

WELCOME HOME

A Guide for Traveling
to Meherabad
and Meherazad
India

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A Guide for Traveling to Meherabad and Meherazad India

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WELCOME HOME

Department of the Army

Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division

Fort Cavazos, Texas

1968

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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.

-- Meher Baba



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FOREWORD

No river can flow endlessly. Every river is destined to merge in the ocean. Likewise, each of our lives in illusion is like a river flowing towards the Ocean of Eternal Life - directly or indirectly - to meet and merge in the Ocean of Reality for all time.

The Life of the Avatar on earth is the life of the Ocean on earth. He is the One who attracts all rivers towards Him so each river can meet Him, receive His Love, and ultimately merge in Him. When He is physically present on earth, the Avatar does His Universal Work of drawing the rivers towards His Ocean. After He leaves His physical body, the results of His Work begin to manifest as people everywhere awaken to His Love within their hearts. The place where His body rests and the places closely associated with His life are of special significance to those who seek Him; for in these places the Avatar has stored the Treasure of His Divine Love to be received by His lovers for centuries to come.

Avatar Meher Baba - the Avatar of this Age - lived for many years at Meherazad. He passed away on the 31st of January 1969, and His Tomb is located at Meherabad on Meherabad Hill. Both of these places are in the District of Ahmednagar, Maharashtra State, India.

In 1954 Avatar Meher Baba led a group of His disciples up Meherabad Hill. He told them how blessed they were that in His physical form He was taking them to the place where His body would rest when He passed away. He added that seventy years hence, His Tomb would become the place of world pilgrimage.

Already rivers in the form of pilgrims have started converging at Meherabad and Meherazad from all over the world. In order to facilitate the course of their pilgrimage, this book, Welcome Home: A Guide for Traveling to Meherabad and Meherazad, India is being offered to all who are drawn to visit Avatar Meher Baba's Home.

Bhau Kalchuri
Ahmednagar, India
August, 1982

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook provides practical information about traveling from the West to Ahmednagar, India, and back again. Although the book is written especially for those who have never been to India before, experienced travelers should find the material helpful also.

The first five chapters of the book cover basic information about preparing for the trip, transportation, accommodations, and so forth. Detailed maps are included of Bombay, Poona and Ahmednagar. The last chapter, "More About..." covers supplemental information about such things as lost luggage, cultural differences, sightseeing, and bringing children to India.

In a book of this sort, it is impossible to predict schedules and prices accurately. Airline and railway times change frequently without notice, and inflation increases the cost of everything. We have tried to describe conditions for June of 1983 in a general sense. We recommend that you investigate specific schedules and prices once in India. Our estimate is that prices increase approximately 15-20% per year.

Our heartfelt thanks to the many people who have contributed information and suggestions for this book. You, too, can help us keep this guidebook up-to-date. Please let us know whenever you find information that has changed. Your contributions will help all of Meher Baba's followers who travel to India. If you would like to order additional copies of this guidebook, please write to Friends of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust at the address below.

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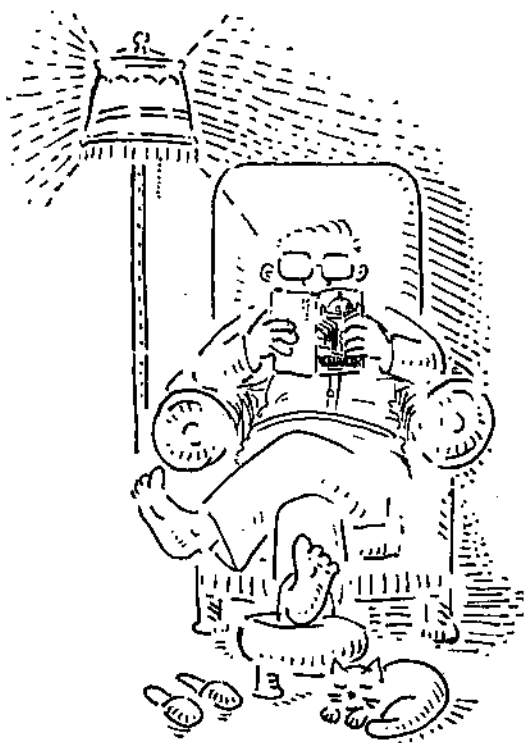
Before You Go

India may seem like a long way away, especially if you've never been there before. It's not really. In this age of jet travel, it's less than a day's journey, with a bit more to get you from Bombay to Ahmednagar.

Even if you've traveled before, you're probably wondering:

- When to go
- How to go
- Where to stay
- How much money to bring
- What to pack

You'll find the answers to these questions, and more, in the pages that follow.



WHEN TO GO

When to go? The answer to this question is, of course, whenever you can - whenever you can take time off from work, when someone can look after the children, or whenever the heart calls. Still, you may find it helpful to know that the time from December through February is quite busy. Many people come from both East and West for the birthday of Mehera (Meher Baba's closest woman disciple) in late December, Amartithi (the anniversary of the day Meher Baba dropped His physical form) on January 31, and Meher Baba's birthday on February 25. Silence Day on July 10 also draws many visitors. Other times of the year - late July through November - are quieter.

There are three months of the year, however, when you are requested not to visit. The period from mid-March to mid-June is the hottest part of the Indian summer. Temperatures remain over 100°F (38°C) much of the time. Meherabad and the

Meher Pilgrim Centre are closed from March 16 to June 14, and the mandali (Meher Baba's close disciples) are not available. From June 15, everyone is again welcome.

Children seven years of age or older are welcome, too. But please plan your trip so that children under seven can be cared for at home. Experience has shown that very young children just aren't equipped to deal with the stresses of a long trip and run greater health risks in India. Because of their special needs, young children can sometimes be distracting to their parents and others. Meher Baba told His followers not to bring children under the age of seven to the 1969 Darshan. As this was His last instruction on the matter, the mandali feel this policy should be continued.

HOW TO GO

This book focuses on the most common method of reaching Ahmednagar - travel by air to Bombay and then by car, bus, plane, or railway to Poona and Ahmednagar. A second route is also possible through New Delhi in the north (near the Taj Mahal and other tourist attractions) and then by plane to Aurangabad or railway to Ahmednagar. (See "More about Delhi and Agra" for details.)

Whatever route you pick, you may want to schedule your trip so that you do any sightseeing before you arrive in Ahmednagar. On several occasions Meher Baba directed His followers to go home directly after having His darshan. One advantage of this approach is that you can return from your journey with the experiences of Meherabad and Meherazad fresh in your mind (and heart).

AIRLINE TICKETS

As soon as you make your plans, book your airline reservations. Peak season flights (Christmas, summer holidays) are often booked for months in advance. You can always change your reservations, if necessary. However, once you finalize your plans, try and plan your return reservations carefully, especially during peak seasons. Changing your return flight in India is more difficult and runs the risk of not obtaining a confirmed seat for a number of days.

If you purchase airline tickets at a discount, make sure you are fully aware of their limitations. Check the following very carefully:

- Make sure the travel agency you use is recommended by a relative or friend who has used it before and is satisfied with its service.
- Find out whether the ticket you are purchasing is acceptable on other airlines. Some airlines will not allow you to change the flight you've booked or transfer the ticket from one airline to another without paying a stiff penalty charge.
- Find out whether the ticket is "free" or "standby." Agents sometimes try to sell free tickets given to them by the airlines. This type of ticket doesn't guarantee you a confirmed reservation and is the same as flying standby.
- Make sure the travel agency books you for any connecting flights on Indian Airlines (flights within India itself) as part of your international ticket. Although you can purchase Indian airlines tickets once in India, this is not recommended because of the difficulty of getting a reservation.

- Always check with the airlines directly that you are confirmed on all flights you have requested. When you receive your ticket, make sure it lists your name and the dates and flights you requested. If you discover any discrepancy, contact your travel agent immediately.

Sometimes certain airlines give free or discounted accommodations en route. For example, Air India sometimes offers free rooms at the Centaur Hotel in Bombay for in-transit passengers connecting with Indian Airlines. Ask your airlines or travel agent for details when you make your reservations.

PASSPORT

You'll need a valid passport to enter India. If you currently don't have one, allow at least two months to allow time to apply for a tourist visa. Make sure your passport is still valid at least three months beyond the date you expect to return, in case you decide later to stay longer. You can renew most passports up to twelve months before they expire.

How to apply. Consult the appropriate government agency in your country for a passport application. In the U.S., many larger post offices accept passport applications. Initial applications must be presented in person; renewals may be handled by mail.

Photographs. For a U.S. passport, you'll need two photos taken within the past six months. The photos must be 2½" by 2½", full-face, front view, without a head covering, printed on thin, non-glossy paper with a plain white background. Vending machine and Polaroid prints are not acceptable. Check the application carefully to make sure you sign the photographs in the proper place.

You will also need these additional photos:

- Three photos for registration in Ahmednagar.
- One photo if you apply for a tourist visa.
- Four photos if you plan to extend a tourist visa longer than three months.

TOURIST VISA

Citizens of Commonwealth countries (U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) do not need a visa to enter India. Citizens of non-Commonwealth countries (U.S., Europe, Central and South America) do need a tourist visa. Landing permits for short visits are no longer being issued. Consult the Indian embassy or consulate nearest you for details at least six weeks before you plan to leave. U.S. offices are listed below:

Office for Consular Services
Embassy of India, Consular Wing
2107 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 265-5050

Consulate General of India
Consular Wing
540 Arguello Boulevard
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 668-0662

Consulate General of India
Consular Wing
3 East 64th Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 879-7800

Consulate General of India
Consular Wing
230 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 726-0659, 726-0660

You may get the application faster if you telephone. Be sure to apply to the office corresponding to your permanent home address.

Typically one application form is used for many different types of visas. Fill in only the sections required for a tourist visa and list the purpose of your visit as "tourist." Enclose a signed photograph and a photocopy of your airline ticket or a letter from your travel agent stating that you have purchased one. (As far as the visa is concerned, you are not obligated to use the travel agent who writes the letter if you decide later to change agents.)

In the U.S., mail the application, your passport, and payment to the embassy or consulate office by registered mail, return receipt requested. Enclose a letter stating that you want the office to return your passport and visa by registered mail, return receipt, and include payment for the extra postage. If you don't enclose such a letter, the office may return your passport by regular first-class mail, even though you've sent the extra money. Payment must usually be made by postal money order or cashier's check.

When you get your passport back, check that the visa is stamped on one of the inside pages. The dates stamped on the visa are the period within which you can enter India, generally three to six months from the time of application. The three-month period of the visa begins on the date you actually enter India.



WHERE TO STAY

You'll need reservations for a place to stay in Ahmednagar when you first arrive. The Meher Pilgrim Centre at Meherabad has accommodations for fifty-six people. Also there are a number of hotels and guest houses in the Ahmednagar area. You may also need reservations in Bombay or Poona en route. The Bombay, Poona, and Ahmednagar chapters contain information about the various accommodations available.

While Indian Baba followers will be glad to help you in emergencies, please don't ask them to make reservations for you. Write or cable directly to the places where you want to stay.

Allow yourself plenty of time to write for reservations. Requests for Meher Pilgrim Centre reservations must reach the office in Ahmednagar by mail six weeks in advance, so the office has time to send you a written confirmation or advise you of alternate dates. Hotels and guest houses have no fixed requirements and may not send a written confirmation. If you are coming at a busy time (mid-December to the end of February and particularly Amartithi), make sure you have reservations in advance. Otherwise you don't need to be overly concerned about having reservations for the full length of your visit.

MONEY

Exchange Rate

India's unit of currency is the rupee (abbreviated in the plural Rs.). Like the dollar or pound, it is divided into one hundred parts, called paise. The rupee's value in your country's currency will vary, depending upon the exchange rate. The exchange rate tells you how many rupees you can exchange for dollars, pounds, francs, and so forth. Exchange rates change daily. Average rates for several countries are given below. You can find out the current rate by calling a bank that exchanges foreign currency.

USA	9 rupees per dollar
UK	16 rupees per pound
Australia	9-10 rupees per dollar
France	1.5 rupees per franc

The expenses in this book have been estimated using rupees. To figure the cost in your own country's currency, divide the number of rupees by the current exchange rate. For example, you'd need the following amounts of U.S. or Australian currency for an expense of Rs. 400 (400 rupees):

USA:	400 divided by 9 = \$44.44
Australia:	400 divided by 10 = \$40.00

How Much to Bring

How much will a trip to India cost? How much spending money should you bring? The answer to these questions depends upon your pocketbook, lifestyle, and need for western comforts.

The accommodations in this book have been divided into three general categories:

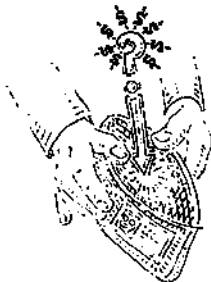
- Budget - less than Rs. 100/night
- Moderate - between Rs. 100-400/night
- Luxury - over 400/night

These rates apply especially to Bombay hotels. Prices in Poona and Ahmednagar are often lower.

The same categories also apply to modes of transportation within India:

- Budget - buses
- Moderate - taxi, railway, luxury bus, and airlines
- Luxury - hired car or taxi (long distance, not shared with others)

If possible, ask someone who has been to Ahmednagar recently how much money you should bring with you. Our estimate is that for a month's stay you should bring the equivalent of at least Rs. 2500-2800. If you plan to stay in luxury hotels and travel entirely by hired car, you may need up to Rs. 5000-6000 for a month's stay. Remember, these figures reflect costs as of June, 1983, and that inflation increases at approximately 15-20% per year within India.



INNOCULATIONS

Special inoculations are no longer required for travel between India and most Western countries (North America, Europe, Australia). India doesn't require inoculations for those arriving from the West, but it does require a valid yellow fever vaccination for those arriving from, or stopping en route in, most parts of Africa, Central and South America. Check with your own health department and Indian consulate if you have any questions.

Even though inoculations may not be required, it is recommended that you get gamma globulin shots to help prevent hepatitis. Check with your own physician for recommendations about other travel inoculations and medicines:

- Cholera/typhoid
- Tetanus
- Anti-malarial drugs

Most initial inoculations require several doses spaced a certain number of weeks apart. See your doctor or public health department at least six weeks before your scheduled departure date. Make sure all inoculations are recorded in an official booklet called "International Certificates of Vaccination" (usually available wherever you get the inoculations).



CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

You're probably thinking of taking your camera or a tape recorder with you on your trip. Certain types of luxury items are regulated by customs laws both in India and in your own country. In general, as a tourist, these regulations won't affect you, but it's a wise idea to be aware of them.

Consult your Indian consulate for specific regulations. Generally at the present time tourists may bring the following items into India without paying Indian customs duty:

- Any amount of foreign currency
- Personal jewelry
- Gifts valued at up to Rs. 500
- Travel souvenirs valued at up to Rs. 500
- Quart bottle of liquor or two small bottles
- 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars
- Camera and film
- Tape recorder and tapes
- Small movie camera and 10 reels of film
- Binoculars
- Portable phonograph and 10 records
- Radio
- Portable typewriter

If you are planning to bring a camera or tape recorder, make sure you bring enough film, cassette tapes, and batteries with you. These items are not easily available in India. If you are planning to bring a large number of electronic or photographic items, also check with the Indian consulate. Certain combinations of items are subject to customs duty.

Customs regulations in Western countries are usually based on a fixed amount of money. A U.S. citizen, for example, can bring back \$300 worth of goods after tourist travel. The U.S. government also recommends that citizens register ex-

pensive foreign-made goods (like cameras) with local customs officials before leaving the country. That way, there can be no question later about whether the items were purchased at home or abroad. Registration forms may be obtained at most international airports.

BAGGAGE REGULATIONS

How much luggage can you take with you on your trip? The rules vary, depending upon the airline, where your trip begins, and whether you'll be making any stopovers en route. Check with your airlines for specific information.

United States. Generally for passengers whose flights originate in the United States, baggage allowance is determined by piece. You are allowed two pieces of checked luggage and a third piece of carry-on luggage that must fit under your seat. Each piece of luggage must meet certain size restrictions.

Other countries. Baggage allowance for passengers whose flights originate in other countries is usually determined by weight. You are allowed a maximum of 20 kilos (44 pounds). An additional bag carried onto the plane is often not included in this total. Indian Airlines also uses the 20 kilo baggage rule on their domestic flights within India.

Overweight charges. Check with your airline about its rules for exceeding the baggage allowance. Overweight baggage can be expensive. On flights from the U.S., the charge is determined by piece, but on flights originating from other countries, the charge is often a percentage of the first-class ticket price and varies with your destination. On the Bombay-Poona route, Indian Airlines charges 1% of the ticket price (about a rupee) for each kilo over 20 kilos.

Stopovers. When you break your journey and stop over in another country en route, you become subject to that country's baggage rules. For example, a traveler from the U.S. with two heavy suitcases who stops for a day in London before continuing on to India may have to pay a stiff penalty upon leaving England, because the baggage allowance changes to the 20-kilo rule.

CLIMATE

India is a tropical country with mild temperatures in the winter and hot temperatures in the summer. Ahmednagar is generally dry and dusty, although during the monsoon season (June through September) it may rain frequently. Temperatures range from lows of 50°F (10°C) at night in January to highs of 95°F (35°C) during the day in March and June.

ELECTRICITY

Electrical current in India is 220-240 volts with fluctuations as low as 180 volts and as high as 300 volts. Anything designed to run on the U.S. standard of 110-120 volts will be damaged if plugged into this higher current. One alternative is to purchase a transformer that steps the current down from 220 to 110 volts. Another is to use batteries as a source of power - a good idea, since certain places like Meherabad do not have electricity on a 24-hour basis.



WHAT TO PACK

What should you pack for your trip to India? Below are suggestions for a typical two-to-four week stay. For your convenience, a checklist is also included at the end of this chapter.

Required items. Please make sure you bring the following items with you:

- Three passport-sized photos for registration in Ahmednagar. (Any type of photograph is acceptable.)
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- A hat, preferably one with a brim. Westerners are especially prone to sunstroke. Although the sun in India may not feel "hot," its rays are actually quite intense. Headache, sunburn, and heat exhaustion can be the result.
- A sweater or light-weight jacket. Mornings and evenings can be quite chilly, especially from November through February.
- A rain cape, lightweight raincoat, or umbrella (during the monsoon season from June through September.)

Clothing. You'll be most comfortable in loose-fitting, lightweight clothing, made from cotton or cotton blends. Because India is a conservative country, both men and women should dress modestly. (Shorts, even for men, are inappropriate as are low necklines, short skirts, tight-fitting and sheer garments for women. Also, women with long hair should wear it tied back.) Some suggestions:

- A minimum of four changes of underwear
- One sleeping garment and a robe or caftan
- A minimum of three changes of daily wear (socks, trousers, shirts, dresses, skirts, blouses or tunics)
- One or two pairs of comfortable slip-on shoes or sandals. (Footwear is taken on and off frequently at Meherazad and Meherabad.)
- A scarf or shawl (to protect clothes, hair and lungs against dust.)

Toiletries. If possible, bring enough toiletries to last for your entire stay in India. Many items like toilet paper are available in Ahmednagar, but are generally more expensive than in the West. Feminine sanitary supplies and shaving supplies, for example, aren't available in an equivalent form.

Medicines. Also bring enough needed medical supplies for your entire stay. If you are taking medical or psychiatric drugs prescribed by a physician, be sure to continue taking them while in India. It's also a good idea to bring a written copy of any prescriptions and an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Miscellaneous. You may want to bring some of these additional items:

- Photocopy or record of passport, visa, and airline ticket information (useful if documents are lost or stolen.)
- Baba button (helpful for meeting other Meher Baba followers en route.)
- Film shield or lead pouch (to protect film from airport security devices.)
- Lightweight canvas or nylon bag (to bring back extra items.)
- Plastic bags in various sizes (handy for a variety of uses.)
- Travel clock or watch.
- Notebook or journal and address book.
- Stationery supplies.
- Sewing kit, footcare supplies, laundry soap, insect repellent, ear plugs.
- Pocket knife and handy kitchen utensils.

TRAVEL TIPS

Traveling Light

One way to avoid the risks of lost luggage and hassles with porters is to "travel light," that is, to bring only the amount of luggage that you can carry by yourself and stow under your seat on the plane. To do this, limit yourself to just two bags:

- A large shoulder bag
- A lightweight overnight bag or backpack

Expandable bags made from rip-stop nylon, parachute-type fabric, or light-weight canvas, with zippered compartments are especially recommended. Suggested wardrobe for a two-to-four week stay:

Women

- 1-2 pairs of slacks
- 1-2 long or mid-length skirts or dresses
- 3-4 blouses or tunics

Men

- 2-3 pairs of slacks
- 3-4 shirts

Both

- 1 sleeping garment and/or caftan
- 3-4 changes of underwear
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1-2 pairs of slip-on shoes or sandals
- 1 sweater or jacket
- 1 rain cape (if needed)
- 1 foldup hat

Food and Water

There may be long stretches between the airplane and Ahmednagar when you won't have access to first-class hotels or restaurants. Because sanitation standards in India aren't always the same as those in the West, it's a wise precaution to pack some food and water in your hand-luggage for one or two light meals. This is especially recommended if you plan to travel long distances by train or bus.

- Carry a canteen or plastic water bottle, and fill it with drinking water on the airplane before you leave.
- Bring snack foods that don't spoil easily, like granola bars, dried fruit and nuts, cheese and cracker packages, and the newer types of juice drinks packed in foil bags. Small tins of meat, fish, or cheese are also useful.
- Other handy items are a can opener, bottle opener, plastic straws, plastic bags, pocket knife, fork, spoon, cup, and pre-packaged moist towelettes.

Protecting Valuables

When traveling, you run a greater risk of your valuables being lost or stolen. If you are tired and in unfamiliar surroundings, you may be less alert than you otherwise would be at home.

To protect against loss or theft, remember to keep the following items with you at all times:

- Passport
- Airline tickets
- Traveler's checks
- Cash
- Identification and/or credit cards

Keep only as much cash in your wallet as you need for the day's expenses. Keep the rest of your cash, documents, and valuables in a safe place - a second wallet inside a zippered compartment in your shoulder bag or hand-luggage, for example, and hold on to the bag itself firmly. Remember that thieves can cut the straps and snatch a bag that dangles behind you. The safest method is to carry a money belt - any sort of pouch or zippered compartment that straps around your waist under clothing. Never keep any of your valuables in trouser or jacket pockets.

Jet Lag

Not only will you be traveling a long distance from home, but you'll also be traveling through a number of time zones. The difference between the time at home and the time in India may be as much as twelve hours.

Your body has its own internal "clocks" and rhythms. If you drastically change them, you cause extra stress to your body - the feeling of fatigue called "jet lag." Research shows that you may take more than a day per time zone to adjust completely to the new time. That means it may take you up to a week once you reach India to feel like your old self again.

Here are some suggestions from experienced travelers to protect against the stresses of travel and jet lag:

- Take extra vitamins and mineral supplements before leaving and throughout your trip. Your body will require extra amounts, especially of vitamins B and C.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep before you leave. Last-minute packing and goodbyes can be tiring. Try to save the last day for nothing but rest.
- On the plane avoid large quantities of coffee, tea, soda with caffeine, and alcohol (twice as strong at high altitudes), but do drink plenty of extra fluids. Airplane cabin pressure causes dehydration.
- When you get to Bombay, you still have some distance to travel. Plan to rest at least 12 to 24 hours in Bombay or Poona.
- Once you reach Ahmednagar, don't push yourself. Start out slowly and take a day or so to rest and recuperate.



CHECKLIST

Essentials

- () Airline ticket(s)
- () Passport
- () Visa (if necessary)
- () Reservations
- () Innoculations
- () Traveler's checks and cash
- () Copy of passport, visa and ticket
- () Identification and/or credit cards

Required Items

- () 3 photos for registration
- () Flashlight and batteries
- () Hat
- () Sweater or jacket
- () Rainwear (if necessary)

Clothing

- () Underwear/socks
- () Sleeping garment
- () Robe or caftan
- () Shirts, blouses or tunics
- () Dresses or skirts
- () Trousers
- () Shoes or sandals
- () Scarf or shawl

Medicines

- () Prescription drugs
- () Copy of prescriptions
- () Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- () Medicine for constipation and/or diarrhea
- () Medicine for motion sickness
- () Eye drops
- () Vitamin/mineral supplements

Miscellaneous

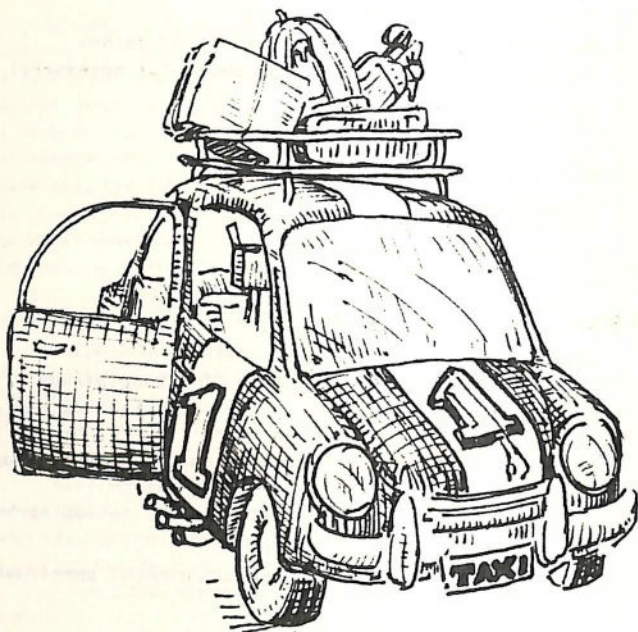
- () Sunglasses
- () Baba button
- () Film shield
- () Extra suitcase keys
- () Canvas or nylon bag
- () Plastic bags
- () Travel clock or watch
- () Notebook or journal
- () Address book
- () Stationery supplies
- () Sewing kit
- () Footcare supplies
- () Laundry soap
- () Insect repellent
- () Ear plugs
- () Can and/or bottle opener, pocket knife, fork, spoon, cup and straws

Toiletries

- () Toothbrush and dental supplies
- () Soap and soapdish (or liquid soap)
- () Shampoo
- () Shaving supplies
- () Deodorant
- () Feminine sanitary supplies
- () Toilet paper (1-2 rolls)
- () Small tissue packs
- () Washcloth or disposable moist towelettes
- () Dry skin lotions and lip balm

Bombay

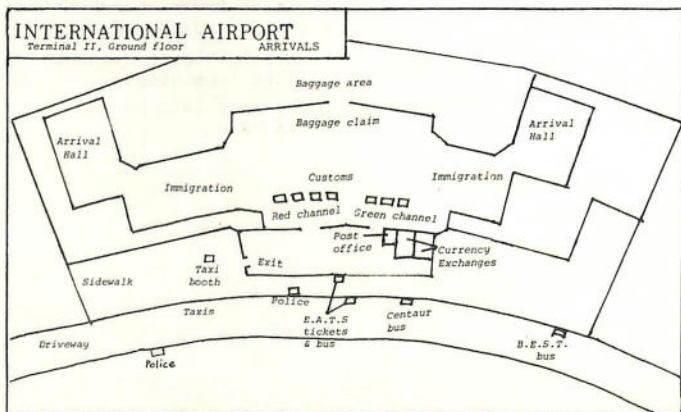
Bombay (also known by its Hindi name, Mumbai) is the destination of most international flights to India. These flights arrive at the new International Airport in Sahar, about sixteen miles north of downtown Bombay. The old airport near the Centaur Hotel in Santa Cruz now handles only domestic flights for Indian Airlines. The airports are also called Terminal I (national, or domestic) and Terminal II (international).



AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Immigration

As your flight approaches Bombay, you will receive a disembarkation card to be filled out before landing. The term "port of embarkation" on the card refers to the city in your own country where the international flight originated. The form also asks for the city where the passport was issued, usually stamped on the photograph as part of its validation.



At the airport, you will enter an immigration area with three counters for different nationalities:

- Indian nationals
- Commonwealth nationals
- Non-Commonwealth nationals

Stand in line for the appropriate counter and keep your passport, disembarkation card, and health documents (if any) ready for inspection. The immigration officer will stamp your passport and keep the lower part of the disembarkation card. Since mistakes can happen, make sure the official dates and stamps your passport properly. A visa isn't valid unless it is dated and stamped here.

Customs

Next, you'll enter the baggage and customs area. Trolleys (rolling metal carts) are available, free of charge, to carry your luggage. You'll see two sets of counters:

- Green channel - for passengers with no duty to pay
- Red channel - for passengers with duty to pay or with unaccompanied baggage (baggage shipped other than on your flight)

Proceed to the appropriate counter. As a tourist, you'll probably use the green channel. If you need further help, a tourist information official is available.

The customs officer will ask if you have anything to declare. If you are bringing in foreign currency valued at more than U.S. \$1,000, or the equivalent, you will be asked to declare the amount on a currency declaration form. If the officer asks if you have a camera, tape recorder, or radio, and you have such items, explain that you are using these items on your tour and will take them out of India when you leave. The customs officer may record certain expensive items on a tourist baggage re-export (T.B.R.E.) form and write the form identification number on your passport. This is to prevent you from selling or leaving the items in India.

If you should receive either of these two forms, make sure that you don't lose them. (In the unpleasant event that any of the items or your currency is lost or stolen, report the loss to the police immediately and get a certificate stating that you have done so. Otherwise you will be charged customs duty, plus penalty, when you leave the country.)

The T.B.R.E. form is especially important if you plan to leave India from a city other than the one where you entered.

Currency Exchange

Just outside customs are the currency exchange counters. Change as much money here as you will need to get to Ahmednagar. The suggested amount is at least U.S. \$100 (approximately Rs. 900), or the equivalent. Get at least Rs. 100 in small bills (in denominations of 1, 5, and 10 rupee notes). You'll need these for porters, taxis, and buses. Before leaving the counter, count your money quickly and put most of it away in a safe place. Keep a smaller amount handy.

Per Meher Baba's instruction, exchange money only through authorized dealers, such as banks or currency exchanges. Selling money to an unauthorized person, (changing money on the black market) is not only illegal, but also involves the risk of receiving counterfeit money. (Selling personal possessions like cameras or watches on the black market is also illegal.

Save your receipts from all currency exchanges. You may need them later to change your unspent Indian rupees back into your own country's currency when you leave.

Other Facilities

Porter service. Porters in blue uniforms will carry your luggage for a fixed rate per bag. However, you can also roll the luggage trolleys out to the sidewalk by yourself without paying a fee.

Telephones. Public telephones are located in the airport foyer. Local calls require exact change - a fifty paise coin. The telephones follow the British system. First, dial the number you want. As soon as someone answers, you'll hear a beeping sound. Immediately insert the correct coin and begin speaking.

Post office and telegraph. A postal and telegraph office is located just outside customs.

Tourist information booth. A booth is located in the customs area for travelers with customs and transportation questions.

Restaurant. The Iris, a first-class restaurant, is located on the floor above the mezzanine, near the departure area. It is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. There is an elevator just outside the customs area to the right.

Drinking water. Although the airport provides drinking water in stands, it is not recommended for Westerners.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

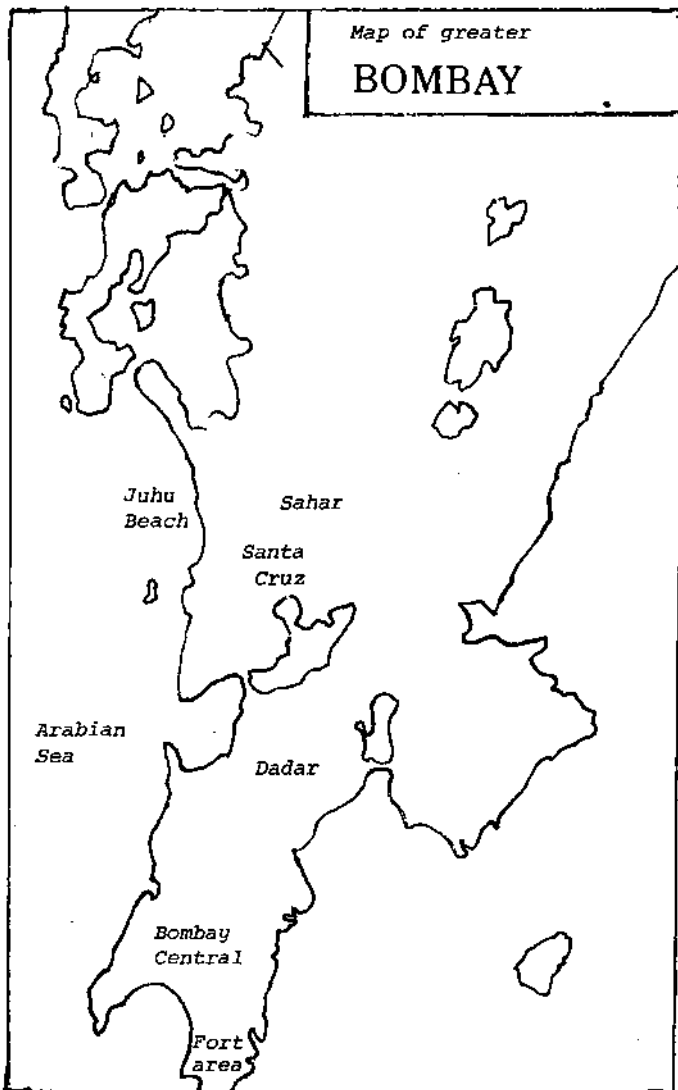
As you come out of the airport terminal, you will see a taxi stand on the right and a number of buses on the left. The buses are a very inexpensive way to travel from the International Airport to the Domestic Airport or to the Fort (central business) area of Bombay. For your own protection, pay no attention to anyone who volunteers to carry your luggage or to help you find a taxi or hotel. Seek help only from uniformed porters or police.

Taxis

For the newcomer and those with luggage, taxis are the recommended way to travel around Bombay. Taxi drivers charge a fixed rate based on the taxi meter reading, plus a surcharge for increased petrol cost. (Each driver carries a taxi tariff card showing the surcharge amounts.) The fare covers everyone in the taxi, up to four passengers. Tipping is not necessary. Luggage charges are approximately Rs. 1-3 per bag.

At the International Airport, taxi lines are long and force drivers to wait a long time before getting passengers. In practice, airport taxi drivers have ignored the tariff card and tried to make up for their long wait by charging two or three times the correct amount.

Because of this, the government has instituted a number of different plans to assist travelers to obtain taxis at the airport for fixed rates. Currently you pay for taxis in advance at a booth just outside the airport exit. Check with any policeman as you leave the airport. Fixed rates are posted, and you pay any luggage charges (approximately Rs. 3 per bag) at this time. You then take your receipt to a policeman who calls a taxi and confirms your destination.



If this system is not available, the best method to get out of the airport is first to catch a bus to one of the hotels, and then to take a taxi to your destination. The Centaur Hotel, for example, has its own list of suggested taxi rates posted near the entrance. You can also ask the hotel to suggest a reliable taxi driver.

Below are approximate travel times from the International Airport to several major areas of Bombay.

<u>From International Airport to:</u>	<u>Approximate travel time:</u>
Santa Cruz	10 minutes
Juhu Beach	20 minutes
Dadar	30 minutes
Bombay Central	40 minutes
Fort (downtown area)	45 minutes

Hotel Buses

Centaur Hotel. The Centaur provides a free bus from the International Airport to the hotel in the Santa Cruz area. A second bus at the hotel takes passengers to the Domestic Airport. The bus is for hotel guests, but will take others, as space permits. Centaur buses run frequently, both day and night.

Hotel Transit. The Hotel Transit provides a 24-hour courtesy coach for hotel guests.

Day-Night (B.E.S.T.) Bus

This bus runs at night from the International Airport directly to the Taj Mahal Hotel and is therefore a safe, convenient way to get to the Fort (downtown) area of Bombay. The sign for this bus at the airport reads "B.E.S.T., NIP Terminal, to R.S.P.M. Chowk." The bus runs approximately every ninety minutes from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

E.A.T.S. Buses

The E.A.T.S. (Ex-servicemen's Airlink Transport Services) buses provide an inexpensive way to get from one airport to the other and to the Air India building in the Fort area downtown. Sometimes there is direct service from the International Airport to the Air India office, but if not, you can take the two buses indicated below and still get there inexpensively.

From the International Airport to the Domestic Airport. The sign for this bus at the International Airport reads "Coach to National Domestic Terminal." Buses leave about every thirty minutes from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.

From the Domestic Airport to the Fort (downtown) area. This bus goes to the Air India building downtown. The sign at the Domestic Airport reads "Airport Coach Service to Terminal II (International Airport) and City available from here." Buses run about every ninety minutes from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. Check to make sure you board the correct bus, as other buses from this location return to the International Airport.

ASIAD Bus Service

This bus service runs from the International Airport to the downtown Fort area twenty-four hours a day. Rates are reasonable, but the service is not recommended if you are in a hurry.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Check-in Time

For most of the hotels in this section, check-in time is from noon to noon. For example, if you check in at 8:00a.m. and check out at 10:00 p.m. on the same day, you are charged for two days. A few airport hotels, such as the Centaur and the Transit, have no fixed check-in time and base their rates on a 24-hour period from the time you check in. Unless you know otherwise, consider all hotels as the noon-to-noon type.

Late check-out. Sometimes hotel clerks will allow you to stay a few hours beyond noon without charging you for an extra day. However, you must arrange this in advance. Another alternative is to ask the bell captain to store your luggage for a few hours after you have checked out of your room. Most bell captains will do this for a service charge.

Temporary Wait

Sometimes a traveler needs to spend only a few hours or part of a day in Bombay. For example, you might arrive early in the morning and need to make connections for Poona or Ahmednagar later in the day. If you don't want to wait at the airport, take the hotel bus or a taxi to the Centaur Hotel. The Centaur has a 24-hour coffee shop and comfortable lounge area. Find the bell captain and ask to leave your luggage with him temporarily. There is a small charge per bag for this service. Be sure to obtain a receipt.

Santa Cruz Area

Centaur Hotel. This five-star hotel is located across from the Domestic Airport in Santa Cruz. Free bus service takes guests to and from the hotel to both airports. Room rates cover a 24-hour period from the time you check in. The hotel has several fine restaurants, including a 24-hour coffee shop.

Centaur Hotel
Bombay Airport
Bombay 400 057
5-star hotel -
Luxury rates

Phone: 6126660
Cable: CENTAUR
Telex: (011) 4971 CHTL

Hotel Transit. A less expensive but plainer airport hotel. Room rates are based on a 12-noon check-in time. Twenty-four hour coach service takes guests to and from the hotel to both airports.

Hotel Transit
Bombay Airport
off Nehru Road
Vile-Parle (East)
Bombay 400 057

Phone: 579335, 579336,
571087
Moderate rates

Juhu Beach Area

Juhu Beach is along the Indian Ocean, away from downtown Bombay but reasonably close to both airports. Assume a 12-noon check-in time for the hotels below. Inquire at the airport whether any of these hotels provide special bus service.

Juhu Hotel
Juhu Beach
Bombay 400 049
Moderate rates

Phone: 571401 through
571406
Cable: SANDYBEACH

Sun-n-Sand
39, Juhu Beach
Bombay 400 049
Moderate rates

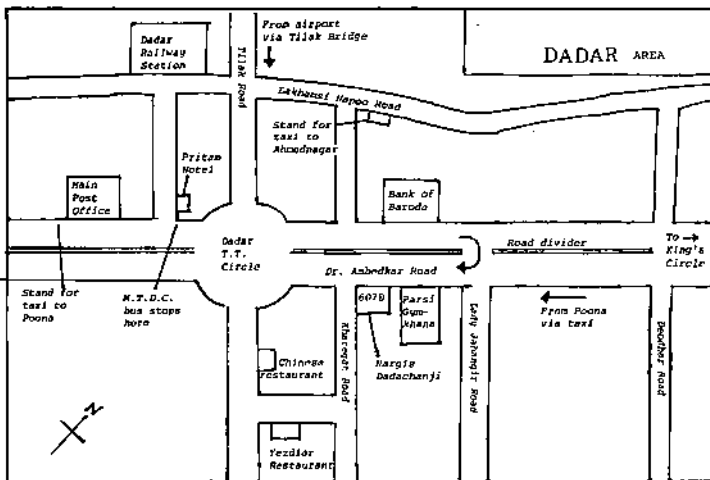
Phone: 571481
Cable: SUNANDSAND (SZ)
Telex: (011) 3282

Hotel King's
International
5, Juhu Tara Road
Bombay 400 049
Coach service
available for
arriving guests

Phone: 621803, 621659,
629775
Cable: KING'S Juhu
Moderate rates

South End Hotel
11, Juhu Tara Road
Bombay 400 054

Phone: 53 74 21
Moderate rates



Dadar in the north of Bombay is the area where Manzil-e-Meem was located. The Bombay-Poona-Bombay taxi stand is here, as well as stops for both the railway and luxury bus. For information about budget accommodations in the Dadar area, contact:

Nargis Dadachanji
 Schrab House Phone: 8828566
 607B, Dr. Ambedkar Road
 Dadar (near Parsi Gymkhana)
 Bombay 400 014

Fort (downtown) Area

The Fort is the central business area of Bombay where many airline offices, hotels, the V.T. railway station, and the M.B.T.A. luxury bus service are located. Assume a 12-noon check-in time for the hotels below.

Taj Mahal International Continental. This five-star hotel is located near the Gateway of India. It has several fine restaurants, including a 24-hour coffee shop.

Taj Mahal Hotel
 Apollo Bunder Phone: 242524
 Bombay 400 039 Cable: TAJGROUP
 5-star hotel Telex: 11-6175 TAJB IN
 Luxury rates

Hotel Oberoi Towers. The Oberoi Towers is a five-star hotel near the Air India and Indian Airlines downtown offices. It has six restaurants, including a 24-hour coffee shop.

Hotel Oberoi Towers
 Marine Drive Phone: 234343
 Nariman Point Cable: OBHOTEL
 Bombay 400 021 Telex: 4153, 4154
 5-star hotel -
 Luxury rates

The Ambassador. Another large hotel in the downtown area. It also has several restaurants, including a 24-hour coffee shop.

The Ambassador Bombay
 Churchgate Extension Phone: 29 11 31
 Bombay 400 020 Cable: EMBASSY
 Moderate rates Telex: AMBA-in 011-2918

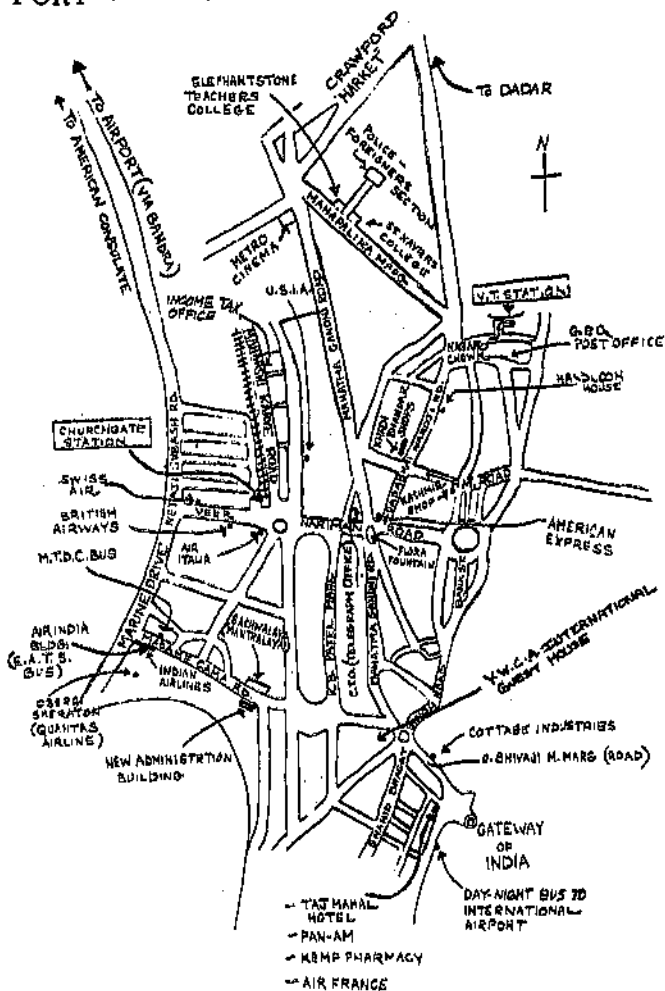
Y.W.C.A. International Guest House. An extremely popular, budget-priced hotel, open to both men and women, within walking distance of most airlines' business offices. Check-in time is 12-noon, but a waiting room is also available. The hotel desk clerk can arrange taxi service at night with safe, reliable drivers. Reservations are difficult to obtain. Write at least one month in advance and include at least Rs. 100 (single) or 200 (double) by international money order, registered mail. If you are planning to stay at this guest house on your way home, you may wish to pay in advance to ensure a guaranteed reservation for your return.

Y.W.C.A. International Guest House

19 Madame Cama Road
Fort, Bombay 400 039
Budget rates

Phone: 235053, 230445
230598
Cable: MAIDENS

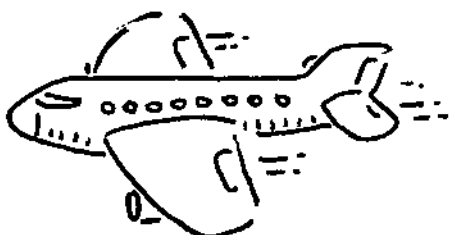
FORT (DOWNTOWN) AREA



Y.M.C.A. International House. This guest house is actually located north of the Port, in the Bombay Central area. It is also open to both men and women. The hotel desk clerk can arrange taxi service at night with safe, reliable drivers. Follow the suggestions above to obtain reservations.

Y.M.C.A. International House
 18 YMCA Road
 Bombay Central
 Bombay 400 008
 Budget rates

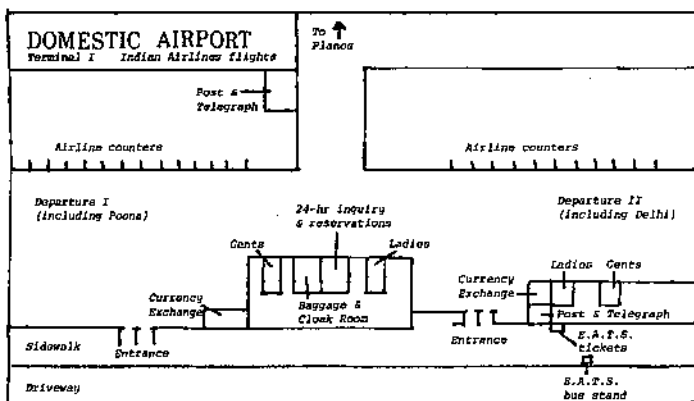
Phone: 891191, 370601,
 891262
 Cable: MANHOOD



TRANSPORTATION TO POONA

Indian Airlines

One of the easiest ways to travel to Poona is by plane. Indian Airlines runs two flights daily from Bombay to Poona. (There is no airport in Ahmednagar.) Flights leave from the Domestic Airport in Santa Cruz at approximately 6:30 to 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. and take about thirty minutes. Flights are crowded and you should make advance reservations and purchase your ticket before leaving the West. Upon landing in India, reconfirm your reservations as soon as possible with Indian Airlines and



Make sure you allow at least four hours between the scheduled arrival of your international flight and the Indian Airlines flight to Poona. International flights are often late, and it takes time to go through customs and get from one airport to the other. Check in at least 90 minutes before your flight. If you miss the flight, you can only get your money back if you have purchased your ticket in the West, by obtaining a refund from your travel agent.

The Domestic Airport has no free trolleys for luggage. Porters dressed in blue uniforms will carry your luggage for a fixed rate per bag. Luggage may also be checked in the baggage cloak room while you wait for your flight. To inquire about available seats or reconfirm a ticket, consult the 24-hour reservation counter next to the baggage cloak room.

Bombay-Poona-Bombay Taxi

Not recommended during monsoon season (June-September)

Regular taxi service is available from Bombay to Poona twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Travel time is approximately 3½ to 4½ hours. Taxis leave from a stand in the Dadar area at the post office, located near Nargis Dadachangi's residence and the Pritam Hotel. Reservations are not necessary. The ticket seller sells four individual seats per taxi on a space-available basis. You can request a particular seat. (The front seat is the most comfortable.) Usually you need wait only 15-30 minutes for a taxi to acquire four passengers and leave.

The taxi arrives in Poona in front of the railway station. However, as it enters Poona, it passes within one block of the Shivaji Nagar bus station. If you are planning to take a bus from Poona to Ahmednagar immediately, you'll need to leave from this station. Ask the taxi driver to drop you off there and offer him a little extra for this service.

Railway

The most comfortable and scenic way to travel from Bombay to Poona is a first-class seat on the Indian railway. Travel time is four to six hours. This method of travel is especially recommended during monsoon season. Trains originate from V.T. (Victoria Terminus) station in the Fort area. Trains also pass through Dadar, but they are usually full by the time they get there. Recommended trains are listed below. (All trains leaving Bombay have the word Down after the train number; those traveling in the opposite direction toward Bombay have the word Up.)

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Bombay (approx.)</u>
Deccan Express	305 Down	6:30-7:30 a.m.
Bombay-Miraj-Koyna Express	307 Down	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Bombay-Daund-Manmad Passenger	321 Down	9:30-10:30 a.m.
Bombay-Hyderabad Express	31 Down	noon-1:00 p.m.
Sinhagad Express	309 Down	2:00-3:00 p.m.
Bombay-Trivandrum-Jayanti-Janata Express	81 Down	3:00-4:00 p.m.
Deccan Queen Express	301 Down	4:45-5:45 p.m.

The train to Poona is crowded, but advance reservations are usually not necessary. However, even if you don't have a reservation ahead of time, make sure to buy both a ticket and a seat reservation at the station. The ticket gets you on the train. The seat reservation gives you a specific seat. Otherwise you may have to stand for the entire journey. See "More about railways" for maps and further details about this procedure. Porters dressed in red shirts and numbered arm bands will carry your luggage for a small charge per bag.

TRANSPORTATION TO AHMEDNAGAR

Taxi

Not recommended during monsoon season (June-September)

You can hire a taxi to take you directly from Bombay to Ahmednagar at the taxi stand near the Dadar railway station on Lakhamsi Napoo Road. (This is different from the Bombay-Poona-Bombay taxi stand mentioned earlier.) You can either hire the entire taxi (four seats) directly

to Ahmednagar, or you can travel with the other passengers to Poona and then hire the entire taxi from there. Travel time is eight hours. Approximate cost is Rs. 550-700.

M.T.D.C. Luxury Bus

The Maharashtra Tourist Development Corporation (M.T.D.C.) provides air-conditioned luxury bus service from Bombay to Aurangabad, with a stop en route in Ahmednagar. Travel time is eight hours from Bombay to Ahmednagar. Although this popular tourist bus is often full, you can sometimes get reservations either the day before or the day you wish to leave Bombay. Call or go to the M.T.D.C. office for reservation information.

Maharashtra Tourist Development Corporation, Ltd.
Tours Division
Madame Cama Road (Opposite Life Insurance Corp. building)
Fort area, Bombay 400 020
Office hours: 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Phone: 241762, 241713, 241784

The bus leaves the M.T.D.C. office in the evening. It also stops for passengers at the Pritam Hotel in Dadar. Seats are available occasionally without reservations. If you don't have a reservation and are staying in either the Dadar or Fort areas, you can go to the M.T.D.C. office or the Pritam Hotel and take a chance on boarding the bus.

In Ahmednagar, the bus stops at one of the local hotels before sunrise. See "Early or late arrival" in the Ahmednagar chapter for advice on where to wait until daylight. Because of the unusually early arrival time, the M.T.D.C. luxury bus is not recommended for newcomers or for women traveling alone.

Railway

The Indian railway is an inexpensive way to travel directly to Ahmednagar. Travel time is ten to twelve hours. Trains leave the V.T. station in the Fort area twice a day, and sleeping berths are available. First-class seats are also comfortable enough for sleeping. Women, however, should not travel alone on the evening Calcutta Mail. Be sure to purchase both a ticket and a seat reservation.

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Bombay (approx.)</u>
Bombay-Daund-Manmad Passenger	321 Down	9:30-10:30 a.m.
Calcutta Mail	1 Down	6:45-7:45 p.m.

Advance reservations are usually required for travel to Ahmednagar. (However, since the 321 Down also stops in Poona, you can take the chance of getting on it to Ahmednagar. If you don't succeed, buy a ticket for Poona instead.) Since the 321 is often delayed several hours, it's also a good idea when taking this train, to cable ahead that you may be arriving late. The 321 passes Meherabad Hill on the left just before entering Ahmednagar. The stations immediately preceding are Sarola and Akolner.

Please note that only one carriage of the Calcutta Mail travels to Ahmednagar. This is the carriage closest to the engine, at the far end of the platform. Shortly after midnight in Manmad, it is disconnected from the train and later attached to another train (the 402 Down) continuing on to Ahmednagar. The stations immediately preceding Ahmednagar are Rahuri, Vambori, and Vilad.

At the Ahmednagar railway station, rickshaws are available to take you into town. See the Ahmednagar chapter for advice on arriving at these early and late hours.

Hired Car

The Government of India Tourist Department provides a tourist car service. The charge is based on a kilometre rate, an overnight charge for the driver, plus half charge for returning empty. Air-conditioned cars are available. Inquire at the tourist counter in the International Airport or at any of the major hotels. Travel time to Ahmednagar is approximately eight hours.

HEALTH TIPS

- Drink only bottled water that has been both boiled and filtered. (Don't drink any tap water, or even use it to brush your teeth.) National brands of soft drinks (like sparkling mineral water, Limca, Gold Spot, or Thumbs Up) are also acceptable. Make sure the seal on the bottle is intact and opened in your presence. Carry a canteen if you plan to travel long distances by train or bus.
- Eat only at 5-star hotels or Grade I (first-class) restaurants. Signs indicating Grade I restaurants are posted near the entrance. Any of the restaurants listed in this book is acceptable.
- Always wash your hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after rickshaw or bus rides. Microscopic organisms causing disease can also be carried by dust. Pre-packaged towelettes are handy when clean water isn't available.
- Avoid eating shellfish and seafood. Make sure any meat or poultry you eat is well-cooked.
- Avoid ice in drinks; ice is made from the same water you're trying to avoid. Also, avoid ice cream and milk products.
- Avoid tea or snacks from street or railway vendors. Also not safe to eat are pan (chewable spices wrapped in betel leaf) and the seeds served at the end of meals in restaurants.
- Thoroughly wash and peel fruits and vegetables purchased in markets before you eat them. If possible, soak fruits and vegetables in a solution of potassium permanganate or salt for thirty minutes to kill any lingering source of infection.
- Pre-packaged foods purchased from department stores like Spicers or Dorabjee's in Poona are generally safe to eat.
- Swim only in chlorinated hotel pools.
- Always wear shoes and promptly attend to any cuts, especially on your feet.
- If touring other parts of India, be especially careful to avoid mosquito bites, which can cause malaria. Cover up after sunset, wear insect repellent, and use mosquito netting at night. To be effective, anti-malarial drugs must be taken continuously before you leave home until six weeks after you return.

MISCELLANEOUS

Cultural Differences

- Because India is a conservative country, certain behavior which is accepted in the West is not appropriate there. For example, unmarried couples should not share a hotel room or overtly express affection in public; men and women should dress modestly; women's long hair should be tied back or covered with a scarf.
- Beggars abound in large cities. The best advice is just to ignore them.

- In answer to a direct question, Indians will sometimes shake their heads from side to side. This doesn't mean "no." It means "Yes, yes, I'm hearing you." It gives the strong impression of a yes answer without a definite commitment to it.
- Many Indian streets now have both Hindi and English names, which can be confusing if you are asking for directions. Signs may show the old names, and the names may even change after a few blocks. Taxi drivers and pedestrians may not know both names.
- Dates are written according to the European system - day first, then the month. Thus 6/7/83 is July 6, 1983, not June 7th.
- Floors are also named according to the European system. The "ground floor" is the American first floor. The "first floor" is the American second floor, and so on.
- Tipping taxi or rickshaw drivers is not necessary. Restaurant tips are usually included as a service charge in the bill. If not, a tip of 5-10% is appropriate.

Police Registration

All foreigners except citizens of Commonwealth countries must register with the police within seven days of their arrival in India. If you are going directly to Ahmednagar, you can register at the Pilgrim Reservation Office in the Meher Nazar compound. However, if you are touring and will not reach Ahmednagar within seven days of your arrival in Bombay, you must register at the Police Foreigner's Office, either in Bombay or whatever city you'll be in. See "More about Bombay" for the address of the police office there. Registration at a first-class hotel also automatically qualifies as registration.

When you reach Ahmednagar, even if you have registered elsewhere, you must still check in with the Pilgrim Registration Office in the Meher Nazar compound.

Avatar Meher Baba Centre, Bombay

Visitors are always welcome at the Bombay Avatar Meher Baba Centre. The Centre is open each evening from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Special meetings are held on Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

Avatar Meher Baba Centre
Navyug Nivas, 3rd floor
(Opposite Minerva Cinema)
Lamington Road
Bombay 400 007

Emergency Contact

Throughout this book you'll find addresses and phone numbers of people in a number of cities who have volunteered to act as emergency contacts for Baba followers. Please note that these contacts are for true emergencies only where you are unable to seek help through other means, such as hotel desks, travel agencies, or tourist information counters. Please do not ask these people to make hotel or travel reservations for you, and do expect to be responsible for any necessary expenses. For information about medical facilities in Bombay or Poona, see the last chapter.

For emergency assistance in Bombay, contact:

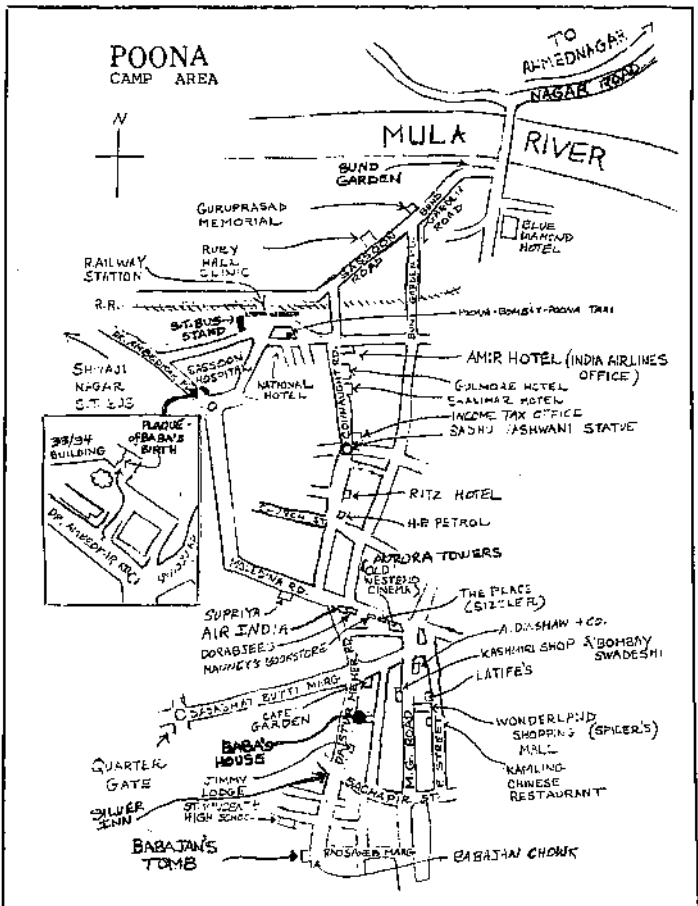
Hoshang and Havovi Dadachanji
5 - Motta Mansion, 2nd floor
Motibai Street (off Tardeo Road)
Bombay 400 007
Phone: 363023, 358924
(Please do not call before 7:00 a.m. or after 11:00 p.m.)

Poona



Poona (Hindi name Pune) is a large city in the Deccan Plateau, about 170 kilometres (106 miles) southeast of Bombay. No matter how you travel, the route passes through the ghats, the mountainous hill ranges surrounding Poona. The roads through the ghats are steep and winding, and the scenery is spectacular.

Poona has a long and proud history. During the 17th century the district was associated with Shivaji, the warrior who resisted Muslim expansion and helped to unite Maharashtra. (Shivaji is known to be one of Meher Baba's veiled minor incarnations.) In the 19th century, Poona was a British military center and popular vacation spot. It was here that Meher Baba was born, grew up, and became unveiled by the Perfect Master Hazrat Babajan. During the 1960s Poona was also the spot where Meher Baba spent the summer months and gave a number of darshan programs, including the 1962 East-West Gathering.



ACCOMMODATIONS

There are a number of hotels and guest houses in Poona at various price ranges. Rooms are sometimes available without reservations, but if possible, write ahead. Reservations are definitely required during racing season, July through October. Advance payment is not necessary. The following are recommended:

Hotel Blue Diamond. This 5-star hotel is fancy and expensive. It has several restaurants and a coffee shop. All rooms are air-conditioned. Check-out time is 12 noon.

Hotel Blue Diamond

11 Koregaon Road
Poona 411 001
5-star hotel -
Luxury rates

Phone: 28735
Cable: BLUEDIAMOND
Telex: 0145-369

National Hotel. This is a popular hotel due to its location across from the railway station and the taxi stand. Rooms may be difficult to get without reservations. The hotel serves only breakfast. Rates are figured on a 24-hour basis.

National Hotel

opposite Railway station
Poona 411 001

Phone: 23080
Budget rates

Hotel Gulmohr. This small, plain hotel is located near the Hotel Amir and the railway station. The hotel contains a small restaurant.

Hotel Gulmohr

15 A/1, Connaught Road
(Sadhu Vaswami Road)
Poona 411 001
Budget rates

Phone: 23545, 23546
20614
Cable: GULMOHR

Hotel Shalimar. Another small hotel located next to the Gulmohr. The hotel does not have a restaurant.

Hotel Shalimar

12A, Connaught Road
(Sadhu Vaswami Road)
Poona 411 001

Phone: 20790, 20791
Budget rates

Jimmy Lodge. This small guest house located near Meher Baba's house is popular and inexpensive. The Dorabjee Restaurant next door is not recommended for Westerners, but you can eat at The Place, or any of the several good Chinese restaurants nearby.

Jimmy Lodge

805 Dastur Meher Road
Poona 411 001

Budget rates

Ritz Hotel. A small hotel located between the railway station and Meher Baba's house. The hotel has a small vegetarian dining room.

Ritz Hotel

6, Connaught Road
Poona 411 001
Budget rates

Phone: 22995
Cable: RITZ

Silver Inn. A small hotel located between Jimmy Lodge and Hazrat Babajan's Tomb.

Silver Inn

1973, Gafferbeg Street
(Near Cantonment Market)
Poona 411 001

Phone: 25041
Budget rates

Hotel Amir. A large hotel near the railway station which contains the Indian Airline offices. Check-out time is 12 noon.

Hotel Amir
15, Connaught Road
(Sadhu Vaswami Road)
Poona 411 001

Phone: 27371, 27372,
27373, 27374
Moderate rates

RESTAURANTS

Since some of the hotels and guest houses listed above do not contain eating facilities suitable for Westerners, the following Poona restaurants are recommended. Although some of these restaurants serve light snacks throughout the day, the usual custom is to open only at meal times, generally 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for lunch and 7:00 p.m. onwards for supper. Always make sure any meat you order is cooked medium to well-done.

The Place (formerly the Sizzler). Located on Moledina Road near Mahatma Gandhi Road, this American-type restaurant serves both meat and vegetarian food.

Chinese Restaurants. Chinese restaurants are generally a good choice in Poona. Especially recommended is the Kamling Chinese Restaurant on East Street.

Latif's. A good, but expensive restaurant also located on East Street. It serves both meat and vegetarian food.

Supriya. A clean, reasonably-priced vegetarian restaurant located on Moledina Road two blocks from the Air India office. It remains open all day with snacks between the breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals.

Ritz Hotel. This hotel is located at 6 Connaught Road. Its restaurant serves vegetarian food only.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Indian Airlines Bus

Indian Airlines runs a bus between the Poona airport and its business office in the Hotel Amir. Check with Indian Airlines for exact schedules. Travel time is fifteen minutes.

Taxi

The taxis in Poona are reasonably priced. The fare from the Poona airport into the city is slightly more expensive than the bus or rickshaw.

Rickshaw

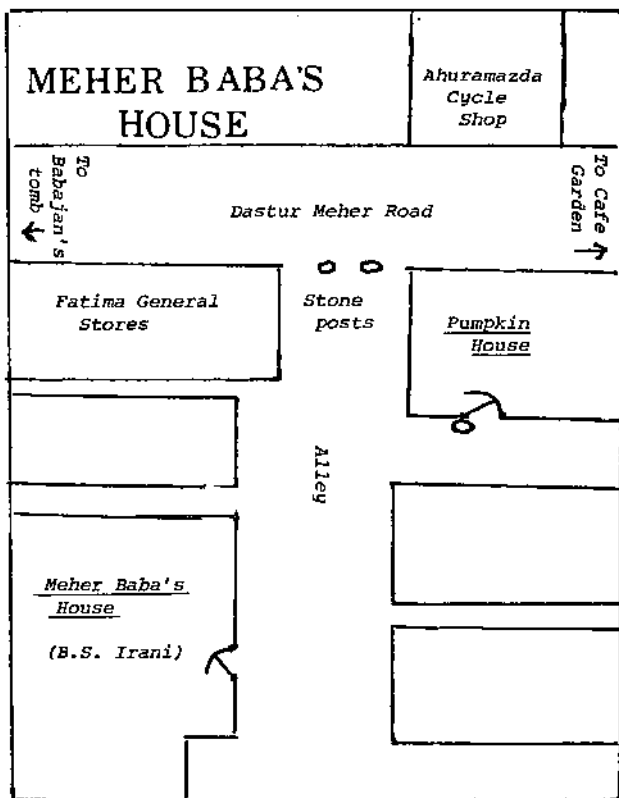
This small three-wheeled black and yellow motorized vehicle is the best means of travel around Poona. Rickshaws hold two or three people and are less expensive than taxis. Like taxis, rickshaws have meters and use tariff cards depending upon the age of the vehicle. If you ask the driver to wait at any time during your trip, don't pay additional waiting charges. The meter automatically continues running and the charge is figured into the final rate.

MEHER BABA PLACES

While in Poona, you may wish to spend time visiting places associated with Meher Baba's life and work.

Meher Baba's House

Down an alley off Dastur Meher Road is the home where Meher Baba and His family lived from 1918 on. Inside is a room (known as Baba's room) where Meher Baba kept Himself



secluded after being unveiled by the Perfect Master Hazrat Babajan. The room contains a number of personal items associated with Meher Baba's life. Baba's house is a private family residence, but Baba followers are welcome to visit Baba's room between 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

765 Dastur Meher Road
 (to the left of Fatima General Stores and
 across from Ahuramazda Cycle Stores)

Pumpkin House

Located diagonally across from Meher Baba's house is the home where Meher Baba spent some of His childhood and boyhood until 1918. The house gets its name from a large round stone at the entrance. Since the residents are not Baba followers, you can only view the house from the outside.

Hazrat Babajan's Tomb

About three blocks south of Baba's house on Dastur Meher Road is Hazrat Babajan's tomb. Part of the neem tree still remains where Babajan used to sit and where Meher Baba first met her. The tomb is clearly marked and open to the public during daylight hours. Please remove your shoes before entering.

Guruprasad Memorial

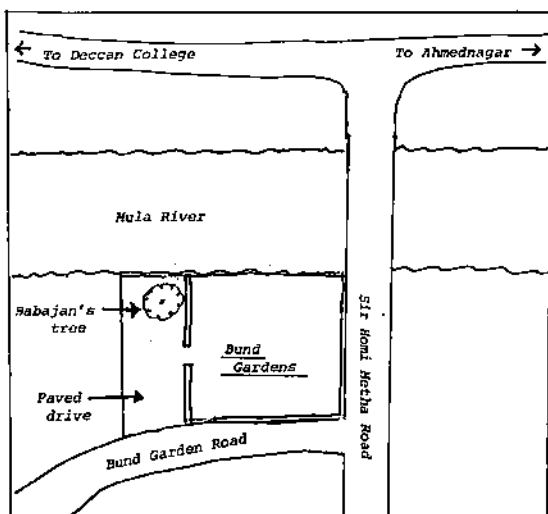
Guruprasad, the palace of the Maharani of Baroda, was where Meher Baba often spent the summer months during the 1960s. It was the site of many darshan programs, including the 1962 East-West Gathering and the 1969 Darshan. The palace no longer stands, but a small memorial building has been constructed on the property, using original materials from

Meher Baba's bedroom. It also contains a chair on which Meher Baba sat and gave darshan. If you do not find Guruprasad Memorial open during the scheduled hours, contact Meherjee Karkaria for assistance (address and phone number listed at the end of this chapter).

24 Bund Garden Road
open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
(Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.)

Bund Gardens

Meher Baba often visited these gardens on the bank of the Mula River. Near the parapet wall is a large mango tree with a cement base where Babajan often sat. Later Meher Baba also sat here on various occasions with His followers.



Sassoon Hospital

This hospital, on Sassoon and Dr. Ambedkar Roads, is where Meher Baba was born on February 25, 1894. On a stone wall outside the area is a plaque commemorating Meher Baba's birth.

Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre

This Centre is somewhat difficult to find. It is located on a side road behind the K.E.M. Hospital. Meher Baba gave darshan a number of times in the large hall. A wide variety of Baba books and pamphlets are also on sale here. Visitors are welcome at meetings on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre

441/1, Somwar Peth
Poona 411 001
Meetings on Mondays
at 7:00 p.m.
Phone: 26390

Hours: Daily 10:00 a.m. to
2:00 p.m. and
4:00 to 9:00 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION TO AHMEDNAGAR

Hired Taxi

The easiest way to get to Ahmednagar is a hired taxi, definitely recommended for women traveling alone. There is no special Poona-to-Ahmednagar taxi or taxi stand. You can arrange for a taxi from your hotel, or you can hire any taxi that is willing to take you. Regular taxis have room for four passengers. They are an economical way to travel if several people are traveling together. Travel time to

Ahmednagar is approximately two and a half hours. Approximate cost is Rs. 250-300.

The best source of taxis for hire is the Poona-Bombay-Poona taxi stand near the Poona railway station. The ticket seller at the stand can negotiate a price for you. If you arrive by plane and want to travel straight to Ahmednagar, you may also be able to hire a taxi at the airport. Rates will be a little higher than taxis you can hire within the city, but the distance and time to Ahmednagar will be shorter.

S.T. Bus

The government State Transport buses are the least expensive way to travel from Poona to Ahmednagar. Buses depart every fifteen minutes from 4:00 a.m. to midnight. Travel time is approximately three hours.

Since the buses are crowded, you will not get a seat unless you catch them where they originate - the Shivaji Nagar bus station on Ganeshkind Road, near Fergusson College Road, about twenty minutes from downtown. (Rickshaw drivers will know the location.) If you are traveling from Bombay by railway, get off at the Shivaji Nagar railway station, one stop prior to Poona and just across from the bus station.

Tickets are purchased on the bus. Buses stopping in Ahmednagar leave currently from platform 6. Since the numbers are written in Hindi, you may need to ask for assistance at the information booth. Wait at the proper platform for a seat. If you don't get a seat on the first available bus, you will then be near the front for the next one. If possible, keep your luggage with you in the aisle or under your seat. However, you may be required to store large luggage on top of the bus. The bus makes one rest stop halfway to Ahmednagar.

Railway

The Indian railway is not as practical a way to travel from Poona to Ahmednagar as the S.T. bus. Only one train, the Jhelum Express, makes reasonable connections and it arrives late at night. Therefore, it is not recommended for newcomers or women traveling alone. The train is often crowded, but sometimes there are first-class seats available. Travel time is three hours.

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Poona</u>
Jhelum Express	177 Down	Evening

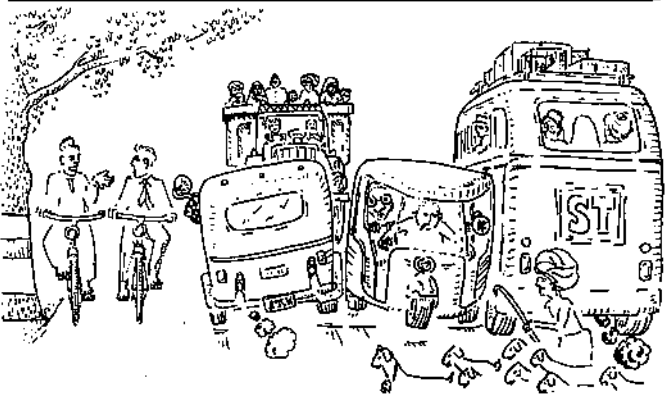
MISCELLANEOUS

Emergency Contact

For emergency assistance in Poona, contact:

Meherjee Karkaria (or Russi Kapadia, his son-in-law)
White Cloud Paper Mills
412 Gultekdi Road
Poona 411 009
Office phone: 441078
Home phone: 441578 (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and
3:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. only)

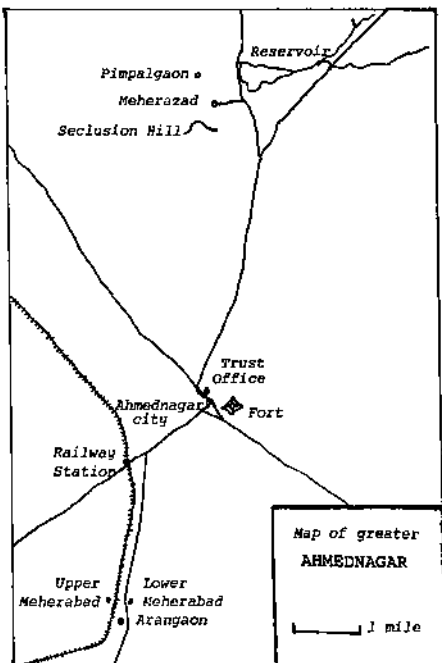
Ahmednagar



Ahmednagar is located about 188 km (73 miles) north-east of Poona in a predominantly agricultural district. The city itself has grown rapidly in recent years. A drive through downtown Ahmednagar is a challenging obstacle course around yellow and red S.T. buses, trucks, rickshaws, bicycles that materialize out of nowhere, horse-drawn tongas, and the ever-present stray cow or dog.

Outside the city, village life still follows traditional patterns. Women in brilliant saris with large brass pots balanced solidly on their heads visit the village well each day to draw water. Farmers work the land with bullocks and hand-held plows, and carry their crops to market in small wooden carts. If there is enough rain, village fields are green with millet, wheat, sugar cane, mangos, and other fruits.

Meher Baba first visited the Ahmednagar area in 1923, staying at Khushru Quarters, the present site of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust. Throughout the years, He made Ahmednagar a center for His work, first at Meherabad near the village of Arangaon, 10 km (6 miles) to the south, and later at Meherazad near the village of Pimpalgaon-Malvi, 14 km (9 miles) to the north.

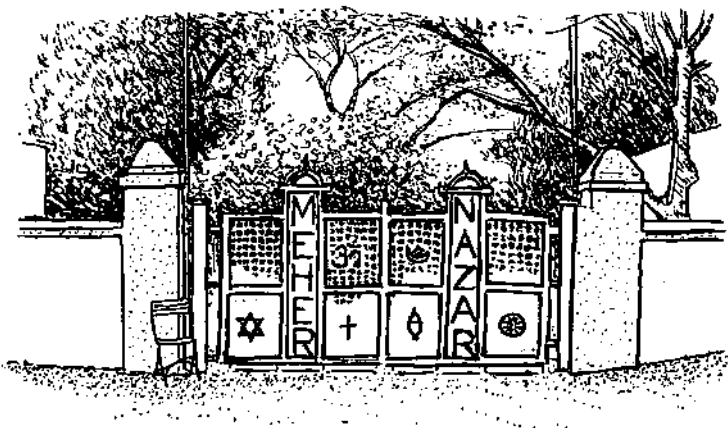


ARRIVAL

Registration

When you arrive in Ahmednagar, you must first register at the Pilgrim Registration Office in the Avatar Meher Baba Trust compound, also known as the Meher Nazar compound. The Registration Office assists Baba followers with police registration in Ahmednagar. It also reconfirms reservations for the Meher Pilgrim Centre. Before beginning your stay at the Pilgrim Centre, you will need to register at this office, located opposite Sarosh Canteen, off King's Road.

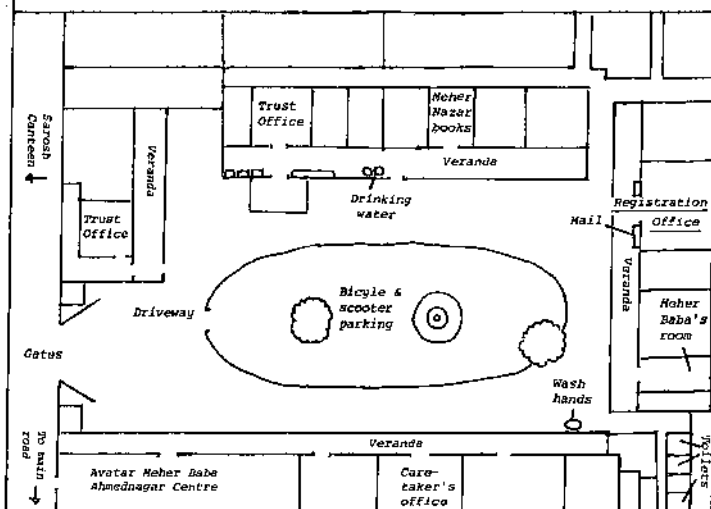
Office hours for registration are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 P.m. daily. Be sure to bring three passport-sized photographs with you.



Early or Late Arrival

If you arrive in Ahmednagar when the Pilgrim Registration Office is closed, you'll have to wait to register until the office is open. If you have made prior arrangements to stay at some place other than the Pilgrim Centre, and you are expected at that hour, just go directly to the place where you'll be staying. Otherwise, at night or in the early morning, go to the Sablok Hotel by rickshaw and take a room or wait until the Registration Office opens.

MEHER NAZAR COMPOUND





ACCOMMODATIONS

Meher Pilgrim Centre

The Meher Pilgrim Centre is an accommodation facility provided by the Avatar Meher Baba Trust for people visiting Meherabad. This attractive and comfortable building accommodates fifty-six in rooms housing one to eight people. Men and women are housed separately. Initial bookings are made up to two weeks. Space permitting, your stay may be extended. Transportation to Meherabad is available several days a week. The Pilgrim Centre serves only vegetarian food; meat and fish cannot be stored or consumed on the premises. Illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages are also not allowed, and guests are expected to have given up illicit drug use entirely.

Please note: anyone with a child under seven years of age cannot be accommodated at Meher Pilgrim Centre and will have to make arrangements for accommodation in Ahmednagar.

Reservations for rooms should reach the Pilgrim Reservations Office six weeks in advance of your expected arrival. This gives the office time to respond in writing either confirming your reservation or advising you of alternate dates. Mail your reservation request to:

Pilgrim Reservations

Avatar Meher Baba Trust
King's Road
Ahmednagar
Maharashtra State
India 414001

Phone: 3666
Cable: MEHERBABA,
AHMEDNAGAR, INDIA

Meher Colony

Meher Colony is the residence of Naosherwan Satha, located on Station Road across from the S.T. bus station. A limited number of budget-priced rooms and simple meals are available for Baba followers during the 1983 season only, on a non-reservation basis.

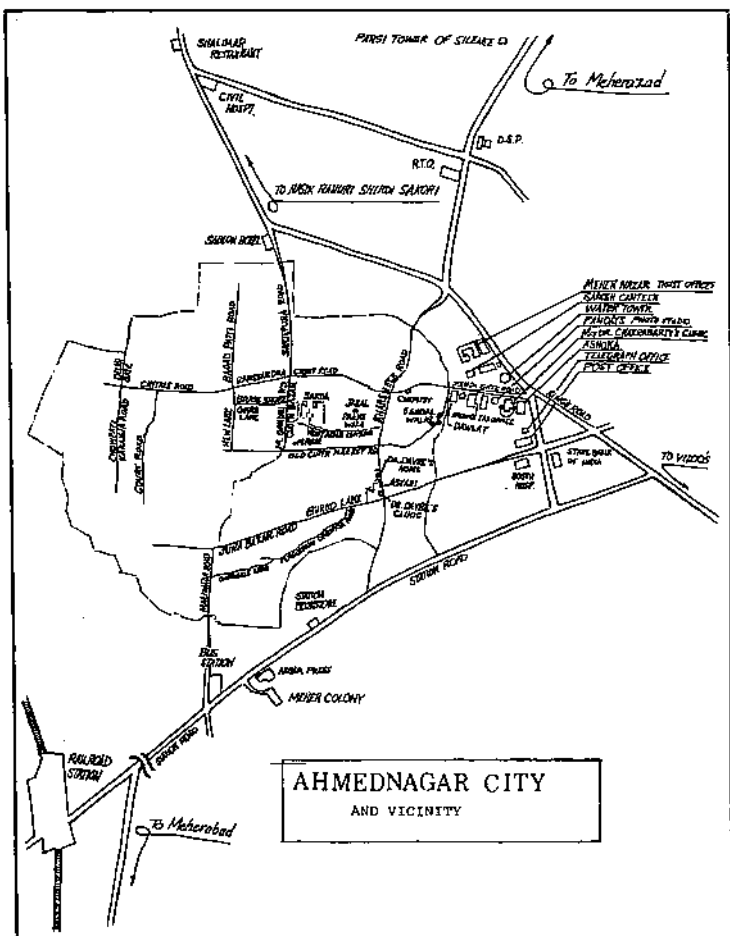
Sablok Hotel

The Sablok Hotel is the only hotel in Ahmednagar currently recommended for Westerners. Reservations are necessary during the Christmas and Amartithi season. The hotel has a dining room.

Sablok Hotel

Sarjapura Street
Ahmednagar
Maharashtra State
India 414001

Phone: 3712, 3713
Budget rates



Other Accommodations

For information about other accommodations in the Ahmednagar area, contact:

Mrs. Viloo S. Irani
 Viloo Villa
 1B, Hunter Road
 Ahmednagar, Maharashtra State
 India 414001

Phone: 5046

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Rickshaw

Unlike Poona, Ahmednagar rickshaw drivers do not charge based on the metre reading. In an effort to curb exorbitant rates, fixed prices have been negotiated with a group of rickshaw drivers. The prices cover travel between places such as Meherabad, Meherazad, Meher Nazar compound, the bazaar, the bus station, and so forth. The prices are posted in most Baba places. Before riding in a rickshaw, be sure to confirm the posted price with the driver.

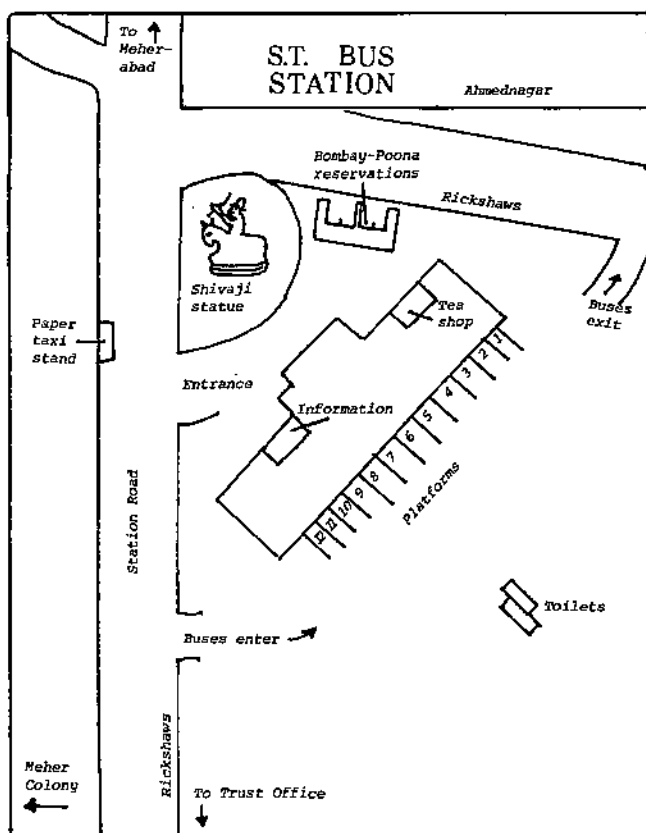
Pay the driver the entire amount at the end of your trip, even for a round-trip ride. Rates are double between midnight and 6:00 a.m. An extra charge is also made if you ask the rickshaw driver to wait more than thirty minutes. You can avoid this charge if you ask the driver to return at a certain time.

Bicycle

Bicycles can be rented at budget rates by the day, week, or month. Inquire at the Registration Office for details.

S.T. Bus

The State Transport buses also run between Ahmednagar and Meherabad and Meherazad. The system is somewhat complex, but much less expensive than other means of travel. Schedules are posted at most Baba places. Consult the Registration Office staff for details.



Hired Vehicle

Vehicles of various types are available in Ahmednagar for travel to Happy Valley, the Ellora Caves, and other points of interest in the area. Consult the Registration Office or Pilgrim Centre staff for details.

MEHER BABA PLACES

Meher Nazar Compound

The Meher Nazar compound, formerly known as Khushru Quarters or Adi's compound, has been associated with the life and work of Meher Baba for many decades. The compound is located opposite the Sarosh Canteen, just off King's Road.

Avatar Meher Baba Trust. This is a charitable organization set up by Meher Baba in 1959 and supported today by donations from Baba followers all over the world. Divided into two parts, the Trust provides for Meher Baba's close mandali and others He named as beneficiaries and administers a variety of other charitable projects. Recent activities at the Meherabad site of Meher Baba's Tomb have included the development of surrounding lands, construction of residential facilities for pilgrims and staff, as well as a clinic, hospital, school buildings and pilgrim hostel.

Pilgrim Registration Office. This office handles reservations for the Meher Pilgrim Centre, registration of foreign pilgrims, as well as a wide variety of practical matters. Consult the office staff if you have questions or need assistance with airline tickets, visas, or transportation. Lockers are available for storing valuables such as passports, tickets and traveler's checks. Luggage may also be stored for short periods (not overnight) in a wooden trunk just outside the office. (All items are left at the owner's risk and are not the responsibility of any of the staff.) Incoming mail is placed in a box outside the office. Outgoing letters with correct postage may be mailed from the office.

Registration facilities are available from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. Hours for general office matters are Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Caretaker's Office. The Caretaker's Office provides emergency assistance at times when the Registration Office is closed. The Caretaker's Office has a list of doctors and medical clinics in the area.

Ahmednagar Avatar Meher Baba Centre. This Centre was opened by Meher Baba in 1959. Meetings, consisting mainly of Indian devotional music, are held every Saturday between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. Visitors are welcome. Extensive musical programs are held during Meher Baba's birthday celebration.

Meher Baba's room. This room, dedicated to Meher Baba, contains a number of photos and mementos from the past. Upasni Maharaj himself came and performed Baba's arti in this room on February 16, 1936.

Upper Meherabad

Many of the places in upper and lower Meherabad are open daily or may be visited by contacting the Meherabad staff.

Meher Baba's Samadhi (Tomb). Known for many years simply as the "Dome," this small stone structure contains Meher Baba's physical form. It began as a small hut erected over a pit where Baba spent a number of months in seclusion. Later the stonework and dome were erected, and Helen Dahm of Switzerland painted the colorful murals which adorn the walls on the inside of the Tomb.

The Tomb is open for darshan from 7:00 a.m. until 7:45 p.m. Those who wish to help clean it may come at 6:30 a.m. Meher Baba's prayers are recited and His artis are sung each day at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Visitors are asked to maintain silence in and around the Tomb.



Baba's room. This tin and wooden building is the place where Meher Baba's body lay on January 31, 1969, before being placed in His Tomb. The English stretcher used to transport Baba's body still rests there. This cabin was built in 1935 by Padri, one of Meher Baba's close disciples. The contrast between the sturdy stone foundation and tin walls is explained by the fact that Baba originally gave Padri several months to erect the building. Then when it was only partly done, Baba ordered it finished in a week, and started using it for His work.

Meher Retreat. Originally a stone water tank used by the British in World War I, this building has served a number of uses throughout the years. In the early days Meher Baba spent time here in seclusion. Later doors and windows were added and the Prem Ashram boys slept inside. When an upper story and tower were added in 1938, it housed many of the Eastern and Western women disciples who lived in Meher Baba's ashram.

Today the building is used as a museum, study hall, and library. In the museum are many things connected with Meher Baba's life and work. These include His bicycle, samples of His handwriting, and items of His clothing, including the famous patched kamli coat. Also in the museum is the original oil painting of the "Ten Circles" chart which was painted by Rano Gayley under Baba's direction. The study hall, formerly the women's dormitory, has charts drawn under Meher Baba's direction and a number of maps of the blue bus tours. The Meherabad Hill library has books, pamphlets, and periodicals by or about Meher Baba. Those staying at the Meher Pilgrim Centre may check books out from the open section of this library.

Cage Room. The small building immediately behind the Tomb contains a room encaged with bamboo bars. Here Meher Baba stayed in seclusion and did His work with certain masts (God-intoxicated souls), including the fiery Karim Baba.

Cemetery. Buried here are the physical remains or personal effects of Meher Baba's parents and a number of close women disciples. These include Mehera's mother, Nardine Tolstoy, Nonny Gayley, Mildred Kyle, Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson, and Adi's mother Gulmai. Nearby are graves of a number of pets - Chum, Foundy, Kippy, Cracker, Warrior, and the peacock Moti.

Lower Meherabad

Baba's ihopdi. A small stone cabin built for Meher Baba in the 1920s. This is the place where He retired the night of July 9, 1925, and began His Silence.

Table house. A small wooden structure resembling a chicken coop where Meher Baba slept and wrote portions of His "Book" in 1925-6. Originally it stood near the dhuni.

Dhuni. A stone platform near the main road which contains a pit for a sacred fire. This fire was first lit on November 10, 1925, when some local villagers approached Meher Baba about a severe drought that threatened their crops. Baba told them to return home and ordered His mandali to build a dhuni. Within minutes of its lighting, rain began to fall. In later years, Meher Baba invited His followers to throw attachments, symbolized by sandalwood sticks, into the fire. By Meher Baba's order, the dhuni continues to be lit on the 12th of each month at sunset.

Old building. This is one of the earliest buildings at Meherabad. Built in 1925, it was used as a meeting hall and hostel for visitors. Today it is used for visitor's accommodations.

Mandali Hall. A newer building constructed in 1948 and used as a meeting hall and quarters for staff or visitors.

Rahuri Cabin. Baba's cabin at the Rahuri mast ashram of 1936-8 which was moved to Meherabad when the ashram closed.

Cemetery. Buried here are the physical remains or personal effects of Meher Baba's male disciples and several masters. These include Ali Shah, Adi K. Irani, Dr. Nilu, Vinu, Gustadji, Pleader, Baidul, Dr. Donkin, Sarosh, Nariman, Kaikobad, Chhagan Master, Harry Kenmore, and Padri.

Tomb of Gilori Shah. In 1922, this Muslim saint asked to be buried on this spot saying, "Very soon after I pass away, a great Master will come and establish his abode here."

Meher Health Centre. A free clinic serving local villagers, first opened in 1974.



Farmer's Educational Centre. An agricultural project aimed at improving dry-land farming.

Pilgrim hostels. Large brick structures providing shelter to those who visit Meherabad during Amartithi.

Meher Hospital. When constructed, this building will serve as a free hospital for the area.

Meherazad

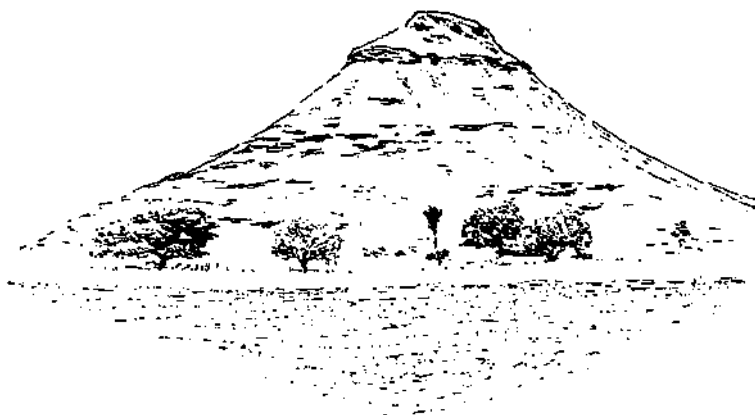
Meherazad is the private residence of a number of Meher Baba's close disciples. It is open to visitors daily, except on Fridays, from 10:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Baba's room. Baba's room in the main bungalow was the one where He rested at night after 1956. It is still furnished as it was in the latter years. The bed was the one He used up until January 26, 1969.

Mandali Hall. Meher Baba met daily with the men mandali in this room. Originally it was a garage and stable, but later brick walls, a roof, floor and windows were added. Besides Baba's chair, the room also contains a number of photos and paintings, as well as the metal gong that ceased to ring after Baba's passing.

Blue bus. This bus carried Meher Baba and His women disciples throughout India in the late 1930s through early 1940s. In 1949 its body was put on a brick foundation. After this it served as a small cabin where Meher Baba spent forty days during the period known as the Great Seclusion. The bed inside is the one Meher Baba used from January 26 through January 31, 1969 (the day that He dropped His physical form).

New Life Caravan. This blue wooden caravan was used for a short time as a sleeping compartment by the women on the New Life. Today it is used as a resting room for visitors. The front window has been replaced by a stained-glass portrait of Baba, created by Karin Kaye.



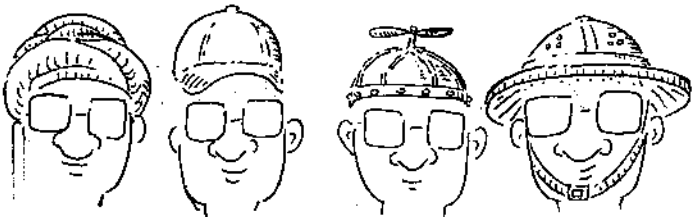
Seclusion Hill. This hill was formerly known as Tembe Hill. At one time two cabins stood on its peak where Meher Baba did His work in seclusion, but today only traces of their foundations remain. The top of the hill belongs to the Trust, but the slopes are public property. The path to the top was blazed by Dr. Donkin, and Meher Baba Himself used to lead groups of His followers to the top.

Meherazad gardens. A tribute to Mehera's loving care, beautiful flowers flourish in the gardens surrounding Meherazad, despite a chronic water shortage. Every day Baba would pass the gardens as He went from His room to Mandali Hall and back again. Many of the films taken of Baba in the latter years were filmed here.



MORE HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

- Drink water only from clay pots or bottles at Meherabad, Meherabad, Meher Nazar, or Viloo Villa. Avoid all food and water from local stands or vendors. The only public restaurants currently recommended in Ahmednagar are the Dowlat Restaurant and the Sablok Hotel dining room. But avoid the drinking water at both.
- Wear a hat at all times when exposed to the sun.
- Avoid touching local dogs or animals.
- After strenuous cycling or exercise, avoid drinking liquids for fifteen minutes.
- Women should not bicycle or take rickshaws alone after dark.
- Beggars and local residents who shout "Jai Baba" and ask your name should just be ignored.
- Don't sell anything to local residents, either of your own accord or if approached.
- Take care not to leave your valuable belongings unlocked or unattended anywhere, especially in rickshaws or hotel rooms.
- Ahmednagar district is a major military area. Sightseeing or jogging near military facilities may be misunderstood. Therefore, stay away from the military base near Viloo Villa and the installation behind Meherabad. Don't visit the Ahmednagar fort without first checking with the Registration Office.



MISCELLANEOUS

Extending a Tourist Visa

If you have a three-month tourist visa and think you want to stay in India longer, you can apply to extend for an additional period of three months (a total stay in India of six months). Consult the Registration Office at least three weeks before the visa expires. You'll need to fill out an application and supply four additional passport-sized photos.

Emergency Contact

For emergency assistance in Ahmednagar, contact:

Pilgrim Registration Office
Avatar Meher Baba Trust
King's Road
Ahmednagar, M.S. 414 001

Phone: 3666
Cable: MEHERBABA

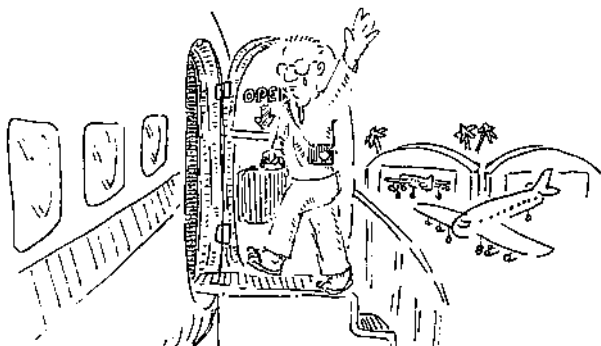
Leaving India

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Reconfirming Airline Tickets

An important step after you arrive in India is to reconfirm your airline ticket at least 72 hours before your return flight. This is vital or you may lose your seat without any legal or moral recourse, even with an "OK status" on your ticket.

If you are flying on a Western airline and are not changing your reservation, you may be able to reconfirm by mail. In your letter or card, you should request the airline to reply, stating that you are reconfirmed in writing. However, if you have an open return, want to change your ticket, or are flying certain airlines like Air India, you must take your ticket to the airline office in person and get it stamped with an official sticker that guarantees you a place on that flight. Consult the Registration Office about your particular situation.



All airlines have a policy of overbooking international flights. Without a sticker, you run the risk of being bumped from the flight. The sticker guarantees you certain rights, and it means that the airline is serious about giving you a seat. (For airlines not requiring a sticker, the card or letter from the airlines serves the same purpose.)

When reconfirming your ticket or contacting the airline (especially by telephone), find out the name of the person doing your booking, as well as the "PNR" (computer) number that indicates your ticket and status. This information is particularly useful later if there are any problems or mixup.

Sometimes this step can be taken care of when you first arrive in Bombay. If you have extra time, you can go to the airline offices in the downtown area or consult the personnel at the airport ticket counters. Otherwise, it can be done from Ahmednagar with the help of someone going to Poona or Bombay. Bombay and Poona telephone directories will list the addresses and phone numbers of local airline business offices.

Income Tax Clearance

Those who stay longer than three months in India must obtain an income tax clearance certificate from the Indian government before leaving the country. This certificate states that you do not owe the government any income tax. Allow two to three weeks in your departure schedule if you have to obtain this clearance. The process is somewhat complex, involving a preliminary set of papers to be filed in Ahmednagar, and a final set to be filed in Poona or Bombay.

Consult the Registration Office for details.

Currency Declaration Form

If you brought in foreign currency valued at more than U.S. \$1,000 and filled out a currency declaration form when you arrived in India, gather together all receipts for foreign currency that you've exchanged. The amount of currency you have left and the receipts should total the amount written on the form. This form and receipts must be presented at the customs counter with your passport and ticket when you depart.

T.B.R.E. Form

If any of your valuable items were marked on this customs form, make sure you pack the form and the items together in your hand luggage. The form and the items must also be presented at the customs counter with your passport and ticket when you depart. At the airport, you'll pass through customs after you check your luggage with the airlines. If the items are too bulky for your hand luggage, you can ask the personnel at the check-in counter to hold them aside until customs has checked them.

Travel Expenses

As you plan your return trip to Bombay, set aside enough money in rupees to cover your travel expenses. You'll need money for transportation, any hotel or meal costs en route, and taxi or bus fare to the airport. You'll also need to set aside at least Rs. 100 for the departure tax you must pay at the airport before you leave India. Check with the Registration Office for the exact amount. There is often a surcharge for weekend travel.

Checklist for Departure

- () Reconfirm ticket
- () Sticker for ticket (if required)
- () Income Tax clearance (over three months)
- () Transportation arranged to Bombay
- () Reservations in transit (if required)
- () Traveling expenses
- () Airport tax
- () Currency declaration form and receipts
(over U.S. currency \$1,000)
- () T.B.R.E. form and items packed in hand luggage
(if have any items on T.B.R.E. form)

TRANSPORTATION FROM AHMEDNAGAR TO POONA

Paper Taxi

This daily taxi service delivers newspapers to Ahmednagar and takes passengers back on the return trip to Poona. You can purchase one seat or rent the entire taxi. Travel time is two and a half hours. It leaves from Station Road opposite the S.T. bus station at approximately 12:30 p.m. If you rent the entire taxi, you can also arrange for it to pick you up at Meherabad for a slightly higher price and leave as late as 1:30 p.m. Make reservations at least two days in advance. Consult the Registration Office for assistance.

In Poona, the taxi will drop you off anywhere near the railway station or Amir Hotel (Indian Airlines office).

Railway

Daily train service is also available to Poona. Travel time is three to six hours. Reservations are not possible or necessary. Consult the Registration office for assistance. Since trains are often late, phone ahead before leaving for the railway station. Since the Jhelum Express is often late, avoid taking this train if you must reach Poona by 1:00 p.m.

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Ahmednagar</u>
Jhelum Express	178 Up	Morning
Manmad-Daund Passenger	322 Up	Afternoon

S.T. Bus

S.T. buses leave for Poona and points beyond approximately every thirty minutes from the bus station on Station Road. Reservations are recommended, especially for the Super Express in the afternoon. Travel time is three hours (two and a half hours for the Super Express). The buses originating in Ahmednagar are your best choices for reservations.

Although buses will take you as far as the Shivaji Nagar bus station in West Poona, don't forget to get off at the Poona railway bus station, which comes first.

Hired Vehicle

For greater convenience, you can also hire a regular taxi or other vehicle to take you to Poona. Consult the Registration Office for assistance.

TRANSPORTATION FROM POONA TO BOMBAY

Poona-Bombay-Poona Taxi

This taxi service is available for the return trip from Poona to Bombay, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Travel time is three and a half to four and a half hours. In Poona the taxi stand is located just outside the railway station. Reservations are not necessary. Usually you need wait only 15-30 minutes for a taxi to fill up and leave.

The taxi arrives in the Dadar area of Bombay at the post office, located near Nargis Dadachanji's residence and the Pritam Hotel.

Indian Airlines

Indian Airlines provides two flights daily from Poona to Bombay in the morning and evening. Travel time is approximately forty minutes. Flights are crowded and you should make reservations and purchase your ticket four or more days in advance. The Registration Office in Ahmednagar can also assist you in purchasing tickets.

Indian Airlines
Amir Hotel
Poona 411 001

Phone: 24940
Hours: 10:00 a.m. to
1:00 p.m. and
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Indian Airlines also runs bus service from the Amir Hotel to the Poona Airport approximately an hour and a half before flight time. In Bombay, flights arrive at the Domestic Airport in Santa Cruz.

Railway

A number of trains leave Poona daily for Bombay. Reservations are not necessary for first class except on the popular Deccan Queen and Deccan Express. Travel time is four to six hours. Trains arrive both in Dadar and at the V.T. station in the Fort area.

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Poona</u>
Sinhagad Express	310 Up	early morning
Deccan Queen	302 Up	morning
Sahyadri Express	312 Up	morning
Poona-Bombay Passenger	326 Up	morning
Deccan Express	306 Up	afternoon
Madras-Bombay-Janta Express	14 Up	afternoon
Miraj-Bombay-Koyna Express	308 Up	afternoon

TRANSPORTATION FROM AHMEDNAGAR TO BOMBAY

Railway

Two trains leave Ahmednagar daily for Bombay. Trains arrive in Dadar and at the V.T. station in the Fort area. Travel time is eleven to twelve hours. Sleeping berths are available.

Reservations are necessary for the 321, as there are minimum first-class seats available. Since the 321 is often late, be sure to take the 322 if you must be in Bombay in the morning.

<u>Train Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Leave Ahmednagar</u>
Manmad-Daund Passenger	322 Up	afternoon
Bombay-Daund-Manmad Passenger	321 Up	evening

S.T. Bus

The S.T. bus is a reasonable way to travel from Ahmednagar to Bombay. S.T. buses arrive at the main bus station in Bombay Central. The S.T. Luxury bus in the morning on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays takes six hours. (The S.T. Luxury bus is not to be confused with the M.T.D.C. Luxury bus described below and elsewhere.) Regular S.T. buses take eight hours.

M.T.D.C. Luxury Bus

The M.T.D.C. Luxury bus from Aurangabad passes through Ahmednagar on its return trip to Bombay. Since reservations are not currently available in Ahmednagar and seats are rarely available, this bus is not at present recommended for return travel to Bombay.

LOCAL BOMBAY TRANSPORTATION

Taxis

Whether you arrive in Dadar, Bombay Central, or the Fort area of Bombay, at some point you'll need to get to the International Airport. Taxis, of course, are one good way to do this. Rates to the airport should be a little

more reasonable than rates from the airport, as the driver should go by the tariff card and meter. Schedules and times for the bus services are given below. In your planning, be sure to allow plenty of time to get to the airport before your flight. See the Bombay chapter for travel times between various areas of Bombay and the International Airport.

Day-Night (B.E.S.T.) Bus

This bus runs at night from the Taj Mahal Hotel in the downtown Fort area back to the International Airport. Travel time is approximately 45 minutes. Buses leave four times between 11:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. The bus stand is across the street from the Taj Mahal Hotel, directly across from Kemps, an all-night chemist (drug store). The sign at the bus stop says:

BEST Bus Stop
PPS3
From S.P.M. Chowk to Nip
Terminal, Sahar via Gateway of India

E.A.T.S. Buses

The E.A.T.S. bus service goes back and forth between the Air India building in the downtown Fort area and the two airports.

From the Fort area to the Domestic Airport. The bus leaves from the Air India building at Nariman Point. Buses run every one to two hours from 9:00 a.m. until midnight.

From the Domestic Airport to the International Airport. The sign at the airport for this bus says: "Airport Coach Service to Terminal II (International Airport) and City available from here." Check to make sure you board the correct bus. Buses leave every 30 minutes.

Hotel Buses

The Centaur Hotel and the Hotel Transit provide courtesy bus service to both airports. The Centaur bus will take non-guests as space permits. To be certain of space available, inquire at the manager's desk near the hotel entrance. Centaur buses run frequently, both day and night.

Nighttime Safety

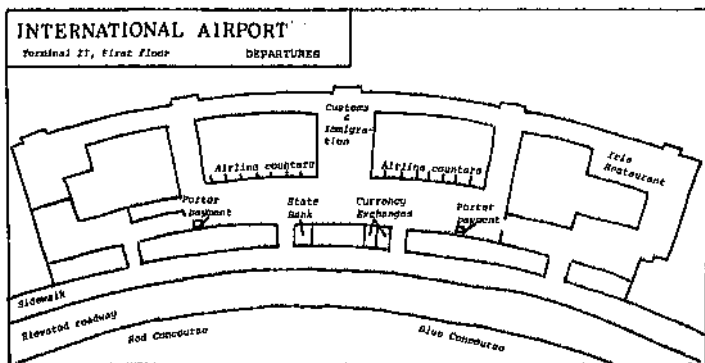
Most international flights leave between midnight and dawn, but this is not a particularly good time to be traveling through Bombay in a taxi, particularly if you are alone and female. Below are some recommendations to avoid traveling late at night:

- Get to the airport early, before 11:00 p.m. Wait in the Iris Restaurant until time to check in.
- Go to the Centaur Hotel. Spend time in the lounge or restaurants and take the Centaur bus in time for your flight.
- Travel by E.A.T.S. or Day-night (B.E.S.T.) bus. Allow plenty of time for connections.

AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Checking In

Make sure that you check in at least two hours before your flight. At the entrance to the departure section of the airport there are porters dressed in blue uniforms to carry your luggage. (Unlike the arrival section, there are no trolleys.)



You pay for the porter service at a booth just inside the entrance.

Unfortunately, there are no cloak rooms or lockers for checking your luggage while you wait, but airline counters open several hours before flight time. Before you can check in, you must pay the airport tax at the State Bank of India counter.

When you check your luggage for the flight, make sure you receive and keep your baggage claim stubs and boarding pass in a safe place. The airline official will also hand you a pink disembarkation card. Fill out the card with the pertinent information. "Port of disembarkation" on the card refers to the city where your flight terminates. (If you are taking a number of connecting flights, write the name of the city where the first flight lands.) If you have any bulky T.B.R.E. items in your checked luggage, ask the airlines official to mark the luggage for customs to check later.

Currency Exchange

You'll find several currency exchange counters in the departure section of the airport. You'll have to exchange any unspent rupees back into your own country's currency before passing through customs, since Indian currency cannot leave the country.

The lines at the currency exchange counters are usually quite long, so allow yourself plenty of time for this step. Before exchanging money, make sure you've paid the airport tax or have set aside enough money for it and any snacks you'll need before boarding. Make sure also that you have receipts to cover the amount of money you are exchanging. For example, if you are changing Rs. 300 back into dollars, you must submit receipts from a bank or currency exchange totaling Rs. 300.

Immigration and Customs

An hour or so before flight time, the passengers on your flight will be called to pass through the immigration checkpoint. Again you will see three different lines - for Indian, Commonwealth, and non-Commonwealth citizens. Have your passport and disembarkation card ready for checking. After this, you'll enter the customs area where customs documents (such as the currency declaration or T.B.R.E. form), if applicable, will be checked. Once you have cleared customs, you'll pass through a security check and into another waiting room until your flight leaves.

The entire process of checking in and passing through immigration and customs can be long and tiring, especially if your flight is delayed for any reason. You have a long trip ahead of you, so take it easy.

AND BACK AGAIN

Customs

After your flight reaches home, you'll pass through your own country's customs checkpoint. Western countries vary in the amount of goods they allow imported duty-free. U.S. customs, for example, allows citizens to import the following without paying duty:

- \$300 worth of merchandise
- 100 cigars and 200 cigarettes
- 1 liter of alcohol
- Any amount of U.S. film

Certain food, plant, or animal products are restricted, and foreign-made articles purchased abroad are liable for duty each time you bring them into the U.S. unless you can prove that you've owned them before. (Proof can consist of a sales receipt, insurance policy, appraisal, or certificate of registration obtained from customs before you leave. If you own a recent model of a Japanese camera and are traveling en route through Japan, obtaining such a certificate before you leave home would be a wise precaution.)

Check with your own government for its customs regulations. Keep receipts for any expensive items you buy and pack the items together. Most countries will allow you to make an oral declaration of the items you've acquired if they fall within the duty-free amount.

Re-Entry

Some Baba followers have remarked that they have felt more "culture shock" returning from India to the West than visa versa. Whatever your experience, give yourself plenty of time to rest and don't try to re-enter things too quickly. Allow yourself a period of time to absorb and reflect on what you've experienced.

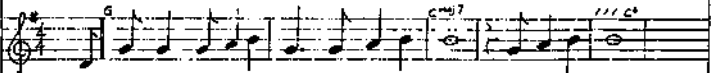
Perhaps no words can describe the challenge of returning to one's life in the West better than these from Meher Baba's sister Mani, from the 82 Family Letters,* written just after the 1969 Darshan to those who had just attended this moving event:

"Parched tree-beds thirsting for water, you were filled with His grace-rain and sparkled in the sunshine of His darshan. And your hearts said in wonder and in fear, "This cannot be true! Oh, will it last?" On the surface it cannot last, if it is to be lasting. The water is for the roots. It must soak deep into the earth to reach the heart of the tree, for its beauty to be made known to all men by the strength of its limbs and the richness of its leaves, by the fragrance of its flowers and the sweetness of its fruits. For this the Divine Gardener prepares the beds. He labours to make the hardened earth receptive, hoeing it thoroughly with the prongs of His Compassion. It hurts at the time and we cry out in pain, but He suffers it for our sakes. He allows us to endure it in the knowledge that nothing endures except His Love."

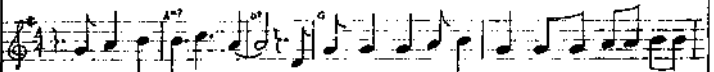
*Manija Sheriar Irani, 82 Family Letters, p. 354. Sheriar Press, Myrtle Beach, S.C. 1976.

Meherabad, Meherazad

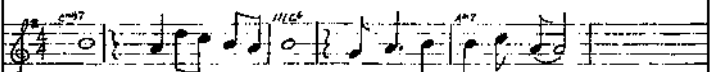
Words and music by
Barbara Bernstein



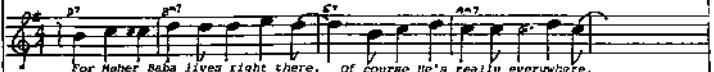
1. I've just come back from a place where God's so real, that you can feel
2. I've just come back from a place where it's so clear, that we're all here
3. I've just come back from a place where hearts are free, just to be
4. I must go back to that place where God's so real, that you can feel



His love surrounding you. I've just come back from a place where this age's Avatars
To love God more and more. Ba da da da da da... Ba da da da da...
United in God's love. Ba da da da da da... Ba da da da da...
His love surrounding you. I must go back to that place where tears can flow,



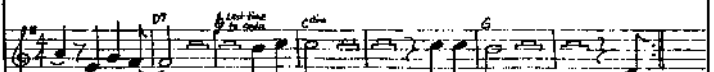
tar draws many from afar to one small Indian town.
... Ba da da da da... Ba da da da da...
... Ba da da da da... Ba da da da da...
flow And eyes do glow with reflections of His presence there.



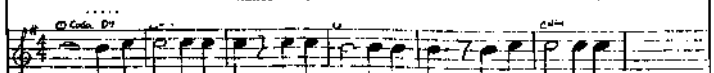
For Meher Baba lives right there, Of course He's really everywhere,
in happy innocence we'd spend the days, learning more of the God Man's ways,
Time passes by so quickly there, with nothing else can one compare,
I must go back to that place, I must go back to that place.



But in the world of time and space, the God Man gives His lovers
Hearing stories and sipping tea, with those who served Him
A journey to the threshold of the Tomb, precious moments
Ba da da da da da... Ba da da da da...



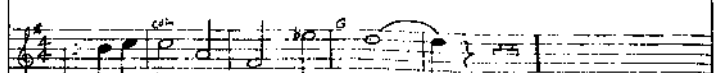
A home base. Meherabad, Meherabad... 2. I've
Personally. Meherabad, Meherabad... 3. I've
In Baba's room. Meherabad; Meherabad... 4. I



Meherabad, Baba's Tomb, Meherabad, Baba's room. Meherabad, Baba's



Tomb, Meherabad, Baba's room. Meherabad, Baba's Tomb, Meherabad, Baba's



room. Ba da da da da da da...

More About . . .

AHMEDNAGAR

Financial Offices

State Bank of India
Station Road

Hours for foreign exchange: 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Medical

Dr. V.R. Davare

Davare Gully (near Parsi Agiary)

Telephone: 3988

Hours: 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

(Closed Sundays)

Dr. Chakrabarty

Zendi Gate Road (next to Ashoka Hotel)

Telephone: 3347

Hours: Noon-2:00 p.m., 6:00-8:00 p.m.

De Souza Chemist

Zendi Gate Road

Telephone: 5140

AIRLINES

Lost or Damaged Luggage

Statistics show that few airline bags are lost, stolen, or damaged (for example, less than 2% of all luggage carried in the U.S.) Half of all problems occur when luggage is moved from one plane to another.

If you should discover your bags damaged or missing when you reach the baggage claim area, report the loss to airline personnel immediately. Missing bags may still be on the plane you just left. Don't leave the baggage area without filling out a form reporting the loss. Be sure to keep a copy. You'll need your baggage claim stubs to make a legal claim, but luggage can sometimes even be traced without them.

Some airlines will also provide temporary clothing or cosmetic kits (or money toward these items) to inconvenienced travelers. If your bags are not located within three or four days, fill out a claim form with the airlines. Claims can take up to six weeks to settle.

Each airline prints a statement of its liability for luggage on the back of its ticket and posts this information at ticket counters. Generally, airlines are not liable for the full value of your suitcase contents - just the depreciated value. In the U.S. this liability is limited to \$750 per passenger. On international flights the liability is calculated by weight, with a maximum of \$400 per passenger. Coverage above these limits (called excess valuation coverage) can also be purchased from the airline for a nominal fee when you check in for your flight.

You can reduce the chances of anything happening to your luggage by doing the following:

- Don't overpack
- Pack valuables in hand luggage
- Label luggage clearly both inside and out
- Lock your luggage
- Remove any old airline baggage tags
- Most important - check in on time
- Check that the airline labels your luggage with the correct destination and flight number
- Pick up luggage at the baggage claim area promptly

Overbooking

Usually airlines will overbook flights - that is, they will accept reservations and sell more tickets than they actually have space for. They do this to protect themselves from the large number of passengers who fail to appear for flights without cancelling their reservations.

Regulations in the U.S. protect passengers with confirmed reservations who are denied seats because of overbooking. When a flight appears to be oversold, the airline must first ask for volunteers who are willing to give up their seats in return for cash or credit on future air travel. The amount of compensation is entirely open to negotiation between the volunteer and the airline. If you aren't in a hurry to reach your destination, you might consider this option. Before agreeing, clarify how much the airline will pay you, your status on an alternative flight, how long you will be delayed, and if you are delayed overnight, what expenses, if any, the airline will cover.

If there are no volunteers, U.S. airlines follow a prescribed policy about who will be "bumped" from the flight. Each airline must provide a written statement of its policy on request. Currently, you are entitled to a cash refund equal to your one-way fare, up to a maximum of \$200. You may also keep your original ticket to use on another flight or to cash in for a further refund. To qualify, you must have confirmed your reservation in advance, purchased your ticket before the required deadline, and have arrived at the boarding gate by the prescribed time. Latecomers and those who fail to confirm lose their reservation and right to compensation. The airline also has the right to upgrade your ticket (from tourist to first-class, for example), and you are not required to pay the difference. However, if the airline downgrades your ticket, it is required to pay you the difference.

In India and other countries, regulations about overbooking vary. If you have a confirmed reservation (reconfirmed, for a return flight) and have arrived at the airport within the prescribed time, you have certain rights. Consult the airline's written policy for details. In general, you should insist on being given a first-class ticket at no extra cost or being put on the next available flight. If you are delayed overnight, insist that the airline cover your hotel, food and transportation costs (in Bombay at the Centaur, if possible).

To avoid being bumped from a flight:

- Before departure from the West, make sure you have a confirmed reservation and that the confirmation appears on the ticket itself. If you have any question, doublecheck with the airlines to make sure the reservation is in their computer.
- In India, reconfirm your flight within 72 hours of departure by obtaining a letter and/or official stamp or sticker on the ticket itself. Obtain the "PNR" computer for your ticket reservation and the name of the airline personnel who served you. Use this information later on to prove reconfirmation.
- Check in at the airport early.
- Obtain the airline's written policy statement and be persistent about insisting on your rights.

Special Assistance

Most airlines provide wheelchair assistance for the handicapped and the elderly. In the West, some airlines even use electric carts with plenty of room for several passengers and luggage. This service is especially helpful if you must travel a long distance on foot between the airport entrance and the terminal gate.

Request wheelchair assistance at the same time you book your ticket. Be sure to explain the reason for your request so the airlines won't think you have a serious medical problem that requires a special doctor's certificate to travel. Don't forget to request assistance for each airport where you'll be deplaning. Reconfirm the request yourself directly with the airline close to the day of departure. Find out the specific location where wheelchairs are available and the procedure for obtaining them. In most cases, you should be able to pick one up close to the sidewalk entrance to the airport. If airline personnel are required to push the wheelchair, you can tip them if you like, but it's not necessary.

At the terminal gate itself, those requiring special assistance can request special seating and can board the plane ahead of other passengers. Bulkhead seats are especially recommended because of the extra legroom. Sometimes on certain airlines seats can even be reserved ahead of time when you book your ticket.

Wheelchairs are available at the Bombay International Airport. Only the type with four wheels (two large wheels in back, two small wheels in front) are satisfactory. The type with two wheels must be pulled backwards and is unstable.



BOMBAY

Consulates

American Consulate General

78 Bhulabhai Desai Road
Breach Candy, Bombay 400 026
Phone: 8223611 through 8223618
Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Australian Consulate General

16th floor, Maker Towers "E"
Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005
Phone: 211072, 217366

British Deputy High Commission

Mercantile Bank Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023
Phone: 274874
Telex: 011-2850 (A/B BHC IN)
Cable: UKREP Bombay

Consulate General, France

Mercantile Bank Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023
Phone: 271528, 271493

Financial Offices

Banking hours in Bombay are generally 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with hours on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Bank of America

Express Towers
Nariman Point (near Air India building)
Bombay 400 021
Phone: 233431
Personal checks may be cashed with a Bank of America courtesy card.

First National City Bank

293, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road
(across from Khadi Bhandar stores)
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 258792
Personal checks may be cashed with a bank identification card.

American Express

Tourist Services
Majithia Chambers, 3rd floor
270, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road
(several blocks north of Flora Fountain)
Bombay 400 025
Phone: 265615, 266120, 260605, 260629
Personal checks may be cashed with an American Express card. The travel service can book tickets with Indian Airlines more successfully than your dealing directly with the airlines itself.
Hours for financial services: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(Saturdays 11:00 a.m.-2:00p.m.)

Government Offices

The Bombay government offices below are closed on Sundays, holidays and various Saturdays. Generally, these days are printed in red on most Indian calendars.

Bombay Police Foreigners Office

S.B. II, C.I.D., 3rd floor
near Crawford Market, off Mahapalika Marg
(from Metro Cinema proceed southeast making a left turn past Elphinstone Technical College into a long driveway)
Hours: 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Bombay Income Tax Office (Foreigner's Branch)

Aayarkar Bhuvan
Ground floor (opposite Marine Lines Railway station)
Hours: 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Place to file and obtain income-tax clearance certificate.

Bombay Deputy Commissioner of Police

Traffic Control Branch (opposite Sachwalaya)
Place to direct complaints about taxi drivers.

Bombay Central Telegraph Office

Veer Nariman Road (near Flora Fountain)
Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Medical

Most consulates have an up-to-date list of recommended Bombay doctors and dentists, both specialists and general practitioners. See the previous section for addresses and telephone numbers of consulates in Bombay. A recommended hospital and pharmacy are listed below:

Breach Candy Hospital

60A Bhulabhai Desai Road (near U.S. Consulate)
Bombay 400 026
Phone: 823657, 8223651

Kemps (pharmacy)

Taj Mahal Hotel
Apollo Bunder
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 243519
Hours: 7:00 a.m.-10:30 p.m.

Shopping

Khadi Bhandar Industries Emporium

286, Dadabhai Naoroji Road
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 263288, 263289
Department store for tourists; government-controlled with fixed prices.

Handloom House

221, Dadabhai Naoroji Road
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 263193
Excellent selection of handloomed saris, scarves and other material. Fixed prices, very reasonable.

Kashmir Government Art Emporium

Sir P. Mehta Road
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 316822
Various handicrafts and art work from the Kashmir area of India. Fixed prices.

Cottage Industries

34 Chhatrapati Shivaji Marg (near Taj Mahal Hotel)
Bombay 400 039
Phone: 243537, 242491
Well-organized and well-stocked with quality items; government controlled with fixed prices.

Bombay Swadeshi stores

Western India House
Sir P. Mehta Road
Bombay 400 001
Phone: 253443

Gateway of India shops

(near Taj Mahal Hotel)
Apollo Bunder
Bombay 400 039
Prices are negotiable.

Taj Mahal Hotel shopping arcade

Apollo Bunder
Bombay 400 039
More expensive; fixed prices.

Hotel Oberoi Towers shopping arcade

Marine Drive, Nariman Point
Bombay 400 021
More expensive; fixed prices.

Miscellaneous

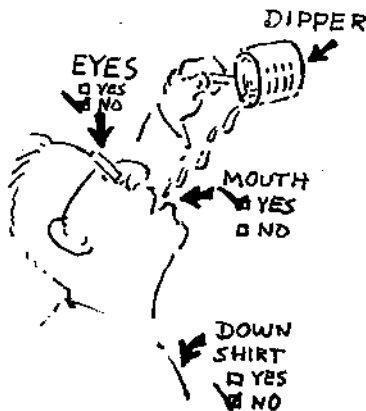
Thrity Dastur

Dastur Travels
42A Survodaya Estate
(near OK Waffers, opposite Tata Parsi Colony)
Tardeo, Bombay
Phone: 397072 (work)
892920 (home)

CHILDREN IN INDIA

If you plan to bring a child (age seven or older) to India, here are a few suggestions to help make the trip more enjoyable.

- Bring a few things associated with home - favorite games, books, etc.
- Bring some familiar Western snack foods - dried fruits, nuts, crackers, granola cereal or bars, instant soup mix or instant cocoa mix with powdered milk.
- Bring lots of spare-time activities - books, puzzles, pocket games, cards, doodle pads, coloring books, arts and crafts, or simple sports equipment. Keep some as surprises to pull out during restless moments on the plane or in India.
- Decide how much to prepare your child for the new experiences he or she will encounter. Some children may be affected by "culture shock" more than others.
- Plan to stop at least once between Bombay and Ahmednagar for sleep and rest. Organize your travel plans carefully so that you'll know exactly where you will be going when you leave the Bombay airport.
- Make sure children take greater health precautions than they would at home. Be sure they realize that all water isn't safe to drink, or to use for brushing their teeth. In hotels within India, use only bottled water. Children should be careful not to put dirty fingers in their mouths and to wash their hands before eating anything and after using the toilet. Disposable moist towel packets are especially practical when traveling with children. You may need to explain how to use Indian toilets and help your children find Western ones, if that is their preference.
- Once in Ahmednagar, children will get more out of the visit if you find ways to include them in various activities. Introduce them to the mandali and other adults. Encourage them to share songs, stories, poems, or drawings. Tell them the history of places like Meherabad and Meherazad. Children often enjoy helping clean Meher Baba's Tomb in the early morning, arranging flowers there in the afternoon, and seeing Meher Baba's things at the Meherabad museum.
- Some rules and customs may need explanation. Boys should be aware of Meher Baba's order that men should not touch Mehera. Explain also that people remove their shoes when entering Meher Baba's Tomb, Mandali Hall, and Baba's room at Meherazad.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others. Children are welcome to ask questions or sit quietly during group discussions at Meherazad and elsewhere, but if they become restless, find some games or activities to keep them occupied outside. At the Meher Pilgrim Centre, see that children don't disturb others resting in their rooms.
- If you need to leave your child for any length of time, find a responsible adult to babysit. At the Pilgrim Centre, make sure the staff know who the adult is and how long you'll be gone.



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Drinking Water

At Meherazad and Meherabad, safe drinking water is provided in large black clay pots covered with tin lids. Nearby you'll find a brass dipper and some plastic or aluminum cups. The brass dipper is used to pour water from the pot into the cups. Since the cups are used by all, be sure not to drink from the actual lip of the cup. Just tip your head back, hold the cup over your mouth, and pour water directly into it. If this isn't possible, then wash the cup at the tap. When you're through, replace the dipper, cup, and lid where you found them.

TOILETS

Eastern toilets differ from their Western counterparts in several ways. Instead of a raised seat with a toilet bowl, the Eastern variety is floor level, usually with a footrest on either side of the opening. Instead of toilet paper, water is provided in a bucket or tap, along with a small jar or cup, for cleaning purposes.

Never contaminate the water supply by dipping your fingers into the jar or bucket. Pour waste water into the toilet bowl only - never back into the jar or bucket.

After using the toilet, wash your hands thoroughly at a sink with soap and water. As a further precaution, you may want to use the Eastern rule of hygiene: left hand for toilet, right hand for eating.

DELHI AND AGRA

If you want to see some of the famous tourist attractions of India on your way to Ahmednagar, consider flying directly to New Delhi and spending a few days visiting the sights in the Delhi-Agra area. New Delhi is more cosmopolitan than Bombay, and costs are more reasonable.

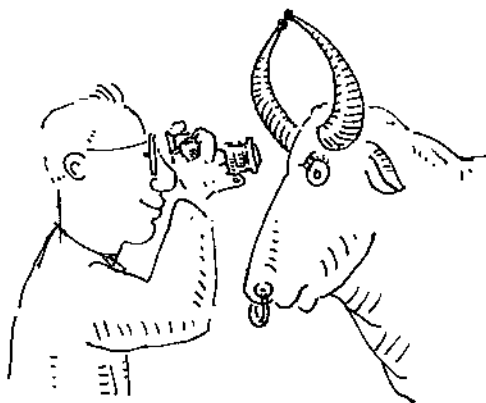
A moderately-priced hotel in New Delhi is the Y.W.C.A. International Guest House. Reservations and advance payment of at least Rs. 110 (single) and 180 (double) are required, made payable to CITI BANK, New Delhi.

International Guest House
 10 Parliament Street
 New Delhi, 110001
 Phone: 311561, 311662, 311763
 Cable: EMISSARIUS

The best way to see the Delhi-Agra area is on an air-conditioned bus with an English-speaking guide. Luxury tours can be arranged through many Delhi hotels. Agra can also be reached from Delhi by express train, hired car, or daily flights on Indian Airlines. Bus tours may also be booked at the Agra railway station and tourist agencies.

Delhi was one of the capitals of the 16th and 17th century Moghul empire. Many interesting buildings still remain from these early periods of India's history. Among them is the Qutub Minar, an 800-year-old sandstone minaret (one of the tallest in the world) and the Red Fort, a magnificent 17th century fortress. The Taj Mahal is located in Agra, about 200 kilometres (125 miles) from Delhi. This famous masoleum was built by the Moghul Emperor Shah Jehan in memory of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal. It is, of course, best viewed at night under a full moon. Other Agra sights include Fatehpur Sikri, a city built by the Emperor Akbar for his wives. Other mosques and tombs in the Agra area reproduce the style and intricate inlay work of the Taj Mahal. Meher Baba visited the Taj Mahal in 1933 with His Western women disciples and the entire area again in 1939 on the Blue Bus Tours.

From Delhi you can fly via Indian Airlines to Aurangabad, a small city about 109 kilometres (68 miles) from Ahmednagar. Aurangabad is near both the Ellora and Ajanta caves (famous for Indian sacred art), Khuldebabad (the "Valley of the Saints"), and the spectacular Daulatabad Fort. Western-style hotel accommodations and bus tours are available. Meher Baba also visited this area many times.



From Aurangabad you can reach Ahmednagar by S.T. bus or hired taxi (approximately Rs. 400) in about two hours. For further travel and price information, consult one of the Government of India Tourist Offices. You can obtain the address of the office nearest you from the Indian consulate. U.S. offices are listed below:

Government of India Tourist Office
30 Rockefeller Plaza, N. Mezzanine
New York, NY 10020
Phone: (212) 586-4901

Government of India Tourist Office
3550 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 204
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Phone: (213) 380-8855

Government of India Tourist Office
201 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 236-6899

Fodor's Guide to India (published by David McKay, New York) contains detailed information about Delhi, Agra, and Aurangabad. Be sure to book reservations through an experienced travel agency, as many of these spots are quite crowded during the tourist season.

Emergency Contact

For emergency assistance only in the New Delhi area, contact:

Mohkam and Kusum Singh
B-171 Greater Kailash I
New Delhi, 110 048
Phone: 646311

FOOD

Indian food is quite tasty, but since it can also be hot and spicy, you may want to request mild spices when eating in unfamiliar restaurants. Some common dishes and useful vocabulary are listed below:

Breads

- Chappati or roti: thin tortilla bread made from wheat flour
- Bakri: heavy tortilla bread made from millet flour
- Nan: Indian pita bread
- Pappadam: single-layer fried crisp or cracker
- Puri: double-layer fried bread
- Paratha: deep-fried bread
- Finger sticks: U.S. "french fries" or British "chips"

Vegetables

- Dal: curried lentils or split peas
- Samosa: vegetable-stuffed turnover
- Bhujiya: tempura-type vegetables fried in batter

Grains

- Pillau: spicy rice dish, usually with ground meat
- Biryani: spicy rice dish with almonds and sliced meat

Fruits

- Sweet limes: oranges
- Sitaful, Ramful: custard apples

Meat

- Tandoori cooking: meat or poultry cooked in a hot clay oven, usually marinated in a spicy sauce
- Pomphret: white fish
- Kebab: meat cooked on a skewer

Milk Products

- Doodh: milk
- Dahi: curds or yogurt
- Raita: yogurt seasoned with tomato and cucumber
- Lassi: buttermilk shake, either sweet or salty

Desserts

- Barfi: sweet milk fudge
- Gulub jam: deep fried milk balls served in syrup
- Rava: sweet wheat cereal
- Jalebi: crisp sugary pretzels

Miscellaneous

- Pani: water
- Chai: tea with milk and sugar
- Chutney: spicy relish made from mangos, coconut, peppers, mint and garlic
- Ghee: clarified butter, used for frying foods
- Pan: betel nut and spices

HEALTH

Pharmacies

Pharmacies or drug stores in India are known as "chemists." They differ from Western pharmacies in several ways:

- Indian chemists may not necessarily have pharmacology degrees and may not always be familiar with the drugs they sell.
- Doctor's prescriptions are sometimes not required to purchase medicines.
- Medicines may be sold loose by the tablet. For sanitary reasons, purchase only tablets that are individually sealed in foil or an entire unopened bottle.
- Examine what you purchase carefully. Read the ingredients on the container and check the date of manufacture to make sure the medicine is still fresh.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is one of the most common illnesses to affect travelers. Usually due to changes in food or water or the stresses of traveling, it disappears in several days. More severe types of diarrhea lasting longer than three days should be treated by a doctor, particularly if blood or mucous appear in the stools.

If you do get diarrhea, avoid spices, fried food, raw fruits and vegetables, alcohol and drinks containing caffeine. Instead, eat bland foods such as crackers, cooked cereals, potatoes, plain rice, eggs, ripe bananas and gelatin. Above all, to avoid reinfecting yourself, make sure any foods you eat are washed and prepared under sanitary conditions and that any liquids you drink are boiled and filtered and meet the standards described earlier.

Sunstroke

The symptoms of sunstroke are headache, nausea, muscle pains, fever and vomiting. These are the body's reaction to overexposure to the sun or the increased stress of heat and activity. Consult a doctor if the symptoms or fever become severe. To avoid sunstroke:

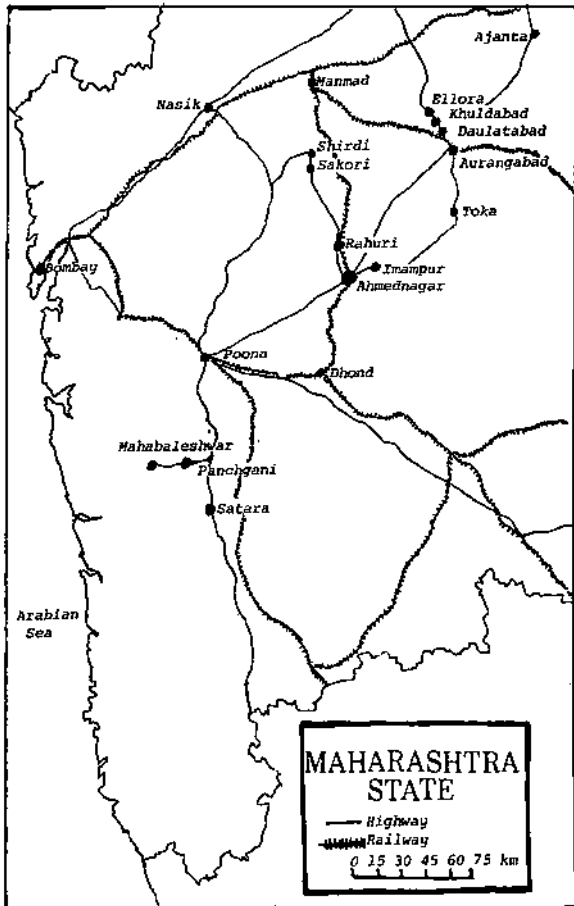
- Cover your head well from your forehead to the nape of your neck with a broad-brimmed hat when outside in the sun.
- Drink plenty of fluids and avoid intense activity in the heat of the day.
- Wear sunglasses if exposed to glare.

Anyone with a history of cardiovascular disease should take extra precautions.

MAHARASHTRA STATE

Some places in Maharashtra State are significant because of Meher Baba's visits and work there.

A few of these spots can be visited on a day's trip from Ahmednagar, but others require overnight visits. For example, Happy Valley and Imampur can be visited easily in one morning. Toka, Khuldabad, Daulatabad, and Ellora can be seen in one day. A more extensive visit to Ajanta and other spots around Aurangabad would require an overnight stop. Rahuri, Sakori and Shirdi can also be seen in one day, but Nasik would require an extra day. A trip to Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, and Satara would take two to three days.



Happy Valley. A wooded spot four miles north of Pimpalgaon-Malvi. Tradition has it that Ram and Sita spent a few days of their years in exile here, and the legend goes that Ram shot an arrow into the ground, creating a spring so that Sita could bathe. Meher Baba visited Happy Valley many times.

Imampur. A village about 22 kilometres (14 miles) north of Ahmednagar on the Aurangabad road. In the ruins of an old mosque occurred the famous "pigeon" incident at the end of the New Life phase of Meher Baba's work.

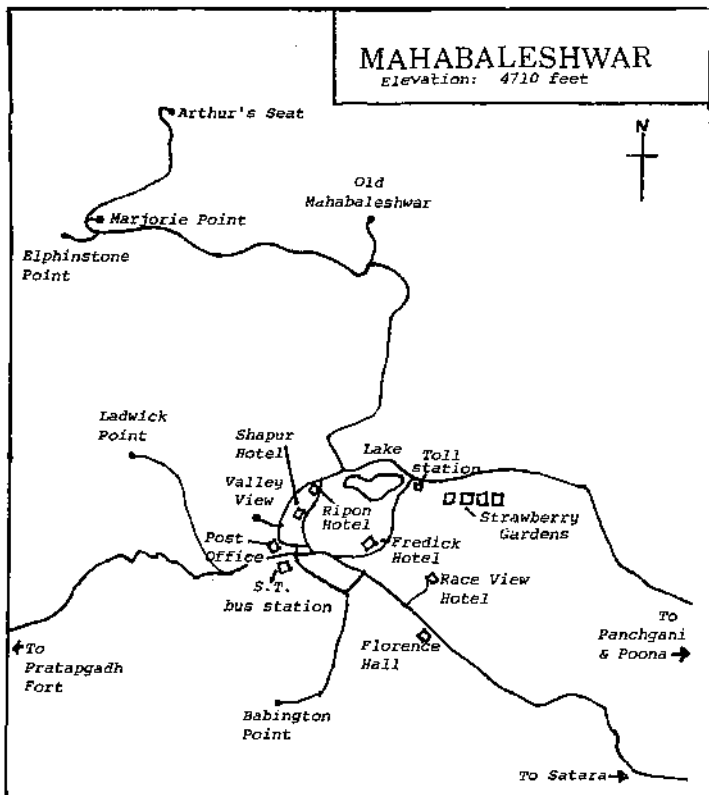
Toka. Also north of Ahmednagar on the Aurangabad road. For a brief period in 1928, Toka was the site of Meher Baba's ashram and school for boys.

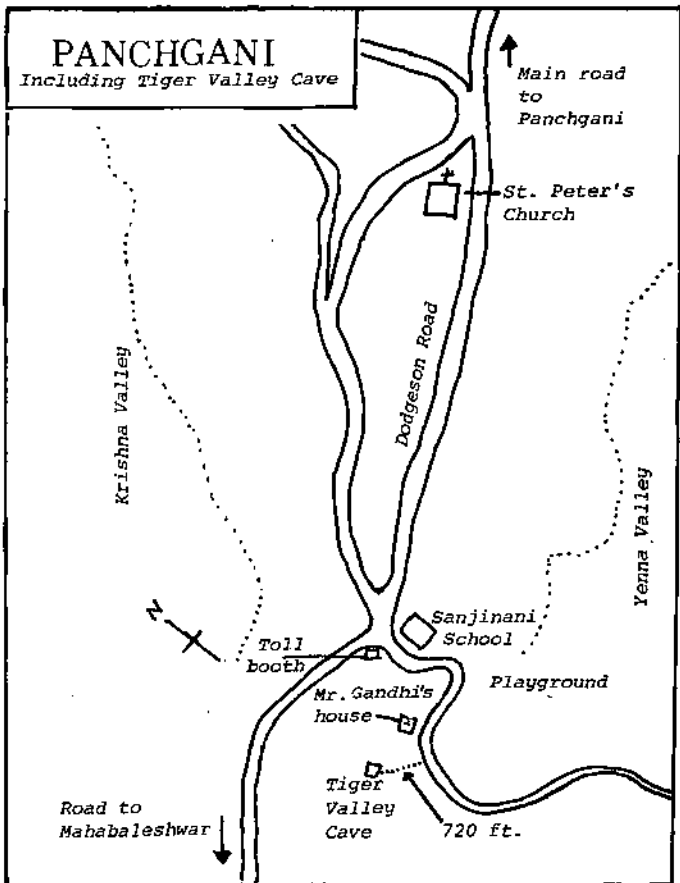
Aurangabad. A city 109 kilometres (68 miles) north of Ahmednagar midway between the Ellora and Ajanta caves. Aurangabad contains a number of Western-style hotels and restaurants. Commercial tours can be arranged to the historic spots in the area. The Bib-ka-Maqbara, or so-called "Mini-Taj," is also located here. This tomb was built by the Emperor Aurangzeb in memory of his wife and modeled after the Taj Mahal, built by his father.

Khuldabad. A village near Aurangabad on the road to Ellora. Khuldabad is called the "Valley of the Saints" because of a large-scale Sufi migration to this spot several hundred years ago. At the tomb of one of these figures, the Perfect Master Zar Zari Zarbaksh (who had died 600 years previously), Sai Baba received God-realization. The emperor Aurangzeb's tomb is located nearby. Meher Baba visited Khuldabad often and at one of the saint's tombs He bowed down six thousand times.

Daulatabad. The site of an 800-year-old stone fort with defenses so remarkable, the story goes, that it could only be conquered through internal treachery.

Ellora. An area containing 34 caves carved entirely from stone. Dating back to the 6th through 13th centuries, these caves are a good example of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain architecture and sculpture. The huge Kailash cave (mentioned in Francis Brabazon's Stay with God) measures 50 by 33 by 33 metres. Buddhist cave number 10 contains a beautiful large statue of Buddha. Meher Baba visited the Ellora caves many times.





Ajanta. An area with 30 Buddhist caves dating back to the 2nd century B.C. containing a number of painted murals and sculpture on the life of Buddha. Meher Baba visited Ajanta at least once.

Rahuri. The site of Meher Baba's ashram for the masts and mad in the late 1930s.

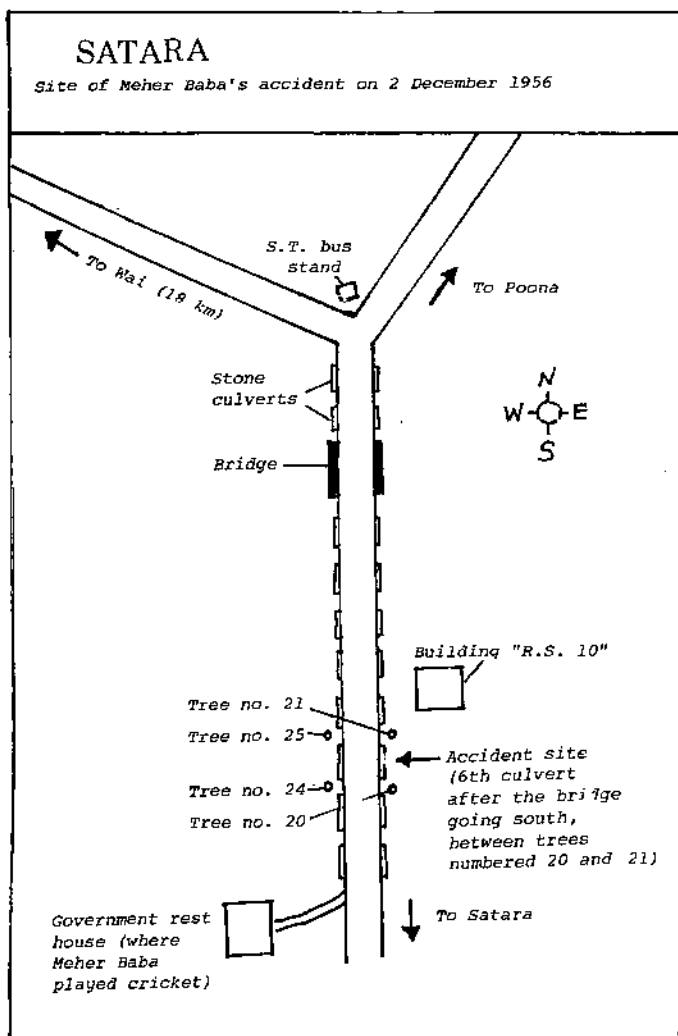
Sakori and Shirdi. Two places associated with Meher Baba's early years, following His realization. Sakori was the seat of the Perfect Master Upasni Maharaj, one of Meher Baba's masters. Upasni Maharaj's tomb and the ashram of His disciples are located here. Shirdi is associated with Sai Baba, another of Meher Baba's masters. Sai Baba's tomb in Shirdi is still maintained for pilgrims and visitors.

Nasik. On the banks of the Godavri River, this city is a place of pilgrimage for Hindus who come to bathe in its waters. More than two thousand temples may be found in the area. Nasik was the site of Meher Baba's first ashram for Western disciples in 1936-7.

Mahabaleshwar. A hill station resort area with many spectacular vantage points about 125 kilometres (78 miles) southwest of Poona. The photograph of Meher Baba standing with His arms outstretched in front of mountainous terrain

was taken here at Arthur's Seat. The Ripon Hotel in Mahabaleshwar is owned by Baba followers. Pratapgad, a nearby fort, is associated with the warrior Shivaji. Meher Baba lived and worked in this area on a number of occasions, including significant periods of the New Life. The meeting on October 16, 1950, in which Meher Baba stepped out of the New Life for one day was held in the Aga Khan's stable in Mahabaleshwar.

Panchgani. Another hilly area near Mahabaleshwar containing the famous Tiger Valley cave where Meher Baba spent time in seclusion.



Satara. The city 106 kilometres (66 miles) south of Poona where Meher Baba spent a great deal of time. Satara is the site of Meher Baba's automobile accident in December of 1956.

POONA

Medical

Ruby Hall Nursing Home

40 Sassoon Road
Poona 411 001
Phone: 25391, 20961, 20962
Doctors in all specialties, dentists and
24-hour pharmacist.

Other pharmacists are located on Mahatma Gandhi Road near the Kashmiri shop. They are closed Sundays and Monday through Saturday from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Shopping

The best shopping is found on Mahatma Gandhi Road from the old West End Cinema south. Stores are generally open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Wonderland Shopping Mall

Between Mahatma Gandhi Road and East Street contains a number of shops and restaurants including Spicers, a 7th Day Adventist health food store and bakery. Spicers' hours are Sunday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. and Fridays from 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; closed Saturdays.

Bombay Swadeshi

Mahatma Gandhi Road
Fixed prices, government-controlled.

Kashmiri Shop

Mahatma Gandhi Road
Items from Kashmir
No fixed prices; bargain carefully.

A. Dinshaw & Co.

2, Mahatma Gandhi Road
Phone: 24749
Excellent optometrist and watch repair.

Manney's Bookshop

Moledina Road
(next to The Place, formerly The Sizzler)
Western and Eastern books and magazines.

Dorabjee's

Moledina Road (next to Air India)
Reliable grocery and department store
with fixed prices.

Octroi Tax

Under normal circumstances, you should not have to be concerned about this tax. Octroi tax is a local tax on valuable property or goods brought into a district. In Poona, tax collectors are stationed at points outside the city. The only possibility of your being stopped by these officials is if you are in a taxi and your luggage is displayed prominently on the top or in an open trunk.

Octroi tax applies only to items staying in the district. You are not liable for Poona octroi tax, even if you plan to stay in the city for a night or two. If you should be stopped, explain to the official that you are a tourist en route to Ahmednagar.

POSTAL SERVICE

From the West to India

Airmail letters take about one to two weeks to reach India. When addressing letters, be sure to use the Indian "pin code" (like the U.S. "zip code"). Common pin codes are:

<u>Bombay</u>		<u>Poona</u>	411 001
Santa Cruz	400 057	<u>Ahmednagar</u>	414 001
Juhu Beach	400 049		
Dadar	400 014		
Fort	400 020, 021, 039		

Preprinted aerograms are generally the least expensive way to send mail to India. The price is fixed and no enclosures are allowed. Packages mailed to India should be sent registered mail to avoid the risk of loss. Mark the package "Unsolicited gift valued at not more than ____" (giving the value). Books, items under U.S. \$4.00, and food packages under U.S. \$9.00 are not subject to customs duty; packages above these limits are subject to duty.

From India to the West

Airmail letters take about two to three weeks to reach the West. Be sure to mark your items "Airmail." Otherwise even with sufficient postage, your letters or packages might go seemail.

For sanitary reasons, don't lick stamps or envelopes. Use a sponge or the paste provided at post offices. Stamps may sometimes be removed from international mail before cancellation, so always mail your letters at the post office itself, not in a letter box. Watch to see that the mail clerk cancels the stamps. (This caution applies only to foreign letters and not to aerograms or other mail where the stamp is actually printed on the card or envelope.) In Ahmednagar, mail placed in the outgoing box at the Registration Office or the Meher Pilgrim Centre will be taken to the post office for you.

Don't forget that aerograms must be mailed from the country of origin. U.S. aerograms, for example, can only be mailed in the United States; you must buy Indian aerograms to mail from India.

RAILWAYS

Tickets

The Indian railway system has two classes of service. First class is recommended for Westerners. Second class is acceptable, but less clean, private and comfortable than first class.

You can purchase first class seats either in open chair carriages, where half the seats face backward, or in private compartments. Compartments contain two to four berths, or padded platforms that fold down from the wall at night for sleeping. (Linens and blankets are not provided.) During the day, upper berths are folded up, and one or two additional passengers are assigned per compartment. A two-berth compartment (one upper, one lower) is called a coupe. When two are traveling together, a coupe provides maximum safety and privacy.

Reservations

No matter what type of first or second class ticket you buy, you should also obtain a seat reservation guaranteeing you a specific seat or berth on the train. A reservation sold as part of the ticket is called a "ticket-cum-reservation." A reservation sold separately is an additional stub or paper receipt.

How and when you purchase a ticket differs significantly depending upon whether you are able to make a reservation in advance. Both methods are discussed below. The first is useful for travelers who will be spending several days in one place and can get to the railway station ahead of time to reserve seats. The second applies to travelers en route who cannot reserve seats in advance.

Traveling with Advanced Reservations

In order to reserve tickets in advance, you must get to the railway station to purchase your ticket at least a half day before train time. This means you must be there before noon for an evening train or by late afternoon for a morning one. Reservation counters at railway stations are open during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.), but counters for specific trains may close earlier.

At the station you obtain a reservation form, usually available near the reservation counters. Fill out the form with information about yourself and the tickets you desire. Cross out all of the words that do not apply. For example, if you want reserved seats, one way, on the 1 Down train from Bombay to Ahmednagar, your form would look like this:

~~Application for Reservation/Cancellation~~
~~Gen. Return Journey/One-way Journey~~

Station from Bombay
Station to Ahmednagar
Date of Journey 19 June 1982
Train Name and No. 1 Down
Class 1st Berths/Seats 2

Sr. No.	Name in Block letters	Sex	Age
1	<u>Mary Jones</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>29</u>
2	<u>Peter Jones</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>33</u>
3	.....	.....	.....
4	.....	.....	.....
5	.....	.....	.....
6	.....	.....	.....

Ticket No.
.....
Maximum permissible 4 per party and 4 per family. (on reserve)
Name Peter Jones
Telephone No. 230445
Address YWCA International
Guest House
Peter Jones
Signature
Date and Time of cancellation.....
Date and Time of Booking.....
.....
Signature of Reservation Clerk
To be filled in by staff.
C.R.P.No.—01-99-0453-10-82

At the top, you would cross out everything but the word, Reservation. You would fill in your destination, train name and date, and class of service you want. Since the number 1 Down is a night train, you would probably cross out seats and request berths instead.

Take the form to the reservation counter for the train you want. In larger stations like V.T. in Bombay, there are specific counters for specific trains. In smaller stations like Poona and Ahmednagar, there are specific counters for first and second class tickets. If in doubt, ask any of the railway officials dressed in black coats with badges. Often stations like Bombay have a Foreign Tourist Guide who will help you.

At the ticket counter, the clerk will check his reservation list and tell you whether seats are available. If so, you pay for your ticket and the seat reservation together. (The reservation is usually only a few rupees extra.) Check that your ticket lists the correct date, class, train number and time. (Remember that in India the day is listed before the month.)

Later, you can return to the station to catch your train about thirty minutes before train time. A large board posted near the train platforms will list all of the trains, their platform numbers, and departure times. Find the correct train and platform. Then check your ticket for the following information:

- Carriage number - for example, 2104
- Compartment letter, if any - A, B, C, etc.
- Seat number - 1, 2, 3, etc.

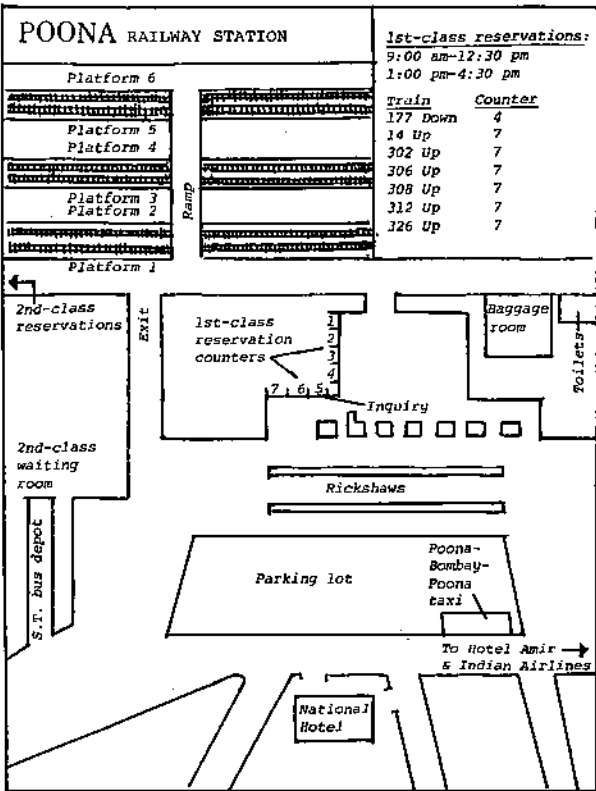
Carriage numbers are marked at the end of each carriage. Compartment letters are marked outside each compartment. Seats are also marked. If you see the train conductor, it's a good idea to check with him, to make sure that you are on his list and that you have found the correct carriage and compartment. Certain carriages may be removed later from the train to go on to other destinations, so you need to make sure you're in the right carriage. After the train starts, the conductor will check your ticket. You keep the ticket for the entire journey and surrender it at the end as you leave the railway station at your destination.

Traveling Without Advanced Reservations

Just because you don't have a reservation doesn't mean that you can't travel by train; it just makes the process a little more complicated. Make sure you get to the railway station at least an hour or two before train time. Instead of purchasing your ticket at the appropriate reservation counter, you will probably have to go to the "Current Counter," where tickets for all trains are sold after the reservations list close.

After you purchase a ticket, the next step is to get yourself a seat reservation. Once the reservation counters close, reservation lists are sent to the individual train conductors and the Chief Reservation Inspector, if there is one at the station. Each train usually has a small number of unreserved seats, and sometimes there are even cancellations for reserved seats. Find the inspector or train conductor and ask him if there are any unreserved seats available for your train. Train conductors can often be found near the first-class carriages. If a seat is available, ask the inspector or conductor to put your name on the list. You may have to pay a few rupees - in effect, the same as purchasing a reservation. Make sure you get a receipt.

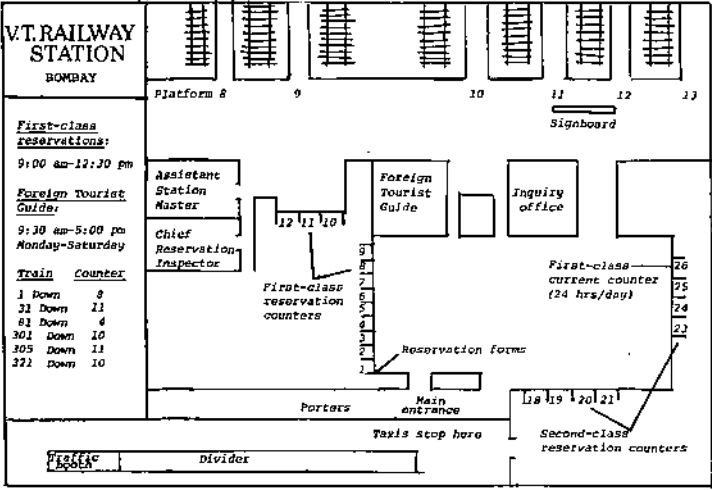
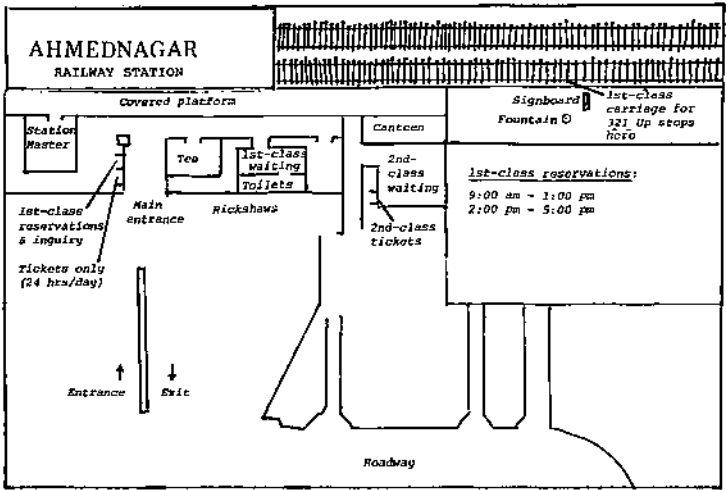
If he says there are no seats available, you have several alternatives. Sometimes seats are kept aside for VIPs or foreigners. Make sure the conductor understands that you are a foreign tourist and should get first preference. If this doesn't work, try for a later train.



Porter Service

Official railway porters dressed in red shirts with numbered armbands will carry your luggage from the sidewalk to the ticket counters and then onto the train. When you hire a porter, make a note of the identification number on his armband. Do this in his presence so he will know that you'll report him should anything happen to your luggage. It's also a wise idea to keep the porter and your luggage in sight at all times.

A fair rate is several rupees per suitcase and for any luggage trolley he uses. In practice, porters may try to charge a great deal more than the fair rate. As with taxi drivers, the cool but firm approach works best. Make sure your luggage is safely stowed on the train before dealing with the question of payment. If someone can watch your luggage, step outside the train or the compartment to pay the porter. Pay him, firmly sticking to the fair price. Then walk away, close the compartment door, reboard the train or otherwise close off the discussion. If the porter becomes difficult, you can also appeal to your fellow travelers for help.



TAXIS

Negotiating with Taxi Drivers

To establish a strong negotiating position with a taxi driver, make sure you fix the price, or the basis for the price (meter plus tariff card surcharge), before you start. For a fixed price, offer the taxi driver half of what you'd really consider paying. In return, he'll ask for twice as much as he'll probably take. Rally back and forth until you reach a mutually agreeable price. Do not put anything in the taxi or get into it until this has been established.

At the end of the ride, the driver may try to demand more than you agreed upon. This situation requires a cool but firm response. First, without committing yourself, unload all of your luggage from the taxi. Next, approach the driver and stick firmly to the price you agreed upon. Pay the driver this amount and close off the conversation as quickly as possible. If he refuses to accept, just leave the money and walk away. Don't be deterred by threats to call the police or attempts to embarrass you in front of others. If the driver demands more than the meter plus tariff card surcharge, he is at risk legally, not you. If necessary, threaten to report him to the police. In Bombay, the proper authority is:

Deputy Commissioner of Police
Traffic Control Branch (Opposite Sachwalaya)
Bombay 400 032

Safety Tips

- When traveling at night, seek the help of a hotel desk clerk to obtain a taxi. Unless the driver is known to you or to hotel staff, don't take a taxi after 11:00 p.m., particularly if you are alone.
- Never allow strangers other than the driver in the taxi with you.
- In the presence of the driver, write down his license plate number or the registration number printed on the rear of his taxi. If possible, leave this information with hotel staff. The driver and you then both know that if there's any trouble, he can be reported to the police.

TELEGRAMS

From the West to India

International cables take one or two days to reach India. In the U.S., there is only one rate, whether sent day or night, calculated by the word. Many Indian hotels (and the Trust office in Ahmednagar) have one-word cable codes that replace the recipient's full name and street address. Just include the cable code, city, and Indian state name. Indian "pin code" is not necessary. The country name (India) is free. It's also a good idea to spell out the state name and any critical words, such as dates or flight times. You can sometimes string words together up to ten letters. Words over ten letters count as two words. Cables to the Trust should include the name of the specific person or office, such as Pilgrim Reservations.

If you want a telegraphed reply, you can include extra money for a reply-paid cable. Usually you also pay for this by the word. For reservation confirmation, include about

35 extra words. Cables from India to the U.S. are telegraphed to a central location (like New York) and then sent via electronic or regular mail from there. Receiving an answer may take three to seven days. If you prefer the reply telephoned to you, include your telephone number (and area code) in the return address of your cable. In the U.S., Western Union often asks if you want a printed copy of the message you're sending. However, you are charged extra for this service.

A sample telegram notifying the Pilgrim Reservation office of last-minute changes in your arrival date might read:

PILGRIM RESERVATIONS
MEHERBABA
AHMEDNAGAR
MAHARASHTRA (INDIA)

ARRIVAL CHANGED SEVENTEEN JUNE
REQUEST PILGRIM CENTRE JUNE NINETEEN THROUGH
JULY THREE PLEASE CONFIRM

MARY JONES
TEN MAIN STREET
ATLANTA GEORGIA 30307 USA
(404) 555-7171

From India to the West

You can send two types of international telegrams from India to the West:

- Letter telegrams - class "LT," two day delivery, 22 word minimum, medium cost.
- Express foreign - class "XF," one day delivery, no minimum number of words, high cost.

When addressing the telegram, put the recipient's state and country in parentheses; you are not charged for them. If there is no telegraph office nearby, it's a good idea to include the name of the closest large city. For faster delivery include a telephone number.

A sample telegram notifying a friend of the time of your return might read:

JOHN SMITH
FOURTEEN WASHINGTON STREET
BLOOMFIELD (NEW JERSEY USA)
(201) 555-1234

ARRIVING FEBRUARY THIRD JFK AIRINDIA ONE FOUR SEVEN AT
TWO IN AFTERNOON

GEORGE

Within India

You can send two types of domestic telegrams within India:

- Ordinary - class "O," normal delivery time, low cost.
- Express - class "EXPRESS," faster delivery time, medium cost.

When addressing the telegram, be sure to include the India "pin code." Telegraph offices are found throughout India, often at post offices, railway stations, and airports. Usually the offices are open 24 hours a day, but cables sent outside normal business hours cost slightly more. When you arrive in India, telegrams are a good way to notify the Trust office of any changes in your expected time of arrival in Ahmednagar. A sample telegram, "Express" class, might read:

PILGRIM RESERVATIONS
MEHERBABA
AHMEDNAGAR
MAHARASHTRA 414 001

DELAYED BOMBAY ARRIVE JUNE TWENTY MORNING
MARY JONES

TELEPHONES

From the West to India

It is very difficult to reach Ahmednagar by phone from the West. Calls can be made either station-to-station or person-to-person, but you cannot dial directly. Place your call through the international operator. Expect some delay before your call goes through. Also be aware of the differences in time zones.

From India to the West

Making an international telephone call from India to the West is more complicated. Calls from a hotel in Bombay or Poona can be made with the assistance of the hotel operator. In Ahmednagar, place your call through the local "trunk booking" operator. Tell the operator the number you are dialing from, the telephone number and name of the party you want to reach in the West, and then your name and the type of call (collect, for example). The operator will give you a ticket number that identifies your call. Use the ticket number to check up on the booking and later to find out the time and charges. The time for the call to go through may be anywhere from two hours to two days. While you're waiting, be sure to leave word where you can be reached. When the operator has placed the call, he will ring back. If the call is collect, be sure to reconfirm this with the operator. After the call is over, notify the operator that you have finished. Then dial the trunk booking inquiry operator to get the time and charges.

Within India

Telephone calls between Poona and Bombay may be dialed directly but calls between Ahmednagar and either of these cities must be booked through an operator. There are two main types of service - "trunk" calls and "demand" (or "no delay") service.

Trunk calls are booked just like international calls, but you have several classes of service to choose from. The difference is in the cost and how quickly the call goes through.

- Ordinary - two to six hours, low cost.
- Urgent - less than an hour, medium cost.
- Lightning - instantaneous, high cost.

In addition, trunk calls may be booked on a "PP" or "Particular Person" basis, similar to person-to-person service in the U.S. The only extra cost is a charge of a few rupees if the party you're calling isn't there.

Demand, or no-delay, calls can only be made between Ahmednagar, Poona, and Bombay. The call goes through in a few minutes to whoever answers the phone. If you don't reach the number, the call is not kept pending. The cost is about the same as an urgent trunk call.

Procedures for booking trunk calls are similar to those for international calls. Book the call through an operator, make a note of the ticket number, and call Trunk Inquiry when the call is finished for the time and charges. Demand service calls have separate book and inquiry numbers.

Calls made within most cities, including Ahmednagar, may be dialed directly. If you are using a pay phone, dial the number, wait for the beeping tone, and then insert your coin (a 50 paise piece).

Telephone Tips

- When booking a call, first confirm that you have the correct operator. ("Trunk booking? I want to place a call.") Then identify your number. Numbers with double or triple digits, like 3666, are read "three six double six," not "three six, six, six." Keep saying your number until the operator repeats it correctly.
- Then tell the operator the number you want to call. ("I want to call Bombay two double six three one.") Keep saying the number until the operator repeats it correctly.
- Next, tell the operator the type of call you want to make. ("Urgent PP call to Mr. Rustom Dastoor.") Get the ticket number for future reference. ("Ticket number English 342? Thank you.")
- When the call is over, press the plunger up and down to get the operator. This tells the operator that the call is over and helps to ensure that you are not overcharged for it. ("Operator, this call is finished. What are the time and charges?") If the operator can't give you the time and charges, call the inquiry number that corresponds to the type of call you've made.
- Also call the inquiry operator if you want to cancel a call or find out if the call is still booked. ("This is three six double six. Urgent PP Bombay number two double six three one. My ticket number is English 342. Do you have my call?")
- Telephone operators for Bombay, Poona, and Ahmednagar are shown below:

	<u>Bombay</u>	<u>Poona</u>	<u>Ahmednagar</u>
International booking:	186	186	180
International inquiry:	187	187	181
Trunk booking:	180	180	180
Trunk inquiry:	188	188	5069
Demand service booking:	152-Poona 151-'Nagar	440200-Bombay 440400-'Nagar	151-Poona 152-Bombay
Demand service inquiry:	188	188	181
Directory assistance:	197	197	197

- Indian telephone operators use the following phonetic codes to spell out letters. These codes are useful if you are having difficulty communicating English names.

A - Army	N - Navy
B - Brother	O - Orange
C - Cinema	P - Paper
D - Doctor	Q - Queen
E - English	R - Raja
F - Father	S - Sister
G - Gold	T - Table
H - Hotel	U - Uncle
I - India	V - Victory
J - Jam	W - Water
K - King	X - X-ray
L - Lady	Y - Yellow
M - Mother	Z - Zero

TIME ZONES

Indian standard time is five and one half hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time in London. The map below shows the difference between Bombay time and times in four other major Western cities.



4:00 am (-8 hrs) 7:00 am (-5 hrs) Noon (0 hrs) 5:30 pm (+ 5 1/2 hrs) 10:00 pm (+ 10 hrs)

For further information contact:

Avatar Meher Baba Trust
King's Road
Ahmednagar, M.S. 414 001, India

Meher Baba Information
Box 1101
Berkeley, CA 94701, U.S.A.

Meher Spiritual Center
10200 Highway 17 North
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577, U.S.A.

Meher Baba Foundation
Box 22
Woombye, Queensland 4559, Australia

Meher Baba Association
The Boathouse
Ranelagh Drive
Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 1QZ, England

A Biographical Note

Merwan Sheriar Irani, known as Meher Baba, was born in Poona, India, on February 25, 1894 of Persian parents. His father, Sheriar Irani, was of Zoroastrian faith and a true seeker of God. Merwan went to a Christian high school in Poona and later attended Deccan College. In 1913, while still in college, a momentous event occurred in his life... the meeting with Hazrat Babajan, an ancient Mohammedan woman and one of the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Babajan gave him God-realization and made him aware of his high spiritual destiny.

Eventually he was drawn to seek out another Perfect Master, Upasni Maharaj, a Hindu who lived in Sakori. During the next seven years Maharaj gave Merwan "Gnosis" or Divine Knowledge. Thus Merwan attained spiritual Perfection. His spiritual mission began in 1921 when he drew together his first close disciples. It was these early disciples who gave him the name Meher Baba, which means "Compassionate Father."

After years of intensive training of his disciples, Meher Baba established an ashram near Ahmednagar that is called Meherabad. Here the Master's work embraced a free school where spiritual training was stressed, a free hospital and dispensary, and shelters for the poor. No distinction was made between the high castes and the untouchables; all mingled in common fellowship through the inspiration of the Master. To his disciples at Meherabad, who were of different castes and creeds, he gave a training of moral discipline, love for God, spiritual understanding and selfless service.

Meher Baba told his disciples that from July 10, 1925, he would observe Silence. From that day until he dropped the body on January 31, 1969, he maintained this Silence. His many spiritual discourses and messages have been dictated by means of an alphabet board. Much later the Master discontinued use of the board and reduced all communication to hand gestures unique in expressiveness and understandable to many.

Meher Baba traveled to the Western world six times, first in 1931, when he contacted his early Western disciples. His last visit to America was in 1958 when he and his disciples stayed at the Center established for his work at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

In India, as many as one hundred thousand people came in one day to seek his Darshan, or blessing; from all over the world there are those who journeyed to spend a few days, even a single day, in his presence.

An important part of Meher Baba's work through the years was to personally contact and to serve, hundreds of those known in India as "masts." These are advanced pilgrims on the spiritual path who have become spiritually intoxicated from direct awareness of God. For this work he traveled many thousands of miles to remote places throughout India and Ceylon. Other vital work was the washing of the lepers, the washing of the feet of thousands of poor and the distribution of grain and cloth to the destitute.

Meher Baba has asserted that he is the same Ancient One, come again to redeem man from his bondage of ignorance and to guide him to realize his true Self which is God. Meher Baba is acknowledged by his many followers as the Avatar of the Age.

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