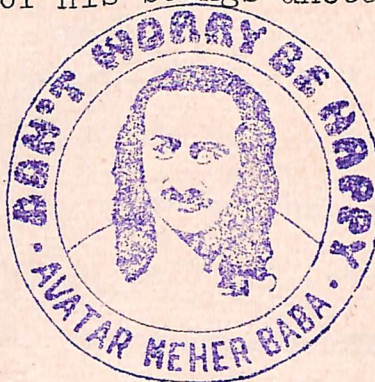


NEWSLETTER

No. 5, Date:- 22-5-83

Dedicated to Beloved Avatar
Meher Baba in His Pious Name
to remind Meher Lovers of His
Infinite Divine Love showered
on all of His beings unceasingly



Those who love Me ^{for} never die and find
their abode in Me eternally

-Avatar Meher Baba

(for details read page no. 13 of the
present issue)

Edited by Dr. B.K. Misra

Assisted by Paul and M.M. Kapoor

Issued by Avatar Meher Prabhu
Charitable Trust

Meher Prasad

74 Rajpur Road

Dehra Dun -248 001

India

1-700789

ATTENTION PLEASE -- MEHER LOVERS

AND MEHER CENTRES

Please listen to our call and pay attention please to our request to the readers of NEWS LETTER and all Meher lovers through "NEWS LETTER" to oblige us by making us informed of any event, occurrence, experience etc. whose inclusion in News Letter you feel a must.

"News Letter" serves the purpose of exchanging views, experiences, Meher lovers are experiencing in their inward communication with the divine Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. Experiences of the kind are nothing but gift from the Divine Beloved, which is to be commonly shared by all Meher lovers. Do then, share your experiences with us.

Do please refer to us any problem you are facing. Never please hesitate in referring to us a query you want to make. Also do let us know the suggestions you want to make for improving the tone and get up of the "News Letter".

We are waiting for your reactions, comments, suggestions, information and experiences etc. Jai Meher Baba.

(Editor "News Letter",
C/o Avatar Meher Prabhu
Charitable Trust, Meher Prasad,
74-Rajpur Road, Dehradun.

Avatar Meher Prabhu Chari-
table Trust
Meher Prasad
74, Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jai Meher Baba in His Infinite Divine Love.

Find herewith Newsletter no. 5 and let us know your reactions please. Valuable suggestions and comments in the direction of improving the tone and get up of the Newsletter from your end shall be highly appreciated.

Thanking you,

In Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's
Infinite, eternal and divine
love,

(J.C. Sharma)
Chairman

BELOVED BABA'S INVITATION TO HIS LOVERS

Do please read Beloved Baba extending His open invitation for all Baba Lovers as follows:-

"I invite to break through all of his self-created prisons and taste of the unlimited life which I bring. I ask him to love divinely, fearlessly and limitlessly and to rise above the limited self of the separative ego-mind."

(refer to "Life at its Best" by Meher Baba, edited by Ivy O. Duce, Third Printing Nov. 1969, Connecticut Printers, Inc. on page no. 62)

Q- What is "Complicated Free Life", Full Free Life" and "Fiery Free Life" According to Meher Baba?

A- What emerged from manonash was named by Baba His "Complicated Free life" in which bindings were to dominate freedom. This continued until July tenth, 1952, when it was followed by the "Full Free Life" in which "freedom would dominate bindings". On Nov. 15th there started the Fiery Free Life" in which "freedom and bindings would by the grace of God be merged into the Divine Life".

(refer "The God-man" by C.B. Purdom, 1971, on P. 198)

CELEBRATION OF MEHERA MA'S BIRTHDAY ON 18-12-82

It was the sincere wish of Prakash Wati that Baba's Birthday be celebrated at Meher Dham and that of Mehera Ma at Meher Prasad and with that end in view, last year Mehera's Birthday function was held at Meher Prasad on the 22nd of December, 1981. This year the information reached us late that the Mandali at Meherazad were celebrating the function on December 12th according to the Parsi calendar and so we too changed the date accordingly.

As in the previous year, we had to face the difficulty of acquiring a large-sized photo of Mehera for the celebration. However timely action was taken and Shri Ramakrishnan, Secretary Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre was requested to find out if Milan Studio could supply us with a large-sized copy. On confirming the availability of the photo in two sizes, Ramakrishnan advised us to contact Milan direct.

An order was then placed with Milan Studio on November 16th with a request to send us a copy of the photo of the size of our choice as early as possible by V.P.P. but nothing was heard from them till the 15th of December. Kishan Singh at this point thought of remitting the cost of the photo by cable. However it was decided that at such a late stage, this course of action would not be helpful in accelerating the dispatch of the photo to reach Dehra Dun in time and so this idea was dropped. The possibility of booking a telephone call to Milans was also ruled out as two days would not be enough time for the photo to reach even if it were sent on the same day. It was finally decided that we should hold the function, with the small-sized photo of Mehera which was available here, though its size did not seem befitting to the sanctity of the occasion.

Baba's ways are always mysterious and miraculous; Kishan Singh received an intimation from the Post office to receive a V.P.P. lying with them. Let the readers themselves judge the height of ecstasy this intimation had caused with its news of the timely arrival of Mehera Ma's photo, the absence of which had caused layers and layers of disappointment and depression.

Soon the photo was framed and made ready on December 17th for the next day's function.

The celebration of Mehera's Birthday function started at Meher Prasad exactly on schedule, 3:30 PM. The hall was decorated very nicely, with dazzling lights, buntings and balloons of various sizes and shapes. A string of small electric bulbs placed around Baba's photo had brightened the painted portrait of the Beloved, making it extra-ordinarily charming. All eyes were focussed on Baba's and Mehera Ma's photos and everyone expressed their admiration of the scene.

A good number of Baba lovers, including men, women and children had gathered in the hall in a festive mood and with smiles on their lips.

Mehera Ma's photo was placed by the side of Beloved Baba's photo, which was kept on a raised platform and the divine vibrations coming from both the photos could not help but raise an urge in all the Baba lovers sitting there, to loudly and cheerfully shout, "Pole Mehera Ma Ki Jai".

The first item on the agenda was the Master's Prayer which was recited by M.M. Karur, the Secretary, Avatar Meher Prabhu Charitable Trust, Dehra Dun, at exactly 3:30 when most of the participants in the function were seen sitting with their eyes closed and enjoying the Bliss and Grace of Beloved Baba, inwardly with the real inner eye.

Then Kishan Singh loudly repeated God's Names five times, "Hari, Paramatma, Allah, Ahuramazda, God, Yezdan Hu."

Then the sankirtan started with the very first note from Mrs. Santosh Chandra Meher, I will attain salvation). This heart-inspiring song was composed by Prakash Wati Sharma long before she passed away, at the time when Baba would not allow a very free contact of His Lady Lovers with the lady Mandali at Meherazad. She sang it for the first time in 1956, during her weekly sankirtan then held at Kishan Agencies. Her basic idea while composing the song was that, in the absence of any motive, why should we bind ourselves and not express our devotion for Baba, by singing "Mehera-Meher" thus denying ourselves the pleasure and bliss which comes when we sing without reservation, "Sita-Ram, Radha-Shyam" as is sung daily in the bhajans sung in all the Hindu temples. She would affirm that when no difference exists between Sita, Radha and Mehera (in their respective roles) in her heart, why should she not proclaim the fact to others. The suggestion from Kishan Singh, that she must obtain permission from Baba before singing the song in public did not appeal to her. She would reply that it was Baba who inspired her to compose the song and sing it she must to convey her conviction to others.

After that some bhajans were sung, Meher Chalisa was sung together by all the Baba Lovers and then the name of Sister Freni Narawala came up on the programme to give a brief talk on Mehera's life with Baba. However on account of her state of health, she could not come in time. Kishan Singh was then asked by the Secretary of the Trust, who was conducting the function, to say a few words about Mehera's life, in Freni's absence.

Kishan Singh then said, "Mehera Ma has played the same role with Baba, as she did as Sita and Radha in the advents of Rama and Krishna respectively. Mehera's mother was a great devotee of Baba's and she lived with the lady Mandali and young Mehera had also come with her. After her mother's death, Mehera continued to live with the Mandali. Her implicit and impeccable faith in Baba's divinity soon led her to surrender herself all to Beloved Baba and her love for her Beloved Baba has become an inspiration for us all how we should love Him. Today we celebrate the Birthday of Mehera Ma. Let us all convey our greetings of Happy Birthday to Mehera and pray to Baba to grant her a long life so that Baba's Divine Love and Grace could continue to inspire us through her."

Thereafter an English song, "Baba is", was sung by some young boys who are the sons of some Baba Lovers living in the vicinity of Meher Prasad. Ashwin Chopra has done good work in training them and everyone enjoyed the song.

At this point Ashwin Chopra read a paper dictated to him by Freni Narawala, giving a brief account of Mehera's life and her unadulterated love for Baba. Freni had also joined just before then but was not feeling well enough to give the talk herself.

Then came the moment for the cutting of the cake. It was unpacked, placed in a tray and brought from the adjoining room and placed on a stool kept in front of Beloved Baba's photo. Everyone there was very delighted to see the artful decorations displayed on it with golden letters bearing the greeting, "Happy Birthday to Mehera."

The youngest girl present in the hall was to cut the cake on behalf of Mehera, and Kapoor's daughter was chosen as the one to perform the sacred ceremony of cutting the cake.

As she cut the cake, the resounding shouts of "Happy Birthday to Mehera" from all present echoed in the hall. The first piece that she cut, she placed into a small plate kept in front of Baba's portrait. Then she cut the second piece and Santosh Chopra put it in the girl's mouth while those present continued to sing in chorus, "Happy Birthday to you Mehera".

Then came the time for the prayers. Santosh Chopra recited the repentance prayer in Hindi and then she sang the Hindi Arti and then the Gujarati Arti. Prasad was then distributed to all with cups of hot tea and snacks were served to all, everyone relishing the treat. The audience finally left the hall saying, "Jai Baba, Jai Meher Baba and Jai Mehera-Meher".

AVATAR MEHER BABA'S

89TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

MEHERAZAD MANDALI SENDS BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

In response to the invitations sent to the Meherazad Mandali from various Avatar Meher Baba Centres, Brother Eruch Jessawala, on behalf of himself and the Meherazad Mandali, sent love and best wishes for the celebrations together with a birthday message, inspiring to Meher Lovers all over the globe.

Let us all go through the letter which is being reproduced here in full, for the immense benefit and valuable guidance to Meher Lovers.

"Where there is love there is oneness"

"All life is one and all divisions are imaginary"

Avatar Meher Baba

Meherazad, 21-2-83

My Dear Brother Kishan Singh and all Baba Lovers of Dehra Dun,
Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai.

As always, we are delighted to hear from you about the birthday celebration planned for our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, by His dear Lovers in your area. All Meherazad Mandali join me in sending our love and best wishes for celebrating the 89th birthday of the birthless Immortal One, with such love and feeling that not only makes Beloved One want to come back to His Lovers' Person but also makes Him want to come back to His Lovers' Person amongst His Lovers very soon again :

What a blessed event we celebrate when we commemorate the birth of our Beloved God in human form, who comes on earth to suffer infinitely so that we might inherit His eternal happiness : Let us uphold Him with every breath, and by His Grace never let Him down, for He has assured us that,

Thank you for

"When you become mine, then you will find that
I am already yours"

Yours lovingly,

(Eruch)

BABA'S BIRTHDAY SANKIRTANS AT HIS LOVER'S PLACES IN D'DUN

According to practice in the past, Baba's Birthday Sankirtan was held at the residence of various Baba Lovers in Dehra Dun. The first one was held on the fifteenth of February, at the residence of Smt. Ramma Bahri, Mrs. Bhagwanti Bahri's daughter-in-law. Mrs Bhagwanti Bahri is a great devotee of Beloved Baba's, however she is presently staying with her elder son in Nagpur for medical reasons.

The glorious scene witnessed at the sankirtan itself speaks of the degree of Baba's love in Ramma's heart and that of her husband Kamal Bahri.

Baba's photo was nicely decorated and placed on a raised platform in the verandah of their house. On entering the house, every one was filled with ecstasy as his or her eyes fell on the heart-attracting photo of Baba. Besides the Baba Lovers, the crowd at the sankirtan included a number of relatives and friends of Bahri's family who were invited for the occasion, thereby receiving the opportunity of freely participating in Baba's love-loot. Feeling at home amongst the Baba Lovers they were all in a festive mood and loudly and happily sang Baba's Bhajans along with Kapoor, Sudesh, Shushma and other members of the sankirtan Party.

The sankirtan had started at about 3:30 PM with the Master's Prayer and ended at about 5:30 PM when the Repentance Prayer was recited and Baba's arti was sung. Prasad was then distributed and everyone present was served with hot tea and a plate of sweets.

Baba's Birthday Sankirtan at Guptaji's residence

The next sankirtan was held at the residence of Shri C.L. Gupta on the 19th of february. His wife, before her marriage was a regular member of the ladies sankirtan party, when sankirtan was being held at Kishan Agencies. As a result of that after her marriage, her husband, whose mother-in-law is a great devotee of Baba's and who has also attended Baba's Sahavas at Guru-Prasad Poona, extended the same regards to Prakash Wati as he does to his own Mother-in-law.

Here too, a decorated photo of Baba was placed at a prominent place and became a source of great admiration and attention from all the participants. A number of their friends and relations were also invited to the occasion and along with the Baba Lovers were clapping their hands to the tune being sung in response to the feeling of Baba's presence in their hearts. After Repentance Prayer and Baba's Arti, Prasad was distributed and all present were served light refreshments and hot tea.

BABA'S BIRTHDAY SANKIRTAN AT MEHER PRASAD

The 21st of February was the day for the weekly sankirtan at Meher Prasad. This sankirtan was thus converted into the celebration of Baba's Birthday Sankirtan. A very large number of Baba Lovers, men, women, and children belonging to all castes and creeds attended the function.

Baba's photo was nicely decorated. A large flower garland adorned His neck and it added great beauty to the aura seen ever-present over His face. The hall was also nicely decorated with balloons and buntings and everyone was in a jolly and festive mood. Shri M.S. Sehgal, Executive Engineer Canals, at Shrinagar (Garhwal), and his wife had also come to Dehra Dun especially for Baba's Birthday Function and both were also present at Meher Prasad.

The sankirtan, in spite of all the efforts made by Baba Lovers, began at 3:15 in the afternoon as opposed to 3:00 the time when it was supposed to begin. After the Master's Prayer was offered, the sweet devotional songs by Kapoor, Sushma, Bal Kishan Bakshi and others, charged the whole atmosphere with love and devotion. It began echoing to the tune and rhythm of each song sung and to the repeated shouts of Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai, on the part of all present.

Kishan Singh gave a brief talk on Baba's Avatarhood and the warning He has left for His Lovers; to hold fast to His Daaman to the last.

Thereafter, Shri A.N. Chopra, who is recording his experiences in Baba's love for a book to be published later, gave an eloquent talk concerning how he and his wife, Santosh, were inspired to accept Baba as the Avatar of the Age by Prakash Wati and Sardar Vir Inder Singh and his wife, and how the Chopra, Sardarji and Prakash families have merged into one family endowed with Baba's love and grace.

The normal time for the sankirtan was to be upto 5:00 but it had to be extended till 6:00 to enable everyone present to freely enjoy the feelings of love and pleasure present in his or her heart.

Sankirtan/ended With Repentance Prayer and Baba's Arti. The prasad of halva, which was specially prepared by Kapoor's wife, Shyama, was then served. Unexpectedly, the halva was found to be still hot making it even more relished by all. Then hot tea and a light refreshment were served to all. After the treat was over, all left the hall, shouting Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai continuously.

SANKIRTAN AT KAMLA CHANDNA'S RESIDENCE

The next sankirtan was held at the residence of Shri-mati Kamla Chandna, who was also a regular member of the ladies sankirtan party when sankirtan was being held at Kishan Agencies. Her love for Baba is unique and she has also attended Baba's Sahvas in Guruprasad Poona.

Once again, Baba's photo was nicely decorated and placed on a raised platform with a burning arti kept in a large bowl.

Seeing ~~that~~ there were some Sikh ladies sitting amongst the large gathering there, Kishan Singh gave a brief talk explaining how Baba belongs to no religion, though all the religions belong to Him and His own personal religion is of His being the Ancient One and the religion He teaches to others is love for God.

Continuing the talk, Kishan Singh referred to the drive for the co-ordination of all religions as was enacted by Beloved Baba at Dehra Dun in 1953; the details of which we include herein from Kishan Singh's Dehra Dun Diary as under;

"Baba's spiritual work is always done by Him on the inner planes and it cannot be made known or fathomed by any human being. During His extensive spiritual work at Dehra Dun, He, one day wished to appoint some Mandali members of different religions to worship, according to the rites of their own religions. Not knowing the object behind such a move, I presume it forms a move for the co-ordination of all religions.

"The following Mandali were directed by Baba to sit at their places of worship (mandir, mosque, church, gurdwara and Parsi Arangah) from midnight 00:00 hours to 1:00 AM from 1st October 53 to 7th October 53 and perform worship or puja and jap according to the rites of their own religion, just as a common man would do, when he would visit such a place of worship. Elcha was asked to sit in the Parsi Arangah, Dr. Nilu in a Mandir, (Dila Ram Bazaar, Dehra Dun) Aloha in a Mosque, Dr. Donkin in a church and myself (Kishan Singh) in a Gurdwara. Since there was no one to represent the Jain religion, Hari Ghand was co-opted to act as a Jain member. He was directed to sit at his own home and read from some Jain religious books which he was asked to acquire from local sources.

"During these seven days, whilst the ceremony was being done, Baba would visit each of these places of worship between mid-night and 1:00 AM and bow down as an ordinary devotee or believer of the faith would do. He also sat for about half an hour on one day at each of these places and attentively listened to what was being repeated or said or read. On other days He would only bow down at the place and leave for the next.

"Whilst the entire world was completely unaware of the highly advanced spiritual work being done by Baba, He was busy doing it under the spell of darkness for the ultimate good to humanity at large. It may be interesting to add here that since I was sent to the Gurdwara, I had to arrange with the Granthi (Sikh priest) to open the shrine and read the Guru Granth Sahib for half an hour daily and then to end the ceremony by the distribution of Prasad, before the shrine was locked up at night. After the programme ended on the seventh day, I suggested to Baba that the ceremony would not be complete till a silken handkerchief was gotten made out by Prakash Wati and Baba presented it to the Gurdwara (Dila Ram Bazaar) through her."

The talk given by Kishan Singh was very attentively heard by all, especially by the Sikh ladies. After Repentance Prayer and Arti, prasad was distributed and the sankirtan ended with repeated shouts of Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai, followed by hot tea and tasty snacks served to all present there.

Sankirtan at Smt. Prem Joshi's Residence

On the 23rd of February, the sankirtan was held at the residence of Mrs. Prem Joshi, an old sankirtan mate of Prakash Wati's and a great Baba Lover.

The Joshi family is also interested in Baba Balak Nath, a saint of his time, whose photo was also placed on a raised dias by the side of Meher Baba's photo.

Seeing both photos placed side by side, Kishan Singh, during the course of the sankirtan, gave a brief account of a personal experience of his concerning Balak Nath at Meher Dham. He said:

"I am happy to see Meher Baba's photo and that of Baba Balak Nath placed together here and I am feeling the presence of both here at today's sankirtan.

"About 13 years ago, Prakash Wati fell seriously ill and medical treatment would not give her any relief. One of the nearest relatives of Prakash Wati was a devotee of Baba Balak Nath and the youngster started getting some inner inspirations to the effect that the secret of Prakash Wati's illness lay at Meher Dham. So, he would suggest her being taken there even though she was seriously ill, but little attention was paid to his suggestions.

"One day the youngster felt the force of inspiration inwardly, that he insisted that not only Prakash Wati, but that all those living with her at Kishan Agencies, should also go to Meher Dham on that very day, rather than that very moment. So we all left for Meher Dham immediately.

"On arriving at Meher Dham, the youngster fell down prostrate before Baba's statue, in a state of trance under the influence of Baba Balak Nath. In that state of trance, the youngster cornered Prakash Wati, over a lapse on her part, which was connected with some instructions given to her by Beloved Baba. In tears, Prakash Wati touched the feet of the youngster asking for forgiveness for her lapse, taking the youth as not being present due to his trance but rather that it was Balak Nath himself who was present. Immediately the youth who was facing Baba's statue, took a brisk turn while remaining prostrate, caught hold of Prakash Wati by her neck and dragged her before Baba's statue and placing her head at Baba's feet, told her to beg for forgiveness from Baba for her lapse which she did. Thereafter I was hauled up by the youngster for a charge against me and questioned:

Youngster: Do you love Baba?

Myself: Yes I do.

Youngster: Do you love Him to the same extent as you did before He dropped His body?

Myself: Yes that is true.

Youngster: Then why did you say "Baba Shaba" in your talk the other day?

Myself:

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M Myself: Yes, by mere force of habit, often I had on several occasions, added the word "Shaba" to Baba's name. But I never meant any disrespect to Baba thereby. However, I am very very sorry for this imprudent action and request Him for His forgiveness. I will not use such a derogatory word in future.

Youngster: Now, let all others present here step forward and pray to Baba for His forgiveness.

Note: At that time some other Baba Lovers were also drawn to Meher Dham, Bal Kishan Bakshi and his wife Meher Kanta being amongst them. All present bowed down to Baba for His forgiveness.

Turning to the sankirtan in progress; the atmosphere was so surcharged with Baba's presence that everyone felt in their hearts the desire to continue the kirtan programme. However the time for the kirtan to end had arrived and after Baba's Arti and the distribution of prasad, everyone had hot tea and snacks served by the host and left with the feeling of having been present at a real divine feast.

BABA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT MEHER DHAM

As last year, the whole night programme of Baba's Birthday Celebration was held at Meher Dham on the night of the 24th of February 83. The function started at 9:30 PM and continued till about 5:00 AM of the 25th of February, when Baba's Arti was performed by all present.

The hall and surroundings of Meher Dham were nicely decorated and lit with brilliant lights. Baba's murti was so decorated with dazzling lights that it seemed to emit divine vibrations. All were amazed to see how spectacular Baba's statue was looking on this happy occasion and they were all the more inspired to sing their best.

Kishan Singh then gave a brief talk as to how the Avatar descends on earth at the instance or behest of the five Sadgurus of the time when they find that humanity has sunk to its lowest ebb which is accompanied by the developing destructive circumstances.

He continued that often people ask Baba Lovers as to what they know of Baba. Kishan Singh then explained in Baba's words, "It is impossible for you to know Baba, as to know Baba is to be Baba." It is therefore our belief that Baba is the Avatar but Baba wants us to hold fast to His daaman as a time is approaching when avatars and sadgurus will grow like mushrooms. It would not at that time, be possible for us to know which one of them is real.

Kishan Singh had also explained that as in the case of His past advents as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed, He as Meher Baba would not start a new cult or sect. All will be helped by Him irrespective of the religion to which they belong. All that is needed by all is to hold fast to His daaman with love and unflinching faith that he is the Avatar of the Age.

Sankirtan then continued and many songs started pouring in one after the other. The atmosphere was so surcharged with enthusiasm, that everyone was inwardly craving to be the fortunate recipient of Baba's love. A party of Qwaals then appeared on the scene and they gave some nice qwaalies in Baba's love and everyone started moving their head this way and that in rhythm to the qwaal's song.

The "lunchbreak" began at about 1:45 AM. All were delighted to see the hot tea being poured into cups for immediate consumption along with the snacks on paper plates kept ready to be passed on to all along with the tea. Everyone relished the love feast giving full justice to all that was served.

After the break, Baba Lovers, Shushma and Asha and party gave a lovely performance of qwaali. The Qwaals enjoyed their singing, appreciating the meaning of the words and the expression with which they were delivered. Now the mood was set for the qwaals to give an enthusiastic performance of qwaali.

The programme continued till 5:00 AM at which time a Baba Lover standing behind Baba's statue imitated the crying sound of a newly born baby. On this signal came the sudden out-pourings of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai" from all sides. Simultaneously the forceful singing of "Happy Birthday to you Baba!" began and the love bond was so strong that soon all were singing the chorus with full gusto in an attempt to give their love and devotion an outlet to flow back to its source. This urge, which all were feeling, was but the manifestation of that urge which was planted in everyone's hearts on the 25th of February 1894, when the Divine Beloved took birth in Poona.

After the Master's Prayer, Prayer of Repentance and Arti the programme ended at about 6:00 AM when everyone was supplied with hot halva as Baba's prasad and everyone left Meher Dham still singing "Happy Birthday to You Baba".

BABA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT MEHER MAFI

As in previous years, Baba's Birthday was celebrated at Meher Mafi on the 25th of February from about 3:30 to 5:30 PM in which a large number of Baba Lovers from Dehra Dun participated. Loving Bhajans were sung by Kapoor, Shushma, Asha, Sudesh and other Members of the Meher Sankirtan Party of Dehra Dun.

During the course of his talk, Kishan Singh related how Baba had sent a Mandali member, to Dehra Dun to find out a plot of land near some village in the vicinity of Dehra Dun. Baba also wished that a cottage should be there for his own accommodation purposes.

The Mandali came to Dehra Dun and contacted the Narawala family for help in carrying out his objective. According to certain specifications laid down by Baba the party came here and found Kumar living here. It so happened that Kumar had a piece of land available which fit the requirements laid down by Baba. The land was bought and a few kacha huts were constructed for the residential purposes of the Mandali accompanying Baba. Baba came here on January 12th, 1950, first staying at Mohant's place and then shifting to the cottage built on the plot.

Baba's ways, being always mysterious, He had on April 30th 1950, sent for Kishan Singh, Harjivan Lal and Kain from Delhi and Todi Singh from Aligarh in connection with the sale of Meher Mafi property and Kishan Singh narrated the talk as to how the Meher Mafi property was disposed of. The following is an extract from Kishan Singh's diary of 1950 which, by his kind permission, we are including here for the benefit of the readers:

"On april 30th myself, Kain, Harjivan Lal from Delhi and Todi Singh from Aligarh were called to Majri Mafi (now Meher Mafi) by Baba for a discussion about accommodation in Delhi and the sale of the property at Majri Mafi. We arrived there at 11:55 hours and were received by Brother Eruch who read to us the following instructions:

"Property at Dehra Dun is to be sold for Rs 10,000/- to Delhiwalas, the offer already received, with the condition that the money was to be paid later on. Cash offer was for rs. 7,000.

"Baba came at about 12:30 and explained to us in brief all that Brother Eruch had said, adding that we must buy the property today for Rs. 10,000/- cash. He then said that Kishan Singh and Kain have no money, let Harjivan Lal and Todi Singh pay Rs. 5,000/- each. On this Harjivan Lal asked to be permitted to consult Todi Singh and both went out.

"When Baba asked Harjivan Lal whether he would buy the property or not, he replied that he did not want to own the property. This was taken as a refusal. He then asked Todi Singh, who expressed his inability to purchase for want of money.

"Baba, then, as if disheartened, spelt on the board:

'You cannot spare Rs. 10,000/- to buy the property, It was a test for you in which you have failed badly. One (Harjivan Lal), had said he would buy land for building Baba's ashram at Delhi. The other one (Todi Singh), had said that he would like to build a house on the present landed property (Majri Mafi). Todi Singh always says "Baba jane" meaning Baba knows, and does he think that I do not know he has Rs. 5,000/- of money to spare? He had spoken a lie. Now our going to Delhi is cancelled. The New Plan is also cancelled and we will have a new phase. You should return to Delhi today. Now, you sit in the corner of the room. You will not have any more spiritual connection with me.'

"He then ordered Baidul to go and get a Tonga for us. Baba then asked that the magistrate entrusted with the sale of the property be called. There came a young man, with a hat on and waving a cane in his hand, known as Kumar. Baba ordered him to buy the property for Rs. 7,000/-, to be paid by the end of July, 1950, adding that he could resell it for any amount, keeping the balance with himself.

"Sitting in the corner of that room, we were watching all that was happening with a very heavy heart and inwardly cursing ourselves. Then Baba called me to Him. Tears were overflowing in my eyes and my heart was almost breaking with grief. Baba then told me that I should not worry about anything. Rather he added that He should not have felt dissappointed over our failure as it was now the New Life. the New Life. ordered.

"On my request to be permitted to make an offer, Baba refused to open the topic saying that everything has been done now. Seeing us however, in that deplorable state of mind, the Avatar, out of Love and Compassion, could not resist being moved. He called us back to sit near Him and explained to us that He should not have been disappointed (according to the conditions of the New Life). Finding an opportunity, Harjivan Lal explained that he had no hesitation in paying the Rs. 10,000/- for the property, but he didn't want to own the property since resale by him was impracticable. All that he wanted was that the present sale arrangements should continue even after he purchased the property. He apologized to Baba explaining that it was his fault in his way of replying to Baba. After all expressed their apologies, Baba excused us and also Himself, for feeling disappointed."

Continuing further Kishan Singh said, "Baba had said many a time, that one day Meher Mafi will be a renowned pilgrim centre for His Lovers and very many huge buildings will be built here in Baba's love and that that time was fast approaching." About two years ago, Shri P. C. Goyal, to whom the property was resold by Kishan Singh in 1950 on the day after we left Dehra Dun, had approached me for a nice photo of Beloved Baba, with a view of getting it enlarged and placed in Baba's cottage still standing on Meher Mafi property. Later on Goyal accompanied some Baba Lovers to Meherabad to attend the Amartithi programme of 1982. On seeing the Pilgrim Center built there, he told Kishan Singh that he had decided that instead of his original plans of placing Baba's photo in the cottage, He would now have a Meher Dham built on the property in question with rooms around it for residential purposes of Baba Lovers visiting Meher Mafi. He was also contemplating building Meher colony on the property for local Baba Lovers, who may wish to live there.

Goyal, however, could not attend Baba's Amartithi this year since he, as he had told Kishan Singh, was ill at that time. He again met Kishan Singh a few days ago and told him that he has already ordered for the plans to be made out according to what he had told Kishan Singh earlier. So it seems that the first large building in Baba's love, at Meher Mafi will soon be built by Goyal and many more may follow soon thereafter, as Baba had said.

Turning to the Sankirtan going on in the hall, the intensity of the love behind the songs and qwaalies given by Kapoor, Shushma, Asha, Sudesh and others was so great that hardly there was any man or woman in the hall who was not moving their head and hands this way and that in rhythm with the music.

During the course of his brief talk, Shri Ulfat, Principal, Nanhi Dunya, giving his experiences in Baba's love, said that with Beloved Baba's blessings and grace, he has been able to provide a high standard of education to all types of students in his school. The work which he has been doing with deaf and dumb students has been amply appreciated abroad as well as in India. By the same grace, he has visited some foreign countries with the purpose of collecting donations to further improve the standard and curriculum of the school run by him. He was expecting to go abroad for a similar tour in the near future.

After Prayers and Arti, the programme ended but the more enchanting item of pakoras served with tea was yet to come. No sooner they were served, everyone began to run with their plate for more and more pakoras, which are always very deliciously prepared at Meher Mafi. Soon voices began to chant with the plea, "Hot pakoras. Please more hot pakoras!" Those relishing their pakoras would tempt others with exclamations about the deliciousness of the treat and invariably the others would find themselves partaking of "just a few more pakoras". This festive mood lasted for sometime before the programme ended late with everyone shouting at the top of their voice, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai".

SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL LEARNING, MEHER PRASAD, DEHRA DUN

An excerpt from Preparatory Lesson no.1, as delivered by Kishan Singh at the School of Spiritual Learning, Meher Prasad on 3/4/81 is given as under:

"...Whilst Merwan was only 10 months old, one day at his home in Poona, he was playing with a snake. When this scene was noticed by his mother and others, they ran to his aid, but the snake immediately fled away and could not be found. One will find that the trait of playing with snakes by perfect ones, happens to be a very common occurrence in their divine leela. The snake adorns Shiva's neck and the snake Kalia Naag came into contact with Lord Krishna while he was playing on the bank of the Yamuna River along with His playmates. In the lives of Baba Lovers, also, snake stories are to be found. One such is as follows:

Once when Baba gave us a jap for a longer duration than usual, lasting day and night, a lady named Narain Devi, who had then only recently come in Baba's love, wanted to participate in it. She was discouraged from joining the Jap party, by myself (Kishan Singh) and others, thinking that she might abandon the jap at any stage if she should find it difficult to carry on. She however assured me that she would not interrupt the jap under any circumstances. So considering her promise, she was allowed to join the Jap party.

One evening, when she was on jap duty, a snake came and crawled onto Baba's photo placed on the dias, just near to where she was sitting. Just imagine what would be the state of a woman in the presence of a snake. She knew she could not break the jap and so she started clapping her hands to indicate that she wanted some help. This clapping was taken as an expression of extreme devotional ecstasy by the lady sitting in the adjoining room who was next in line for duty. Fortunately for the lady doing the jap the snake left on its own and it was not until she was relieved of her duty that she could explain the awkward situation in which she was placed.

Narain Devi had died at the end of October of 1965. Baba was informed of her death to which he conveyed the following message:

"Those who love me can never die but find their abode in me eternally."

HOMAGE TO DEPARTED LOVERS

This is the continuation of the story of Hari Chand Kochhar's life with Baba (from page 8 of Newsletter no. 4):

Later when Baba left for Mussoorie in April of 1953, Harichand came to know about it and went there to have His darshan. All efforts on his part to find out Baba's address at Mussoorie from Kishan Singh or others had failed. Arriving in Mussoorie, he found out Baba's address from the postal authorities. When he called at Baba's residence, he was refused entry by the Mandali member on duty at the gate. He was asked to go back to Dehra Dun as Baba was not giving darshan to anyone. However, he waited patiently at the gate and when Baba was informed of this, He called him to His room. Oblivious to all standing orders not to bow down to Baba, he immediately fell down at Baba's feet and one of the Mandali had to pull him up. Baba admonished him very much for his action, but soon embraced him and forgave him.

A few days later, he again felt a great urge to go to Mussoorie for Baba's darshan. He went with his daughter Raj Kumari. In the bus to Mussoorie, he contacted a Baba Lover from the South, a public prosecutor, who was going for Baba's darshan on a previously arranged appointment. On arriving at Baba's residence, the other Baba Lover was given a chair to sit on till Baba called him in. Hari Chand was admonished by the Mandali at the gate for his constantly disobeying Baba's instructions and visiting the place again and again in spite of the strict warning issued to him by Baba. The Mandali told him to go back as he would not be allowed to see Baba at any cost. He and his daughter left the gate but both of them sat at a place near Baba's bungalow from where they could have a glimpse of the house. They thought that by sitting there, they might get an opportunity to see Baba, if and when he came out of His room. Their presence was reported to Baba who sent them a message to go back. On getting this message, they left for another place nearby thinking that they could rest there for a short while and then return to Dehra Dun. Eruch happened to pass by them and advised them not to attempt to have Baba's darshan anymore. Sitting there in that heart broken state, grace from the infinite fountain of love flowed to them. Baba sent them a message that they could see Him, but from outside His bungalow. With hearts bursting with love, they came to Baba's bungalow from where they saw that the Baba Lover who had come with them, was still waiting to be called in. Baba then came out of the house and Hari Chand and his daughter had His darshan to their heart's content. Baba called Raj inside and introduced her to the women Mandali. They were happy to meet her and gave her some biscuits as Baba's prasad. The women asked her to love Baba more and more.

When Baba returned from Mussoorie, Hari Chand again came to 107 Rajpur Road with his sons Sarwan and Bhushan and his daughter Raj. They stood at the gate and were told that Baba's darshan was stopped. Yet he insisted that he should be given darshan. When this information was conveyed to Baba, He sent a message to them that if they still insisted in having His darshan, they would have it but they would have to suffer the consequences of disobeying His orders. Hari Chand accepted the terms and was soon in the presence of Baba with his children. Raj reminded Baba that at Mussoorie He had called her His

daughter and since she was a girl, she should be called His daughter, and should be called His daughter.

His "beti" (daughter) and since a father never closes his doors to his daughter, she should be allowed free access to Baba's residence. Baba told her, "Love me more and more".

Hari Chand would come daily to 107 Rajpur Road and stand on the road in the hope of finding a chance to see Baba. Sometimes, Baba, sitting in the room, would ask one of the Mandali to go and see whether or not Harya (the pet name given by Baba to Hari Chand), was standing on the roadside. At times, in His infinite compassion, He would call him inside the room to sit with the Mandali. Soon Hari Chand's simplicity, love and sincerity earned for him the desired reward he longed for. Baba, one day asked him to come in and sit with the Mandali daily. Baba liked him so much that he was called for all the important meetings whenever Baba Lovers from outstations were called.

One day Hari Chand came in a very melancholy mood. When questioned as to why he was so depressed, he explained to Baba that his tenants were giving him a great deal of trouble and were threatening to deal with him harshly. Baba, the unfathomable fountain of love and compassion could not silently stand a witness to such treatment accorded to one of His lovers and so He accompanied Hari Chand to his residence. Baba met the tenants and without a word from Him to them, without asking them to vacate the house, they, on their own, vacated the house soon thereafter without any feeling of animosity. When Baba began from Kishan Singh's son 1953 (Dehra Dun Diary) 11 pages

WORDS IN MEMORY OF SISTER PRAKASH WATI SHARMA

(English version of the news published in Meher Pukar, April 1982, at the passing away of Sister Prakashwati)

As per information received from Dehra Dun, Shrimati Prakashwati Sharma, one of the main pillars in Baba's work, dropped her physical body on the 24th of March 1982 at 1:30 AM and joined Baba. On the 23 of March 1953, Baba had given public darshan in Dehra Dun. In order to commemorate this event a congregation of Baba Lovers is organised on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of March. On the 23rd of March 1982, She had participated, with enthusiasm and deep love for Baba, in the program organised at Meher Dham, Meher Prasad and at the residence of Shri A.M. Dogra and only a short while after this on the same night she dropped her physical body. Her body was led to Meher Dham first by Baba Lovers and then later on to Meher Prasad, dedicated by her to Baba Lovers, and after this it was led to Haridwar where the last rites were performed.

ANNUAL MEHER MELA - 1983

Avatar Meher Baba came to Dehra Dun on the 18th of February 1953 and left the place on the 30th of November 1953. During the period of His stay here, He gave two public darshans in Dehra Dun; the first on the 23rd of March and the second on the first of November. The first darshan was at 107 Rajpur Road (C.D.A. Air Force Office) while sitting inside the room of Kishan Singh's residential quarters. The second public darshan was given at 101 Rajpur Road in a rented accommodation, where the Mandali and Kishan Singh lived after the pre-mature retirement of the latter from government service for Baba's work.

In order to keep the memory of the first Public Darshan of the 23rd of March, 1953 alive, Meher Mela was started on the 23rd of March, 1961. When Prakash Wati Sharma, returned from Hamirpur after attending the first Meher Mela held there, she wished that a gathering of Baba Lovers, from different parts of India, should also be held annually in Dehra Dun in the form of a Meher Mela, where their experiences in Baba's love would infuse a greater impetus in the minds of Baba Lovers here to work with more and more zeal in spreading Baba's Love and Messages. Thus she insisted that a Meher Mela should also be introduced in Dehra Dun as early as possible.

With an insufficient amount of the required fund forthcoming from the limited number of Baba Lovers in Dehra Dun then, and from other sources, it was considered impossible to attempt such an endeavour at that time. However the interest in holding a Meher Mela had already been firmly entrenched in the minds of some of the other lady and men Lovers, and so with Beloved Baba's grace and at the keen insistence of Prakash Wati the so-called impossible was soon transformed into a practicality.

Baba was then informed of the joint wish of all His Lovers in Dehra Dun in starting a Meher Mela here with a request for His Blessings. Baba was gracious enough to have cabled on the 24th of February, 1961 as under:

"All who will assemble in my love on the 23rd are blessed with Blessings of Love."

The question then arose, as to where to hold the Mela, as there was no place at the disposal of the Avatar Meher Baba Dehra Dun Centre for the celebration of such a large function. After serious consideration, a part of the Parade Ground was selected for the purpose and the permission of the authorities concerned was soon obtained, after paying all the required rental fees. A programme was drawn up for the Mela and issued to other Baba Centres. Due to sheer inexperience, the time was fixed from 7:00 AM to 12:00 midnight, with a short break for lunch from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM.

The next question which arose was about the food and lodging of the Baba Lovers attending the Mela from outside. Prakash Wati then arranged with her neighbours to each spare a room for the stay of the Baba Lovers coming for the Mela. For their food arrangements she had two shamianas (large-sized tents) pitched behind Kishan Agencies; one for cooking and the other to be used as a dining hall. Chairs and dining tables were then arranged and a temporary electric connection was installed.

The next problem which arose was that since Baba always enjoyed qwaali, we should arrange for a party of qwaals for the Mela and that their performance of qwaali would also help us in drawing the public to the Mela. Bal Kishan Bakshi could arrange a party of qwaals very soon from Sharanpur.

Mr. Narawala was entrusted with the duty of arranging for the loud-speakers for the function, but he could not do so since the Government had banned the use of loudspeakers during March, to avoid the interruption in the studies of the students taking up their annual examinations that month. Mr. Narawala, however,

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forgot to inform Kishan Singh the secretary of the A.M.B. Dehra Dun Centre, of his inability to arrange the loud-speakers thus a precarious situation was created on the 21st of March as to the sad fate of the sacred Meher Mela to be held in the love of the Avatar of the Age, with no provision for loud-speakers to broadcast the function's programme. Just imagine the deplorable state of Prakash Wati's mind, with the thought of the arrival of Baba Lovers from outstations, with their rich experiences in Baba's love and the qwaals coming with their programme of qwaali and no loud speakers available to transmit this wealth to the crowd.

Strenuous efforts were, however, then made to explore the possibility of finding some other arrangement for the loud-speakers, but all the dealers contacted regretted their inability to arrange the needful without the sanction of the D.M. due to the ban imposed by the Government on the use of loud-speakers. Only one day was left before the Mela and the possibility of obtaining the required sanction from the authorities concerned in time, appeared to be absolutely remote.

But Beloved Baba's graceful, though always very very mysterious ways, finding Prakash Wati, the organiser of the Mela, in that disheartened state of mind, immediately came to her rescue, when an unknown man called at Kishan Agencies and made inquiries about the details of the Meher Mela. When, amongst other details, Prakash Wati explained her grief over the inability of obtaining permission for the use of loud-speakers for the function, the man was quick to suggest the name of the person who was generally installing loud-speakers at the Rotary Club and that he should be contacted for this purpose. Contacting him, an application was then addressed to the D.M. for permission to use Loud-speakers at low volume and the Rotary man took it to the residence of the official concerned for sanction. Oddly enough the official told him that someone had brought that very application to him a short while earlier, and he had already rejected it. This annoyed the Rotary man and when the Secretary, Avatar Meher Baba Centre went to him to find out if the necessary sanction had been given, the Rotary man accused the Secretary of taking the application directly to the official concerned, when the deal was supposed to be arranged through him. The secretary explained to him that no such application was ever moved by the centre at all, and that the one referred to by the official concerned must have been put in by some other religious organization. Feeling reassured, he agreed to move the matter further. He then visited the official again and received the required sanction after explaining to him that in fact a different application had been rejected by him.

Finally the problem of the loud-speakers was solved and with Baba's Grace, the First Meher Mela began in Dehra Dun on the 23rd of March 1961, at 7:00 AM. Some local Baba Lovers and those who had come from outstations, sitting under the nicely decorated shamiana at Parade Ground, waited and waited till 1:30 PM for people to join in but no non-Baba Lover came to listen to the programme. One or two casual passers-by however, did come only to satisfy their curiosity to see what was going on and finding the subject not to their taste, left the place immediately.

After lunch, the Baba Lovers, the secretary of the Shamiana by 3:30 PM and they resumed their talks on Beloved Baba and the sankirtan continued with fervent love and with dancing in their hearts. Much later a small number of people who knew nothing about Baba, gathered at the place to see what was happening there.

At about 5:00 PM a question arose as to how to serve tea to the Baba Lovers who had come from out-stations. It was felt that if they were taken to Kishan Agencies for tea, the little interest on the part of those who had come out of curiosity would be disturbed rather it may vanish. So, in batches of 2 or 3 at a time, they were taken to a nearby cafe, the Cafe Royal and served tea there.

The attendance at the Mela, however, considerably increased after about 8:00 PM when the qwaals started singing. Soon a small crowd of people gathered to hear the qwaali. In between the songs of the qwaal, Kishan Singh would request the qwaal to kindly spare a few minutes for a talk on Baba's Divinity by one of the outstation Baba Lovers, so that the audience should know something about Beloved Baba and also the basic idea behind the holding of the Meher Mela. Some people became engrossed in the talk, but there were also those waiting expectantly for the qwaals to restart.

In this way the Meher Mela at Parade Ground continued for some years and a large number of persons became acquainted with Beloved Baba's status as the Avatar of the Age. In between, it was once held at Tagore Villa and once or twice in the park outside the post office, where a larger number of persons, passing on the road could freely join the function, mostly drawn by the qwaali performed there. In 1964, when Meher Dham was built and inaugurated by Baba's representative Brother Sarosh Irani on the 23rd of March, 1964, Baba had issued instructions that an audience of about 5,000 persons should be present at Parade Ground on the night of the 22nd of March, 1964, to hear His Message of Love, which was to be read by Brother Sarosh. A rough count of the audience on that date showed that with Baba's Grace and Nazar, not less than 8,000 persons were present at Parade Ground at the time.

From 1965 onwards the Meher Mela was always held on the 23rd of March, each year at Meher Dham and the yearly function at the Parade Ground on the 22nd of March each year was dispensed with. However the Meher Mela was extended to Meher Mafi and it is held there on the 24th of March each year.

Turning to the Meher Mela, the celebrations were held at the residence of Rajiv Sahai on the

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Turning to this year's Meher Mela, the celebrations were held at the residence of Rajiv Sahai on the 22nd of March, 1983, at Meher Dham, Meher Prasad and Brother A.N. Dogra's residence on the 23rd, at Meher Mafi and Brother A.K. Chopra's residence on the 24th and at Meher Mohan Gardens on the 25th of March. A number of Baba Lovers attended the Mela from outstations including Shri Salig Ram Sharma, from Hamirpur, Shri G.S.N. Murti from Kharakpur (now staying in Andhra), and Miss Judy Gregory from USA.

AT MEHER DHALL

At Mahor Dham on the 23rd of March, the hoisting ceremony of Baba's flag was performed by Salig Ram Sharma, whilst a band was playing. Besides the sankirtan by the Dehra Dun Centre, a number of Baba Lovers from outstations recited some lovely bhajans. Judy sang a heart pleasing Baba song in English. A very interesting talk on Baba was given by Salig Ram Sharma as well as others and a good one by Dr. Murti on his experiences in Baba's love. Qwaals were also present and they gave good qwaali which was greatly appreciated by all. Qwaalies by Shushma and Asha filled the hearts of the lovers with love for the Beloved. Balkishan Bakshi thanked all those Baba Lovers who had participated in the Mela from outstations. Prayers and Baba's Arti were performed with great devotion and love by all present and prasad was distributed. The function ended with lunch, which was served at 82 Rajpur Road from 1:30 to 3:00 PM.

FUNCTION AT MEHER PRASAD

At 3:00 PM, the function started at Meher Prasad when Salig Ram Sharma, unfurled Baba's seven-coloured flag. Santosh Chopra sang a song conveying the spiritual significance of the flag. J.C. Sharma, Chairman, Avatar Meher Prabhu Charitable Trust, presented the welcome address to the audience, in which he gave a brief history regarding the sponsoring of the Trust by Prakash Wati. He added that the Trust was most happy to see Baba Lovers staying at Meher Prasad during the Mela, but was not at all pleased to see that the accommodation available there was as of yet far below the required standards. Continuing, J.C. Sharma recalled Baba's words that Dehra Dun will be the Vrinda ban of the age, and said that Meher Prasad, which means a gift from Lord Meher to all His Lovers is now the property of all Baba Lovers in and outside of India, and the responsibility for its development thus rests with all of them as much as with the Trust.

After some lovely songs were given by Dehra Dun Baba Lovers and some others from outstations, M.M. Kapoor, Secretary of the Trust, read the annual report on the working of the Trust in which he said that soon after the passing away of Prakash Wati, the Trust took over the full control of Meher Prasad. It has had to do much work in order to provide, for all the Baba Lovers coming from outstations, a comfortable stay here during the Meher Mela this year. All the funds received during the lifetime of the sponsor of the Trust, Prakash Wati Sharma, had soon been exhausted and the amount donated during the previous year's programme (Mela) was negligible, though some donations in kind were made later on by some local Baba Lovers and those who had visited Meher Prasad from outside. He added that during the year under report, the cash donation collected by the Trust amounted to Rs. 3729.25 and only two donors had donated Rs. 500/- or above: Mrs R. Mehra, Rs. 506.25 (cash Rs. 206.25 and in kind Rs. 200/-) and Rs. 2500/- by the other who wished to remain anonymous.

Continuing, Kapoor explained that out of the total donation of Rs. 3729.25, a sum of Rs. 1000/- is still held by the Trust unspent, as the donor had requested that this sum be specifically utilized for the plastering of the outer walls of Meher Prasad and that the position at present was that a minimum jobs at Meher Prasad and that the position at present was that a minimum amounts needed for each of the two.

sum of Rs. 10,000/- was needed by the Trust for the uncompleted jobs in Meher Prasad, which he enumerated giving the approximate amounts needed for each job.

AT DOGRA'S RESIDENCE

After the function ended at Meher Prasad with prayers, arti and distribution of Prasad and with a light refreshment of tea and snacks served to all, the audience shifted to Dogra's place. There too everyone expressed their love for the Beloved through sankirtan and bhajans, and Salig Ram Sharma recited a ghazal. After Baba's arti and prasad, all were served rich and delicious plates of rice, puries and halva and all left the place shouting, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai".

A similar scene was witnessed at Brother Rajiv Sahai's residence when Meher Mela was celebrated there in the afternoon on the 22nd of March.

MEHER MELA AT MEHER MAFI

The function started at Meher Mafi at about 11:00 AM on the 24th of March. The atmosphere was already charged with the ever-present divine vibrations left by Beloved Baba when He stayed at Meher Mafi during the New Life in 1950. With the start of the function, the Beloved's love was glowing in everyone's heart. Loving speeches were given by Brother Salig Ram Sharma and Dr. Murti, which everyone heard with rapt attention. Shri P.C. Goyal, who now owns the Meher Mafi property was also present there and agreeably to his previous talk with Kishan Singh (see details under Baba's Birthday Programme at Meher Mafi) announced his wish to build Meher Dham at Meher Mafi on that property, for which he said he has already placed an order for the Beloved's statue. Further he would build a colony there for Baba Lovers to live and those willing to buy the houses would be provided with the same, at a low price. Salig Ram Sharma embraced Goyal for the extreme love, he was carrying for Baba, in his heart, unexpressed to others, and for the magnanimity of heart shown by him in making that announcement.

After prayers, arti and prasad, the lunch started and everyone was lifted into a festive mood. When the festivities ended, all left shouting and reshouting loudly, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai".

AT A.N. CHOPRA'S PLACE

The function started at Shri A.N. Chopra's residence at 5:30 PM on return of the lovers from Meher Mafi. Salig Ram Sharma and Murti, went directly into their talk and experiences in Baba's love. After Prayers, Baba's Arti and prasad, everyone was served with a lovely dinner by the Chopra family with smiling faces and Baba's love overflowing in their hearts. The function ended after dinner and all left the place with the words, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai" on their lips.

AT MEHER MOHAN GARDENS

This garden is the property of Bal Kishan Bakshi who had longed for the celebration of the Meher Mela there since many years, but due to the transport difficulties, the endeavour had to be abandoned. This year a special arrangement was made for a private bus to transport everyone the long distance to the garden. Everyone boarded the bus and arriving at Meher Mohan Gardens, all felt how the natural beauty of the surroundings mingled with the atmosphere of love! In this happy setting the mela started and everyone felt inspired to grasp, rather assimilate the significance of what was being sung or spoken of there in Baba's love. After a brief sankirtan, prayers, arti and prasad, a tea party was arranged and everyone enjoyed it in the real spirit of a picnic.

AT PADMA DIVAN'S RESIDENCE

The party then returned and visited the residence of Padma Divan, where some Bhajan's were sung in Baba's love and a brief talk was given by Murti. After Baba's arti and prasad, all were served tea and snacks and the function ended with the shouting of, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai".

THE END

The Meher Mela, 1983 thus ended with full out-pourings of devotion and love from all those who had participated in the function. The Lovers who had joined from outstations left for their respective places, completely charged with love vibrations of the Beloved, ever present, everywhere, though not visible in His physical form to our naked eyes thirsting for His darshan. It is beyond the capacity of this Newsletter to include all the details, many of which did not come to the notice of the editorial staff. Enough it would be to record, that besides the above, some house visits were also paid by outstation Baba lovers to the residences of some of the local Baba Lovers. Due apologies are extended for any omissions on our part.

Jai Baba!

TID-BITS

- Q. Are you Baba's Chamcha? (Prof. D.N. Bhatkoti, 74 Rajpur Road Dehra Dun)
- A. How can I be Baba's Chamcha (spoon)? In one sense I would like to say that He is our chamcha as He feeds us all with a chamcha big and generous whose dimension can not be gauged by any measuring device so far devised by scientists and technologists.
- Q. How do you distinguish Meher Baba from the unending series of Babas?
- A. The distinction between Meher Baba and Babas other than Meher Baba is like the distinction between Reality and Illusion, fact and fiction, earth and sky; truth and falsehood. Even when everybody is Baba (God) yet there is a vast difference between Meher Baba and other Baba's. Meher Baba knew that He is God and others don't know that they are God and they have yet to undergo the process of self-realisation.

BABA'S DAAMAN

One should not nor can one pose holding on to Baba's daaman and those who do so are holding on to anything but Baba's daaman. The Beloved has remarked, "If you love Me, love Me alone". Similarly if you aim at holding on to Baba's daaman hold fast to Baba's daaman and nothing else.

Holding on to Baba's daaman in the truest sense is possible only when you become dust and stick to the lotus feet of the Beloved. Then alone can you hang on to Baba's daaman. The Beloved has said, "Where there is ego there is no God and where there is God there is no egoism.". It is the ego which is a definite hinderance to the holding of Baba's daaman and ultimately results in one losing one's grip. Wherever you go, so long as the ego is there, you will be remembering yourself all the time in one form or the other instead of Him. In the name of holding on, you stick to yourself; your belongings, your desires and ambitions, the memory of your achievements, your post and privileges, your personal friends and enemies and all that you take to be your own. In brief you hold all that you must not and thus miss what you must not.

So, it is you yourself which has to be eliminated in holding on to Baba's daaman. It is your self which is your enemy as Baba has remarked, "the greatest danger to men today is not from any natural catastrophe, but from himself".

Unfortunately these days, the danger of losing one's hold on Baba's daaman has increased due to the mushroom growth of self appointed preceptors, guides, yogis, saints and sadgurus. Circular dated 25th November, 1980 from Meherazad received from Brother Eruch B. Jessawala is to be read over and over again, because in it has been expressed in detail, the consequences of not holding fast to Baba's daaman. The Beloved in His Sahvas in Poona, knowing all that was to occur in the future, had warned Baba Lovers in the following words:

"The sum of and substance of this long talk is that either hold fast to My daaman only or leave Me altogether... Do not visit other places or saints as you cannot distinguish between a real saint and an imitation one... If you have full faith in me, stick to Me otherwise leave Me altogether... If you cannot love Me as I ought to be loved, at least try to hold fast to my daaman. I will help you... Stick to Me even during the phase of 'Humiliation'".

Beloved Meher, by New Life, meant: (i) Aimlessness i.e. renunciation of all aims (ii) Hopelessness i.e. renunciation of all hopes (iii) Helplessness i.e. renunciation of all help (iv) No master, no disciple i.e. renunciation of spirituality. And thus by New Life, He meant absolute renunciation. Why should one holding on to Baba's daaman run after anybody who may or may not be able to help human beings to overcome the life of illusion. The Beloved has asked us not "to hope for anything except to rise above all hopes".

The Beloved is still present. His divinity is still available to us provided we love Him and have trust in Him and in His divinity. Out of a number of secrets of His Avatarhood, which the Beloved had disclosed, one is the one which Brother Eruch has brought out in the circular under reference and that

is, "at the end of each Avataric advent, His Avataric impact, influence or force and the fragrance of His pressure continues to remain active for 100 or 200 years, exactly as though He were physically present." Thus if one ignores Baba's words, one is liable to go astray in search of a Perfect Master and lose grip on Baba's daaman.

The conflict of seeking a Perfect Master arises only when you are under the impression that you have lost the Perfect Master, the Highest of the High, Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. The cause of the conflict would be due to the forgetfulness of or the distrust in what the Beloved has told us and has instructed us in this respect. If you have unfortunately developed a sort of distrust in what the Beloved has said, well you certainly have been deprived of Baba's daaman, which can be restored only by love and confidence in the divinity of Avatar Meher Prabhu.

As a matter of fact, those holding on to Baba's daaman do not require any Perfect Master as they are already in the eternal companionship of the Eternal Companion. Those who do not hold on or lose their grip over Baba's daaman by running after someone in search of a living Perfect Master are unfortunate and are quite ignorant of the fact that they do not have the sight to recognise and identify a Perfect Master. As such their search would result in cent percent failure. Only a Perfect Master can recognise a Perfect Master. How ignorant they are who go in search of a Perfect Master without having the ability of recognising and identifying a Perfect Master, even if they should come across one?

As it is an impossibility for an ordinary man to succeed in the mission of searching a living Perfect Master, the search for a living Perfect Master is of no use. We are already with the Perfect Master, the Divinity of the Avatar is still available to us.

The only safe and sure and secure measure is to hold on to Baba's daaman and safeguard yourself against the growing danger of losing hold on Baba's daaman.

(by Dr. B.K. Misra)

