appear 'in glory' after his death, to his friends, when the sensuous nature (man) was manifested in the spiritual (God), upon which faith the Christian Church was founded.

The God-Man is the exteriorization of the divine inwardness, the manifestation in visible sensual form of transcendent Godhead. He presents man in his relation to that which is beyond Nature and presents God in him. In him is reconciled the Eastern conception of identity between the human and the divine with the Western conception of unity. As God is more than the God of this world, so the God-Man is more than the Man of this world. Indeed, his light is for the entire creation, not simply our galaxy but the infinite galaxies: for him 'the whole creation travails in pain'.

(8)

For myself, the moment having come to speak personally, I recognize Baba's claim and do not consider it to interfere with belief in Jesus Christ in the sense understood in the Christian creeds, for the 'Only-begotten Son' does not mean only Jesus, for the 'begetting' is in the Godhead, it is not an earthly begetting. All who are 'born of the spirit' share in son-ship, and to believe that Jesus is the Son is to believe that he calls men his brothers. What this does interfere with is the belief that Christianity is intended to absorb and to replace other religions. Though I believe Christianity to be unique, final in its uniqueness, I find it possible to be a Christian without believing in any absolutist claims, maintaining respect for all religions, which I regard as equally unique and final. This does not mean that I do not scrutinize other religions or do not subject them to critical thought, or 'like' them equally, any more than I think it possible to create a syncretic religion in which a whole is made of the dogmas of different religions, for to attempt to make a composite and final religion would be absurd presumption. Every religion represents its own truth, supported by

its own tradition; these truths have to be acknowledged with the validity of the traditions. Certainly every 'truth' is to be interrogated and examined by the rational mind, but final judgment does not depend upon rational demonstration, it depends upon intuition, sympathy, the reasons of the heart. This is not sentimentality: my own mind is inherently sceptical; it is a matter of critical reflection accompanied by action in full awareness, in consciousness of the present moment, taking a decision from one's own centre, the centre that controls thinking and feeling, the 'I am'.

The religious and cultural forms in which a man has been born and educated are part of his heritage, that is to say, his human, individual soul; for tradition should not be thought of as a collective soul, an altogether different and more transient phenomenon: it is as much the man as his hand or eye, even more so for one's organs are parts, while the heritage is the whole. For a man to deny his religion is near to treachery, although Baba once said, 'To change a religion is just like changing a cage', by which he meant to discourage people from doing it. To know what is real and essential in his religion a man must practise and experience it, otherwise he must not pretend to knowledge. We cannot pick and choose our religion as we choose movements and societies to which to belong. We have to be one with our own religion to be able to tolerate and acknowledge other religions. Religion and civilization are intertwined. Western civilization is Druidic - Jewish - Hellenistic - Roman - Christian - and the roots of those born and bred in the West are deep in its soil. Unless we in the West are conscious of this we are conscious of nothing, and to cut ourselves off from these psychological and biological roots would mean that we should cease to be. The same is to be said of Eastern men and their traditions and religions. Though it is true that 'man is the same everywhere', men are not, and we live as men not man. Because of these roots of body and soul, men of the East and West need to meet and learn from each other for they share common humanity and the unity of divine origin; but diversity has to be recognized even in its most contradictory aspects. This unity and diversity are contained in the One Self of the Vedas, the moral fire of Zoroaster, the supreme Reality of the Tao, the wisdom of Confucius, the 'I am who am' of Moses, the supreme Goodness of Plato, the way of the Gods of Shinto, the dynamic One of Plotinus, the glory of the One God of Muhammad, as well as in the 'I am what I am', and the joyful resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It must however be added that while their sources may be revelation, which in one sense or another is claimed by all religions, all traditions

have to be purified, for all exist within the human mind on the 'planes' and in the waking-sleep state. When there is awakening there is loosening from the temporality of tradition, while the inner core remains. The core of tradition is the divinity, or spirit or intellect in man, his inwardness; it is man as 'subject' rather than 'object' - or rather 'subject-object' - its significance is that man has to know himself, that is to awaken.

Baba is at very great pains that people in the West should not adopt Eastern cults unsuited to their psychology and traditions. Although his teaching is the same for both East and West his insistence that everyone should follow his own tradition and religion means that he does not seek to Easternize Westerners or vice versa. For that reason Baba has no cult or rule.

(9)

It seems to me of importance to recognize in Baba as God-Man that as a man he is Irani. Though born in India, and, until independence, a British subject, his parents were Persian; he is Zoroastrian in religious upbringing and acknowledges it. When he prayed formally as at the opening of the New Life in 1949, he used Zoroastrian terms, as well as the terms of other religions. As Persian he stands between East and West, looking both ways, in a balancing position. He belongs to an Eastern tradition that turns towards the West, nearer to the Semitic and the Greek than to the Hindu and Chinese. Persia most nearly approaches the Western categories of thought of subject and object in its Zoroastrian opposition of Good and Evil. Baba's favourite poet is the Persian Hafiz, from whom he quotes most frequently.

For centuries Persia was a centre of religious and cultural influence throughout the East, extending as far as Japan. Its domination by Islam for so long has been of the utmost importance, for Islam is near to the Western Christian world, with which it has always been entangled in cultural and religious opposition, and Islamic influence upon the West has been marked. Furthermore the tradition of Hellenic Roman learning is marked in Islam. This interchange is found in Sufism, so strong in Persia, and not a little in Baba's other well-loved poet the Indian-Muslim Kabir. The East takes the opposites as polarities, whose contrariety is illusion; it contains in Buddhism the most complete system of self-deliverance in the Overcoming of illusion, leading to, it seems, inertia. The West projects the opposites into life

and nature as inherent in existence, and its acceptance of opposites has resulted in boundless creativity. All Western forms of religion are concerned with human helplessness, the basic disharmony, guilt and suffering of man; thus tragedy is characteristic of Western thought and art in its sagas and dramas. This is absent in the East, where conflicts are the activities of the gods. Real Indian tragedy is in the mythical works equivalent to Homer; there is no Aeschylus, Shakespeare or Racine, and no such tragic philosophers as Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. In short, Western man is deeply involved in time, while Eastern man has always as it were had his feet in eternity.

Although as God-Man, Baba's five Perfect Masters who prepared for his coming were Eastern, his Persian origin, which explains his use of so many Sufi terms, has significance in his relation to the West.

(10)

There is this, finally, to be added, that Baba has repeatedly said that he has not yet 'manifested' as God-Man. The manifestation is still to come. Just before the important 'Final Declaration' (1954) he said that there would be three phases of the Avatar-life:

First, a very strange and serious illness will attack this body, which will be the cause of my humiliation Secondly, the humiliation will end in the sudden breaking of my silence, and my uttering the Word which only God can utter. Thirdly, glorification will replace humiliation. All the pent up Infinity in me will splash and spread over the Universe.

In the Declaration he said:

My manifestation as the Avatar of the age will be of short duration. This short period will, in quick succession, cover my humiliation, the breaking of my silence, my glorification and my violent physical end.

On a later occasion he explained that the illness and humiliation were 'said in your language'; his glorification 'was said simultaneously in my language and in yours', his violent end, 'was said in my language alone'; and his physical end 'was said in my own language and simultaneously in yours'. All of which means that the words were to be taken seriously but not grossly.

The manifestation, the breaking of his silence and the speaking of the One Word, are to be a single event. What that event will be he has not clearly explained. He has said:

My universal glorification will not be manifested very near my physical presence ... those who are around me will not be affected.

And further:

No one of my mandali or lovers will be near me when I am beaten and finally stabbed.

This is 'Baba's own language'. He has further said that the 'manifestation' will be of 'short duration' but what form the 'manifestation' will take remains unknown. We are to understand that it will be of the highest importance. All will be able to hear the Word, but not everyone will know that he hears it, for some will remain deaf, some will be asleep and hear it in a dream, and some, even among those waiting to hear, may mistake it. That is why he says alertness is essential. He has repeatedly given the warning, however, that many will by then have left him, for success as the world understands it is not provided for.

(11)

Recognition of Meher Baba as God-Man must influence one's thinking of him as a man. In his divine nature the God-Man possesses infinite knowledge, power and bliss, but in his person his human nature causes him universal helplessness and suffering; his infinite power and bliss are not used, while his infinite knowledge has self-imposed limitations. Because the world is imperfect Baba's body shares in that imperfection; but he is conscious of the fact, and in that sense his body is different from our bodies. It looks the same, feels the same, is subject to heat and cold, liable to disease and to accident, and is in fact indistinguishable from a normal body, yet it is impossible to avoid the impression that there is a difference from the normal body. His eyes, expression, touch, walk, posture, and use of his hands are peculiarly his own. Certainly something of the sort could be said of any outstanding person; but it is none the less true that it is characteristic of outstanding men to be much like ordinary men, even indistinguishable from them. That at least has often been my experience. With Baba there is no mistaking his uniqueness. It is not that there is an atmosphere of occult powers or that some influence appears intentionally to emanate from him; but the strangeness is none the less there. The more one sees of him the more unshakable is that impression, and I can say that after more than thirty years of knowing him it never diminishes.

Part II Chapter 4

THE SILENCE

'In spite of my silence, I speak with all the tongues of the world'

(1)

Meher Baba became silent on 10 July 1925, three and a half years after realizing himself, when he was thirty-one years old. He then used a pencil and slate or paper for communication; in another eighteen months, on 2 January 1927, he ceased to write.

At first he employed gestures, but soon took to the use of an alphabet board in Roman lettering. The board was a ready method of communication, making conversation with him easy. He pointed to the letters and used a variety of signs and gestures. Normally the board would be 'read' by one of the mandali when he received visitors, or addressed groups of people or meetings. This continued for more than twenty-nine years, until on 7 October 1954 when he discarded the board. Thereafter he communicated by means of gestures with which those around him became familiar. The interpretation of these gestures by some of the mandali, in particular by Eruch Jessawala, is remarkably well done. Eruch is with him continually and has become so near to him in spirit that he reads Baba like a book. When statements of great importance have to be made, the alphabet is spoken and Baba indicates the letters to make up the words he wants.

There can be little doubt that the silence and cessation of writing were connected. Why he ceased to speak and write Baba has explained only vaguely, though much natural curiosity is aroused; the first question asked when people come to know about him or to see him is why he does it. That both silence and non-writing are of great significance is certain; not surprisingly Baba does not explain. Silence is the answer to silence.

Baba occasionally enjoins silence upon his followers, usually for no more than a day at a time, though certain disciples have been ordered to maintain silence for longer periods, sometimes indefinitely. Normally,

silence is a form of discipline, and for the sake of self-recollection; when long silences are ordered they are for other unexplained reasons. In the East the avoidance of words and explanations is a recognized technique in spiritual training; the guru or teacher often gives no answer to his pupils' questions.

(2)

Silence has been practised throughout the ages. 'Be still and know that I am God', said the Psalmist. 'He who knows does not speak', said Lao-tze. When the Buddha was asked to state the duty of a disciple, he took the golden flower and gazed on it in silence; he was silent when questioned about the nature of Reality and nirvana. For thirty-two years the life of Jesus is shrouded in silence (apart from a single episode), and to what extent he practised silence during those years is unknown; we do know that afterwards he was often in silence, and when questioned by Pilate about the nature of Truth said nothing. The second-century Saint Ignatius of Antioch said:

He who also possesses Jesus' word is able also to hear his silence, in order that he may be perfect, so that he may act through his words and may be known through his silences.

Plotinus declared:

You should not ask questions but understand keeping silence, as I keep silence, for I am not in the habit of speaking.

The sixth-century Armenian saint, known as John the Silent, was a Bishop at twenty-eight, and ten years later became a 'walled-up' recluse, but lived to be a very old man. Silence is usual in Christian religious orders and is virtually complete in some. Eckhart referred to the divine as 'the wordless Godhead', and in the discourse entitled, 'From whom God hid nothing' said on a text from the Book of Wisdom, 'Out of the silence a secret word was spoken to me'

Ah Sir! - what is this silence and where is that word to be spoken? We shall say ... it is spoken in the purest element of the soul, in the soul's most exalted place, in the core, yes, in the essence of the soul. The central silence is there, where no creature may enter, nor any idea, and where the soul neither thinks nor acts, nor entertains any idea, either of itself or of anything else.

One of the strangest stories of silence is that of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the 'Angelic Doctor' of the Catholic Church. As a young man he was known in Paris as 'the dumb ox'. Throughout his life St Thomas travelled a great deal, mostly on foot, never staying long anywhere, though often returning to the same place. He laboured on his great work *Summa Theologica* for seven years, without completing it, for he stopped, was silent and wrote no more. This caused great concern and he was repeatedly urged to continue or to explain why he did not. At last, shortly before he died, he said, 'All I have written seems to me to be nothing but straw ... compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me'. He died in 1274 at the age of fifty. Perhaps with St Thomas it was at the moment when understanding flooded his mind that he became silent; he then looked within himself as with the same glance he looked above. Dionysius the Areopagite, one of St Thomas's favourite authorities, wrote of 'the Divine silence'.

I do not think this silence of St Thomas, any more than the silence of Baba, is to be thought of as contemplative silence, such as for instance was practised so extensively in the Heychast mysticism of the Byzantine Church, and as practised also in Zen and other Eastern systems. Certainly Baba's silence is not a method of inner mental prayer for the sake of spiritual development. It is both part of his work and a condition under which that work is done.

(3)

Just before Baba gave up the use of the alphabet board in the autumn of 1954, he seems to have spoken more about his silence than at any other time. In April 1952 he said:

"God has been everlastingly working in silence, unobserved, unheard, except by those who experience his infinite silence. If my silence cannot speak, of what avail would be speeches made by the tongue.

"The very moment when he thinks my speaking should be heard universally, God will make me break my silence."

Two years later during his tour in Andra he spoke of it on many occasions. He also said:

"To ask whether my followers will be informed of the time and place of the breaking of my silence would be ridiculous, and in itself would show that the significance of the breaking of my silence has not been truly understood."

In the same year, 1954, he said:

"If you were to ask me why I do not speak, I would say I am not silent, and that I speak more eloquently through gestures and the alphabet board.

"If you were to ask me why I do not talk, I would say, mostly for three reasons. Firstly, I feel that through you all I am talking eternally. Secondly, to relieve the boredom of talking incessantly through your forms, I keep silence in my personal physical form. And thirdly, because all talk in itself is idle talk. Lectures, messages, statements, discourses of any kind, spiritual or otherwise, imparted through utterances or writings, are just idle talk when not acted upon or lived up to.

"If you were to ask me when I will break my silence, I would say, when I feel like uttering the only real Word that was spoken in the beginningless beginning, as that Word alone is worth uttering. The time for the breaking of my outward silence to utter that Word is very near."

Those who have been in his presence know that Baba communicates through his silence. What proceeds from him is beyond words, does not need words, could not be contained in them. The inaudible sound is from heart to heart: silence that penetrates mind and heart. He sometimes reminds those who read or listen to what he 'says' that he uses another language from theirs, which should be remembered when his words are considered. That is, his standpoint is different from those who listen. He is on the level of the listener, but his standpoint is absolute, i.e. timeless and essential, while that of the listener is relative, i.e. in the terms of earthly life and history. Silence is not only a matter of non-speaking, but silence of the desires, passions, urgings and conflicts of body and mind. In those who practise it, silence brings about calmness and harmony in the body, making it a ready instrument: it is complete self-possession.

Baba's silence places him among the intangible, the unrecorded and not documented, a positive sign that he does not wholly belong to the rational world of facts and events but to the inner world of insight and intuition.

(4)

This suggests that something should be said of the silence of Baba in connection with the great amount of writing bearing his name, of

which there is much contained in this book. When we read the discourses, messages and books, we should never forget his silence, which is certainly one of his important symbols. Despite all the published matter, he has not spoken a word, neither has any written word of his been published. There are no writings by Krishna; the Buddha who talked much wrote nothing; Socrates, essentially a talker, wrote nothing; Jesus did not write, and though his teaching is treasured, his significance is contained in his life, in particular the story of his resurrection. Baba's significance is conveyed most forcibly by his silence and not writing. We cannot escape the full meaning of the fact. The Buddha is said to have remarked to his disciples, 'I have been talking and talking to you for the last forty-nine years, but in truth I have not spoken a word'.

It is very necessary to remember that all the writing that bears Baba's name reaches us through others. What he used to 'say' on the alphabet board was interpreted, and every time the words 'Baba says' appear, inverted commas should be used, and in documents bearing Baba's name the signature should be in inverted commas too. I do not mean to say that Baba is not responsible for these declarations and writings; but so far as the reader or hearer is concerned he should know that they reach him at second hand. Even when Baba used the board, it is necessary to remember how the words were conveyed. He would dictate, usually not word for word, a general idea or theme, from which the writer would compose a discourse; it would then be read to Baba, who would indicate alterations, after that he would be finished with it. There are many declarations and messages in which he dictated exactly what he wished said, including those since he gave up the board, conveyed by gestures and composed with difficulty. It should especially be noticed how often in messages Baba is made to refer to himself in the second person, which clearly indicates that someone is speaking for him.

Those who serve him do so with complete devotion and singleness of heart, and I am certain that they would give their lives for the truth. Never in the very slightest degree do they intend to convey anything from him but with the most meticulous accuracy. Yet one only has to read what bears his name to realize that the utterances cannot be Baba's in the strict sense, for the manner of the interpreter is too often unmistakably impressed upon them. I say this with emphasis, for I have studied almost every word that has been printed or circulated under Baba's name. When Baba has 'spoken' to groups of people and what he has said has been taken down, on his instructions, it is interesting

that the records have only too often shown discrepancies, despite the desire of those taking notes to be exact. Listeners do not always hear the same thing, and omissions of what has been said, as well as words introduced that have not been spoken, are frequent. Statements, and messages, of course, are carefully taken down and scrupulously checked; none the less the words do not come from his lips or hands.

That is part of the price Baba has to pay for choosing to be silent and not to write; for he cannot be silent and at the same time have the advantage of speech. We never get the full intonation, the flavour, the precision of Baba's own being in his 'words', though we do often get his humour. In the course of writing this book I have been continually aware that I should have put such words as 'said', 'remarked', 'spoke', 'declared' and the like, when used of him, in quotation marks to remind myself and the reader of what was actually happening; but to do so would have been confusing, and might possibly have diminished the force of what was being 'said'. More might have been lost, than gained. I do, however, ask the reader to take account of this explanation.

(5)

Baba has 'said' many times that he would break his silence. As long ago as early 1927, less than two years after the silence started, he said that he would speak in five days. He did not. He made a promise to speak in Hollywood in July 1932, but did not. In April 1941 he said:

"I will speak on the 1st August 1941, the Divine Word to myself and in myself, the word of the Will of God, that will begin the resurrection of the dead world; and this speaking-to-myself operation will continue till the 15th of February 1942, the day I will publicly and universally speak, the day that my world manifestation will come to full expression, the day that the six months' self-speaking operation will bring out the subsequent unfoldment of the spiritual revival and the day that the disciples of my circle will realize the truth. My present seclusion will continue till 15th April, from April 15th 1941 to February 15th 1942, my seclusion will be more absolute."

It will be observed that he speaks here of a 'speaking-to-myself' which was to last for six months. What this meant he has not disclosed and he did not speak in February 1942. In Poona in November 1962 he said that the following year, 1963, would be devoted to 'preparation for the urge' to speak. No one has ever heard him speak to himself, not

even those who have been with him day and night, and are near him during his seclusions. I was once told by Ramjoo that years ago Baba informed some of the mandali that he proposed to speak, and brought a number of them to a distant place, which they reached after days of strenuous walking. When they arrived he made each stand around him at a distance of fifty feet or more with their backs to him, he standing in the center; at the clapping of his hands they were to turn to him and he would speak. He clapped his hands, they turned, but heard nothing. He smiled and beckoned them to him. Why had he not spoken? they asked. He said, 'Do you not know I am always speaking?' Indeed, he has said that 'the voice of intuition is my voice'.

Is it not terrifying that Baba should have maintained silence all these nearly forty years? For silence is the abyss, or the very edge of the abyss. In the ordinary way in silence we come dangerously near the gap of meaninglessness, in which nothing has a name or a rightful place. To me it is astonishing that a man should look into the darkness so long, and should live; it shrouds Baba with the deepest mystery, a word I have constantly used.

Unless it is the Word, in Baba's sense, the noise that breaks the silence is ignorance. When he breaks his silence, he says he will speak one Word, which will 'go to the world as from God, not as from a philosopher, it will go straight to its heart'. Why the Word is not yet uttered we do not know, except that he is waiting for the moment. It will mean much, for after all these years of silence he will be bound to speak to the point. Indeed, he says, his Word will reverberate for seven hundred years. He has to choose the time because of the danger of men hearing what exceeds the possibility of what they are able to hear: it might destroy the balance of mankind. In Francis Brabazon's *Stay with God* the following statement by Baba is contained:

When I break my silence and speak, it will be this Primal Oceanic 'M-m-m' which I will utter through my human mouth.

And because all forms and words are from this Primal Sound or Original Word and are continuously connected with it and have their life from it, when it is uttered by me it will reverberate in all people and creatures and all will know that I have broken my silence and have uttered that Sound or Word.

The effective force of this Word and their reaction to it will be in accordance with the magnitude and receptivity of each individual mind.

And the reaction will be an instantaneous and as various as the reaction of people in a room through which a cobra suddenly and

swiftly passes, when some would nervously laugh, some lose control of their bowels, and some feel great courage or reasonless hope and joy.

(p.66)

As the Word will be an inner word, heard by the inner ear only by those able to hear it, those who, in Goethe's words, can bear 'the living and instantaneous revelation of the unfathomable', they will know that they hear it and what they hear. Baba told me in Poona, in November 1962, that he would not after 'speaking' resume speech in the normal way. He is reported to have said (in Bombay, November 1936), 'My active and intensive work will last for twelve years after my speech'. It seems, however, that the speaking may have something to do with his end, for he has said that his speaking and his manifestation will be one. We cannot know, for he does not, in this matter, speak our language. What we do know can perhaps be expressed in some aphoristic lines of Nietzsche:

He who has much to announce
first silences much into himself.
He who has to kindle the lightning
must be the cloud for long.

Part II Chapter 5

THE TEACHING

'I am not a teacher'

(1)

From the beginning Meher Baba has declared that he is not a teacher. In answer to a question in 1932, he said:

"My work is to lead others to reach the goal: to live in the world and not to be of it, and to be in harmony with everything and everyone."

He does this by silence and not-writing. These strange methods challenge normal life; not that others, too, should cease to speak and write, but that they should ask themselves questions. Baba's sister Mani tells of a visitor who came to him with a long list of questions, but sitting with him the questions were forgotten. On his leaving, Baba said:

"There is only one question. And, once you know the answer to that question, there will be no more questions. In fact, there are not two questions.

"There is the one Original Question, to which there is one Final Answer. In between the original Question and the final Answer there are innumerable false answers.

"From out of the depth of unbroken Infinity arose the Question, 'Who am I?' And to that Question there is the answer, 'I am God!'"

Baba is not a teacher, because there is teaching enough already. Yet he does teach because the mind has to be addressed and awakened as well as the heart. That is the explanation of the great amount of teaching by this non-teacher, though he does not cease to point out that it is the less important thing. Indeed, he often says to those who are listening, 'This does not concern you'. I have often thought of the

famous Bodhidharma, who brought Zen to China from the south of India in the sixth century, who is said to have been seen tearing up the holy writings and throwing them away.

(2)

Baba himself wrote a book during the period between the silence and ceasing to write, which no one has yet seen. There are, however, a number of volumes bearing his name, the product of the non-writing period, in particular a series of 'discourses' in five volumes, published in Ahmednagar from 1938 to 1942. These are only a fraction, however, of a great many discourses, some of which have been printed separately or included in various books; some hitherto unpublished are contained in the present volume; and there are many others. These represent a considerable volume of 'writing'. I have already described how this was done. The discourses are concerned with specific spiritual themes; the declarations and messages are more of a personal nature though containing important elements of teaching.

(3)

There is one book that bears his name, *God Speaks; The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, published in New York (1955), rightly regarded as of major importance, which Baba usually tells those who come to him to be certain to read. The typescript of this work was given to Ivy O. Duce and Don Stevens to edit and prepare for the press, Mrs Duce being the Murshida of 'Sufism Reoriented' in the United States of America, and Mr Stevens one of its members. The book is an impressive work of 255 pages with seven charts, some in color, illustrating the text.

Parts I-VIII (pages 1-145) was dictated by Meher Baba through the medium of his alphabet board to Eruch B. Jessawala; Parts IX-X (pages 147-76) were written by the latter under the supervision of Baba; the Supplement (pages 177-244) was compiled from notes dictated by Baba.

As its title indicates this book contains Meher Baba's cosmology. The language is mainly Vedantic suffused with Sufi terminology with some regard to Christian mystical terms. The first part might be thought of (though it is nothing of the kind) as a commentary upon the *Brahma Sutra*, taking account of *Samskara* and *Ramanuja*. I am reminded of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, also of the fifth-century Dionysus the Areopagite, the teacher of St Thomas Aquinas, and always with great

advantage of the fourteenth century Dominican, Meister Johannes Eckhart, as the reader may discover. The second part is an elaborate statement of the 'Ten States of God' somewhat reminiscent of the ten spheres of the divine manifestation in the Kabbalah, the essence of which is the limitation of God, which scholars think might possibly have had a very ancient Persian origin, but here again there is no more than a reminiscence. As a source book of what can reasonably be said about Baba's 'thought' it has a very special place, but it should be regarded as a symbolic work not a philosophical treatise. It is highly compressed, despite repetitiveness and a certain confusion due to the different hands through which it has passed.

It may be thought odd that one who disclaims being a teacher should have been responsible for such a work as this; the title itself is startling, if only because Baba does not 'speak'. Yet the work is important, indicating among other things that one whose life is committed to what cannot be spoken must none the less set out to give a rational exposition of what cannot be explained.

(4)

I propose to give in my own words, not using the Vedantic or Sufi terminology employed in the book nor repeating the poetical or prophetic language of the earlier part, putting in bare outline what Baba seems to say. For anything equivalent to a total view it is necessary to go beyond *God Speaks* and to take account of discourses and messages, including chance remarks, and especially of what was said at the East-West gathering in November, 1962, which I have done. The following therefore is Baba's cosmology as I understand it:

(a)

In the beginningless beginning, in the beyond the beyond, God Is in absolute sound sleep or unpredictable emptiness; from which God projects in the beyond, conscious of power, knowledge and bliss; from whom proceeds God as creator, sustainer and dissolver, whose initial urge projects God, contracted as embodied soul in gross unconsciousness, the most finite point of creation.

(b)

Creation is the finite point of the embodied soul, contained in innumerable galaxies, in which the soul passes through the evolutionary processes, the elements in their different ratios, vegetable,

worm, fish, animal and man; in the completion of man there are seven stages or worlds of consciousness: (1) sound sleep, (2) sleep in which man opens his eyes slightly and dreams, (3) sleep in which his eyes are half-open, his dreams more active, (4) sleep in which he is semiconscious, about to wake, but still dreaming, (5) sleep in which his eyes are further open, his dreams more intense, (6) when he is fully awake but not yet conscious of himself, (7) when man becomes conscious of himself, but retains impressions of the past, and supposes the physical, subtle and mental worlds to be everything.

(c)

On this earth human evolution is completed, man, having become self-conscious, experiences disorder and contradictions within himself, which his soul has the urge to resolve in a process of involution of consciousness and disentanglement from the gross world, in the course of which he passes through a series of re-incarnations to be freed from the impressions gained during evolution; he thus enters upon seven planes or states, the first three of which are in the domain of energy, the fourth is the threshold between energy and the domain of mind, the fifth and sixth in the world of mind; these six planes are in the 'illusion'; the seventh plane is that of complete freedom from illusion and full consciousness of God. The planes are: (1) when the soul of man is on the brink, conscious of the gross aspects of energy, having the first glimpse of its subtle aspects; (2) when he gains greater consciousness of the subtle aspects of energy and becomes aware of the mental plane; (3) in which the subtle-conscious aspects of energy become complete; (4) when with full possession of subtle energy-consciousness man gains the key to infinite energy, and is on the threshold of mind: at this point there are great temptations, powers may be used for individual or collective good, and disintegration of consciousness becomes possible; (5) man in the first state of mind, inquiring and reflecting, gains control of thoughts: if the powers of the fourth plane have not been misused this plane may be jumped over; (6) man is fully mentally conscious, in control of thoughts and feelings and sees God in all but cannot see himself in God; (7) the fully self-conscious soul sees itself as infinite and eternal, the 'I' is no more, followed immediately by the realization, 'I am God'.

(d)

This is the end of the 'first journey' of the human soul, when man 'passes away into' God in power, knowledge and bliss, and leaves

the world; rarely he remains, and re-enters normal life in illusion, knowing it to be illusion; he may then enter upon a 'second journey' which starts with fluctuating experiences of the divine and human until the 'abiding-in' God state is established; he may then start a 'third journey', at the end of which as Perfect Master he lives in the world as God and man simultaneously, the Man-God freed from illusion.

(e)

At the end of the first, second or third journey, in a 'fourth and final journey' man 'passes away as' God, physical, subtle and mental experiences are dropped, infinite power, knowledge and bliss are enjoyed, the infinite individuality is retained.

(5)

The above is the briefest possible summary of what could only be conveyed at all adequately in a work wholly devoted to it, but I think it may have value as far as it goes. There are several important points to be kept in mind: (i) I have made the first part relating to the Godhead and God very brief, because what can be said about the Everything and Nothing amounts to no more than words written in darkness about the darkness. The Light that enters into creation is to our eyes in shadow, which is not penetrable by the probing of philosophical enquiry, only by intuition or revelation; what we get from Baba is necessarily clothed in mystery, and I cannot hope to do justice to it in the space available to me here. The idea of God in the Beyond beyond the Beyond is familiar in Western and Eastern mysticism, for beyond all symbols of God, all personalizations, all attributes, is the Unknown. Eckhart speaks of 'meeting God through God', we enter into the Unknown through the God whom we know in prayer, in insight, even in denial and atheism. The Beyond is ever beyond, only Being and Existence are to be known. (ii) Note that the original 'sound sleep' includes consciousness and unconsciousness, the original emptiness includes everything, and the original infinitude includes finiteness. (iii) God remains one and the same, although referred to as 'projecting', 'proceeding', and passing through the 'processes' of evolution and involution. Thus the act of creation is not a separating off from God, neither is it an emanation, nor as the planting of a seed: the soul in contraction is God. (iv) At the most finite point, the embodied soul in creation (or contraction into finiteness) refers not merely to this earth but to the innumerable galaxies. (v) The act of creation is not to be

thought of as equivalent to a human whim or desire but as an inexplicable spontaneous 'act' in infinitude, impossible to describe for it was beginningless and has no ending. (vi) In the act of contraction or creation God subjects himself to evolution in the soul and body of Nature in all its forms and to involution of consciousness in human nature. (vii) The states, worlds and planes overlap and interpenetrate, for these are timeless and simultaneous, not to be separated except in rational thought.¹ (viii) The description of the evolutionary process is not a scientific outline of evolution (which would be quite different), but an indication of the evolution of consciousness in its main physical stages, pre-human and human. (ix) It is very necessary to bear in mind that in the highest as in the lowest forms of life there is 'transcendence'. Thus the cosmology is not to be dismissed as 'pantheistic'. There is no limit to God in Baba's teaching, so that transcendence is of its essence.

To attempt to reconcile what is said above with present day astronomical and geo-physical theories, or with biology or any of the physical sciences, or with anthropology or the study of psychology, would be of great interest, possible only when it be remembered that the point of view from which Baba's cosmology is presented and that of science are not the same: one is from within, the other from without; one is intuitive, the other mathematical; one is knowledge of Being the other of Existence.² When Baba speaks of the 'initial urge' from, which came 'The most finite point' of creation, the beginning of the evolutionary process, we may be reminded of the theory of Professor Martin Ryle that creation started 10,000 million years ago with a stupendous explosion, which has been flying outwards ever since, in which our own galaxy, the Milky Way, is a tiny fragment. But Baba also says that everything is simultaneous and 'is' as it ever was, which is not unlike the opposite theory of Professor Fred Hoyle that creation is continuous and that everything is as it always has been and always will be, that as galaxies recede their place is always reoccupied, the creation of new matter out of the nothingness being infinite.

The cosmology is really 'cosmic' in the sense that it embraces the entire creation, so that the evolutionary processes are not limited to this earth. Baba has said little about this, but at the meeting in November 1962 at which I was present, reported in the first part of this book, he said that on this earth there was the most advanced development

¹ To suppose oneself to be on a particular plane or to discuss on what planes other persons may be is without meaning.

² We are reminded of St Thomas Aquinas's remark that 'An error concerning the Creation ends as false thinking about God.'

and that only here could God be realized, which appears to mean that the 'involutionary' processes take place only here.¹

In conclusion let me add that I use the words 'soul', 'the embodied soul', in the sense of that which proceeds from 'spirit'. The 'embodied soul' means the soul in matter, which is not separate from that which created it, so that 'matter' is not separate from either soul or 'spirit', except in thought. As we are bound to think, we must distinguish between them, just as it is important to distinguish between 'soul' and 'spirit'. Much difficulty would be removed by distinguishing between these words.² 'Soul' passes through the experience of creation, 'not spirit'. 'Spirit' is the beginningless, unknowable absolute from which 'soul' proceeds as its 'energy' or 'life'. 'Spirit' not 'soul' is 'divinity'. Thus it is possible to think of the perfection of the soul, but spirit is beyond perfection, it 'is'. Distinction should also be recognized between 'intellect' 'reason' and 'mind'. In the same way as spirit, soul and body they are one, though not the same.

(6)

Meher Baba's doctrine of reincarnation requires some attention. In the course of evolution the soul becomes self-conscious when man is complete biologically and in his mind. This self-consciousness is his ability to converse with himself so that he knows himself as distinct from others. With the completion of evolution the soul of man carries within it a great heritage of impressions from his evolutionary past, and, though self-conscious, is still caught up in sleep and spends much time in dreams. In this state he enters upon the process of involution of consciousness and does not become free from these bindings, which are the confusion of the illusion with the real, until the involution of consciousness is complete. In the course of this involution he becomes subject to reincarnations, the involuntary 'process of intermittent association and disassociation of consciousness'. Thus reincarnation

¹ The ideas that evolution continues in mankind on this earth and that progress is the natural law are dangerous fallacies of our time; for progress for man involves his own will and responsibility, his awakening to his own inner law. The attempt to reduce this into the terms of naturalistic humanist rationalism results in moral confusion.

² For instance when we read in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (3.7.22), the words 'your self, the Ruler within, the Immortal', and in the Chandogya Upanishad, 'That is the Self' and thou, O Svetahetu, art it', (6.9) what is meant is not what we should call 'soul' but 'spirit'. St Paul refers to the first Adam as a 'living soul' and the second Adam as 'life giving spirit' (I. Cor. 15,45-50).

does not belong to natural evolution but starts with individuality and is completed with full consciousness in the realization of oneness. Evolution is the contraction of the soul in the growth of forms; involution is inner development and the passing through the worlds of consciousness. The evolution of man ended tens of thousands of years ago, so that the involution of consciousness started in prehistory and created history as part of the illusion through which man has to pass.

Baba calls these impressions of experience in the course of evolution and involution *sanskaras*. This is a Sanskrit word, not often found in Indian writings, though the idea is familiar. It is associated with *maya*; which is the illusion of phenomenal existence. Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz uses the word *sangsara*, as the universe of appearances, also as 'the round of death and birth'.¹ *Sanskaras* are the impressions, whatever they may be, good or bad, created by experience of appearances made upon the soul so long as it takes appearances for the reality (God to Man and Man to God, pp.76-93, 149-153), and the purpose of reincarnation is to provide the opportunity for the liberation of the soul from illusion. Until this liberation takes place *sanskaras* remain a burden. In reincarnations the experience of opposites is the means by which the impressions are loosened.

Reincarnation takes place only when the subtle and mental bodies are developed. In those bodies, through the physical bodies, the human soul reincarnates innumerable times, sometimes as male, sometimes as female, in various places and continents, in all conditions of life. Thus there is experience of contradiction and suffering as in the process of innumerable so-called deaths and births of human forms consciousness involves' and impressions gradually grow fainter and scarcer'. (God Speaks, p.1 07) Reincarnation is an important stage in the progress of man in knowledge of himself. The progress is not inevitable or evolutionary but depends upon will, without which regress is possible. Reincarnation is not to be thought of as giving 'another chance' to careless men so that what is done in one's present life does not matter very much; on the contrary it means that every thought and action is of vital importance, having effects from which there is no deliverance except by paying the price, and is an urge to take every opportunity to free oneself from attachments. Much confusion exists upon this subject. Reincarnation is not 'the transmigration of souls', which in its crude form is fantasy.

¹ Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa (Oxford University Press, 1928) p.39.n. The word *samsara* with the same meaning is used by others.

(7)

There is in Baba's cosmology the possibility of 'dissolution of consciousness', not in the course of evolution, but in the process of involution on the fourth plane of consciousness. It is when the soul has advanced in consciousness, feels its powers, has intense emotions, is aware of its own will, which is the key to its future, and is tempted to use its powers wrongly, that what Baba calls a 'psychic crash of unimaginable magnitude' may occur. That is why the fourth plane of high intelligence and consciousness is dangerous. He says:

The explosive forces thereby released bring about a complete disintegration of consciousness, subjecting the soul to a cataclysmic downfall from the heights of subtle consciousness' to the very lowest depths of rudimentary stone consciousness' (*God Speaks*, p. 45).

This means starting the evolutionary process all over again. Normally, says Baba, consciousness once gained is never lost, only when the powers of the fourth plane are misused does it happen. Altogether, this seems to me an original statement on the idea of reincarnation for which we are wholly indebted to Meher Baba.

(8)

Thus in his cosmology, Meher Baba posits and answers the question, What is man? The answer is that man is the actor of the divine cosmic drama, the theme of which is the divinization of all things and of man as the image of God. Though actor, he is not a puppet, for his inner core of divinity allows him freedom. So history is the drama of man's realization of his oneness with God. His soul evolved in the process of evolution, a part of nature in his phenomenal structure, acquires in the process of involving consciousness knowledge of himself. These processes of evolution and involution are a single act of love, which explains the emphasis upon obedience and love in the teaching. God is not an absentee, looking at the world from a distance; he is in the world's suffering and ignorance, for creation is God in phenomenal existence. If we ask why there is God and creation, why we exist at all, the answer is 'love': creation is the play of love. What we call supernatural is the essence of the natural, without which creation would not exist, and vice versa. To us in this world unless there is body there is nothing, from this imperfect body we know the supernatural.

(9)

In an earlier chapter I have spoken of Perfect Masters, their functions, and their 'control of the affairs of the whole universe', and of the one among them 'responsible for the control of all the affairs of the whole universe' (God Speaks, p.143). This duty he delivers in an Avataric period to the Avatar (ibid. p.145). Baba allows some mystery to lie upon these statements that I do not intend to disturb; it can however be said that these 'responsibilities' indicate the presence of God in the conscious state throughout the creation as well as in human affairs. Baba once said that Sai Baba 'controlled' the world war of 1914-18, by which he could not have meant what we should mean were we to say that any man had such control, but that the war was fulfilling the divine purpose. So with the responsibilities of the Avatar, symbolizing that whatever is done God's will is done. What is meant is that never at any point is chance, present in the nothingness, therefore always present in creation, allowed to prevail.

(10)

The appearance of perfect ones and the advent of the Avatar have to do with 'ages' and 'cycles' of which little is said in Baba's teaching, though there are references without explanation. A cycle of Avataric time is from 700 to 1400 years, each cycle containing eleven ages of from 65 to 125 years. (God Speaks, p.229) These cycles of years are not in our time measurement but cycles of consciousness, not of evolution, for they concern man. With the idea of these cycles is bound up two further ideas: the 'Circle', and 'catastrophe'. Nothing is said of the Circle in God Speaks, but there is some reference to the 'Hierarchy'. The Circle was frequently mentioned in the early years of Baba's teaching, (cf. God to Man and Man to God, pp.51-55); there are other references in the first part of this book; and there is also an unpublished discourse, for which I regret there is no space here, containing a detailed account of the number of circles and how each is constituted. I conclude this reference by saying that the notion of circles is not that of a static system. It is worth noting that less and less has been said about 'the' Circle until now the discussion has ended; for that reason I will say no more.

(11)

When what Baba calls the Hierarchy is mentioned (*God Speaks*,

pp.219-131), what is to be understood is not superiority of persons, but difference of responsibilities. There is, he says, a functioning spiritual Hierarchy of seven thousand members in each cycle, responsible for 'the assigned spiritual duties on various planes of consciousness according to their spiritual advancement or perfection'. In this number are included the God-realized and perfect ones.

(12)

I have given an account of what might be described as Meher Baba's prophetic or theoretical teaching and before turning to the practical, religious or moral application of it, I will answer the question that will be bound to be asked, How did he come to this knowledge? He showed no philosophical interests at school though deeply interested in the poets; in the seven years of preparation after his ordinary life had been stopped there is nothing to indicate access to books or to study. He says that Upasni Maharaj gave him 'knowledge'. It seems to me that we must leave it at that. I will, however, add this: all 'know-ledge' belongs to the essence of mind, which is a function of the reality that contains everything. Language, philosophy and science, are techniques that belong to the phenomenal mind, which is a function of the essence of mind. Baba's knowledge does not come from reason or postulates but what he finds in himself is not book knowledge, though he is versed in Persian, Indian and Christian scriptures, and he quotes from very few books or writers except the Persian and Indian poets, sometimes the Bhavagad-gita; and then only to remind those who listen, to illustrate what he is saying. He never quotes 'authorities'. His knowledge is intuitive, inherent in the awakening to the knowledge of his own Self. He said on one occasion, 'The Perfect Master knows everything ... But to know everything in a flash takes an eternity in the illusion of time' it means 'to find yourself as God.' As Plotinus said, when light dawns on the soul we know what we see. Power, bliss and knowledge are one, and I do not know that any more need be said.

(13)

The practical application of Baba's teaching is to put obedience first, because union with God is an act of the will as the Christian mystical writers without exception taught, as well as the learned St Thomas Aquinas. By obedience Baba means, of course obedience to conscience: to make it easier he says, 'Obey me'. The 'me' that Baba refers to is Meher Baba, the God-Man Himself.

Thus we are brought to religion and its practice. Baba tells everyone that he should observe his own religion, but he also says that he has come to do away with ceremonies and rituals, by which he means to put an end to mere conformity. 'The soul may spend many lives in gathering the lessons of external formality', he says, 'but the time comes when it longs for the realities of the inner life'. Unless one is constantly and fully aware of the reality within the practice, ritual is a binding.

This applies to sacraments, which are acts in phenomena, which convey inner meaning or grace. Thus in the Christian sacrifice of the Mass the priest who performs and the believers who participate share in an act that symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ and the rising from death to the life of the soul, which has meaning only as the priest intends the act and for the believer as he intends to participate in the sacrifice, making it his own: otherwise there is nothing. The same is true of any other religious practice also of adherence to dogmas and creeds, for, unless the reality is perceived and entered into, allegiance to what is done or believed may be fanatical and destructive: this binding to external form has brought much evil.

Although Baba is constantly declaring that he does away with rites and ceremonies, he allows arti to be performed before him. He also allows his portrait to be garlanded and statues to be made and garlanded. Why does he permit this? Why does he tolerate his devotees capitalizing the initials of personal pronouns when referring to him, and allow the title of Avatar (it is not a title) to be attached sometimes to his name? I think the answer is that he recognizes the effort to express love. He so longs for the love of the entire heart that even the tiny spark contained in these signs of devotion is not to be denied. I once said to him, 'Baba, smash the idols', and he no more than smiled. Yet his warnings against idolatry are very severe. Idols, however, are not merely in these simple things, which could so easily be smashed, they are as much in opinions, prejudices and beliefs of all kinds not rigorously subjected to scrutiny, especially in the worship of power.¹

The obedience of which Baba speaks depends upon intelligent conviction, for, without intelligence, conviction is equivalent to the idolatry I have just mentioned, the greatest danger in all devotion.

¹ That is to say, power in the sense of 'possession of force that can be employed to one's own advantage against others'; not in the sense of 'ability to do'.

To accept anything literally is to be idolatrous. To banish reason is to deny intelligence and to close the door to Reality - for without reason one is at the mercy of one's 'feelings', which becomes mistaken for 'thought', so that we are in great danger of deceiving ourselves; so fanatics are born. All religious reforms are resistances to idolatry, in one form or another. What goes wrong with reform is that the resistance itself consolidates into a new dogma; thus heresies are inevitably erroneous: justified in their origin, their effect is to sidetrack the objector who proceeds to set up new idols.

Obedience as the free devotion of the will has nothing in common with authoritarian subservience, the subjection to exterior orders or to an external absolute. Indeed, it contains the essence of intellectual independence, for full obedience is possible only to the intellectually courageous. Such obedience is the seat of love, which is purity of heart, the capacity to reflect God's love without distortion. Such love is far from mere sentimental feeling, a pleasant sensation, and because obedience involves the mind and will, when the heart reflects, it receives and gives. That receiving and giving love is a disposition of the will. Recognition of the factor of will is of the highest importance; as I have pointed out, the progress of the soul is not inevitable, and the sleeping soul cannot will: it is subject so long as it sleeps to natural development, which is decay. Without will, that is to say, a turning or disposition, what is called 'repentance', there is no awakening. Thus responsibility is placed upon the human soul, which is the ground for the dignity and worth of man. Alone in creation he has responsibility, which is his greatness and uniqueness.

Baba's ethics, therefore, may be said to be contained in the words, 'honesty', 'tolerance', and 'self-responsibility'. I once heard him cross-examined on the subject of 'honesty' but he would admit no compromise: one had to be scrupulously honest in small things as in great. To hear this in India where corruption is everywhere was unforgettable. Baba, however, is not a moralist in the narrow sense, for there is nothing negative about him. His 'honesty' is positive. 'God forgives everything except hypocrisy', he says. Tolerance is forgiveness; for while cosmically everything has to be paid for, it is not for us to hold up others for payment. Self-responsibility is the courage to take responsibility for everything, not even putting responsibility upon God.

Thus Baba's practical 'teaching' is action springing from inner conviction, and while he addresses the reasoning mind in his metaphysics, he is constantly warning us against too rigid dependence upon conceptual, logical thinking, for the reasoning mind is tied to the brain,

when the brain goes, reason goes. Baba addresses himself to the creative intelligence, the intellect that uses the brain and its reasoning abilities, but is also in the heart and in every cell of the body, the divine core, not afflicted with mortality. The distinction between 'reason' and 'intellect' is important.

(14)

Meher Baba talks plainly about sex because, with hypocrisy out of the way, sex can be considered within the sphere of love, either the biological love of instinct or the pure love of consciousness that surrenders all for the beloved. The body is not to be regarded as separate from the soul, for it, too, is to be known from within. It is clear from Baba's actions - and his actions are the most important part of his teaching - that the body is not to be denied, but accepted and respected. This, indeed, applies to the entire 'illusion', which is not to be regarded merely as symbol, for in his own words it 'sustains Reality'.¹ He once referred to the body as 'a walking latrine', but he does not despise latrines; at his school, as the record shows, he cleaned out the boys' latrines. He washes the diseased and lepers and bows down to them and to the poor. He thus honors the body. There is no 'niceness' about Baba. In every act he makes us aware of the sacredness of Nature, for God is in the stone, the flower, the animal, and in suffering man.

(15)

Baba speaks of himself not as prophets or teachers do of themselves but as one with whom men have a special relation. He speaks of 'loving me', 'being in me', 'coming to me'; he tells his followers to speak his name at times of difficulty, and he has said that to have his name on one's lips at the moment of death is blessed, using language that Jesus used. Yet it cannot be supposed that he is imitating Jesus; he is quite clearly speaking from himself. It would be easy to react to this and to find fault with it; nonetheless we should consider what in fact he is doing. He is obviously meaning the special relation to which I have referred. He is not simply drawing attention to his 'method' or 'teaching' but to himself. What is it in himself that he means? It is undoubtedly Godhood. The 'me' that he means is God. Is he then, as Jesus was accused of doing, putting himself in the place of God, an

¹ The dedication of God Speaks is 'To the Universe - the Illusion that sustains Reality'.

arrogant claim? Nothing of the kind. When he points to himself as God he is pointing to God, at the same time he is reminding others of their own real selves. When he said of Nilu and Jamshed when they died that they had 'come to me', he meant that the soul had entered the realm of eternity in which Baba lives simultaneously with his mortal life.

(16)

A strange statement was made in 'The Final Declaration' (1954) when he said:

The time has come for the pre-ordained destruction of multiple separateness which keeps man from experiencing the feeling of unity and brotherhood. This destruction which will take place very soon, will cause three-fourths of the world to be destroyed. The remaining one fourth will be brought together to live a life of concord and mutual understanding, thus establishing a feeling of oneness in all fellow beings, leading them towards lasting happiness.

He later explained that this language was 'his own'; in other words, not to be grossly understood: it is symbolic. It is worth pointing out that this Final Declaration concluded Baba's 'Fiery Life'.

The idea of catastrophe is associated with that of cycles. In Hindu philosophy there is the dissolution of a completed life of Brahma', in which the annihilation of the entire creation is contemplated, which is present in various forms in Indian philosophical teaching. The idea is indeed very ancient. There was the Chaldean doctrine of the Great Year, which was equivalent to 36,000 ordinary years. The Greeks, too, had a great year of 18,000 or more years, and Plato presents the idea of a cosmic catastrophe, in *The Statesman*, to account for the fall from the original city of perfection to the existing city of strife. The Stoics believed in the periodic dissolution of mankind over long periods of time, a new world arising out of the cataclysm. There is evidence of the idea in the records of the Mayas and Aztecs. All in the West know of the great catastrophe when man was expelled from Paradise at the very start of his existence on earth, and, indeed, the history of the Jews is a record of the catastrophes due to their disobedience. Islam looks for the 'grievous chastisement' to fall upon a world that does not make peace with God.

The idea is vividly present in the New Testament. Jesus was very

conscious of cataclysm; and it is the entire subject of 'The Book of Revelation'.

That nature renovates itself by means of catastrophe belongs not merely to the evolutionary process but to history, for on a relatively small scale, though often affecting millions of people, floods, earthquakes, fires, famines or pestilences occur every year, and a final cataclysm is not beyond belief. It is hardly necessary to say more at this time with our memories of two devastating world wars, and when natural man in the nations, West and East, is bent on perfecting means of world destruction. Indeed, the question arises, Has man been evolved by Nature to destroy himself? J. M. Keynes said in 1930, before the catastrophe of the second world war, 'There is no country and no people who can look forward ... without dread', a remark that still re-echoes throughout the world. Baba's warning of catastrophe is intended to arouse us to our precarious situation in our supposed mastery of Nature and the illusion of progress and to awaken us to the truth that security is not to be found on this earth.¹ When we think of our lives in the context of his teaching that the soul of man is on a divine journey from illusion to reality, in which, as the will is exercised in obedience and the mind awakened in consciousness, there is overcoming of unreality and the falseness of separateness, confidence arises that cannot be shaken, however great the darkness and suffering. That confidence is grounded in the divine grace, not upon the logic of earthly success.

¹ He does not say, however, that there should be obedience because of fear of the catastrophe, for catastrophe, too, belongs to the illusion; he is urgent about obedience because it is the essential condition of man's life.

Part II Chapter 6

THE METHOD

'Do what I tell you, not what I do.'

(1)

It is clear from the record that Baba set out immediately he realized himself, Meher Baba set out to get together a small number of men to live with him, to form his mandali or close disciples. When he was declared by Upasni Maharaj to be a Sadguru, the Master at once told one of his disciples to follow Baba, afterwards he sent others to him. The numbers grew, and later some women were included, who from the start were kept entirely apart. Baba's method with the mandali was to instruct them especially in obedience. They had to give up everything and to live by his orders; some were required to be with him always and to be celibate; others were allowed to marry, and to live normal lives, following a business or profession, but to be available at any time to do as he wished and to live where he directed. Exacting tasks were laid upon all. Those who lived with him did so under the most severe conditions, with few comforts, ready at any hour of the day or night to do his bidding. What is called his 'teaching' is primarily his training of the mandali, ultimately it is for all.

The account of what was called the 'New Life' in the preceding pages shows how severe that training can be, how inexplicable and demanding. Nothing is allowed to be easy for long, nothing is merely 'agreeable', confusion and contradiction have to be faced, and Baba even arouses conflict among those around him. Two extracts from Dr. Donkin's diary illustrate the point of view of the mandali:

27/3/40. Yesterday morning Nilu and I had a bit of a crisis with Baba. He had been 'poking' us over Nargis, so we had some straight talk back. A straight talk with Baba is very refreshing; he never evades anything, and never harbours bitterness. Nilu is rather sensitive about Baba's teasing, much more than I, and seems to take it to heart. I feel

that Baba does it for his own reasons, not by any means because of the matter in hand I definitely feel that the dust up yesterday has brought me a lot closer to him, although it is not funny to be ticked-off and made to look an ass. I suppose it is all done in love. All these Masters have abuse upon their tongues and love in their hearts.

30/3/40. I get the impression that he no longer takes the trouble to be extra nice to me, to flatter me, but treats me much more like the other mandali, which is really a big compliment; for to work for Baba and not to be praised or thanked is the best.

To the mandali are added others who live normal lives at their homes, devotees and lovers who accept specific orders from time to time, and at any time, receiving the teaching and living by it. These disciples are found in almost every country of the world, without, however, as I shall explain, there being any attempt to establish an organization, or 'movement'.

All who come into contact with Baba, either personally or through others, are welcomed with great warmth; there is no bar as to sex, religion, race, color, caste or anything else. It is noticeable, however, that difficulties are soon likely to arise and a certain amount of discouragement appears. The farther off people are the less this is felt, of course, and many thousands of devotees know nothing of it whatever; but the nearer a person gets to Baba the more it becomes apparent. It is never a matter of money, for Baba does not ask for money, and, except for special purposes on occasion, does not permit his disciples to do so. He does, however, look for acceptance of the unexpected. He is never, however, rude to his devotees, as Zen masters often are. He is strict and severe, insisting upon scrupulous attention to every detail of his instructions. The nearer to him the more exacting he is, only their love for him enable the mandali to bear the pressure of his presence. He has great patience, but when he gets impatient he says it is to enable them to be patient! Baba's praises and flattery are for those who are not near. He may sometimes deliberately inflate the ego of a follower, making him think he is important. If he makes marked signs of approval, it is likely to be a warning of distance from him. To be specific, it is impossible to be close to him without suffering loss of self-complacency and self-esteem; should any part of either survive, it indicates that one is not so near to him as one supposed.

Indeed, it is not too much to say that Baba needs to lose disciples if he can. He must shake them off if they can be made to go. It will be seen from the record that, from the start, Baba has constantly faced his

disciples with the choice between following him and giving him up. He does this on the most unlooked for occasions and always with great force. All Masters are difficult with their intimate followers, elusive, distracting, and contradictory, and get up to all sorts of tricks to drive away those whom they love. There is nothing that a Master will not do to put a disciple to the severest test, disturbing his relations with him to the uttermost, so that if possible he may be detached.

This is not to say the disciple is to be submerged in the Master, for there is no surrender of individuality: it is the end of separateness. The will of the disciple is given up that he may receive it again. To give it up is the test - not even to be ready, but to do it. That is why Baba demands explicit obedience. There is no questioning an order, right or wrong it has to be done. Certainly if the order be questioned Baba will listen, he may even withdraw an order; but no one who has been so foolish as to put himself in such a position, however justified he may think himself to be, has ever failed to regret it. Having given implicit obedience the disciple becomes through painful experience as his Master. For the end of discipleship is to be a disciple no more, but a Master. Those who desert a Master lose their discipleship in the wrong way. They cut themselves off when they should jump more deeply in. They refuse equality.

(2)

The most constant complaint made against Baba, is that he is continually changing his plans. He makes promises and does not keep them; he gives instructions and contradicts them; and what he proposes is not carried out. Many such facts are recorded earlier in this book, and I must examine them.

Note in the first place that this promise-breaking is contrary to his practice in everyday affairs, which, as I have said, is scrupulous in its attention to precise detail, and he never neglects to keep commitments. That, however, is in mundane matters, always treated as very important, but in the great things, in spiritual matters, in his activities as a Master, he is unpredictable. He says one thing and does another. Time after time he declares that he will speak, and does not. He says he will drop his body, and does not. Why does he act thus? We can offer a variety of explanations, the most simple of which is in the words that 'the spirit bloweth whither it listeth'. Baba acts according to vision or intuition. In terms of ordinary life it is hard to accept any explanation at all. His own comment is 'It is said of me that I am most slippery'. Thus the strict routine and order in his life is continually interrupted,

sometimes violently. His rule is to observe no rule. From the standpoint of the spiritual order nothing else is possible, because the primordial creative element is ever new; the spirit does not act according to any apparent plan, but spontaneously. Thus his actions may be described as 'whim', that is to say impulsive, seeming to be caprice but never chance.

In the changes of plans and broken promises, Baba is partly testing his disciples and followers, making positive demands upon their faithfulness, so that these actions, so impossible to understand, are elements in his technique of training. To create uncertainty, to jog people out of easy expectation and habit, and to prepare them for anything, are certainly important in relation to the task of remaking the human soul in the terms of a new understanding of life. But there is much more than technique, however, for the technical training is a by-product. These broken promises and the confusions they cause are part of his method of 'working'. The initiative they call for on the part of everyone touched by them is itself of value, and he achieves a terrific effect with the energies that are released. He eats up the faith of his disciples, tests and exhausts it. That some find themselves leaving him, even denouncing him, is inherent in the method. Only his final manifestation will justify him. Indeed, this misleading of people imposes a great burden upon him, and the question that can rightly be asked is, Will he discharge that responsibility? How many of his nearest really understand what he is doing by his silence, seclusions, and his extraordinary methods? He is a mystery to all. Indeed it is possible to say that the confusion he stirs up belongs to Baba's play, which is not only in games and stone throwing, but in the treatment of his followers and all who look to him. He allows them to think what pleases them, makes promises - or allows them to be made in his name - and disappoints those who are led to expect something or other at some time or other; so that they are made to feel let down, even deceived. In 1958 he made all his followers all over the world repeat a hundred or even a thousand times a day for forty days 'that all our beloved Baba has said will all come to pass this year'. And it did not come to pass. Two years later, 1960, was to be a year of immense significance, but the year passed, and, so far as anyone can tell, nothing happened. Thus Baba seems to abuse the faith of his disciples, while exhorting them continually to hold on to his daaman,¹ and warning them in the strongest terms that they will leave him.

Most of his followers take this buffeting and seeming betrayal very

¹ That is to say the hem of his garment; i.e., to have faith.

quietly, although their reactions are not always easy to assess. A few leave him, some express disgust or disquiet, sometimes active antagonism is offered. Those who remain are often made to feel in a painful predicament.

There can be little doubt that Baba does not regard the taking of these upsets lightly. He realizes fully what is happening, and I sometimes think he would prefer to be answered back, to be denounced, to receive actual hostility even to arouse a strong wind of opposition and contradiction.

Thus, all who become associated with Meher Baba sooner or later are given shocks. Yet he says plainly enough, You must expect nothing. He is constantly reminding people that he promises nothing, which he demonstrated most clearly in 1962 when he said people from any part of the world could come to see him in Poona on the understanding that he promised them nothing whatever. When he called people from many countries in the West to Myrtle Beach four years earlier in 1958 they had to undertake to stay there with him for fourteen days. After two days he said his work was finished and he thought of going away. That he did not was because he did not wish to distress those who had come, often at great cost. He stayed, but there can be little doubt that it was at cost to himself. It is possible to say, however, after all this, that of those who have been closest to Baba throughout forty years and have borne most, not one feels he has been let down.

(3)

When not in seclusion Meher Baba used to make a practice of giving private interviews. Thus in many places in India, and almost invariably when abroad, he saw thousands of people individually. For some years, however, these interviews have been discontinued, a private interview being granted only rarely. A description of what took place, which holds good still, belongs to this method of working.¹

Baba would be seated and the visitor asked to sit near him. He looks at him: the 'look' is, of course, important. He usually touches the visitor's hand or caresses his arm. There is significance in the physical contact, for Baba's touch is not a mere sign of affection; it is intended to raise consciousness. Perhaps he will do no more than smile. Perhaps he will say, (at one time on the alphabet board, now by gesture), 'I like you', which he varies by saying, 'I am pleased', or 'I am very

¹ A record of a number of interviews and what Baba said at them is contained in *The Perfect Master*, p.237 f.

pleased'. He will say, 'Do not worry. I am with you.' He never asks questions except to say, sometimes, 'Have you anything to ask me?' Frequently people come to see him with their minds full of questions, but sitting before him they have nothing to say. This is easily understood, for we know the answers to our questions before we ask them. If people tell Baba their troubles, he will advise them what to do. He always repeats, 'Do not worry. I will help you', the significance of which is that the inquirer is made to feel that his difficulties can be overcome and that what he aims at can be reached. Many questions are asked by those who want to 'understand' usually something about themselves. Baba's invariable answer is not to think more, but to act, to do the simplest thing. The confidence he seeks to arouse is not rational conviction - about which he is indifferent. He wants people to feel. He may give a rational answer when asked for it, or he may not, but his intention is that the inquirer should feel more deeply, so that the heart is stirred. Often he does not answer a question, but replies, as it were, to an unspoken question. His methods with different people vary according to the person and his situation. He may give quite opposite advice to one person from what he gives to another. He seems to aim at times at heating up a situation rather than reducing or removing it. The egotistical individual may well be made more egotistical. If desires are strongly expressed he will fall in with them, and does not always warn people of the troubles they are preparing for themselves. To the honest inarticulate person he will be most explicit. To all he offers love that cannot be mistaken, and the most self-willed person is offered a way of escape if he will but take it, for he never plays idly with people, or lacks seriousness.

There is no formality about any interview. The conditions under which it is given make it as simple as possible. He always remembers those who come to see him and what they have said. People are often moved to tears in his presence. The first time I met him several of those present found tears streaming from their eyes. At the Prem-Ashram, it will be remembered, the boys were frequently and for long periods in tears. These tears are not ordinary crying, but tears of joy for purification, they dissolve the burden of wrong. It is said that the saints spent much time weeping.

(4)

Another feature of Baba's working is his abuse of disciples, sometimes in their presence, at other times in their absence. He is not rude

in the ordinary way but gives severe rebuke. When we abuse another we create sanskaras for ourselves, and the abuse falls upon our own heads. When Upasni Maharaj abused Baba, he was attracting to himself - for the purpose of dissolving them - Baba's sanskaras. When, therefore, Baba rebukes a disciple it is for the sake of protecting him, if he is in danger, or of attracting to himself the sanskaras that are affecting the disciple, so freeing him from them.¹ To be abused by a Master is a blessing. Milarepa records that his Master said that the anger of a Master is a thing apart, intended to excite repentance and to contribute towards the spiritual development of the one against whom it is directed. As Rumi says:

I boil thee not because thou art hateful to me; nay 'tis that thou mayest get savour
And become nutriment and mingle with the vital spirit.

It should be noted that in quarrels among his mandali or, indeed, among any of his followers, Baba may not immediately attempt to restore harmony but allow discord to develop, even to provoke it. He quietly says, 'There will always be disagreement, one has to give in. You must try hard.' With Baba, turning the other cheek means being ready to accept the slap, even the worst that can be offered, then to overcome the negative feelings that interfere with acting freely.

(5)

It is part of Baba's method of working to be in contact with crowds of people. When he visits cities he almost invariably walks (now he drives) in the most crowded streets and goes to cinemas and other places where people congregate. In India there are large gatherings where he gives darshan to many thousands at a time. I have described a number of such darshan programmes, which sometimes include the presenting of prasad, or gift, consisting of a sweetmeat, or fruit, or a flower, or even the petal of a rose. The gift has no value in itself, but forms a link of intimacy.

Baba has said that the highest spiritual benefits can be imparted by a Master only when he is in bodily presence on earth, thus there is meaning in the desire to see him and to be near him. A special grace of the God-Man is to be the source of blessing in his physical presence throughout the world.

¹ This he does as Perfect Master, not as God-Man, for the latter takes on himself not the sanskaras of individuals but the sins of the whole world.

(6)

It is Baba's practice to allow anyone who wishes to say what they think about him or his work to do so. This sometimes exasperates those who are near him, but he will not interfere. He will therefore permit people to make statements about him that they may strongly desire to make, without checking them, and with an indifference to the results that is remarkable. His attitude to the Press should be noted. He does not court publicity, and frequently takes great precautions both in India and when traveling elsewhere to ensure that he is not recognized. Sometimes he seems to welcome publicity for he is unpredictable. When it is thrust upon him, either by the assiduous efforts of his disciples and friends or by the importunity of the Press itself, he usually does not resist it. In England and in America he has given numerous interviews to journalists, and, though he has shown almost childish amusement at the noise and heat of Press hunts after him, he has also shown complete indifference to the accuracy or otherwise of what has been said. He has, so far as I am aware, never defended himself against any misrepresentation of himself or his activities, or protested against any attack. When a London weekly paper, which devoted itself to the exposure of scandals and frauds, and had one of the largest circulations of any paper in the country, printed a violent attack upon him during one of his visits he said, 'It also is doing my work': attacks are preferred to praise because they arouse more feeling.

(7)

From the very beginning it has appeared that Baba had no intention of forming an institution, or settled ashram, or philosophical school, or religious brotherhood, or a church for worship and doctrinal promulgation, or a society for the reform of religion and practice, or of founding a religion. Movements and religions are inevitably causes of disunity and strife. A new movement would increase discord and sectarianism, therefore his disciples and followers are of all religions or none and are not organized. He has, however, 'centers' in many places and does not discourage them, though he has been known on occasion to dissolve them; they exist as it were on sufferance. His method is that of individual contact, person to person, the aim being individual transformation.

One of the most touching of Baba's appeals was his message to his 'workers' in November 1962, when he said to the three thousand or so

people who had come to his darshan from all over the world that he did not need their work. 'You must remember that I alone do my Work' he said. This was not intended to discourage them but to get understanding of the nature of his Work, which was not in 'publishing magazines', 'organized meetings', 'building halls and having statues made of me', and 'sacrificing your vacations in traveling', all of which were some sort of game', but in 'brotherly feelings in your hearts - the 'way of my Work is the way of effacement', he said. Movements gather around the crystalizations of doctrine and become concerned with fidelity to it. With the living Master the doctrine has life; with him the tempo changes and the rhythm moves; nothing remains still; yesterday is not as today. Once a movement is formed it has to protect itself and its own survival becomes its major interest, the price paid always being high.

Baba does not lay down any rule or order or formal ideal or method of self-training for his followers as individuals or groups. He does not demand even of those who are closest to him and devote their lives to him the practice of any technique or discipline to achieve spiritual mastery. What he asks for are love and obedience, dramatically exemplified in the earlier chapter on The New Life (p. 162), which should be read as an account of how the old man is transformed into the new man, in some respects the most important chapter in this book.

(8)

Note should be taken of the fact that Baba gives a warning against exaggerating the importance of occult experiences, discourages occult practices, and, except under direction, dissuades anyone from paying attention to dreams. (*God to Man and Man to God*, p.154f.) To those who say that they see Baba in their dreams, he says, 'Don't attribute them to me. I have come to awaken you out of your dreams.' He makes it clear that ecstasies or visions, or any kind of supra-normal experiences, are not to be sought, for they are irrelevant and may be misleading, and those who experience them should not regard themselves as spiritually favoured. Indeed, until the desire to have such experiences is surrendered, it is impossible to arrive at the state of nothingness that is the goal. Baba does not himself speak of experiences or unusual occurrences of the kind admitted by or attributed to many mystics, Eastern and Western. Except for one instance that I have noted, when he was at Myrtle Beach in 1958, he gives no evidence of abnormality, trance, or exaltation, such as is shown by men and

women of excessive sensibility or inner intensity. He recognizes the value of psychotherapy, without especially encouraging it.

He has given instruction on meditation and requests people to meditate from time to time. What he stresses is to keep the mind focused, looking within, 'to close the eyes and imagine yourself "infinite within" for five minutes', he sometimes says. He gets those around him to sit in silence, at times, for half an hour. 'Think of me', he says, 'put Baba on you as a cloak', he also says. There is a detailed discourse (*God to Man and Man to God*, p.94f.) which contains what may be regarded as Baba's method of meditation. He distinguishes between three types of meditation; discriminative, 'I am not my body but the Infinite'; meditation of the heart; and meditation of action, dedication to selfless service. These are not exclusive, but Baba emphasizes that meditation should be under the direction of a Master, so that the 'one-pointedness' necessary may be maintained. The forms of meditation are: assimilation of the Divine Truth; specialized meditation; and sahaj samadhi, which is spontaneous meditation when the goal of life has been realized: life in eternity, which ends in nirvana or absorption, which can be entered into before dropping the body, usually, however, leaving the body as useless. That meditation is necessary for spiritual life there can be no doubt.

(9)

Before leaving this very brief account of Baba's method something should be said on the subject of miracles, which is constantly raised in connection with Baba, for it belongs to this aspect of his teaching. I have related how an English journalist interviewing him in 1931 asked for a miracle to convince him of Baba's genuineness; when Baba ignored the request the journalist expressed an adverse view of Baba's spirituality! Miracle is an extraordinary event unaccountable on the general law of causality. Nearly all religions seek to support themselves by claims to miracle and demand faith in specific miracles, which is a strange contradiction, for contempt of miracles is shown as much by the spiritual-minded as by the scientifically trained men. On Baba's teaching, magical acts are possible on the first, second and third planes of consciousness; they include reciting passages or indicating words from an unseen book, stopping trains, allowing oneself to be buried alive, and so on. These are the so-called yogi feats. (*God Speaks*, p.193f.) Such acts are always to the spiritual disadvantage of those responsible for them, he says. Miracles on what he calls the fourth

plane, such for instance as those by an advanced yogi, are at the cost of immense danger to the one performing them. Those on the fifth and sixth planes do not perform miracles themselves. However, they are capable of controlling the minds of those who would wish to. Miracles are not possible on the seventh plane of consciousness because for those on that plane the gross, subtle and mental spheres do not exist. The voluntary or involuntary miracles of a Perfect Master are always directed towards the awakening of consciousness; to perform them he has to place himself on the sixth, fifth, or fourth plane, which are planes in which illusion remains. In so acting the Perfect Master acts in God's name. A God-Man's miracles, also for inner awakening, such as the miracles of Jesus Christ, are in his own name. So Baba says.

However, it is not possible to leave the subject as though thought about it were ended after an attempt at rational explanation, for miracle belongs by definition to the realm of the unaccountable; it must be allowed for because the transcendent must always be allowed for. Causal law is in the sphere of 'illusion' that veils 'reality', so that the laws of physics, chemistry, biology and the sciences dependent upon analysis and demonstration, ought not to inhibit the mind from what Sir Thomas Browne called 'those winged Mysteries in Divinity', the eternal dynamics that cannot be explained. Jesus said that he who finds life in the phenomena will lose it, but he who gives up his life of illusion 'for my sake', that is for the sake of the transcendent reality, will find the real. That is Baba's teaching of the miracle, the only miracle performed by the God-Man.

Baba has declared many times: 'I have never consciously performed a miracle'. He brushes aside attempts to explain happenings as due to his miraculous intervention. The stories of remarkable events in Baba's life, some of which I have related, though I have ignored many more, have no 'evidential' value: their significance is of another kind. They belong to the realm of the childlike and innocent and are true. He is explicit about not coming to him for benefits in body, mind or affairs. In an interview given in 1932, he said in answer to a question about miracles:

The only real miracle for a Perfect One is to make others perfect too, to make them realize the infinite state, which he himself enjoys. That is a real miracle ... otherwise miracles have nothing to do with truth at all.

Part II Chapter 7

THE WORK

'God and God alone'

(1)

Although I have divided this book into two parts and separate chapters, it has been for convenience only. Baba's life and activities are one in a more complete sense than we are likely to find in any other man. Everything concerning him is directly related to everything else. The narrative shows that his is not a simple life. His activities are worldwide, but unity pervades the whole from the first day to the present. Such single-mindedness without deviation, is astonishing: the explanation is that everything is for the Work.

No one knows exactly what that Work is. When Baba fasts, or is among masts, or is in seclusion, when he travels, when among crowds, whatever he is doing and wherever he is, he is 'working'. Observe him sitting on a chair during a darshan, or in the company of people when someone is speaking or when music is played, and one sees that while his attention is upon what is taking place, he is working: watch his fingers, and how alive is his entire body. That the Work is not the darshans or sahawas or the teaching is demonstrated by his life; indeed, the best that can be said is that it is his life, not simply what he does or says. The Work is his own, not shared with anyone, so that he does not need anyone, which is why he has no organization or movement. That the Work is concerned with mankind, indeed with the cosmos, is indicated in his words about the God-Man's responsibility for 'the control of the affairs of the whole universe'. We are in the dark about the meaning of those words; but we need take no narrow view of them. We can think of the Work as belonging to the dramatic action of God in the cosmos, the divine play, in which the protagonist is God himself in the likeness of man, the actors being not the great men or heroes but the souls of individual men, the great multitude of the unknown.

Nature is the divine manuscript, the Book of God's Work, to be accepted with 'devout admiration' as a 'picture of the invisible'. What Baba does in those long nights and days in seclusion, not even his most intimate mandali can tell, but we find in them a sufficient explanation of his seeming lack of concern with immediate politics and his apparent indifference to urgent social conditions. There can be no doubt that Baba as a man is not at all unconcerned or indifferent, there is ample evidence to the contrary, such as his symbolic washing of the feet of lepers and the poor and the gifts of money, but his consistent aim is to turn attention to the invisible behind the appearance, from the ephemeral show to the ever living inner action. In this seeming inactivity Baba is in obvious contrast to his great contemporary the late Mahatma Gandhi: as fully conscious as he is of political issues Baba in his Work, is not elsewhere, but engaged no less immediately and urgently and with no less energy in man's existential life, projecting the invisible 'Sun' within us.

All this adds to the powerful element of mystery. How often in the course of this book have I had to use the words, 'Baba has not explained'! Mystery belongs to supreme values that cannot be put into words, only contemplated. It is clear, however, that so far as we are concerned, his task as God-Man is to awaken the soul so that man becomes more conscious, developing the will to take charge of his life as a responsible being. It is to give a deep sharp push from within, to initiate a new creative impulse, to give human life direction. The Work is not restricted to any place, or class of people, or religion, but is the arousing of an impulse for man to surpass himself. The God-Man is a fulcrum for the re-energizing of the human soul, the power being divine energy of which he is the center, so that the personal centers of individual men and women are activated. Baba says, 'my center is the heart of my lover'. Archimedes said, 'Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth'. Jesus said, 'Have faith as a grain of mustard seed and you will remove this mountain'.

That the Work is physically exhausting there is sufficient evidence; the heavy demands made upon one who is naturally vigorous and strong are shown on his face and bearing, for he is frequently in a physical sense utterly played out. The 'New Life' provided an example of extreme physical deprivation, 'hopelessness and helplessness', over a period of three years in which his Work in its outward aspects can be observed, a life of nothingness, culminating in 'annihilation', emerging in freedom.

Baba's work continues day and night, but seems to be specially

heavy at night, for he sleeps but little. He comes out of the night, and out of the days of retirement, and says nothing. There is nothing that can be said. Here we see the symbolic meaning of the silence.

(2)

In the first part of this book I have devoted a chapter to the men called masts. These men, not inherently mad, but in whom there is suspension of interest in and capacity for worldly things, who are not, as I have said, to be confused with yogis and fakirs, but who 'lose their balance while traversing the path of the inner life', which brings them 'to a complete breakup and reconstitution of the mental structure', are regarded as of immense importance in Baba's 'Work'. 'They have resigned so much', he says, 'that God has to come to them'. He can not only help them to liberate fresh energies, but, he says, 'Mast-mind is a nucleus of conscious formations with innumerable and far-reaching links. A mast can therefore be a more effecting agent for spiritual work than the most able persons.' (*The Wayfarers*, p.10). Thus Baba spent thirteen years on this work covering the period of the second world war and the great tensions in India in which independence took place, the land became soaked in blood, Gandhi gave up politics and devoted his life to peace and was murdered. That this dedicated activity of Baba's had relation to what was taking place, there can be little doubt.

This raises the question why masts are not heard of elsewhere? They are mostly to be found in India, says Baba, a few in Arabia, Iran, Egypt, China and Tibet, none in any other part of the world. There are, however, men and women, when we come to think of it, in the West, some very great men indeed, of whom Nietzsche comes first to mind, who if not masts, are mast-like. That Nietzsche suffered from madness different in degree if not in kind from ordinary madness there can be little doubt, and that he became mad because of spiritual despair and through compassion are equally certain. There have been and are others, and the subject seems worthy of study. It may be that in the mast-State the functions of earthly existence comes to an end and the involution of consciousness cannot proceed farther here.

Why masts are to be found in the East, says Baba, is that India is the most important country spiritually. (*The Wayfarers*, p.37.) He has not taken the matter farther. It explains, too, why the God-Man appears in India.

(3)

Another matter allied to this is that of the agents in his Work of whom Baba speaks. There are four 'direct' agents, all on the fourth plane, for the purpose of using certain of its powers, one each in America, Europe, Asia and Africa, who receive direct instructions from him; also a few 'indirect' agents who receive instructions from the direct agents, and many 'borrowed' agents who are instructed by indirect agents. (The Wayfarers, p.373.) These are all concerned with the universal aspects of Baba's Work.

(4)

In its outer and positive sense the Work is nothing less than the immense task of getting men to realize the full implications of their religion, whatever name it goes by, to awaken them out of the sleep of the senses and the rational mind, and to move beyond the life of time and space in which they are held captive by illusion and come to terms with their own being which is the Reality: to awaken to the Spirit and at the same time live as husband or wife, father or son, housekeeper, craftsman, politician and human being.

Baba works directly with individuals when he says, 'I will help you'. We do not think merely of an old man of Iranian blood, crippled, mostly in solitude, far away in India. He is the God beyond creation, the Eternal Reality, the source of knowledge, power and bliss, and by applying the name to himself Baba challenges the listener to catch hold of the same 'I'. When egotism is purged away, when the will is surrendered, when clinging to life is given up, when the rationalizing mind ceases to demand explanations, the door to freedom opens, and man becomes what he really is.

Meher Baba's story does not contain the prospect of immediate ease or security but the promise of destruction. There is no stronger and more general conviction than the dire possibility of world destruction through concentration upon technological skills, confirming age old belief that the world is pre-ordained to chaos. At one time it was thought that the destructive element was in outside evil antagonistic powers, now we know it to be in man's own self will. Baba calls for courage to face the destruction of illusion; for that men are not one is an illusion. Like Krishna speaking to Arjuna on the battlefield bidding him do his duty, not to fear consequences, knowing the spirit to be eternal, so Baba bids us cast off fear, take control in consciousness, let the ground beneath quake and disappear. In the confusion of our

civilization he is as one who knows his way, not 'giddy in the infinite' in Kierkegaard's words, but Master.

(5)

I have written this account of the life of Meher Baba from the beginning as far as I know it and have been told it, and I have examined what he seems to mean, and now, after a further visit to India, I ask myself, Who is he really, this man I have been writing about?

What is one to make of him? One can shrug off what he says of himself and refuse to consider him, supposing him to be a paranoiac, or self-deluded. His life in its strange contradictions should make us hesitate to do that. Were he asking anything for himself, any recognition or fame, or attempting to cut a figure, we could allow him to remain with the credulous; but he does the very opposite by shunning publicity, courting seclusion, observing silence: indeed, he raises the question, Are we deluding ourselves? I ask the question not that I am uncertain but because questions are to be answered. I cannot be satisfied with what I have written in these pages in the language at my command but my answer is that we delude ourselves unless we do accept him, for he is one who knows why he is alone, what his work is, and that he will complete his work. These pages could easily have been lightened in a story-telling manner, which I have refrained from doing, for I have not fictionalized places, episodes or people. To have gone about my task in that way would, perhaps, have made a more readable and tasty book, but inconsistent with putting the naked truth on record and letting it speak for itself. To accommodate that aim I have had to cut down descriptions that might have eased the account, though at the cost of omitting much of factual importance. Here, however, all the cards are on the table, none face downwards. I have written with an inherently sceptical mind at full stretch, not attempting to enlarge or to tone down anything.

It may not be easy for everyone to read with unprejudiced mind, for there is no prepared place for such a man in our society. Yet it seems to me that his presence, his silence and his Word relieve our world from being what Pascal said it would be without Christian belief, a chaos. He illuminates our age, a fundamentally modern yet timeless man, not belonging to the traditions of the past, precious as they are, any more than to the tensions of the present, urgent as they appear, but to the eternal fullness. It has occurred to me more than once that something points to him in the tremendous energy, abundance and shock of the

work of the rather older and completely contrasting man, Pablo Picasso, which may seem absurd, but I am struck by the depth of vision in the artist who says in his work, 'Let there be light!' that seems to illustrate the life of Meher Baba. And I recall what Alcibiades said of Socrates at the end of his famous speech in the Symposium that 'the really wonderful thing about him is that he is like no other human being, living or dead ... our friend here is so extraordinary ... that you will never be able to find anyone remotely resembling him.'

Many will find impudicity in his claim to God-manhood, but there is in this humble man the highest degree of consciousness and the complete spontaneity that enables him to say 'I am that Ancient One whose past is worshipped and remembered, whose present is ignored and forgotten', and to add, 'I suffer infinite agony through your ignorance'.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Charles Purdom to a friend in May of 1963.

"I wish I could write an entirely new book about Baba. Having finished his life, I can now look at him as it were from a distance and can say much more than I have written. After the Life has been published I may be able to do that. His uniqueness is what is outstanding, the most remarkable thing. There is no one in history who is his equivalent, so far as I can discover. None of the men from the East who are well known in America, some known here, are in the least like him. Teaching, yes, but not as a man....

Charles"

Bibliography

There are innumerable small publications in India and elsewhere of messages, discourses, and sayings by Meher Baba and no attempt has been made to include them here. At some time they will be collected.

MEHER BABA

Discourses. (Five volumes) (Bangalore and Ahmednagar, India. 1938-1943)

These are important volumes, the earliest of Baba's silent 'discourses' written by various members of the mandali, chiefly by Dr. C.D. Deshmukh.

God to Man and Man to God. Discourses edited by CB, Purdom, pp. 272 (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955.) Based on the above five volumes edited for Western reading.

Messages. pp. 101. (Ahmednagar: Adi K. Irani, N.D.)

A collection of messages from 1932 to 1944 with a foreward by Dr. William Donkin (dated October 1945).

God Speaks: the Theme of Creation and its Purpose. Pp. xxix and 255. (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1955) Edited by Ivy O. Duce and Don E. Stevens, with Meher Baba's dedication 'To the Universe-the Illusion that sustains Reality'. Containing 7 charts. It is a detailed statement of Meher Baba's cosmology, a source book of great importance, written chiefly by Eruch Jessawala, under Baba's direction.

Life at its Best. pp. 73. (San Francisco: Sufism Reoriented, 1957.)

A collection of brief messages and notes edited by Ivy O. Duce, with a forward by Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz.

Beams from Meher Baba on the Spiritual Panorama. pp. 88. (San Francisco: Sufism Reoriented, 1958.)

A collection of short essays based on answers by Meher Baba to questions arising from *God Speaks*.

The Everything and the Nothing. With an introduction by Francis Brabazon. (Beacon Hill, N.S.W., Australia, Meher House Publications, 1963.)

A collection of recent discourses.

ABDULKARIM RAMJU ABDULLA

Sobs and Throbs. (Meherabad, Ahmednagar, N.N. Satha, 1929.) An account of the Prem-Ashram by one who took part.

C.B.PURDOM

The Pefect Master. pp. 330. (London: Williams and Norgate. 1937.)

An account of Meher Baba's life to 1933. Illustrated. The substance of this book is incorporated with the present volume.

WILLIAM DONKIN

The Wayfarers: An account of the work of Meher Baba with the God-intoxicated, Advanved Souls, Sadhus and the Poor, pp. x and 405. (Ahmednagar, India: Adi K. Irani. 1948.)

A work of first importance giving a detailed account of life with Meher Baba by one of his English mandali, and a full description of Baba's great work among the masts, sadhus, the mad and others; dates, places, and names of those contacted, and character descriptions of the 'five favourites'. It is a scientific study at first hand by a qualified medical man. There are many photographs and series of maps.

The Work of Meher Baba with Advanced Souls and Sadhus (Supplement to *The Wayfarers*), pp. 15.

(Ahmednagar:

Adi K. Irani. 1948.)

The Work of Meher Baba with Advanced Souls, Sadhus, the Mad and the Poor. (Supplement to *The Wayfarers*), pp. 57. (Ahmednagar: Adi K. Irani. 1949.)

JEAN ADRIEL

Avatar. pp. x and 284. (Santa Barbara, Calif: J.F. Rowney Press 1947.)

A highly coloured personal account described as 'A narrative of spiritual experience'.

IRENE CONEYBEARE

Civilization or Chaos? pp. 252. (London, 1955. Bombay, 1959.)

A study of the world crisis in the light of the teaching of Meher Baba by the daughter of a distinguished Patristic and Armenian scholar.

D.E. STEVENS

Listen Humanity! pp. xvi and 262 (New York: Dodd Mead and Co. 1957.)

An account by an American businessman of a visit to Meher Baba in November 1955, with a number of discourses and instructions.

FRANCIS BRABAZON

Journey with God. pp. 35. (Beacon Hill, N.S.W. Australia. Beacon Hill Publishing Co. 1954.) An account of a visit to Meher Baba in 1954, partly in verse, with notes and messages.

Stay with God, A statement in Illusion on Reality. pp. 167. (Woombye, Queensland, Australia. Garuda Books, 1959.)

A long poem in five parts, with full notes and two messages.

The East- West Gathering. pp. 50. (Sydney, Australia. Meher House. 1963.) 'The song-story of an event in history'.

PERIODICALS

The Meher Message (Meherabad, Ahmednagar, India. Jan. to Dec. 1929.; Nasik, India. Jan. 1930 to Nov. 1931.)

The Meher Gazette (Meherabad, Madras, India. June 1930 to Sept. 1938.)

The Meher Baba Journal. Edited by Elizabeth C. Patterson. Monthly. (Meherabad, Ahmednagar, India. Nov. 1938 to Sept. 1939; Bangalore, India. Oct. 1939 to Oct. 1942.)

The Awakener. Edited by Phyllis Frederick. Quarterly. (New York. 1953-continued.)

Divya Vani. Edited by Swami Satya Prakash Udaseen. An English Quarterly. (Nidadavole P.O., West Godavari, Andhra, 1961- continued.)

INDEX

- Adam, 397, 421n.
 Adi K. Irani, 8, 19, 42, 46, 48, 117, 120, 138, 164, 175, 176, 177, 183, 184, 201, 227, 255, 266, 288, 296, 309
 Adriel, lean, 157-8, 449
 Aeschylus, 405
 Africa, 445
 Aga Ali, 74, 75-6
 Agents, Baba's, 445
 Agra, 43, 81, 116, 141, 142
 Ahmedabad, 44, 158
 Ahmednagar, 41-2, 43, 45, 47, 51, 128, 130, 158, 165, 176, 207, 221-5, 231-2, 258, 368, 369
 Ahuramazd, 352
 Ajmer, 142, 152, 153
 al-Ghazali, 385
 al-Hallaj, Mansūr, 250, 385, 386
 Alexandria, 112
 Ali Akbar, 168-9, 176, 184, 186, 187, 189
 Ali Shah, 154, 289
 Allahabad, 142, 155, 207
 Aloba, 236
 Alphabet-board, 66, 406, 409, 410, 411, 416
 Amarpura, 205-6
 Amboli, 145
 Amraoti, 207
 Ancient One, The, 211, 237, 252, 255, 262, 270, 272, 290, 296, 304, 316, 344, 447
 Andhra Pradesh, 189, 207, 215, 216, 230, 367, 409
 Ankleshwar, 44
 Anna Jakkal, 176, 184, 189
 Antony, Father (Bombay), 353
 Arabia, 444
 Arangaon, 42, 43, 44, 47, 58-9, 72, 73, 165, 260-1, 264-6, 287, 351
 Arantangi, 158
 Archimedes, 443
 Ardeshir S. Irani, 17, 76, 98, 176
 Arjun Supekar, 28
 Arti, (act of devotion), 22, 93, 216, 224, 252, 264, 287, 343, 351, 364, 367, 426
 Assisi, 108-112, 122
 Atheists, 213
 Atman, 215
 Aurangabad, 192
 Australia, 112, 219, 288, 340-2, 358, 359, 379
 Avatar, 15, 104, 162, 210f., 218, 222, 230, 232, 233, 244, 268, 275, 280-1, 291, 295, 314, 315, 324, 337, 339, 390f., 394-5, 399, 424, 426, *see* God-Man
 Avataric period, 292, 314, 424
 Avatars, Praise of the Ten, 263
 Avesta (Persian scriptures), 168, 173
 Avita, 121, 122
 Awakener, *The*, 450
 Awakening, 213, 382, 383, 388-9, 404, 427, 443
 Aztec, 429
 Baba Ubale, 42
 Babadas Dharmare, 176
 Babajan, 18-19, 21, 52, 61, 66, 75, 77, 220, 244, 245, 270, 358, 374, 399
 Backett, William, 121, 229, 258
 Baghdad, 131
 Baha'is, 85
 Bahadur Kaikhushroo Sarosh Irani, 29, 42, 47
 Baidul (R. B. Baiduliyan), 42, 140, 141, 153, 156, 184, 186, 354
 Bal Natu, 8, 189
 Balak Bhagwan (Meher) 311-12
 Bandarawela, 113
 Banerjee, A. K., 393
 Bangalore, 126, 133, 134, 143, 148
 Barcelona, 121, 125
 Broach, 44

- Baroda, 158
 Baroda, Maharanee of, 342, 360, 361
 Barry, Jane, 308
 Bāuls, of Bengal, 393
 Bayazid Bistarni, 385
beams from Meher Baha on the Spiritual Panorama, 448
 Behli J. Irani, 7, 26, 27, 28
 Behram S. Irani, 17, 98, 326
 Behramji Ferdoonji Irani, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 42, 80, 82, 145
 Belgaum, 93, 133, 145, 175, 177, 178, 184
 Belgium, 288
 Benares, *see* Varanasi
 Bezwada, 215
Bhagavad Gītā 134, 135, 240, 263, 392, 395, 425
Bhagwat-gītā, 55, 168, 173
Bhakli, 301, 304
 Bhandardara, 116
 Bharucha, 270
Bible, The, 168, 173
 Bihar, 189
 Bijapur, 93
 Billo, Irene, 8, 134, 143, 149
 Blind, the, 2.94, 348
 Bliss, 48, 66, 101, 198, 209, 210, 213, 244, 245, 246, 262, 366, 367
 Bombay, 16, 18, 20, 25, 27, 29, 43, 44-5, 49, 66, 83, 92, 97, 98, 114, 115, 128, 155, 158, 189, 190, 205, 219-20, 276, 280, 290, 347, 360
 Boston, 97
 Brabazon, Francis, 202, 215, 229, 248, 269, 299, 340-1, 351-2, 354-5, 377, 413, 450
Brahma Sūtra, 416
Brahman 215, 231, 393
 Brahmins, 73, 255-6, 261
Bramand, 70
Brīhadāranyaka Upanishad, 421
 Brindaban, 142
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 441
 Brunton, Paul, *see* Hirsch, H. Raphael
 Buddha, 99, 100, 141, 142, 182, 210, 244, 283, 328, 374, 382, 388, 396, 408, 411
 Buddhism, 199, 204
 Buddhists, 346
 Burrakatha in Telugu, 368
Buzoorg (God-merged), 86, 88
 Byramangala, 133, 144
 Calcutta, 43, 146-8, 156, 190
 California, 103
 Cambay, 158
 Cannes, 132
 Carmi, Maria, 200
 Castes, 27, 51, 64
passim Catastrophe, *see* Disasters
 Cawnpore, 47, 141
 Centre, U.S.A., 200f., *see* Myrtle Beach
 England, 77
 Centres, 217
 Ceylon, 113, 149-50
 Chacha, 152-3
 Chalcedon, Council of, 397-8
 Chaldean 'Great Year', 429
 Chance, 380
Chandogya Upanishad, 421n
 Chanji, *see* Dadachanji
 Chapin, S. B., 200-1
 Chargeman, 48
 Chastity, 378
 Chatti Baba, 148-50
 Chhagan, 78, 156, 171
 Chicago, 103
 Children, 320 *see* Meherabad, school
 China, 67, 105-7, 122, 444
 Christ, *see* Jesus Christ
 Christian, 68, 93, 328, 346, 383, 446, 325
 mystics, 325, 382, 384, 385-6, 400, 416
 Fathers, 382, 384
 prayer, 236-7, 268
 Christianity, 199, 204, 384, 393, 397, 400-3
 Circle, The, 48, 62, 64, 70, 424
Civilization or Chaos, 449
 Clement of Alexandria, 395
 Colgon, 190
 Colombo, 113, 127
 Columbia, S.C., 203
 Complicated Free Life, 196, 198, 204
 Coneybeare, Irene, 8, 334, 449

- Confucius, 403
 Conscious action and inaction, 318-19
 Conscious and Unconscious, 308
 Consciousness, planes of, 249, 317, 330, 418,
 human and divine, 198-9, 283,
 344-6, 392
 unlimited, 327
 evolution of, 366, 387, 418, 419, 420, 423
 involution of, 362, 366, 387, 390, 418-19, 421-2, 424
 dissolution of, 423
 Constantinople, 96
 Coombe Martin (N. Devon), 95, 102, 375
 Cosmology, 416-23
 Cosmos, 326-7, 330
 Cradle ceremony, 68-9
 Craske, Margaret, 8, 116, 117-18, 149, 321, 336
 Creation, point of, 70, 283, 417, 419-20
 as play, 286, 423, 442
 Cuttack, 190
 Cycles of time, 275, 281, 424, 425
Daaman (hem of cloak), 291, 346, 348, 350, 351, 355,
 357, 366, 434
 Dacca, 156
 Dadachanji, F. H., (Chanji) 7, 72, 82, 90, 92, 95, 110, 116,
 117, 313
 Dadachanji, Nariman M., 166, 218, 296, 309, 324, 335,
 336, 347
 Dahm, Helen, 226
Daily Mirror, 116
 Dante, 401
Darshan (formal viewing), 49, 50-1, 64, 79, 131, 153, 154,
 205, 206, 207, 208, 221-5, 230, 256, 258, 265, 266,
 271, 277, 280, 287, 290, 294, 295, 344, 348, 353-4,
 359-369, 361, 368, 369, 437, 439, 442
 refused 180, 183, 184
 taken, 185
 Dastur, K. F., *see* Kaikobad
 Dastur, K. J., 7, 77
 Daulat Singh, 176, 177, 178, 189, 268
 Davy, Kitty, 8, 114, 118-21, 133, 149, 201, 203, 326, 335,
 336
 Death, statements upon, 54, 59-61, 69-70, 279, 320, 327-8,
 337
 Dehra Dun, 184, 186, 208, 210
 Delhi, 81, 141, 142, 157, 158, 186, 206-7
 Descartes, Rene, 383
 Deshmukh, Dr. C. D., 175, 276
 Dhake, 72
 Dhanwar, 93
 Dhulia, 81
 Dionysus the Areopagite, 409, 416
 Disasters foretold, 52, 274, 278, 356-7, 429, 430, 445
 Discourses, 33, 35, 47, 112, 247, 410-12, 416
Discourses, 448
Divine Theme, The, 149
 Divinity in Man, 392f., 402, 423, 426, 428-9
 Donkin, Dr. W., 8, 137f., 167, 168, 170, 173, 176, 180,
 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 201, 221, 226, 236,
 238, 271, 289, 296, 309, 449
 Douglas, James, 98-100, 128
 Dreams, 132, 240, 305, 418, 421
 Duce, Mrs. Ivy, O., 8, 204, 338, 347, 416
 Dust, to become, 311, 361, 384
 Duzdāb, 84, 86, 89-91, 92
East-West Gathering, The, 450
 East-West meeting (1962), 359-69, 417, 435
 Eaton, Frank, 201, 229
 Eckhart, Meister, 382, 384, 396, 408, 417, 419
 Ego, 35, 240, 241-2
 Egypt, 112, 113, 444
 Ellore, 207
 Eluru, 215
 Eruch Jessawala, 8, 140, 148, 149, 156, 176, 177, 184, 186,
 187, 189, 198, 225, 227, 233, 236, 245, 263, 269, 272,
 276, 288, 289, 296, 297, 300, 309, 335, 343, 346, 347,
 361, 363, 367, 416
 Eternal Now, 323, 324
 Ethics, 427
 Evans-Wentz, Dr. W. Y., 422

- Everything & the Nothing, The*, 448
 Evolution, 326, 390, 394-5, 417-18, 420, 421-2, 421n, 423, 424
Fakir (holy person), 55, 139, 159, 444
 Fallenfluh, 126
Fanā (unconscious consciousness), 246, 292, 328-9
Fanā-Fillāh. (conscious of reality), 328
 Farum, 164
 Fasting, 31, 33, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50-1, 56-7, 67, 74, 79, 80, 81, 161, 280, 287, 290, 357, 378-9, 442
 Fiery Free Life, *The*, 196, 198, 204, 209, 210, 429
 Final Decision, 280-1
 Final Declaration, 269, 272-5, 277-83, 405, 429
 Fore-knowledge, 323-4
 Frazer, Sir James, 391n
 Frederick, Phyllis, 450
 Free Life, *The*, 196-7, 198-209, 388
 Freni S. Irani, 17
 Full Free Life, *The*, 198, 204
 Gadekar, 175
 Gadge Maharaj, 225, 271, 277, 289
 Galaxies, *The*, 364, 402, 419, 420
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 94-5, 99, 155, 443, 444
 Ganges, 142
 Gayley, Nonny, 226
 Gayley, Rano, 133, 149, 201, 203, 234, 239
 Geneva, 205
 Genoa, 96, 117
 Germany, disciples sent to, 112
 Ghodnadi, 176, 177
 Glorification, 271-2, 275, 350-1, 405
 Goa, 145-6
 God:
 repeating name of, 69, 280, 357
 union with, 100, 246, 264, 285, 325, 329, 335, 384f
 love of, 138, 140, 193, 195, 202, 247, 249, 251, 257, 260f., 281, 299-302, 325, 348, 362
 the names of, 209
 knowing, 291, 315
 Is, 241, 259, 344-6, 362, 417
 the Ten States of, 241, 417
 the Reality, 257, 280-1, 285-6, 305
 Beyond-Beyond, 286, 314, 318-19, 322, 394, 417, 419
 as Father-Mother-Son, 314-15
 as end of false 'I', 316-18, 330
 as the sun, 338-9
 Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient, 322-3
 and the cosmos, 326-7, 364-6
 the shadow of, 301, 364, 419
 silence of, 409
 and Creation, 417-421 *see* Realization
God is My Adventure, 128
God Speaks, 239, 240, 241, 309, 391, 394, 395, 416-17, 422, 423, 424, 428, 440, 448
God to Man and Man to God, 394, 422, 424, 439, 440, 448
 God-Man, 15, 105, 198, 210, 230, 305, 325, 363-4, 390-406, 443, 444, 445, 447 *see* Avatar
God-Manhood, Lectures on, 401
 Godavri, Mai, 227, 252, 256, 261, 287, 290
 Goethe, 414
 Goher R. Irani, Dr., 176, 201, 203, 289, 335
Golden Bough, The, 391
 Gous Ali Shah Qalandar, 38
 Grace, 214, 344, 362, 364, 386, 430, 437
 Gulmai Kaikhushroo Irani, 29, 114, 130, 149, 256
 Guntur, 215
 Guruprasad, 294, 347, 352, 358, 359, 360f
 Gustadji Hansotia, 26, 42, 82, 156, 164, 176, 184, 186, 189, 201, 233, 234, 270, 293
 Gwalior, 81
 Hafiz, Shams-ud-din, 18, 34, 35, 36, 71, 251, 259, 299, 309, 310, 311, 319, 333, 335, 362, 377, 404
 Hafliger, Max, 8, 229, 230, 232, 235, 313

- Haqiqat*, 308
 Haji Malangshah, 41
 Hamirpur, 206
 Happy Valley, 78
 Hardwar, 81, 177, 183, 184, 185, 186, 208
 Harmon-on-Hudson, 97, 103, 200
 Harvan 81
 Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 391n
 Hazrat Babajan English School, 76
Harrat (Perfect Master), 19, 21, 22
He's Got the Whole World in His Hands 333, 334, 366, 388-9
 Heaven, 330
 Hegel, 398n
 Heritage, religious and cultural, 403-4
 Heychast mysticism, 409
 Hierarchy, 424-5
 Himalayas, 81, 208
 Hindus, 29, 33, 54, 55, 64-5, 71, 73, 236, 346
 Hirsch, H. Raphael, 94, 128, 440
History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, 393
 Hitaker, K., 247, 248, 267
 Hollywood, 103-5, 107, 127
 Homer, 393, 405
 Honesty, 262, 280, 298, 427
 Hong Kong, 127
 Hoyle, Prof. Fred, 420
 Hugel, Baron von, 401
 Humanism, 386
 Humiliation, 271, 278, 287-8, 350
Hungary, disciples sent to, 112
 rising, 289
 Huxley, Aldous, 383
 Hyderabad (Deccan), 190, 191
 Hyderabad (Sind), 153
 'I', the real and false, 240-2, 244, 258-9, 304, 305-8, 347, 384, 418, 445
 Igatpuri, 128
 Illumination, 381-3, 382f
 Illusion, 214, 249-50, 273-4, 275, 280, 286, 304, 317, 326-7, 418, 419, 422, 428, 430, 445
 Incarnation, 222, 345, 390, 391f., 397f.
 India, nationalism, 73, 93, 154
 messages to, 113, 150-1, 152, 207
 cricket team, 348
 important spiritually, 444
 Individuality, 331, 366, 419
 Individuation, 387
 Initial Urge, 420
 Intellect, 404, 421
 International Spiritual Centre, 133, 136
 Interviews, 97, 118, 127, 202, 232, 262, 288, 299, 308-9, 320, 333, 339, 347-8, 351, 358, 369, 436, 438
 Intuition, 413, 419
 Involution, 362, 366, 378, 390, 399, 418, 421-2
 Iran, 444 *see* Persia
 Islam, 42, 93, 204, 236, 328, 382, 384, 385, 386, 393, 401, 404, 429
Ishqa-e-Haqiqi, 316
Ishqa-e-Mejati, 316
 Israel, 297
 Italy, visits to, 96, 107-12, 117-19
 Jainism, 204, 303
 Jaipur, 150
 Jal D. Kerawalla, 205
 Jal S. Irani, 17, 42, 93, 145, 187
Jalali (a mast), 160
 Jalgaon, 158
Jamali (a mast), 160
 Jamshed Mehta, 94
 Jamshed R. Irani, 28, 337, 428
 Jamshedji S. Irani, 17, 20, 59-60
 Janak, 242-4
 Janakpur, 190
 Jessawala, B. D., 205, 220, 225
 Jesus Christ, 124, 239, 248, 250, 257, 262, 283, 298, 308, 328, 330, 332, 346, 351, 353, 443
 one with God, 49, 102
 obedience to, 68, 230
 crucifixion, 168, 242, 254, 255, 261, 291, 333, 386
 God-Man, 210, 237, 281, 325, 369, 394, 395, 396, 397-8, 428-9
 miracles, 254, 441
 in Galilee, 265, 401
 as mediator, 385-6
 relation with Meher Baba, 400-2

- Jesus *Christ-contd.* resurrection, 403, 411, 416
 second coming, 401
 silence, 408
 Jewish prophets, 381
 John the Baptist, 155, 256
 John the Silent, 408
Journey with God, 115, 450
 Journeys, The Four, 364-6, 418-19
- Jubbulpore, 141
 Judaism, 384
 Junagarh, 158
Kahha/ah, 417
 Kabir, 47, 228, 146, 377, 404
 Kaikhushru Afsari, 88, 90
 Kaikobad Dastur, 164, 167, 168, 171, 186, 189, 233, 236, 184-5, 308
 Kaka (A. S. Baria), 110, 111, 117, 120, 140, 144, 145, 148, 153, 156, 158, 161, 162, 175, 184, 186, 189, 233, 269
 Kakinada, 218
 Kale, Murli R., 176, 184, 186, 189
 Kalemama, 167, 168
 Kalyau, 243-4
 Kandevely, 115
 Kandy, 149
 Karachi, 43, 45, 47, 49, 84
 Karma, (impressions of the past), 310, 333, 391
 Kashmir, 81, 91, 208
 Kathiawar, 158
 Katni, 141
 Kenmore, Dr. Harry, 293-4, 297, 314, 329, 330, 332, 333, 338
 Keshav, 159-60
 Keynes, J. M. (Lord), 430
 Khaksaheb, 167, 168
 Khalghat, 81
 Khandoba, 23, 24, 234
 Khare, Dr., 181
 Khodadad Shirzad Irani, 21
 Khorshed, 149
 Khuldabad, 281
 Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, 40
 Khwaja Murn-ud-din Chishti, 152-3
- Kierkegaard, Seren, 401, 405, 446
 Kishan Singh, 189
 Knowledge, 35, 48, 101, 198, 209, 210, 213-14, 246, 268, 270, 301, 304, 324, 333, 366, 425
 Knox, R. A., 383n
 Kolhapur, 93, 190
 Krishna, 23, 77, 99, 134, 135, 141, 141, 211, 234, 239, 277, 283, 298, 311, 332, 339, 369, 382, 392-3, 394, 395, 396, 400, 401, 411, 445
 Kulkarni Maharaj, 23
 Kumar, 354
 Kurudwad, Dowager Rani of, 343
 Lahore, 81
 Landau, Rom, 128
 Lao-tze, 408
 Lata Limaya, 368
Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, 398n
 Leik, Christian, 76-7, 91
 Leila, 316
 Leon, Delia de, 8, 116, 157-8, 203
 Lepers, 280, 349, 355, 388, 443
Life at its Best, 448
Listen Humanity. '284, 449
 Locarno, 205
 Logos, The, 395, 396
 Lonavla, 45-6, 65-6
 London, 95-6, 97, 113, 121, 126, 127, 131, 204-5, 263, 288, 379
 Love, divine, 101, 138, 140, 151, 195, 199, 245, 361, 367, 400, 423, 417
 human, 113, 315, 316, 353, 385
 of God, 178, 188, 189, 228, 23⁰, 237, 24¹, 247, 249, 250-1, 256, 260, 261, 262, 272, 274, 281, 286, 287, 301, 307, 313-14, 315, 316, 319-20, 348, 352, 385
 of Baba, 193, 215, 216, 217, 248, 262, 273, 287-8, 297-8, 299-300, 301-3, 304, 320, 330-1, 347, 439
 impact of, 344, 436
 Lugano, 102
 Madras, 128, 130, 158, 189, 190, 207, 215
 Madrid, 122-3, 379
 Mahabaleshwar, 145, 152, 187, 188-9, 190-1, 296

- Mahadeo Desai, 95
Mahapurusha, 211
 Maharaj, *see* Upasni Maharaj *Mahatmas* (holy men), 186, 211
 Mahavira Vardhamana, 303
Majzoob (drowned in God) 36, 318, 319
Malik, 256
 Man, the human form spiritual, 69:
 to be what he is, 244: completion
 of evolution, 316, 366, 392, 418,
 421-2: subject to 'must', 321-2:
 the Four Journeys, 364, 418-19:
 what is? 423: perfection of, 348f
 Man-God, 364, 366, 381-9, 390f., 396,
 see Perfect Master
Mandali (close disciples), 45, *passim*
 rules and discipline, 29-31, 42, 47f., 52, 72, 432
 fasting, 31, 43, 45, 46, 62, 79, 80, 128, 130
 discourses to, 33f., 66, 67, 145
 discord among, 47-8, 436-7
 composition of, 53-4, 431-3
 duties of (1925-27), 61-6, 78-80, 82
 silence, 80, 129, 233
 participation in mast-work, 140f.
 living conditions, 158-431
 the New Life, 163-97, 430-1
 who leave him, 434
 Mani S. Irani, 8, 17, 114, 132, 149, 154, 176, 201, 202, 203,
 204, 283, 326, 337, 349, 415
 Manifestation, 193, 196, 262, 275, 344, 350, 405-6, 412, 434
 Majnu, 316
 Manjri Mafi, 184, 185, 186
Manonash (annihilation of rational mind), 190-7, 198
 Mansari, 171, 336-7
 Manzil-e-Meem, 29f.
Marefat (God-illuminated), 308
 Marseilles, 95, 97, 116-17, 121, 125, 126
 Masi, 149
Mast(s) (God-intoxicated), 130-1, 136- 160, 188, 189, 190,
 199, 205, 206, 207, 208, 234, 251, 287, 288, 303, 319, 354,
 383, 442, 444
 Mast Ashrams, *see* Ajmer, Bangalore, Juhulpore,
 Mahabaleshwar, Meherabad, Ranchi, Satara
Mastani (female *mast*), 138, 143
 Master, Perfect, (*see* Perfect Master)
 Master's Prayer, The, 209, 297, 364
 Masulipatam, 215
 Matchabelli, Princess Norina, 115, 116, 117, 118, 124, 126,
 133, 134, 145, 149, 162, 200-1, 202
Maya (illusion), 214, 258, 304, 305, 334, 345, 349
 Mayas, 429
 Meditation, 33, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 239, 245, 257, 347, 362, 440
 Meher Baba:
 birth (1894), 15, 17, 39, 152, 398-9
 parents, 15-16
 boyhood and youth, 17-18
 first Spiritual Master (1913), 18-20
 second Spiritual Master (1915), 21
 third Spiritual Master (1915), 22
 fourth Spiritual Master (1915), 22
 fifth Spiritual Master (1915), 23f.
 abnormal period (1914-21), 20-6, 244, 374-5, 381, 389
 God-realized (1921), 26
 Perfect Master (1921), 26, 381-9
 Avatar (1921), 26, 261, 270, 370-407
 Poona (1922), 27-9, *passim*
 first-ashram (1922-3), 29-41, 42 *passim*
 speaking, 33, 35, 37, 51
 abused, 39-40, 437
 early journeys, 40-1, 43, 46-7, 83-92
 changing plans, 41, 43, 65, 377, 433-4, *passim*
 tasks, 51, 57, 58, 136
 silence starts (1925), 51, 66
 birthday celebrations, 53, 68, 77, 127, 130, 141, 215, 347
 writing, 53, 65-6, 227, 416
 games, 33, 47, 58, 75, 202, 253, 260, 302, 358, 377
 no more writing, 66f., 406, 410f., 414
 opposition to, 98, 128, 301, 438
 first visit to West (1931), 94-8
 first world tour (1932), 98f.
 visit to Assisi, 110-12

Meher Baba-contd.

visit to Egypt, 112
 third visit to Europe (1932.), 107-11
 fourth visit to Europe, (1932.), 113
 fifth visit to Europe (1933), 121
 seventh visit to Europe (1934), 127f.
 second world tour (1934-5), 127f.
 appearance, 128, 144, 361, 375-6
 ninth visit to Europe (1937), 132
 attitude to money, 134, 139, 165-6, 175-6, 183, 186, 187, 188, 189, 216-17, 341
 illness, 33, 153, 163, 289, 296, 347, 348, 350 356, 357, 358, 376, 405, 406
 orders to adherents, 63, 154-5, 157, 160, 192, 194, 209, 280, 282, 288, 290, 293, 313, 342, 347-8, 349, 355-6, 357-8, 434
 the New Life, 162-197
 tomb, 165
 car accident (USA), 203-4, 380
 stone-throwing, 227, 235, 245
 death foretold, 247, 268, 270, 271-2, 275, 278, 279, 285, 344
 alphabet board given up, 270-1, 277
 his 'language'; 278-9, 405-6, 429
 world tour (1956), 287-8
 second car accident, 289-90, 296, 297, 376, 380
 repeating name of, 290, 337, 349, 428
 declaration as God-Man, 401
 without cult or rule, 273-4, 404
 as Irani, 404-5
 source of knowledge, 425
 method, 431-41
 see Ancient one, Fasting, GodMan, *Mandali*, Interviews, Miracles, Politics, Seclusions, Silence, Work
Meher Baba Journal, The, 201, 450
Meher Gazette, The, 450
Meher Message, The, 77, 93, 98, 450
 Mehera, J. Irani, 115, 149, 172, 176, 177, 201, 202, 203, 204, 234, 314, 324, 335-6

Meherabad;

founded 42, 43, 47
 hospital, 49, 63, 65
 school, 49-50, 57-9, 65, 66, 67-8, 71, 72, 73-7
 abandoned, 65
 Prem Ashram, 74-6
 re-established, 125
 English visitors, 131
mast ashram, 145-9, 150
 Western visitors, 219f.
Passim
 Meherazad, 153, 154, 158, 159, 160, 165, 166, 193, 205, 233-4, 283, 290, 342, 351, 356, 359, 369, 378
 Meherjee A. Karkaria, 166, 183, 201, 2.07, 219, 288
 Mehru, R. Irani, 176, 201, 202, 203
 Merwan Sheriar Irani, *see* Meher Baba
Messages, 448
 Mexico, 297
 Milan, 96
 Milarepa, 380, 437
 Mind, 191-2, 327, 418, 421
 Minu Kharas, 189
 Mira, 332
 Miracles 214, 227, 254, 388, 440-1
 Moradabad, 183
 Moses, 403
 Morichur, 185, 186
 Mouni Buwa, 284
 Mount Abu, 81, 129-30, 160, 162
 Muhammad, The Prophet, 34, 36, 210, 283, 325, 328, 346, 382, 385, 396
 Muhammad, *mast*, 141, 148, 158
 Munga Sain Mastan, 158
 Munsiff, Dr. Abdul Ghani, 8, 165, 168, 170, 171, 176, 178, 181, 183, 184, 186, 189, 191, 192, 193, 416
 Murphy, Tennessee, 203
 Murree, 116
 Music, 27, 50, 246, 249-52, 264, 265, 313, 324-5, 333, 364, 366, 368, 369, 377
 Muslims, 29, 40-1, 42, 50, 73, 346, 383, *see* Islam

- Must, the Law of, 310
 the Inexorable 321-2
 Mustan, 54
 Muttra, 142
My Wish, 320
 Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 163, 200f., 203-4, 288-340
 Mysore, Maharaja of, 133
 Mystics, 239, 325, 373, 382, 383n, 384, 385, 400, 409, 416, 419
 Nadiad, 158
 Nagpur, 133, 141, 207
 Nanak, 268
 Narayan Maharaj, 21, 24, 46, 61, 399
 Narizabad, 158
 Nasik, 44, 80, 81, 92-3, 98, 112, 117, 125, 128, 130, 131, 312
 Nasirabad, 158
 Nath, Dr., 181
 Nature, 310, 383, 384, 402, 420, 428, 430, 443
 Navsari, 44, 133
 Neelkanth (a *mast*), 354
 Negapatam, 148
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 231-2
 Nelhams, Lewis Charles, 53-4
 Nepal, 189
 New Life, Song of the, 178-9
 New Life, The 163-97, 388, 404, 431-2, 439, 443
 New Testament, The, 382, 384
 New York, 96-7, 201, 204, 288
 New Zealand, 113, 359
 Nicholson, Reynold A., 10, 385n, 386n
 Nietzsche, Frederich, 382, 405, 414, 444
 Nilgris, 93
 Nilu, (Dr. Nilkanth Godse), 153, 154, 176, 178, 184, 185, 186, 189, 201, 232, 288, 289, 380, 428
Nirvan (infinite nothing), 328
Nirvana (the goal), 100, 388, 440
Nirvilcalp (Real Everything), 328
 Nizamuddin, 142
 Nothing, False and Real, 328-9
 Now, The Eternal, 323
Nur (God's Glory), 325
 OM (the sound of the name of God), 251, 413
 Obedience, 71-2, 169f., 174, 234, 286, 292-3, 297-8, 309-11, 320, 330, 341, 347, 355-6, 362, 400, 425-8, 439
 Occult experiences, warning against
 Ocean, The, as symbol, 327, 331, 394
 Ojai, California, 202
 Origen, 395
 Orissa, 189
 Padri, 42, 166, 172, 175, 276
 Pakistan, 359, 379
 Panchgani, 78-80
 Pandharpur, 271, 277
 Pandoba, 189
 Pantheistic, 383n, 420
 Paris, 102, 126, 131, 132, 379
 Parsees 29, 93
 Pascal, Blaise, 446
 Pascal, Gabriel, 126-7, 200
 Patel (Sadash Shelke), 27, 176, 178, 184
 Pathan Baba, 155
 Patna, 190
 Patterson, Mrs. Elizabeth, 8, 117, 134, 141, 145, 162, 200-1, 202-3, 450
 Pendu (A. R. Irani), 42, 117, 120, 121, 175, 176, 183, 186, 189, 198, 289, 290
 Perfect Master(s), 15, 22, 24, 26, 27, 34, 36-9, 48, 70, 92, 95, 102, 162, 197, 214, 242-3, 246, 270, 280-1, 303, 311, 317, 318, 319, 324, 325, 329, 330, 331, 335, 336, 361, 362, 366, 380-9, 390, 393, 394, 419, 424, 425, 437, 441
Perfect Master, The, 449
 Perfect Masters, functions of the five, 394-5, 399, 405
 Perfect Ones, 198-9, 208, 260, 387, 424, 425
 Persia, 43, 45, 46-7, 73, 83-92, 359, 404-5
 Personality, 396-8, 401
 Philo, 395

- Picasso, Pablo, 447
 Pimpalgaon, IS4, 158, 165, 2.33, *see* Meherazad
 Plato, 231, 382, 384, 403, 429
 Plotinus, 382, 403, 408, 425
 Politics, 67, 199, 289, 443, 444
 Pond Crest, 203
 Poona, 15, 16f., 27, 46, 61, 128, 152, 159, 162, 180, 205, 220-1, 280, 289, 296, 353, 358, 359-69
 Poor (and sick), feeding (and clothing) 31, 47, 68, 156, 161, 189, 193, 205, 206, 208, 222, 225, 260, 280, 288, 290, 349, 354, 355, 356, 378, 387, 443
 Portofino, 117, 119
 Power, 338, 425, 426
 Prague, Oklahoma, 203
 Prajnananda, Swami, 93
Prasad, 156, 206, 224-5, 230, 253, 265, 276, 320, 326, 335, 339, 437
 Prayers, 162, 16S, 167, 168, 173, 176, 181-2, 182, 188, 189, 193-4, 197, 235, 236-8, 268-9, 268, 280, 297, 314, 335, 341, 364, 369, 419
 Prem-Ashram, 75-6, 436
 Progress a false idea, 421n., 430
 Propaganda, 217
Prophets of the New India, 393n.
 Publicity, 217, 438
 Purandhare, 270
 Purity of heart, 230, 239, 242, 286, 427
Qawali (extemporary singer or song of love), 189, 251, 324, 325, 368, 377
 Questions, 415, 436
 Quetta, 43, 49, 81, 89, 150
Quran, 168, 173, 236
Qutub, 210, 246, 281, 325, 381, *see* Perfect Master
 Racine, 405
 Radhakrishnan, Sir Sarvepalli, 392
 Rahuri, mad ashram at, 130-1, 132, 137-8, 252
 Rajamundry, 207, 215-16, 318
 Rajasthan, 160
 Rajkot, 159
 Rāma, 131, 206, 283, 393
 Rama Bhiva (Bholaram), 55
 Ramakrishna, 76, 242, 393, 394
Ramakrishna, Sayings of Sri, 393n.
 Ramalinga Shastri, 263
 Ramana Maharshi, 207
 Rāmānuja, 416
 Ramju (Abdulkarim Ramju Abdulla), 42, 164, 186, 255, 413
 Ranchi, 146-7
Rasool (God-Man), 281
 Rawalpindi, 116
 Real Birth, 327-8
 Real Death, 327-8
 Real Everything, 328
 Realization of God, 26, 27, 35, 37, 38, 48, 66, 70, 228, 264, 366, 387
 Reason, 421, 427-8
 Re-incarnation, 213, 328, 329, 395, 418, 421-2
 Reinhardt, Max, 200
 Religion, to be observed, 33, 35-6, 345, 426
 implications of, 100, 274, 445
 rites, 256, 257, 292, 345-6, 352, 426
 Religions, relations between, 64, 199, 400-4
 Repentance, 427
 Repentance, Prayer of, 238, 268-9, 297, 314, 335, 341, 343, 369
 Responsibility, 424, 427, 442
 Revelation, 382, 390, 403-4, 419
 Revelation, the Book of, 430
 Reza Shah, 84
 Rishikesh, 81, 156, 208, 354
Rishis, 141
 Rolland, Romain, 393
 Rome, 117-19, 379
 Ross, Sir Denison, 99
 Rūmi, Jalalu'l-Dīn, 10, 33-4, 385, 386, 391, 437
 Rusi, 157
 Rustom K. Irani, 29, 42, 73, 76
 Ryle, Prof. Martin, 420
 Saar, 185
 Sacraments, 386, 426

- Sadguru*, 211, 281, 325, 381, 394, *see* Perfect Master
Sādhu (one who has renounced the world), 47, 55, 138, 155, 156, 159, 186, 189, 207, 208, 211, 212, 213, 231, 285
Sahawās (intimacy of love) Meherabad, 284-5, 290, 293-4, 295-6, 335
 Myrtle Beach, 296-9, 344, 378, 435, 439
 Australia, 299, 309, 344
 Sai Baba, 22-3, 24, 55, 67, 244, 253, 254, 270, 399, 424
 St. Augustine, 400, 248, 257, 379, 401
 St. Francis of Assisi, 108-12, 122
 St. Francis Xavier, 145, 248
 St. Ignatius of Antioch, 405
 St. John Damascene, 397
 St. Mark's, Venice, 112, 122
 St. Paul, 421
 St. Peter, 308, 330
 St. Peter's, Rome, 117
 St. Teresa, 121, 122, 332, 379
 St. Theophilus of Antioch, 395
 St. Thomas Aquinas, 409, 416, 420, 425
 Saints, 211, 212, 213, 223, 230, 231
Salik (God-illuminated), 138, 361
Samiidhi (highest contemplation), 71, 245, 440
 Samkara, 416
Samsara (the phenomena), 422n.
 San Francisco, 340
Sangsaṅa (the round of births, and deaths), 422
Sanskāras, (the impressions of experience), 70, 71, 240, 304, 310, 318, 422, 437
 Santa Margherita, 107-112, 119
 Saoner, 207
 Sarnath, 142, 182
 Sarosh K. Irani, 166, 176, 201, 202-3, 222, 226, 235, 258, 266
 Sarover, 185
 Satara, 23, 152-4, 271, 280-1, 288
Sa tori (awakening), 382
 Saurashtra, 158
 Savak Kotwal, 221, 239
 Scarsdale, 204
 Schloss, Malcolm, 228, 276, 277
 Schuon, Fruthjof, 401
Search in Secret India, A, 94, 128
 Seclusions, 48-9, 52-3, 74, 78-80, 81-3, 126, 128-30, 145, 146, 152, 154, 160-2, 190-1, 249, 282, 283, 288, 346, 349, 356, 358, 359, 369, 376, 378, 379, 413, 434, 443, 444
 Self, The Real, 70, 322, 324, 331, 347, 402, 403, *see* 'I', knowledge, 70
 consciousness, 418, 421-2
 Seneca, 388
 Sermon on the Mount, 384
 Seven hundred years, 274, 275
 Sex, 100, 154, 157, 162, 282, 293, 428
 Shakespeare, 66, 405
 Shanghai, 105-7
Sharyiat (religious practices), 35, 292, 308, 352
 Shaw, Darwin, 201, 229, 367
 Sheriar Mundegar Irani, 15-17, 102, 144
 Sheriar, 303
 Shimoga, 145
 Shinto, 403
 Shiraji Art College, 207
 Shirdi, 22, 55, 253, 254, 287
 Shirinbanoo, 16, 17, 39, 154
 Sidhu Kamble, 264
 Sikh College, Delhi, 206-7
 Sikh Prayer, 268
 Silence, starts, 51-2
 breaking, 69, 146, 150, 162, 199, 218, 271, 274, 282, 344, 346, 350, 355, 356, 363, 367, 369, 405, 409, 410, 412-14
 effects, 103, 407-14
 God's, 345
 ordered, 358, 367
 meaning, 406, 407-9, 414
 Sing Sing prison, 97
 Sistine Chapel, 118
 Slamson, 42
Sobs and Throbs, 449

- Socrates, 411, 447
 Solovyev, Vladimir, 401
 Soul (contraction of divinity), 100, 417-21, 422
 Spirit (divinity), 421 *see* Self, the
 Srinagar, 81, 116
Stay with God, 351-2, 413, 449
 Steiner, Rudolf, 118
 Stevens, Don, 8, 284, 299, 301, 308, 313, 314, 319, 332, 416, 449
 Stoics, 429
 Suffering, 39, 70, 274, 296, 333, 334-5, 349-50, 356-7, 361, 447
 Sufism Reoriented, 416
 Sufism, 199, 204, 228, 385, 404, 405, 416, 417
Sunday Express, 99-100
 Supa, 176-7
 Surat, 154
 Surrender, 212, 330f.
 Swami Satya Prakash Udaseen, 450
Symposium, The, 447
 Tadepalligudam, 207, 215
 Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, 21-2, 62, 270, 399
Tamāshā (farce), 339
 Tao, 403
Tapaswis (ascetics), 141
Tariqat (a stage in awakening), 292, 308
 Teaching, The, 415-30
 Tears, 74, 375, 436
 Tehri, 156
 Tibet, 444
Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa, 422n.
 Tiger Valley cave, 78-81
 Time factor, The, 279, 281, 282
 Tipa Baba, 155-6
 Tiruppur, 158
 Tiruvallur, 158
 Todd, Quentin, 110, 114
 Toka, 75-6
 Tolerance, 427
 Tolstoy, Nadine, 134, 149, 226
 Trichinopoly, 158
 Udatara, 289
 Transcendence, 420
 Tradition, 403-4
Transcendent Unity of Religions, The 401
 Umar Baba, 155
 Unconscious action, inaction, 318-19
 United States of America, 96-7, 184
 Unity, 274-5
 Universal Message, The, 343-4
 Untouchables, 49, 50, 57, 58, 71, 73, 265
Upanishads, 115, 231, 382
 Upasni Maharaj (Kashinath Govindrao Upasni) 22, 23f., 29, 38, 39-40, 41, 50, 61, 81, 95, 130, 141, 146, 222, 233, 244, 252-3, 261, 270, 399, 425, 430, 437
 Uttar Kashi, 154, 156-7
 Valu, 149
 Vambori, 156
 Vancouver, 117
 Varanasi, 141, 177, 180-1
 Vasant Deshmukh, 270
 Vaswani, T. L., 290
 Vedanta, 384
 Vedantism, 199, 204, 228, 384, 416, 417
 Vedantists, 239, 240, 327-8
 Vedas (Hindu sacred scriptures), 403
 Venice, 112, 113
 Viloo Sarosh Irani, 226
 Vinayakruo Patwardhau, 367
 Viramgam, 159
 Virgil, 393
 Visapur, 156
 Vishnu N. Deorukkhar, 164, 175, 176, 184, 185, 186, 189, 227, 289
 Vishnu, 184, 393
 Visions, 286-7, 439
 Vivekananda, Swami, 36, 393n.
 Wadula, 348
 Wagh, 270
 Wai, 80
Wafi (God-merged), 179, 211, 212, 317, 338

- War, the second world, 133, 125, 143, 144, 145, 146, 150, 154
 instructions to disciples, 151-2
 Washington, 340
Wayfarers, The, 138 *passim*, 444, 445, 449
 Wellesley, Arthur (Duke of Wellington), 231
 West Bengal, 189
 Western Civilization, 493
 Will, the, 422-3, 427, 430
 Wilmington, 340
 Woombye, Queensland, 340-2, 351
 Word, The One, 227, 246, 259, 271, 274, 275, 278, 350, 356-7, 363-4, 405-6, 410, 412-14
 Work Baba's, 345, 350-1, 379, 414, 439, 442-7
 What Baba means by real, 216-18, 302-3
 World Congress of Faiths, 121
 Workers, 367-8, 438-9
 World Destruction, 274, 278, 356-7, 429-30, 445
 Yeshwantro, 256, 261, 270
 Yoga (a rule or practice leading to union with God), 36, 159, 306-7, 348, 383
 Yogi(s), 56, 67, 211, 212, 213, 230, 231, 245-6, 380, 440-1, 444
 Yogi Sudhananda Bharati, 311
 Zaehner, R.C., 383n.
 Zen, 382, 386, 409, 416, 432
 Zoroaster, 210, 211, 239, 283, 298, 328, 352, 395, 396, 403
 Zoroastrianism, 199, 204, 268, 328, 383
 Zoroastrian(s), 42, 346, 352, 404
 Zurich, 116-7, 131

EPILOGUE

Avatar Meher Baba dropped his physical body at twelve noon on 31st January 1969, to live eternally in the hearts of all his lovers. Beloved Baba's body will be interred at Meherabad Arangaon on 1st February at 10 a.m. in the tomb he had ordered to be built long ago.

The above cable was sent out by Adi K. Irani on February 1st, 1969 to Baba lovers all over the world.

From the years between 1964 (When this book was published) and the above date, Baba's health had given cause for great anxiety. The 1964 East-West Darshan was cancelled, and Baba went into even stricter seclusion. On July 30th, 1968 He said: "My work is done. It is completed 100% to my satisfaction."

On October 13th, 1968 He said: "Today I say: THE TIME IS COME. Remember this."

In November came the news that Baba would give His darshan from April 10th to June 10th, 1969 in Poona at Guruprasad.

Immediately on receipt of Adi's cable of Baba's death, Baba lovers from all over the world gathered at Meherabad to pay their loving homage to their Beloved. All day and night they struggled up the hill and went straight to the tomb. In the crypt lay Beloved Baba covered with a pink sheet, and pink roses round His head and body.

On the eighth day, Friday February 7th, Baba's body was interred at 12:00 p.m. It was Baba's birthday according to the Zoroastrian Calendar.

A short time before the anniversary of Baba's 75th birthday Mani-Baba's sister—released, for circulation among His lovers, a last wonderful and inspiring message which had been given by him in anticipation of the birthday celebration.

"To love me for what I may give you is not loving me at all. To sacrifice anything in my cause to gain something for yourself is like a blind man sacrificing his eyes for sight. I am the Divine Beloved worthy of being loved because I am love. He who loves me because of this will be blessed with unlimited sight and will see me as I am."

The mandali decided that the promised Darshan should take place at Guruprasad Poona from April 10th to June 10th, 1969. Lovers came from all over the world to take this unparalleled Darshan, the last He had said to be given in silence.

Baba has said:

"I am not limited to this form. I use it like a garment to make myself visible to you, and I communicate with you. Don't try to understand Me. My depth is unfathomable.

"Just love me."

Delia De Leon

