



# IN HIS SERVICE

DECEMBER / 2024

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

# In Baba's Handwriting

A REMARKABLE FIND has been uncovered in the Trust's Archives. In July, three batches of documents were identified as possibly written in Meher Baba's own handwriting. After careful and thorough analysis, it has been confirmed that these manuscripts are indeed written by Beloved Baba Himself.

## Background of the Manuscripts

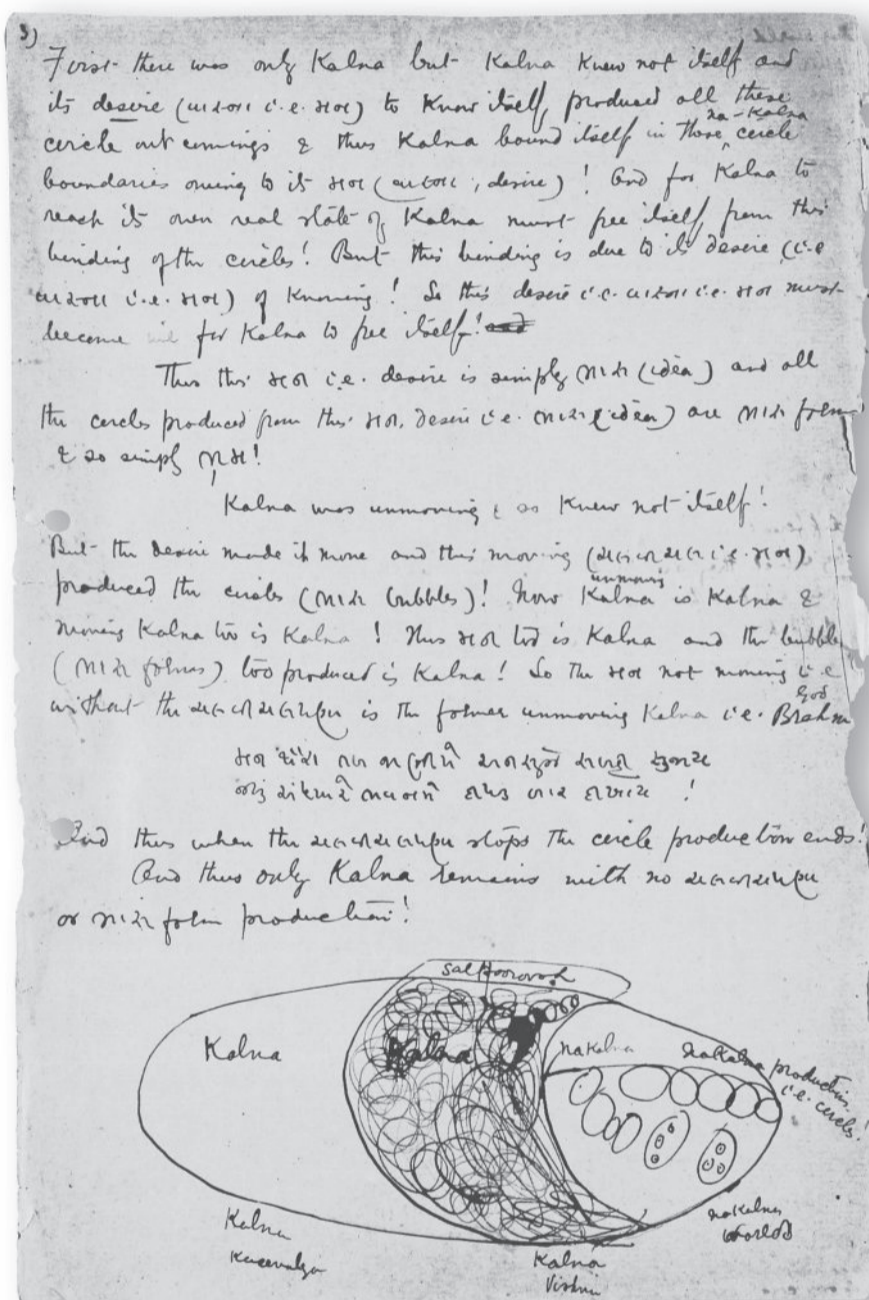
The documents were found among the preserved papers of Chanji, who was Baba's devoted secretary from the 1920s until the mid-1940s. Following Chanji's passing in 1944, the files he had kept for Baba were transferred to Adi K. Irani in Ahmednagar and became part of what was known as "The Record."

Baba was very particular about preserving this record. On November 30, 1958, during a meeting with Adi in the Trust Office, Baba emphasised the importance of safeguarding these records: "Do you keep all the office records in steel trunks or *almirahs*? As a precaution against insects and fire, you must do this. The importance and significance of these records is such that you can hardly imagine it today."<sup>\*</sup>

## Content and Condition of the Documents

The documents were found in folders labelled "Dadachanji's Records Manuscripts." They mostly consist of loose 8.5"x13" single or double folios that were preserved with relatively minor damage.

The first batch consists of 64 pages. Mostly handwritten in ink, these pages include a number of essays, many of which are untitled, and some without clear beginnings



One of the pages in Baba's handwriting

or endings. The text is primarily in English but includes Indic terms and Gujarati script. Some pages are entirely in Gujarati, with diagrams that require further deciphering. The second batch is a two-page story in English, written in pencil. The third batch comprises three essays written in pencil, mostly in English, with some words in Perso-Arabic script for Sufi terms.

## Significance and Authentication

Although these documents are not signed or explicitly labeled as Baba's, the handwriting was flagged as possibly His during cataloguing. The Archives team then worked closely with the Publications-Copyright team, who concurred that the handwriting was likely Baba's. Finally, two separate independent forensic



Visitors to the Welcome and Information tables under the Tin Shed

## Welcome & Information on the Hill

The Welcome and Information Centre, originally stationed at Lower Meherabad in the Meher Pilgrim Centre building, has relocated to Upper Meherabad. It is now operating out of the previous Library room in Meher Retreat. With the mission of providing information about Meher Baba to visitors, the team of volunteers notes that the new location near Baba's Samadhi has generated a four-fold increase in the number of pilgrims served.

The team is currently setting out materials about Baba on tables under the Tin Shed, the old roof structure from Baba's time, where pilgrims like to come for darshan of Baba's gaadi, and to tour the kitchen and bedroom used by Baba. Materials are available for free, in at least four languages, and volunteers who speak those languages are on hand to greet people, answer questions, and tell stories, particularly for those new to Baba. The new set-up is available from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and again from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. The schedule is flexible in order to be available to meet tour buses, schools, and other groups.

Among the materials given are Brief Life Sketches of Meher Baba, Universal Messages, the Prayers, Historic Maps of Meherabad, photos of Baba, and information on how to make a reservation and how to consult the Trust website.

handwriting experts from Mumbai and Pune confirmed that the handwriting is indeed Meher Baba's.

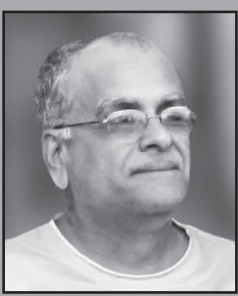
Over the coming months and years, researchers and scholars will examine these documents in detail, creating authoritative editions of these previously unpublished writings. This process will involve transcription and translation, particularly of the Gujarati script and other languages. However, making the documents available to all in facsimile is the essential first step and that has been done.

## Viewing the Manuscripts

These documents are available for viewing in a special gallery on the Trust Archives Document website: [https:// archives.ambppct.org/CA\\_1\\_7/jaibaba/index.php/Browse/objects/facet/topic\\_facet/id/450/view/images](https://archives.ambppct.org/CA_1_7/jaibaba/index.php/Browse/objects/facet/topic_facet/id/450/view/images).

\* Lord Meher, online edition, p. 4474





# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Our Dear Baba Family,  
Jai Meher Baba!

We enjoyed a generous monsoon this year, and now move into the drier, cooler months of winter. This is typically the peak season for pilgrims, and our facilities will be bustling with Baba's eager lovers from the four corners of the earth.

Trust activities span a wide spectrum of areas, as we put our best efforts into fulfilling the mandate of Baba's Trust Deed. I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter, as we are featuring some of our community outreach programs, such as the Physical Education Centre and Meher English School. You'll also find a

new discovery from the Archives of pages written by Baba in His own handwriting, plans to reissue older, out-of-print writings by Baba, maintenance of original buildings on the Hill, and other topics.

We warmly welcome our two new Trustees, Rajendra Meher Poduri and Rakhi Sharma. Well-known to us for their many years of service to Baba, we are delighted to have them join the Board of Trustees and wish them an old Irish blessing, "May God hold you in the palm of His hands and may He not squeeze too hard."

As I write, the whole of India is celebrating the Festival of Lights, Diwali, recognized by all as the

time to celebrate the spiritual victory of Light over Darkness, Knowledge over Ignorance. In Baba's own words:

*This is real Diwali, to light the lamp of love in the hearts, and when the lamp is lit, then of course you don't need any words: You see the light. And that is real Diwali.*

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

In Baba's Love and Service,

Framroze J. Mistry

Chairman, Avatar Meher Baba

Perpetual Public Charitable Trust

**"YOUR JOB IS TO REMEMBER ME; EVERYTHING ELSE IS MY JOB." - MEHER BABA**

## MEHER ENGLISH SCHOOL



Mrs. Ketki Shendre, far right, with sports day winners and Mrs. Manjula Kala, Trust manager of our education department

Our Meher English School welcomes a new principal at the helm, Mrs. Ketki Shendre from Nagpur. A long-time Baba lover, Ketki has relocated to Meherabad along with her husband, Ajay Shendre. Ketki has a vast experience in education, having served as teacher, vice principal, and principal in her 30 years' experience. She holds advanced degrees in Physics, Mathematics, and Chemistry.

The school has an enrollment of 510 students, in standards KG-10th. This year a new bus was purchased, a new seesaw and slide were installed in the kindergarten play area, a new projector with screen and sound system was procured for the auditorium, colorful new tables and chairs were acquired for the kindergarten classes, and window screens were installed on all the classroom windows. Students love participating in special celebrations, some of which include a visit to Baba's Samadhi.



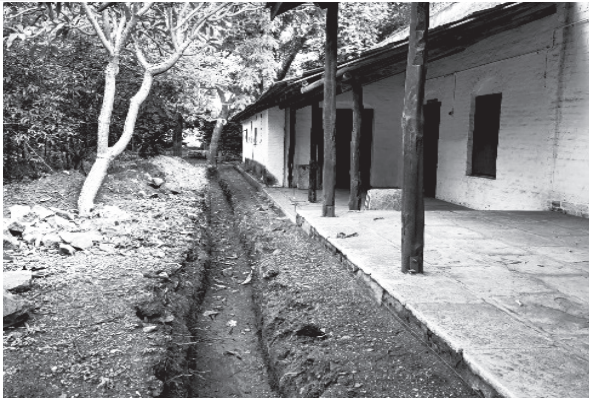
Sports Day at the school was a popular event!

Meher English School students visited Baba's Samadhi on India's Independence Day, August 15, 2024



PHOTOGRAPHERS UNKNOWN





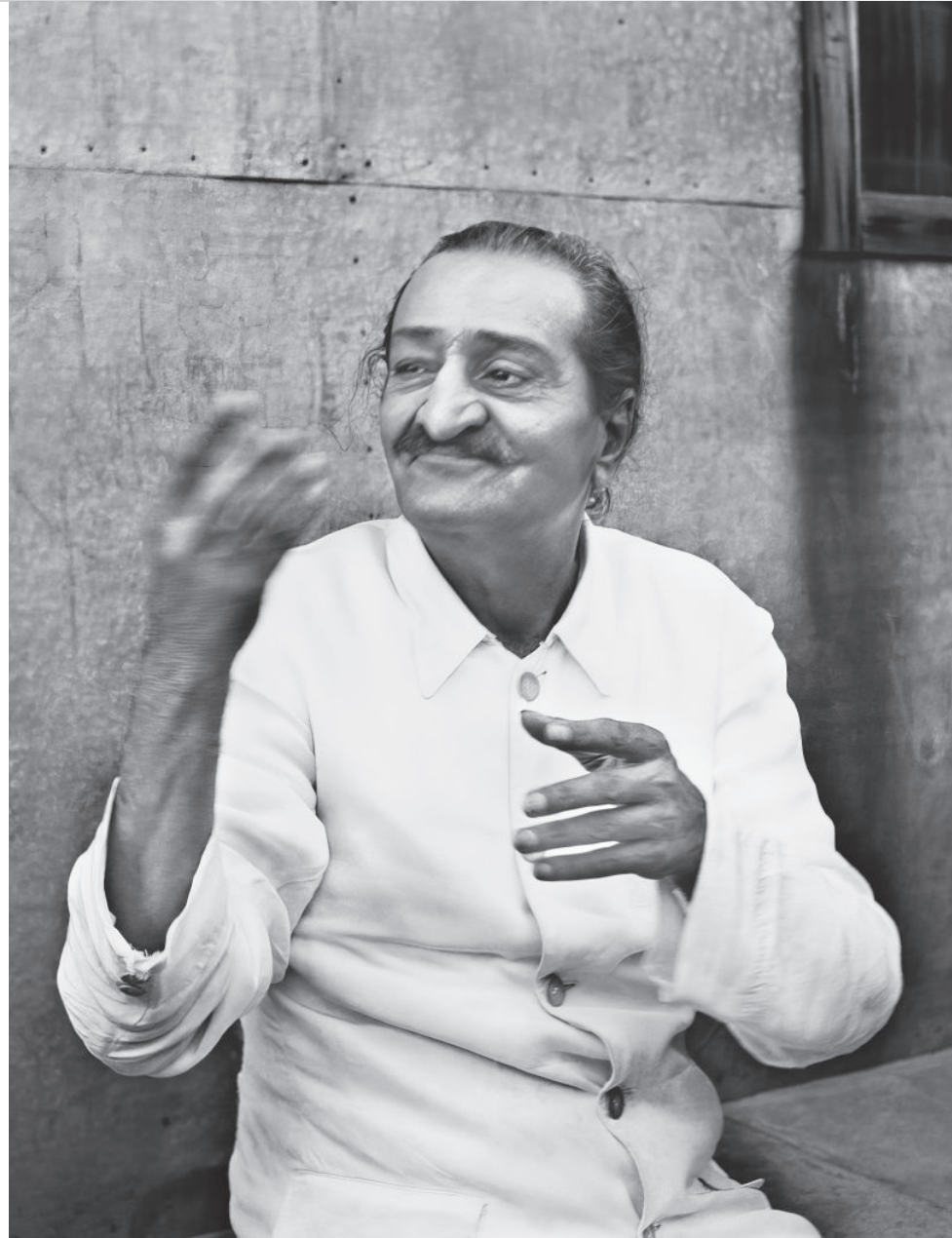
### BUILDING MAINTENANCE ON THE HILL

Baba's Cabin, built by Padri under Baba's instructions in 1935, was used by Him whenever He would stay on the Hill, from its completion until 1947. This year the galvanized metal sheets comprising the walls underwent preservation and maintenance work. The sheets were secured with new or repaired nails, rusted areas were treated with an archival metal anti-corrosion substance, and a transparent wax coating was applied to prevent future corrosion of the material.

The Study Hall, upstairs in the Meher Retreat building on the Hill, was renovated with fresh paint and minor repairs. The furnishings and art and photo exhibits of Baba's life were removed for the project and will soon be returned so pilgrims will again be able to visit the Study Hall.

### LIBRARY OPENS ANEW

The Meherabad Library was founded by long-time Baba lover and Meherabad resident Nana Kher in the early 1970s. It was housed in the lower level of Meher Retreat, in a room used during Baba's time by the women mandali. The library has now moved to a new location at Lower Meherabad in the building previously used as offices for the Chairman and Trustees. The new incarnation of our library was inaugurated



Baba outside the Cabin, Nov. 1955. We can see how the galvanized sheets overlap and are fixed in place with nails, as it is maintained today.

### ARANGAON COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Trust conducts many small and large community services for Arangaon and its residents. In the past year we have given land on a lease basis for the construction of an overhead water tower serving the village and the Trust. The Trust often supplies water delivered by tanker to individual social functions, for those who cannot afford to provide it for their event. Electrical fittings and fixtures are provided on a quarterly basis for the village. Recently the government "gram panchayat" building has been renovated with significant financial help from the Trust. The Krishna Temple has been renovated as well, with help from the Trust. On a lighter note, each year the Trust sponsors a much-loved cricket tournament for boys and girls.

### MONSOON

As monsoon rains draw to a close, we see we have had a good year. Rainfall so far in 2024 is 37.7 inches, well above our 10-year average of 28.6 inches. Ground water levels are up as the open wells easily show us.

### PROTECTING ORIGINAL LOWER MEHERABAD BUILDINGS

A field drain has been installed along the edges of the Main Bungalow (Old Mandali Hall) and the Dharamshala at Lower Meherabad to drain excess water away from the aging archival buildings. This important work will prevent water seeping in and causing damage to the walls and floors.

### NEW LIFE DAY

October 16, 2024, marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Baba's New Life in 1949. A special exhibit was offered in the Museum on the Hill, displaying the *kafni*, turban, and satchel used by Beloved Baba during the New Life. A commemorative program was held in the Music and Arts Centre to honor the day.

### YOUNG ADULT SAHAVAS

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual International Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas was held at Meherabad in June this year. There was an overwhelming participation of 179 sahavasees, the highest number so far, with over 100 of them first-time participants. For seven days the group celebrated Baba's Love and Presence with the theme "Pleasing Meher Baba." The week's activities included talks by senior Baba lovers, group discussions, presentations, cultural workshops, interactive sessions, tunnel painting, a Meherazad visit, music, and service projects. Organizers are already looking forward to the 2025 Sahavas next June, which will coincide with the 100th anniversary of Baba starting His Silence. Inquiries can be directed to mbyas1894@gmail.com.



Sahavasees join in a discussion group with Dara Irani and Ramesh Jangale

Two new trustees were appointed to the Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust board in October this year.

RAKHI SHARMA of New Delhi has been a stalwart lover of Baba and has served the Trust for many years. She is well known in Meherabad as the long-time organizer of the International Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas every year. She has also been a tireless Amartithi volunteer and manager of the Delhi food stall for pilgrims. Rakhi has been President of the Delhi Avatar Meher Baba Centre since 2015 and has organised a number of Baba programs for the public in Delhi.

## NEW TRUSTEES



Rakhi Sharma



Rajendra Meher Poduri

Rajendra Meher Poduri was born into a family of Baba devotees in Hyderabad.

Rajendra Meher has been very active in Baba work both in Hyderabad and in Meherabad for many years. He has served as the Secretary of the Avatar Meher Baba Hyderabad Centre for 40 years. He has worked alongside Baba's mandali members and others, for Amartithi work and various Meherabad projects, particularly in the information technology aspects. He has also been involved in publishing and distributing Baba books and materials with a Hyderabad group of Baba lovers.



# Physical Education Centre

During early morning and early evening hours, boys and young men can be seen streaming into the area known as the Pilgrim Education Site, in outer Meherabad. They quietly proceed to their preferred area to play or study.

The Meherabad Physical Education Centre has been developed in a few of the bays originally built for Amarthi accommodations, uphill to the west of the Samadhi, off the MPR Road. The buildings are still used for accommodations during Amarthi, but year-round they house the activities of the Physical Education Centre. The Centre is also open for girls,

they are encouraged to come during certain hours, but at this stage girls and women come very rarely.

Each particular activity is conducted in one of the “accommodation” bays. One is for yoga, either individual or in organized classes. One is for table tennis, another is a body-building gym, and another is an *Akhara* (wrestling pit) used for a variety of traditional Indian sports and exercises. There is also a Study Hall, outfitted with chairs, tables, and good lighting, as a quiet space for students to read and work.

The body-building gym gets the most use, as local boys love

working out with the equipment. Originally at Lower Meherabad, the gym has grown in scope over many years. Recently the owner of a commercial gym that was closing made many machines available to the Trust at drastically reduced prices. So now the gym is fully equipped with rubber flooring, weights, and body-building machines.

The *Akhara* is a rectangular pit filled with soft red earth. Many of the boys use it as part of their daily exercises, to do the traditional *jor* (Indian-style squat), and turning of the red earth with special, heavy *fawdas* (Indian-style shovel). Younger boys have started to use it for wrestling.

With monsoon coming to an end, the outdoor activities will soon start up again.

These include volleyball, rope climbing, jungle gym, running, and cricket practice. These facilities are used enthusiastically by the local community and also by pilgrims and Meherabad residents. The site continues to be developed, including the interiors as well as exterior landscaping and equipment installations. The commitment to regular exercise and study, the enthusiasm and hearty comradeship shown by those who use the Physical Education Centre, demonstrate how Baba can do His work of awakening love through daily life and recreation!



Newly acquired equipment adds variety and professionalism to the fitness gym



Lifting weights remains a mainstay activity for the body builders

*True sportsmanship is concentrated ability, enlivened with appreciation of the performance of others. And when this is manifested, everyone present, both players and spectators, receives spiritual upliftment as well as good entertainment.\**

MEHER BABA

\*Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher*, online edition, p. 4510

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAOSAHEB NAIK



Table tennis enthusiasts at play

## How to Donate

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

Another way to support the Trust is to list it as a beneficiary in your personal Legacy. See “Legacies:” [www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org/legacies/](http://www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org/legacies/) Trust financial information is provided annually in the Trust Financial Report, sent out with the June issue of this newsletter and posted on the Trust website. More information can be found in the Trust's website at [www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org](http://www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org).

### Current news about foreign donations

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

## IMPRINTS OF THE SILENT WORD

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust is currently preparing a new edition of Meher Baba's earliest published messages. Entitled *Imprints of the Silent Word*, this four-volume set will make available articles and messages originally published in India but out of print for the greater part of a century.

Meher Baba's very first published articles were released in the *Meher Message*, a monthly magazine issuing from Nasik between 1929 and 1931. Much of this content was republished in abridged form in a compilation by Ramjoo Abdulla, entitled *Shree Meher*

*Baba: His Philosophy and Teachings* (1933). An expanded version, edited by Abdul Ghani, along with many other articles and short pieces, made its appearance a few years later in another Indian periodical, the *Meher Baba Journal* (1938–42).

As a new, thoroughly researched, and carefully edited republication, *Imprints of the Silent Word* will embody the earliest literary expression that the Avatar of the Age chose to put before the world in print form.

Specific information about the release of this four-volume set will appear in the months ahead.

## WHAT IS THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST?

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

**Contact:** The Chairman, Avatar Meher Baba Trust, King's Road, Post Bag 31, Ahmednagar 414001, M.S., India.

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Or sign on via the Trust website: [www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org](http://www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org)

**For Reservations to Stay at Meherabad:**

FOR MEHER PILGRIM RETREAT: [pimco@ambppct.org](mailto:pimco@ambppct.org).  
FOR HOSTEL D/DHARAMSHALA: [jaibaba@ambppct.org](mailto:jaibaba@ambppct.org).

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